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Govt activates contingency plan to deal with heavy rain

Panel debates rain damage • Met: Wet weather till Monday • Dozens of mines defused

By B Izzak and Agencies

KUWAIT: The government is activating a contingency plan in full in anticipation of further rainfall. Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri announced yesterday, as the National Assembly's housing committee discussed with the government extensive damage caused by torrential rains to Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area. Bushehri said she told the panel that she ordered the formation of a committee to investigate what happened in that area, which is relatively new. She promised to announce the results of the investigation committee and to take legal action against those responsible.

Bushehri also announced that the government has suspended dealings with six contracting companies and an engineering office involved in road and housing con-

tracts with the government. Unprecedented heavy rains lashed Kuwait in November, causing severe damage to several residential areas and main roads that lawmakers claim was due to bad infrastructure because of corruption in executing contracts. The government and the Assembly have formed investigation committees to find out what happened and who is responsible.

Head of the housing committee MP Faisal Al-Kandari said the committee held a general debate on the destruction in Sabah Al-Ahmad and insisted that the Assembly wants all those responsible be held to account and not only suspend their contracts. On compensating citizens whose properties were damaged in the recent deluge, Bushehri said the Cabinet decided in its session on Monday to task a team chaired by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh to follow up on the issue and receive complaints.

Kuwait's meteorological office has warned of the likelihood of more unstable weather starting tomorrow. The inclement weather gripping the country is likely to persist with a chance of intermittent downpours of varying intensities, meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi told KUNA yesterday. Friday's weather will see sporadic rainfall during the day with wind speeds of 60 km per hour, leading to a seven-foot rise in sea levels and low visibility in some areas, he indicated. Unpredictable weather patterns are expected to continue until Monday morning, Qarawi added, urging people to visit www.met.gov.kw for all the latest weather details.

Meanwhile, the interior ministry said yesterday that it had received 20 reports of the appearance of mines due to the heavy rainfall in the desert over the past days. The relations and security information department at the ministry, as part of an awareness campaign,

renewed warnings to citizens and expatriates to avoid any unfamiliar objects that might appear in desert areas. Such uncovered objects and items may turn out to be abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO), the ministry warned.

It added that it has received, during the past three days, numerous reports of military remnants in the desert areas of Jahra governorate. The explosives squad immediately rushed to the area and handled the objects, the statement said, noting that its personnel discovered 48 mines. The ministry called on citizens and residents, namely desert campers, to call 112 when finding any strange objects that may appear following sand drifts due to the recent heavy rains. It also urged them to take extra precaution and refrain from touching any of these objects, which might be dangerous military leftovers.

News in brief

Dumped body identified

KUWAIT: Security sources said a dead body thrown from a taxi in Jabriya on Monday night belongs to Bangladeshi male, noting that criminal investigations managed to identify the body by checking its fingerprints. Detectives were informed that a taxi driver had dumped the body in a Jabriya street and fled the scene. On examining the body, it was found to be bloodied. However, a passerby managed to jot down the taxi's license plate number. — A Saleh

Nod to Shiite personal law

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's legal and legislative committee yesterday approved a draft personal status law for Kuwaiti Shiites after making small amendments to the bill, head of the committee MP Khaled Al-Shatti said. The bill has been languishing in the Assembly for the past several years. If approved by the Assembly, it will be used in courts to rule on personal status matters like marriage and divorce for Shiite Muslims. — B Izzak

\$500m Saudi, UAE aid to Yemen

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which lead a military coalition against the Houthi rebels in Yemen, announced yesterday \$500 million in aid to the country on the brink of famine. They will each give \$250 million in response to the food crisis to support more than 10 million people, said Abdullah Rabeeah, general supervisor at King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre. He added that donations will go through the UN as well as other international and local aid groups. — AFP

Ivanka used personal email

WASHINGTON: The US president's daughter and senior advisor Ivanka Trump used a personal email account for government business in violation of federal records rules, The Washington Post reported Monday. A spokesman for Trump's attorney confirmed that she did use a private email account before she was informed of the rules, and said that all her government-related emails had been turned over months ago. President Donald Trump has repeatedly pilloried Hillary Clinton for her use of a private email server for government business while she was secretary of state. — AFP

Saudi Arabia announces new projects

DUBAI: Saudi King Salman announced \$3 billion in investment projects yesterday, the latest in a royal spending spree. King Salman inaugurated 151 projects in the northern province of Tabuk valued at more than 11 billion riyals (\$2.9 billion), of which 4.9 billion riyals will go toward three electricity management projects in the province, where the futuristic city of NEOM is due to be built. Among other recipients are the tourism authority and the ministries of transport, housing, education, environment and municipal affairs. — Reuters

After Airbnb, Booking.com asked to remove W Bank listings

ADEI AD: Rights activists yesterday urged Booking.com to follow the example of Airbnb and withdraw listings for rentals in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, even as Israel called the move "disgusting" and threatened legal action. Airbnb said Monday it will remove such listings, just ahead of the release of a Human Rights Watch report criticizing the inclusion of settlements. Israel strongly denounced Airbnb's decision and threatened legal action against the company, while Palestinian officials welcomed it.

The US-based rights group HRW issued its report yesterday and called on Booking.com to follow Airbnb's "positive step". "By ending its brokering of rentals in illegal settlements on land off-limits to Palestinians, Airbnb has taken a stand against discrimination

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With Sufi rituals, sweets, Muslims mark 'mawlid'

AKRA, Iraq: From Sufis in Iraqi Kurdistan shaking their hair to rhythmic drumbeats, to Libyan children receiving toys and Egyptians swapping sweets - Muslims across the world celebrated Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday yesterday. Nearly 1,450 years after Muhammad (PBUH) was born in Makkah in modern-day Saudi Arabia, Sunni Muslims marked the anniversary with ancestral customs and new traditions yesterday, a few days ahead of the date recognized by Shiites.

In the Libyan city of Benghazi, the celebration has been underway since

late Monday with children unpacking new clothes and plastic toys under strings of colorful lights. The buildings around them are marked with bullet holes and craters - scars of the violent years since the 2011 ouster of dictator Muammar Gaddafi - but holiday cheer seems to overcome that.

In Egypt, candy shops prepare the traditional "mawlid (birth) bride," a figurine made of sugary paste that is then dressed in paper skirts, sparkles, and fabric flowers. According to tradition, the dolls must be offered by young men to their betrothed along with other traditional sweets made of dried fruit, nuts and nougat.

And in Iraq's northern town of Akra, a Sufi ritual takes precedence. Men dressed in loose pants, matching jackets and wrap-around belts stand in lines and semi-circles for the "dhikr", or religious

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Muslim lawmaker proposes to end head-cover ban in US Congress

WASHINGTON: A Muslim congresswoman-elect has co-authored changes to a longstanding rule banning the wearing of head coverings on the US House floor, an effort supported Monday by the nation's largest Muslim rights group. Ilhan Omar, a Somali refugee who was one of the first two Muslim women elected to Congress earlier this month, has joined Democratic leaders in drafting an update to a 181-year-old rule to allow for religious exemptions for headwear like the Muslim hijab, Jewish yarmulkes or Sikh turban.

The change is part of a rules package introduced by top Democrats including House Minority Leader Nancy



AL MUGHAYYIR: Nati Rom, the founder of Israel's Lev Haolam organization which is active against the Palestinian-led boycott movement, walks next to an Airbnb apartment in the Esh Kodesh outpost near the Jewish settlement of Shilo in the occupied West Bank yesterday. — AFP



JERUSALEM: Palestinian scouts play music during a ceremony commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) outside the Dome of the Rock in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound yesterday. — AFP



WASHINGTON: Incoming Representative Ilhan Omar speaks to a reporter while arriving for a House of Representatives member-elect welcome briefing on Capitol Hill. — AFP

Pelosi that is expected to be approved in January, when Democrats take majority control of the chamber. "No one puts a scarf on my head but me. It's my choice - one protected by the first amendment," Omar posted Saturday on Twitter.

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More than 50 dead in attack on Kabul religious gathering

KABUL: More than 50 people were killed in a suicide attack on a religious celebration in Kabul yesterday, officials said, in one of the deadliest assaults to strike Afghanistan this year. It follows a wave of bloody violence across the war-torn country in recent weeks that has killed hundreds of people as militants step up assaults amid a flurry of diplomatic efforts to end the 17-year conflict.

At least 83 people were wounded in the blast, health ministry spokesman Wahid Majroh said, which targeted religious scholars and leaders inside a wedding hall where hundreds had gathered to

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Local

Amir, Crown Prince meet senior state officials at Bayan Palace

Defense Minister discusses cooperation with World Bank official



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



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the World Bank Regional Director Dr Issam Abu Suleiman.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh and members of the Gulf Engineering Union.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister received Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, accompanied by the Secretary-General of the Gulf Engineering Union Dr Kamal Abdullah Al-Hamad and members of the union on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Gulf Engineering Union.

Separately, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense

Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah discussed at Bayan Palace yesterday mutual cooperation with the World Bank Regional Director, Dr Issam Abu Suleiman, along with the accompanying delegation. The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that the two sides discussed issues of common concern. The meeting was attended by members of the board of trustees of the apparatus for developing Silk City and Boubyan Island. — KUNA

Kuwaiti academic wins feminist research award

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti academic Dr Haneen Al-Ghabra won an award on feminist studies from the US National Communication Association (NCA). In a statement to the press yesterday, Assistant Professor at Kuwait University's communications department Dr Ghabra said that the 'Outstanding Article of the Year Award' was presented to her for a research on women's privileges and facing oppression. She noted that she had also recently published a book titled 'Muslim Women and White Femininity: Reenactment and Resistance.' — KUNA



Dr Haneen Al-Ghabra (left) receives an award on feminist studies from the US National Communication Association.

Ambassador confirms Spain's role in canceling visa

MADRID: Kuwait's Ambassador to Spain Ayadah Al-Saidi stressed the importance of the role of the Spanish Parliament in supporting Kuwait's file on canceling the Schengen visa for Kuwaiti citizens in the European Parliament. The Kuwaiti embassy in Spain said in a press



MADRID: Kuwait's Ambassador to Spain Ayadah Al-Saidi (right) presents a souvenir to Spanish Senate Speaker Pio Garcia-Escudero. — KUNA

statement that this came during a meeting between Ambassador Al-Saidi and Spanish Senate Speaker Pio Garcia-Escudero at the Spanish parliament in Madrid Monday evening. It added that Ambassador Saidi conveyed to Garcia greetings of Kuwait's Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, noting that the two parties stressed the need to continue mutual visits between the parliamentary committees of both countries. The two sides also stressed the importance of strengthening the bonds of parliamentary relations and continuing to exchange support in the international parliamentary forums, praising at the same time the distinguished bilateral relations. — KUNA

New Iranian envoy submits credentials

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-

Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received a copy of the credentials of the new Iranian ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Irani during a meeting held at his office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah expressed his best wishes to the new ambassador and more developments for bilateral ties. The meeting was attended by a number of foreign ministry's senior officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The new Iranian ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Irani presents his credentials to Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Local

Residency affairs department speeds up efforts to compensate for missed days

American medical group likely to manage Jahra hospital

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior's (MoI) Assistant Undersecretary Maj Gen Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah instructed all residency affairs departments to exert their utmost efforts on processing transactions of citizens and expatriates to make up for the days given off during the recent heavy rain. Informed sources said MoI's immigration director Maj Gen Abdullah Al-Hajri receives up to 100 applicants at his office daily. The sources added that over 3,000 transactions were being processed daily at various departments, with 400 at the Hawally department.

KISR employees

MP Khalil Al-Saleh filed an inquiry asking Minister of Education Hamed Al-Azmi about allegedly ignoring remarks made in a State Audit Bureau report, and failing to provide explanations to why 122 Kuwaitis quit their jobs at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and why non-Kuwaiti employees received salaries beyond the limits set by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Behind schedule

A State Audit Bureau (SAB) reportedly stressed the Ministry of Services has repeatedly fallen behind schedule in executing some construction projects for which the total of KD 771,000 had been allocated, noting that this reflects the ministry's incapability to follow up the execution of those projects, and consequently increases the costs yearly. Meanwhile, another Sab report showed that revenues collected by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) during the fiscal year 2017-2018 dropped by 53 percent (KD 3.4 million) compared with estimates, adding that revenues had also dropped by 40 percent in 2015-2016 and 74 percent in 2016-2017.

Jahra Medical City

Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah and Amiri Diwan Undersecretary Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah recently met six international medical groups to select one of them to manage the Jahra Medical City, informed sources said. The sources added that

an American medical group will most likely be selected in view of the success achieved by American medical groups in Abu Dhabi. The sources also noted that the estimated cost of running the city varies between KD 100 million and KD 200 million for a period of five to 10 years. They also reminded that the American Henry Ford Medical Group already runs a hospital in Riyadh. Notably, Jahra Medical City has a bed capacity of 1,234 in eight main buildings and the project is located over a total area of 235,000 sq m. It is expected to be completed within three years at a total cost of KD 354 million.

New building

The Ministry of Education (MoE) announced plans to move to its new building in South Surra on November 25, 2018, said educational sources, explaining that the new building includes the minister's office as well as those of the assistant undersecretaries for public education and educational development and activities. The sources added that some departments will not move to the new building until enough parking spaces become available. In another educational con-

cern, sources said various educational zones will soon submit the names of the heads of examination centers for the upcoming first term exams. The sources added that each director will be entitled to nominate 10-15 educators to work with them at the designated centers.

Solar power

Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) is currently working on executing the Al-Dibdibah solar power project with a 1,500 megawatt capacity, projects manager Riyadh Al-Toura announced. He added that the project is located over an area of 32 sq km within KISR's Al-Sheqaya renewable energy complex, which is affiliated to Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). Toura added that the project had been offered for bidding through the Central Agency for Public Tenders and that 28 international companies and consortia have qualified for the project so far. He added that bids will close by Dec 16, 2018 and expected the project contract will be signed during the first quarter of 2019, adding the project is to be launched within 24 months effective from the date of signing the contract.

Authority gears up to develop ports' infrastructure

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) recently conducted a comprehensive inspection and inventory of various departments in Shuwaikh, Shuaiba and Doha ports pending developing the infrastructure of all three ports that have been in service for over 60 years. KPA Director Sheikh Yousef Abdullah Sabah Al-Nasser instructed all concerned committees to complete the process as soon as possible, the authority's public relations department said in a statement.

In this regard, head of the facilities and public relations committee Atef Al-Shatti said five tenders had been offered for public bidding to remove at least 60 tons of solid waste in the three ports as well as in the main ports complex building. Commenting on the same issue, the safety and security manager at Shuwaikh Port Bader Al-Rushood said some isolated areas behind the



port were being subjected to electricity and plumbing maintenance operations in addition to collecting debris and classifying it pending selling them in an auction.

In the meantime, the authority's planning and proj-

ects manager and the head of the constructions committee Essa Al-Mulla said some temporary structures and warehouses are being currently removed to be replaced by modern edifices.

Oil Minister's grilling still on: Lawmaker

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Faisal Al-Kandari said yesterday that he and two other lawmakers are still determined to grill Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheed over alleged financial violations even after he has provided a key investigation report to the national assembly. Kandari said the minister was supposed to provide the report on Sunday based on a resolution by the National Assembly but he did not and provided the report on Monday after the three MPs said they will grill him. The lawmaker said that the grilling will go ahead as planned after the grilling of the prime minister next week.



MP Faisal Al-Kandari

In the meantime, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a liberal grouping, yesterday welcomed the amendment approved by the legal committee to allow granting Kuwaiti citizenship to non-Muslims. The NDA said that the amendment is a correction for an unconstitutional law enacted by the 1981 National Assembly which deprives non-Muslims from the right to become Kuwaiti, adding that this provision was not present in the original Kuwaiti nationality law issued in 1959. Liberal MP Rakan Al-Nisf also supported the move and called on the National Assembly to approve the amendment soon. MP Saadoun Hammad however said he will oppose the amendment.

Fatal accidents leave three dead, 11 injured

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Two men were killed in a horrific car accident reported on Seventh Ring Road. Mubarak Al-Kabeer fire station responded and recovered the victim's bodies. In another fatal crash, an Egyptian man was killed and 11 others were injured in a traffic accident reported on King Fahd Road between an SUV and a bus that was carrying 14 workers. The accident took place near Ahmadi bridge. The injured suffered fractures and bruises.

Fake detective arrested

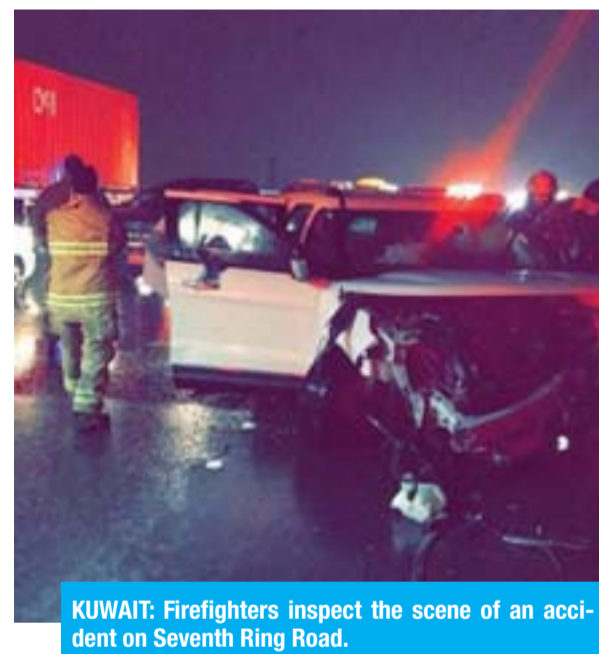
Ahmadi detectives arrested the suspect who impersonated a policeman and robbed an Indian man, then threatened to kill a Lebanese child in Fahahel. The suspect is a 23-year-old Kuwaiti and was arrested at his father's house in Ahmadi.

Traffic dispute

A citizen became annoyed with a woman's loud voice during a traffic dispute and slapped her across the face, rupturing her eardrum. She lodged a complaint against him. The suspect is being summoned for questioning.

Suspect arrested

An SUV driver was arrested after ramming into a police patrol in Salmiya and escaping, then abandoning his vehicle in front of Rai mall. Policemen manning a checkpoint near the passports roundabout in Salmiya noticed a driver attempting to avoid them, so he was chased until he collided with a patrol car and escaped. Later, a call was



KUWAIT: Firefighters inspect the scene of an accident on Seventh Ring Road.

received about a car with sparks coming out of a tire near a mall on the Fifth Ring Road, whose driver left the car and escaped. Police were able to identify and arrest him.

Beggars arrested

Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Operations Affairs Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh asked police patrols to be present around Mubarakiya and its markets because the number of beggars is on the rise, as social media posts show. A source said policewomen can be used to arrest female beggars, adding all those arrested will be deported and their sponsors will not be allowed to sponsor anyone anymore. Meanwhile, six beggars were arrested in Farwaniya and were sent to concerned authorities to be deported.

local spotlight

To Egypt with love



By Nejouad Al-Yagout

When I was a child, I heard about a place called Egypt, a place they called and still call the 'Mother of the World.' Everything's magical and mystical when we are children. It is a shame that when we grow up, we learn that the world is not as glorious as we once thought, or actually, it is still glorious, but we cease treating it as though it were. My parents and relatives kept the magic and glory alive, though. They were always watching glamorous black and white Egyptian movies, and when I grew up and developed an affinity for literature, I was drawn to Naguib Mahfouz, Alaa Al-Aswany, Nawal El-Saadawi and so many other literary legends who happened to be Egyptian.

I am dismayed to learn that Egypt - a country rich in culture, overflowing with intellectuality and avant-garde writers and artists - has gradually become the brunt of many jokes and racism. Fast forward to now, having learned that we have further upset the descendants of one of the most ancient civilizations on our planet - the folks that we are supposed to look up to - is something I cannot get over.

Oh fellow brothers and sisters in Kuwait: Oil is a resource - it is not something we invented, and one day it will be replaced. Where will we then be, having alienated so many people with our words and actions? Fear is not an incentive for change, but how else can we change if love is not permeating our core? Weather changes (as we have witnessed in the last couple of weeks), conditions change (as history has exemplified), wealth fluctuates (as recessions have tried but failed to teach us), but at the end of the day, what kind of legacy do we want to leave behind? How do we want to be known to the rest of the world? Do we want people to roll their eyes when they refer to us? Do we want to be known as arrogant? Or as bigots? Do we want to have people across nations speaking about our lack of mercy and our continued intolerance?

This is not the Kuwait of my grandparents and ancestors, who were welcoming to people of all nations, who respected all religions, all walks of life. And this is certainly not the generation of my parents who considered Egypt the 'Mother of the World.' To say I am heartbroken is an understatement, but I have hope in the locals who shun any form of discrimination toward Egyptians and all other expatriates. Kuwait for all. Viva l'amore!

Illicit garbage dumped in Mahboula



KUWAIT: Unknown persons are dumping truckloads of garbage in an unauthorized spot in Mahboula. According to Kuwait Times reader, J Mathew, who witnessed the dumping, a large yellow dump truck pulled up to the empty lot, located in block 2 and dumped piles and piles of trash. The impact on the immediate environment, not to mention the possibly of spreading disease during the rainy season is unknown.— (Photos courtesy J Mathew)

Local

Kuwaiti-Japanese businessmen discuss investment, joint projects

Kuwait seeks Japanese expertise in renewable energy, other areas

TOKYO: Kuwait and Japan yesterday discussed measures to enhance business cooperation between the two countries with focusing on infrastructure projects and small and medium-sized business. The 22nd meeting of the Kuwaiti-Japanese Businessmen's Committee was held in Tokyo, Japan and featured three sessions - economic analysis, the 'New Kuwait 2035' development plan, and cooperation in the field of training small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The one-day forum, co-chaired by Tareq Al-Mutawa and his Japanese counterpart Hiroshi Saito, brought together some 90 government officials and business people from various sectors of both countries.

Removing obstacles

Saito reaffirmed his country's continued contribution to the economic growth of Kuwait. "As Japan heavily relies on Kuwaiti crude oil, our country shall actively invest and expand businesses in Kuwait in return, which will contribute to the development of the Kuwaiti economy and employment promotion," Saito said after the meeting in Tokyo. "For that purpose, our committee aims to help remove obstacles that Japanese companies may face," said Saito, renewing committee's intention to facilitate the necessary support and cooperation to that end. For example, the committee has played a significant role in the abolishment of 'offset' program that had caused troubles for Japanese firms operating in Kuwait. Participants at yesterday's meeting had active discussions about the development of the bilateral cooperation between the two countries, according to Saito, who is Honorary Advisor of Mizuho Financial Group.

"This year, in addition to representatives from the private sector, many of those from the government sector attended the meeting. We had an in-depth discussion covering projects under the New Kuwait 2035 development plan, and the establishment of a government agency for the promotion of the related investment, as well as the development of the Kuwait stock exchange," Saito said. There was also presentation about current status of an electricity and water project, and other key economic issues in Kuwait, while the Japanese side offered Japan's intention to support in the field of water and its experience of small and medium enterprises.

Meanwhile, at the meeting, Saito offered optimistic view of more Japanese private sector's involvement in Kuwait given that Kuwait enjoys economic stability despite the current geopolitical risks in the Middle East. "Kuwait's financial system is stable enough to withstand an oil-price slump. Kuwait can be a lucrative market for Japanese firms. I hope Kuwait will create a market that

will include Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which will be more appealing to Japanese enterprises," he said.

Human resources' development

In his opening remarks, Mutawa pointed out it was the first annual meeting since the official ratification of an agreement on technical cooperation between the two governments, saying, "it is considered the main relevant event witnessed during 2018." The agreement is a great achievement crowning the constant efforts of this committee for more than two decades, said Mutawa. The pact gives significant focus to the human resources' development activities, such as providing technical training to Kuwaiti nationals, and dispatching Japanese missions to Kuwait to conduct, with their Kuwaiti counterparts, surveys of economic and social nature, according to Mutawa, who is a board member of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

"Kuwait has several initiatives to promote its capital markets and introduce advanced financing this year. These developments help raise the capital inflows to Kuwait, boost liquidity, and place it on the map of foreign investors," he said, expressing hope that there will be cooperation between the authorities of capital markets in Kuwait and their counterparts in Japan in the fields of technical and financial education.

The head of the Kuwaiti side also stressed that Japanese expertise is required in many areas such as energy, security, clean and renewable energy, small and medium enterprises development, small cities and ports, e-commerce, human capital building and the development of Kuwait industries, given that Japan is one of the first countries in the world which has competitive advantages in these fields.

Steady progress

Meanwhile, Saito said the relationship between the two countries has been progressing steadily, such as bilateral tax and investment treaties that came into force in 2013 and 2014, respectively, and the Az-Zour North Power Plant project starting commercial operation about two years ago, in which Japanese companies participated. "As a three-way cooperation involving Kuwait and Japan, the Nghi Son petrochemical refinery complex in Vietnam began full-scale operation in May. I hope that we will continue to develop projects that will create a win-win situation for the both countries," he said.

Kuwait has made progress on the Second National Development Plan (2015-2019) for rebuilding of infrastructure, in which Japan is much interested, said Saito, adding that Kuwait has



TOKYO: Kuwaiti-Japanese Businessmen's Committee Co-Chairman Tareq Al-Mutawa (center) speaks during the committee's 22nd meeting in Tokyo, Japan yesterday. —KUNA

also accelerated the improvement of the investment climate and related legislation. "Since the establishment of a new organization promoting privatization, various public and private partnership projects have been also promoted. I hope that this committee will serve as a platform to create synergies of both countries' development," he added.

KD 34 billion

At the gathering, the Kuwaiti side briefed the Japanese participants on investment climate and opportunities under the New Kuwait 2035, including key projects in energy, oil, power, smart cities, the stock exchange, developing the islands, and establishing Madinat Al-Hareer (Silk City). As part of the plan under the New Kuwait 2035, the government plans to invest KD 34 billion (\$12.4 billion) in strategic projects by 2019, hoping to raise a third of that capital from the private sector, according to the presentation, which described the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model as one of the key vehicles.

The meeting also covered a report on macroeconomic trend and monetary/financial stability in Kuwait that was presented by Central Bank Deputy Governor Yousef Al-Obaid, and support for SMEs. The Japanese side provided an overview of the economy, Japan's experience on electricity and water sector and its policy on SMEs. They also touched on a policy dialogue on electricity and water between the two countries, which was established in 2015 with the aim of exchanging information of future projects in Kuwait and applicable technology of Japan and discussing possible cooperation projects in the electricity and water sector.

The Kuwaiti delegation included Ambassador to Japan Hasana



Kuwaiti-Japanese Businessmen's Committee Co-Chairman Hiroshi Saito speaks during the meeting.

Mohammad Zaman and representatives from the Agency for Developing Madinat Al-Hareer (Silk City) and Boubiyah Island, the Bourse Kuwait, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Affairs, the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects, the Ministry of Electricity and Water, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, as well as unions of investment, banks and industries. —KUNA

NBK partners with Al-Shaheed Park to support Kuwaiti Culture

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) provides its support to Al-Shaheed Park 'Modern Heritage Festival' during November for the third year in a row, as part of the bank's continuous efforts to stand by the social and cultural institutions in Kuwait.

NBK's Public Relations Assistant General Manager, Manal Al-Mattar, said that NBK's support to Al-Shaheed Park activities is a recognition of the important and pivotal role that this leading cultural institution plays in promoting our culture and shedding light on its arts and rich heritage.

"Our CSR strategy focuses on supporting cultural activities that aims at building bridges between generations," she added. "We trust that cultural and historical related events do attract a large segment of the society and it's our duty as a leading institution to be part in spreading cultural activities and help youth to be engaged more and continuing to enhance Kuwait history and tradition for years to come."

Over the past six and a half decades, NBK has committed itself to supporting social and cultural activities in



Kuwait as part of its social responsibility. As a leading and prestigious institution, NBK has a track record of serving and supporting the Kuwaiti society. Its contribution to Al-Shaheed Park supports promoting and highlighting the richness of history and civilization.

It is worth mentioning that Al-Shaheed Park is managed by LOYAC. The park management's vision is to help in enhancing the cultural and civilized dimensions of the country, as well as support the development of the heritage.



Manal Al-Mattar



KIB sponsors 35th annual NUKS conference

KUWAIT: KIB announced its sponsorship of the 35th annual National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) conference, which will be held under the theme 'The Youth of Kuwait,' in Dallas, United States. Taking place from the 22nd to the 25th of November, the conference will be held under the patronage and presence of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and attended by an elite group of notable figures and representatives from diverse fields, ranging from politics and economics to religion and arts.

The four-day conference will be attended by the Bank's General Manager of the Investment Department, Jamal Al-

Barrak. On behalf of the Bank, Barrak will be speaking on a panel discussion during the economic track of the conference.

On this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "Every year, we continue to sponsor this conference, as it brings together Kuwaiti students in a friendly, atmosphere full of great minds from a diverse set of disciplines. At KIB, we always strive to foster these student-related educational initiatives that seek to enrich the experience of students and empower the next generation of leaders. We are proud to offer our moral and financial support to Kuwaiti students, whether in Kuwait or abroad, investing in their future as well as ours."

Najia also added that this sponsorship has become a flagship component of KIB's social responsibility program, reflecting its unwavering commitment to developing youth and supporting the local student population. The Bank continues to support a myriad of student-based initiatives and activities, stemming from its strong belief in the importance of supporting young, local talents and encouraging them to realize their ambitions.

1st Sino-Kuwaiti Investment Forum kicks off tomorrow

SHANGHAI: The first Sino-Kuwaiti investment forum will be held in Shanghai tomorrow amid high expectations for an increase in bilateral cooperation between the two sides. The forum will be held under the patronage of Kuwaiti Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf.

The forum is organized jointly by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) and Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority. The forum will be held on the sidelines of the inauguration of KIA's second office in Shanghai today, after opening its 1st office in Beijing in 2011. Minister Hajraf is expected to deliver an opening speech at the forum, followed by a panel discussion including KPC's CEO Nizar Al-Adsani, Board Member of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Amran Jouhar Hayat, Chief Executive Officer of Huawei Technologies Company in Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait Trevor Lo and Director General of China Construction Company Yang Chu Sin.

The one-day forum will discuss investment opportunities available in the State of Kuwait including sectors such



as oil construction, housing, infrastructure and information technology. The forum also discusses the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti market regionally and efforts exerted to improve business environment and the foreign investment environment in light of recent developments on the regulatory environment in the country and the impact of modern economic laws on the Kuwaiti economy.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Samih Johar Hayat affirmed that bilateral relations between Kuwait and China are witnessing a remarkable stage of cooperation and are well established. This came in a statement to the press yesterday after Kuwait's economic delegation arrived to Shanghai. Hayat stressed the importance of holding such meetings periodically, as the investment forum is one of the most important meetings and the largest economic gathering between the countries. He added that Kuwait and China signed on Monday a memorandum of understanding forming a mechanism for development of cooperation for Silk City and the five Kuwaiti islands. —KUNA

Third Neolithic Conference promotes archaeology in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Third Neolithic Conference of the Arabian Peninsula kicked off yesterday at Kuwait National Library Headquarter under the supervision and organization of Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). The third Neolithic Conference of the Arabian Peninsula, is held for the third consecutive time in Kuwait, and will last for three days in cooperation with the French Center for Archaeology and Social Sciences and the French Embassy.

The conference will shed light on the latest discoveries

in the field of archaeology in Kuwait and Gulf region, said Director of the Department of Antiquities and Museums at NCCAL Dr Sultan Al-Duwaish. A specialized team from Poland is participating in this conference, which will discuss the most important findings in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Jordan. The team will also discuss the latest discoveries in northern Kuwait, where archaeological evidences showed the presence of ancient humans for thousands of years in the area, Duwaish added.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Council Engineer Ali Al-Yoha said that studies showed the existence of humans in Tal-Burqan, Tal-Al-Qurain, Bahra, and Thiej Island. The National Council worked to support the field of antiquities through foreign archaeological missions and excavations in Kuwait, and organizing events and forums, he explained. He expressed hope the conference would create an archaeological climate, and take a step toward expanding knowledge and reveal historical facts. —KUNA



KUWAIT: A group photo featuring participants in the Third Neolithic Conference of the Arabian Peninsula. —KUNA

Urgent need to address children's issues: Satyarthi

Education 'very important' to get rid of poverty

By Reaven D'Souza

KUWAIT: Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi who has championed the cause of children for more than 37 years was in Kuwait recently as part of an event organized by TakMinds, a new platform launched by Takreem, which aims to highlight how changemakers and emerging talents are addressing current societal challenges. As the chief guest speaker, Kailash Satyarthi spoke about children's issues that were impacting the global peace process, as well as the need to act fast and comprehensively.

Having started his movement Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save Childhood Movement) in 1981, Satyarthi has rescued almost 87,000 children from child labor, trafficking and slavery. In recognition of his efforts, in 2014, he was awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, along with Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai, "for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education."

In addition to child labor and slavery, he has been an active campaigner for children's rights on several fronts, including all forms of violence against children, such as sexual abuse, rape, health, malnutrition and others. The Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation that was set up after he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 has been at the forefront of fighting for the protection of children everywhere.

Speaking to the media after the event, Satyarthi pointed out that there was a lot left to be done to protect children's rights everywhere, and that new legislation was required to safeguard these rights. "In the 35 minutes following the awarding of Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, the issue of children's rights received more global recognition than what I could do in 35 years," he said.

Satyarthi pointed out that all these are new initiatives that have never been undertaken in the past. "Some of the policy successes and accomplishments

we had in the past, resulted in the ILO convention 182, which helped bring the issues of child abuse to the forefront."

"I am now working with the United Nations on a new convention that will expand the protection of children; this will be a legally binding international pact with very specific clauses against online child pornography, sexual abuse and child trafficking," he disclosed.

Satyarthi, who met the Pope in Rome a few days back to seek his support for the UN convention, said that he was very pleased with the meeting and the positivity shown by His Holiness towards the issue. Emphasizing the need for everyone to support children's issues, he said, "Children are the most vulnerable members of society, especially the marginalized children, they have no protection whatsoever. Moreover, since they have no voting rights, political interest in child issues is minimal."

Satyarthi said once we have a legally binding convention, then there are several mechanisms for monitoring its implementation, but his foundation has gone a step further in seeking added provisions that would include a global task force having extra-territorial jurisdiction and could be hosted by any UN agency. Also, a global helpline that will help track down syndicates anywhere will be crucial in the monitoring process.

Regarding the notion that child labor is directly linked to poverty, Satyarthi disputed this by pointing out that there are almost 210 million jobless adults who can easily replace the 150 million children workers, so every single child laborer is working at the cost of an adult.

"There are studies in many countries including India that indicate that most child laborers belong to parents who are not able to find work for even 100 days. Children cannot form unions, they are vulnerable and get exploited, so there is a parallel between adult unemployment and child labor," he pointed out.

Elaborating on this, he added that child labor is the



Movement rescued almost 87,000 children



KUWAIT: Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi speaks during an event in Kuwait organized by TakMinds, a new platform launched by Takreem. — Photo by Reaven D'Souza

Kuwaiti actors hail Heritage Week in Sharjah

SHARJAH: A number of Kuwaiti actors praised Kuwait Heritage Week in Sharjah, which officially inaugurated on Monday. Participants in the event, included renowned Kuwaiti actors Saad Al-Faraj and Mohammad Al-Mansour, as well as singer Mustapha Ahmad who all were guest of honors in the Heritage Week, part of the Global Heritage Weeks organized by Sharjah Institute for Heritage (SIH).

Faraj said that such cultural initiative would enable visitors to know different cultures from around the world. "Kuwaiti art, particularly the one that shed light on heritage and events prior to the discovery of oil, was well known in the Arab world, especially in UAE," Faraj said.

Meanwhile, Mansour said these gatherings highlight Kuwait's popular and cultural heritage, affirming on Sharjah's honoring of Kuwaiti actors and artists in many occasions. In the meantime, Ahmad praised the artistic galleries in the event, noting on the exceptional singing shows. UAE and Kuwait singing heritage were brilliant, and was unique in terms of melodies, using old folk musical instruments. —KUNA



Kuwaiti actors Saad Al-Faraj (right) and Mohammad Al-Mansour.

biggest impediment in child education; if children are not able to get quality education then they will be poor for the rest of their lives, adding that if one has to get rid of poverty, then education is very important.

Globally, \$22 billion are required annually to ensure primary education, and \$39 billion would be required to ensure education up to secondary grade. "We have to prioritize education to see the social change and gender justice," he said, pointing out that governments are the main stake holder followed by the corporate sector.

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Pakistan summons US envoy in protest

US mulls adding Venezuela to 'terror sponsors list'

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TEHRAN: Iranians carry placards as they demonstrate in front of the UN office in Tehran yesterday in support of the Yemeni people. The World Health Organization says nearly 10,000 people have been killed in Yemen since the Saudi intervention in March 2015, but rights groups believe the toll may be five times higher. — AFP

Battles flare as UN prepares for Yemen talks

Fresh fighting shakes the flashpoint city of Hodeida

SANAA: UN envoy Martin Griffiths was preparing yesterday to head to war-torn Yemen to lay the groundwork for peace talks in Sweden, after fresh fighting shook the flashpoint city of Hodeida. Griffiths - whose efforts at kickstarting peace talks failed in September - is again trying to get the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels and the Saudi-backed government to the negotiating table by the end of the year. He is expected to meet with Houthi officials in the capital Sanaa today. Both sides have in the past week expressed their support for the envoy and his mission to hold talks in Stockholm, but fierce clashes erupted in the Red Sea city of Hodeida late Monday after a lull.

Military officials said that the battles were the worst since loyalists halted an offensive last week, and were concentrated in the eastern part of the city where rebels

fired artillery. Pro-government forces struck back, supported by warplanes from the Saudi-led coalition which launched a dozen raids, the sources said. According to Houthi-run media, clashes lasted up to four hours and resulted in fatalities. The city was relatively calm yesterday morning, according to an AFP correspondent who spoke to residents by telephone from Khokha about 100 kilometers away.

Call for truce

On Monday, Britain presented to the UN Security Council a draft resolution urging an immediate truce in Hodeida city, whose port serves as an entry point to nearly all imports and humanitarian aid to the impoverished country. The draft, circulated by Britain to the 14 other council members and seen by AFP, sets a two-week deadline for the warring sides to remove all barriers to humanitarian aid. The proposed resolution would significantly ratchet up pressure on the Saudi-led coalition and

the Houthis to seek a negotiated settlement in Yemen, where millions are on the brink of starvation. It also calls for a large injection of foreign currency into the economy to support Yemen's collapsing currency and for salaries of civil servants, teachers, and health workers to be paid within a month.

Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi, head of the Houthi rebels' Higher Revolutionary Committee and an influential political figure, tweeted on Monday that he wanted his group to announce "readiness to suspend and halt all military operations" and stop firing missiles on Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia also lent its support to new talks. Saudi King Salman told the Shura Council, his country's top advisory body, that Riyadh also backed a "political solution" and a "comprehensive national dialogue" in Yemen. Multiple past attempts to hold negotiations between the government alliance and Houthis have failed. Griffiths said on Monday he hoped the rivals would meet in Sweden "within the next few weeks". No date has yet been set.

'Stop selling weapons'

The Houthis have controlled Yemen's capital Sanaa since capturing it in late 2014, when they also took control of Hodeida and its port. A year later, Saudi Arabia and

its allies intervened in the war to bolster Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. Both parties in the Yemen conflict stand accused of acts that could amount to war crimes. Human Rights Watch yesterday called on France to address laws-of-war violations with the UAE - a key member of the Saudi-led coalition - during Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan's visit to Paris on November 21. "If President (Emmanuel) Macron is truly concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, he should tell the crown prince that France will stop selling weapons to the UAE if there's a real risk of their unlawful use," Benedicte Jeannerod, France director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

Although western governments have condemned civilian deaths in Yemen, they remain political and military backers of Saudi Arabia, which is a regional ally and spends billions of dollars on arms from the United States, Britain and France. The World Health Organization says nearly 10,000 people - mostly civilians - have been killed in Yemen since the Saudi intervention in March 2015, but rights groups believe the toll may be five times higher. The war in Yemen - already one of the world's most impoverished countries - has left the nation on the edge of mass starvation. — AFP

Indian court hands down a rare death sentence

NEW DELHI: An Indian court yesterday handed down a rare death sentence over anti-Sikh riots in 1984 that left nearly 3,000 dead following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Relatives of victims rejoiced in New Delhi after the judge announced the death sentence, the first since 1996. It follows the setting up of a special probe in 2015.

The 1984 carnage erupted just hours after then-premier Gandhi was killed by her Sikh bodyguards. It lasted three days with Sikhs raped and murdered, their homes and businesses torched. The violence across the country but mostly in New Delhi saw people dragged from their homes and burned alive. Few have been brought to justice over the massacre, with government-appointed commissions in the past failing to prosecute more than a handful of minor cases. Gandhi was shot dead after ordering Indian troops to storm the Golden Temple, Sikhism's holiest shrine in the northern state of Punjab.

The operation was to flush out separatists from the minority faith holed up inside. Sikh leaders say the death toll from the pogrom that followed far exceeded the official figure of nearly 3,000, and accuse leaders of Gandhi's

Congress party of fanning the violence. India's top investigating agency had blamed senior Congress leader Sajjan Kumar for inciting the mobs, but he was acquitted by a court in 2013. Sikhs in India make up around 20 million people, a little under two percent of India's population of 1.25 billion people. Worldwide they number around 27 million.

'Lack of evidence'

Additional Sessions Judge Ajay Pandey awarded the death sentence yesterday to Yashpal Singh and a life sentence to Naresh Sherawat, both for murder, rioting and other charges. "The court should have sentenced the other convict to death as well. It seems like half justice," one woman who lost relatives in the riots told reporters. "These (convicts) are small people. The court should now hold the big names accountable for the killings." The duo were convicted last week of killing Hardev Singh and Avtar Singh, two men in their 20s, in south Delhi's Mahipalpur during the riots.

Police had closed a case against both men in 1994 citing a lack of evidence but it was reopened by the Special Investigation Team after it was formed in 2015. The team is probing around 60 cases that it has reopened out of a total of 293. The verdict was pronounced in Delhi's high-security Tihar Jail due to security concerns after an attack last week on the convicts on the premises of the Delhi court. Emotional relatives said they were relieved that "justice has been finally served" and hoped that next up would be two former Congress ministers, Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Singh. — AFP

Police seize mafia villas

ROME: Italian police yesterday confiscated eight luxury villas illegally built in Rome by its most infamous and entrenched mafia clan in dawn raids involving some 600 police. City mayor Virginia Raggi, who watched the operation carried out against the Casamonica mobsters, said the properties would be demolished by the end of the year. "Today is an historic day for the city of Rome and for Romans," said Raggi, a member of the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement who has been criticized for not doing more to clean up the Italian capital. "We are putting an end to years of illegality and are sending a strong statement to the Casamonica clan," she said.

After years of operating in the shadows, the family leapt to public attention with a lavish funeral for one of its godfathers in 2015. A helicopter dropped rose petals on mourners while posters were strung on the railings of a city basilica which read: "You have conquered Rome, now conquer paradise." The Casamonica family has been associated with crime in the south-eastern quarters of Rome for several decades, but the high profile funeral sparked a fierce backlash with politicians demanding a comprehensive legal assault on the clan.

In July, 33 members of the group were arrested in raids on gaudy properties which were filled with gilded mirrors, marbled sculptures of animals and extravagant, regal furniture. Raggi said some of the villas confiscated yesterday had been built in areas of archaeological interest. "Some houses had even incorporated whole features of the historic Felice Aqueduct," she said, referring to a 16th century city waterway. Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, who heads the far-right League party, has promised to join in when the bulldozers set to work on the villas. "The party is over," he said yesterday as he visited the police operations room. — Reuters

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International

North Korea blows up frontline bunkers in Demilitarized Zone

The two Koreas pursue a reconciliation drive

SEOUL: Pyongyang blew up 10 guard posts in the Demilitarized Zone yesterday as the two Koreas pursue a reconciliation drive, even while denuclearization talks stall between the US and the North. The move is one of the steps agreed during the Pyongyang summit between the South's President Moon Jae-in and the North's leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang in September. The North told the South that it would blow up the 10 facilities almost simultaneously, Seoul's defense ministry said, adding that Southern soldiers "observed and confirmed the guard posts were completely ruined at the announced time".

Seoul has been tearing down 10 guard posts of its own, mostly using excavators, a defense ministry spokesman said. The North has more of the facilities - which include both surface structures and underground elements - and according to Yonhap news agency the moves will leave it with around 150 in the area, with the South having about 50. The dovish Moon has pursued a policy of engagement with its isolated, nuclear-armed neighbor, in increasing contrast to Washington, which insists pressure should be maintained on Pyongyang until it denuclearizes.

Despite its name the area around the DMZ is one of the most fortified places on earth, replete with minefields and barbed-wire fences. But under plans to ease tensions agreed in Pyongyang, the two

Koreas are demilitarizing the border truce village of Panmunjom, to leave it manned by 35 unarmed personnel from each side. Officially called the Joint Security Area (JSA), the enclave is the only spot along the 250-kilometre (155-mile) frontier where soldiers from the two Koreas and the US-led UN Command stand face to face.

US blacklists S African

Meanwhile, the US Treasury placed a Russian-born South African man on its sanctions blacklist Monday for allegedly helping North Korea avoid an international embargo on its energy purchases. The Treasury said Vladlen Amtchentsev worked with Velmur Management Pte and Transatlantic Partners Pte to buy fuel oil and gasoil to ship to North Korea even though that was forbidden by US sanctions. The companies, which are also accused of laundering millions of dollars for Pyongyang, have already been placed on the US sanctions blacklist.

US blacklists South African over N Korea

The sanctions forbid Americans or American businesses from doing business with those named. Their property under US jurisdiction is also frozen. The US has used economic sanctions to step up pressure on North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. "North Korea depends upon the help of criminals and illicit actors to raise and



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (left) visit the Taegwan factory at an undisclosed location in North Korea. —AFP

transfer funds," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in a statement. "As part of our commitment to the final, fully verified denuclearization of North

Korea, Treasury will continue to enforce and implement sanctions against any actor that seeks to aid the regime's deceptive practices." —Agencies

Wealth gaps affecting school children in Iraq

BAGHDAD: Economic inequality is massively affecting whether students in war-ravaged Iraq finish school, the United Nations children's agency warned Monday, urging the fledgling government in Baghdad to spend more on education. An economic downturn, years of fighting and little government support has left Iraq's school system lacking, UNICEF found in a new study of more than 20,000 families. Socio-economic status creates a huge gap in who graduates from secondary school - 73 percent for the wealthiest students compared to just 23 percent of the poorest students.

One-third of schools across the country operate multiple shifts in an effort to enroll as many kids as possible, meaning students may get just a few hours of class per day. To improve access to education, Iraq needs 7,500

new schools, UNICEF said. "It's to do with the conflict, the economic collapse, and lack of investment over the past 20 years. When the quality falls, then children themselves march out of the classroom," UNICEF country director Peter Hawkins said. "Children are the future of this country, and a growing gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' sows discord and is detrimental for children and for Iraq," he added.

The wide-ranging study was the first in seven years in Iraq. The country's infrastructure, including its schools, has been hit hard by conflict, from the US-led invasion in 2003 to years of sectarian violence and bombings. In 2014, the Islamic State group overran a third of the country, implementing its own twisted curriculum in schools before being ousted from its urban strongholds last year. And in recent months, a water crisis in the country's south kept many children at home in fear of contracting diseases.

To get more children in school, the government must boost its spending on education, one of the lowest rates in the region at just 5.7 percent of total expenditure, UNICEF said. "Ministers: please use this to target investment to those



NAJAF, Iraq: Iraqi women and children load their donkey carts with bricks at a brick factory near the holy city of Najaf. —AFP

children in greater need. Those children are your future," Hawkins urged government members. Parliamentary divisions mean Iraq has not appointed anyone to head the ministries of education or higher education. According to Iraq's Human

Rights Commission, more than 1,050 schools across the country have been damaged to varying degrees by the recent violent years. Sixty percent of the country's 39 million people are under the age of 24. —AFP

Erdogan rejects a European court's 'non-binding' ruling

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday rejected a European Court of Human Rights' ruling that Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtas should be released, saying Turkey was not bound by the court's decisions. Demirtas, a former co-chief of the leftist pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), has been imprisoned since November 2016 over alleged links to Kurdish militants. "The decisions delivered by the ECHR do not bind us," Erdogan was quoted as saying by the state-run Anadolu news agency after a meeting of his ruling party. "We will make our

counter-attack and get this business over with," the president added, without elaborating. The Strasbourg-based ECHR enforces the European Convention on Human Rights and is a body of the Council of Europe (CoE), of which Turkey has been a member since 1950.

After Erdogan spoke, a CoE spokesman said: "Under Article 46 of the Convention all member states are bound by the rulings of the Court." The ECHR earlier yesterday said while it accepted that Demirtas had been arrested on "reasonable suspicion" of committing a crime, the court criticized the reasons for keeping him in jail. The extension of his detention - through an April 2017 referendum on expanding Erdogan's powers and June 2018 presidential polls where Demirtas ran as a candidate - was aimed at "stifling pluralism and limiting freedom of political debate", it said.

At the time of his arrest, Demirtas, 45, was a member of parliament. "The court therefore held, unanimously, that the respondent state was to take all necessary measures to put an end to the

applicant's pre-trial detention," it added. Turkey was ordered to pay Demirtas 10,000 euros (\$11,492) in damages and 15,000 euros towards his legal costs. The HDP is repeatedly accused by Ankara of being the political front of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which the second main opposition party denies.

The PKK is proscribed as a terror group by Ankara and its Western allies. Demirtas faces up to 142 years in jail if convicted of other charges relating to alleged links to PKK militants. He was in September sentenced to four years and eight months for disseminating propaganda on behalf of the PKK. Demirtas and the HDP have repeatedly denied the charges against him, insisting that he is a target because of his opposition to Erdogan. The CoE's chief Thorbjorn Jagland in February warned Turkey over "casting the net too widely" in the mass crackdown that followed the 2016 failed coup, saying the situation had resulted in a backlog of cases at the ECHR. —AFP

Interpol urged to reject Russia candidate

MOSCOW: A growing chorus of critics is calling on Interpol to reject a Russian candidate to lead the organization, over fears Moscow could abuse the role to target political opponents. The Kremlin has denounced what it says is "interference" in the vote, set for today at the close of Interpol's annual conference in Dubai. Concerns have been raised over Russia's previous applications for Interpol "Red Notices", or international arrest warrants, for those who have fallen foul of the Kremlin. Russian interior ministry official and current Interpol vice president Alexander Prokopchuk appears to be the favorite for the position. In an open letter this week, a bipartisan group of US senators said that choosing Prokopchuk would be like "putting a fox in charge of a henhouse".

"Russia routinely abuses Interpol for the purpose of settling scores and harassing political opponents, dissidents and journalists," they wrote. The senators said Prokopchuk has been "personally involved" in this strategy

since being elected to Interpol's executive committee. Delegates from Interpol member countries will elect a new president to replace Meng Hongwei, who went missing in his native China in September. Beijing later informed Interpol that Meng had resigned after being charged with accepting bribes. The other candidate running is South Korea's Kim Jong-Yang, the acting president, and whoever is elected will serve out Meng's term until 2020.

'Political persecution'

Anti-Kremlin figures have raised concerns ahead of the vote, including Alexei Navalny, the Russian opposition leader who has been repeatedly jailed by authorities. "Our team has suffered from abuse of Interpol for political persecution by Russia," Navalny wrote on Twitter. "I don't think that a president from Russia will help to reduce such violations."

The controversy also comes amid security concerns over accusations of Russian agents carrying out a spy poisoning in Britain and attempting to hack the network of the global chemical weapons watchdog. Former US ambassador to Moscow Michael McFaul said the candidacy was "worrying for anyone who believes in the rule of law". Ukraine, deeply at odds with Moscow over its annexation of Crimea



SINGAPORE: Interpol vice president Alexander Prokopchuk (left) and Meng Hongwei, president of Interpol, attend the opening of the Interpol World Congress in this file photo. —AFP

and support for separatists, threatened to pull out of Interpol if Prokopchuk prevailed.

The Kremlin dismissed the US senators' letter as a "vivid example" of an attempt to interfere in the vote. "This is interference ... in the election to an international organization," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Meanwhile Moscow's inter-

ior ministry denounced a "foreign media campaign aimed at discrediting Russia's candidate". "We consider the politicization of Interpol... unacceptable," spokeswoman Irina Volk said. Analysts point out the position of president is largely honorary, with much greater influence in the hands of the secretary general, currently Germany's Jurgen Stock. —AFP

Malaysia's Najib questioned over submarine deal

KUALA LUMPUR: Fallen Malaysian leader Najib Razak is being questioned over the purchase of two French-made submarines, an official said yesterday, the latest probe to engulf the former prime minister since his government's ousting. Najib, his wife and key allies have been hit with a flurry of charges since his surprise election loss earlier this year as public anger crescendoed over a series of graft scandals.

Most of the charges have stemmed from the IMDB scandal where top officials allegedly looted billions from a government fund to go on a worldwide spending spree. But the latest probe centers on a controversial \$1.2 billion deal signed sixteen years ago when Najib was defense minister to purchase two Scorpene-class submarines. "Najib is being probed with regards to the purchase of the two Scorpene-class submarines," an official inside the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) familiar with the ongoing probe, told AFP. "On Monday, MACC officials grilled Najib for four hours over the deal," the officer added, requesting anonymity.

The submarine deal has long been mired in controversy. French submarine maker-then called DCNS-is alleged to have paid more than 114 million euros (\$134 million) in kickbacks to a shell company linked to Abdul Razak Baginda, a close Najib associate who brokered the deal. Razak Baginda's Mongolian mistress Altantuya Shaariibuu, who was said to have demanded a cut for translating during negotiations, was shot dead and her body blown up with military-grade plastic explosives near Kuala Lumpur in 2006. The case sank off the radar after a Malaysian court in 2008 cleared Razak Baginda of abetting the murder, sparking allegations of a huge cover-up to protect Najib. —Reuters

Powerful Ethiopian party accuses govt of ethnic crackdown

ADDIS ABABA: A powerful party in Ethiopia's government accused authorities of arresting members of its ethnic group in a politically-driven crackdown - an unprecedented public charge exposing deep rifts at the heart of the ruling elite. The accusation marked growing tensions between elements in the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) - a movement that has dominated Ethiopia for decades - and new reformist prime minister Abiy Ahmed who has upended politics with a string of radical reforms.

At least 79 security officers, officials, businessmen and women, many of them Tigrayan, have been arrested since last week - under what the government said was a clamp-down on corruption and mistreatment of prisoners. Amnesty International and other rights groups have welcomed the arrests. But TPLF chair Debretsion Gebremichael said on Monday the arrests ordered under "the pretext of corruption and human rights are being used to attack Tigrayans". The prime minister's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Debretsion's remarks.

Abiy's rise - as Ethiopia's first leader from the majority Oromo group - had transformed decades-old hierarchies in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition that was founded by the TPLF and came to power in 1991. Soon after Abiy was inaugurated in April, he made peace with long-time foe Eritrea and started pushing reforms he said were meant to rein in the military and security services and limit their involvement in the economy - changes that have been largely welcomed by Western powers. —Reuters

International

Cows with or without horns? Switzerland votes on Sunday

Farmer behind initiative says horns maintain animals' dignity

PERREFITTE: Switzerland votes this Sunday on an issue of national importance that has divided the Alpine country - whether to subsidize farmers who let their cows' and goats' horns grow naturally. The referendum on preserving the "dignity of livestock" was initiated by farmer Armin Capaul, 66, a self-described rebel. He says that "listening" to his cows inspired his nine-year campaign for cash to fund the extra grazing space horned animals need and which he hopes will reduce dehorning.

"We must respect cows as they are. Leave them their horns. When you look at them they always hold their head high and are proud. When you remove the horns, they are sad," he told Reuters on his small farm in northwestern Switzerland. Three-quarters of Swiss cows, who are a national symbol and tourist attraction, are dehorned or genetically hornless.

Capaul, who says horns help cows communicate and regulate their body temperature, wants a 190 Swiss franc (\$191.65) annual subsidy per horned animal for farmers. When political lobbying failed, he collected over 100,000 signatures to trigger a national vote. The latest poll says the vote is too close to call. His campaign is likely to garner support from those who oppose dehorning - burning a sedated calf's horn buds with a red-hot iron. Critics say it is painful and unnatural but supporters liken it to castrating cats or dogs and argue it is a safety issue.



'Dehorning is safer for herd, farmers'

"In Switzerland, cows have never been talked about as much as now," said Capaul, a distinctive figure with a long grey beard and hand-knitted red hat, whose alternative approach has made him a media star and a household name. His campaign is opposed by the government, which says it would drain up to 30 million francs from its 3 billion franc annual agricultural budget, and is a burden on the constitution. "In Switzerland it's usual for issues to be brought to the people for a vote - every important question or less important question," Swiss Economy

Minister Johann Schneider-Ammann said.

Some farmers are opposed. "Our current system in the stable has advantages, the cows get along better with each other. If cows have horns, the danger of injuries to the animals and humans is greater," said Stefan Gilgen, whose 48 cows provide 1,000 liters of milk daily to Swiss dairy Emmi AG. "Each farm should decide for itself. We have other problems in agriculture." In Vaud canton, Reuters watched veterinarian Jean-Marie Surer dehorn three calves, anaesthetizing each one before the procedure that causes smoke and a burning odor. "Using a very hot iron for seven seconds, I burned the skin and blood vessels which irrigate the horn bud, so it won't grow," Surer said as he applied disinfectant. "It is painless, they didn't move even an ear." —Reuters

US considers adding Venezuela to list of 'terrorism sponsors'

WASHINGTON: The United States is considering adding Venezuela to its list of state sponsors of terrorism but no final decision has been made, a person familiar with the deliberations said on Monday. Adding Venezuela to the list could limit US economic assistance and impose financial restrictions on a country already suffering from hyperinflation, mass migration and shortages of food and medicine. Discussions on the issue have moved forward in recent days with strong lobbying from Republican Senator Marco Rubio, who has long pressed the administration to take a tougher stand against the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, the source said.

A time frame for a decision on whether to add Venezuela to the terrorism list had not yet been determined, the source said. A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it would be a challenge for the Trump administration to provide concrete proof linking the Maduro government to terrorism if it decides to put Venezuela on the list. The four countries currently on the list - North Korea, Iran, Sudan and Syria - have been found to "have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism."

Rubio and two other Republican senators sent a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in September urging him to name Venezuela a state sponsor of terrorism and accusing it of links to Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, but they offered no proof. The Trump administration has levied several rounds of sanctions against Maduro's Socialist-led government since 2017, accusing it of undermining democracy. On Nov 1, President Donald Trump signed an executive order aimed at disrupting Venezuela's gold exports. Venezuela's Information Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. —Reuters

A Mississippi runoff: Democrats seek final twist to US midterms

WASHINGTON: The final twist in the US midterm elections may emerge in Mississippi, where a Senate race that should have been easy winnings for Donald Trump's party is headed to a runoff, after multiple stumbles by the Republican incumbent. The president is counting on the reliably Republican stronghold in the Deep South, where political battles are rarely on the national radar, to give him some breathing room with his majority in the 100-member Senate. The runoff is looking increasingly important for Trump. On election night, he could have argued that his Republicans held their ground, as Democrats eked out a win in the House.

But as results were tallied in the weeks since, Democrats now appear to have won about 40 House seats, their strongest victory in decades, and managed to hold their own in the Senate despite an unfavorable election map. Aware of the potential that the November 27 runoff goes badly for Republican Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, Trump has scheduled election-eve rallies with her in two cities in Mississippi, a state Trump won by nearly 18 percentage points in 2016. The tight Senate race in Florida flipping to the Republicans helped improve the narrative for Trump. If the party keeps Mississippi, Republicans will widen their narrow pre-election 51-49 majority to 53-47.

But out of nowhere, Mississippi may now be in play thanks to Hyde-Smith, who was appointed this year to fill a vacancy but has stumbled badly on the campaign trail in recent weeks. In praising a supporter, Hyde-Smith said she would be "on the front row" if he invited her to attend a "public hanging." Many bridled at the comment, all too aware that Mississippi lynched more African Americans than any other state. Days later, she told a small crowd that laws that "make it just a little more difficult" for some liberal college students to vote are "a great idea."

Hyde-Smith, 59, said her lynching remark was an "exaggerated expression of regard," and that her voter suppression line was a joke. But her gaffes have clearly shaken up the campaign. "She's trying really hard to turn this into a race," professor John Bruce, who chairs the political science department at the University of Mississippi said. If Democratic challenger Mike Espy, a former congressman and the first African American to represent Mississippi in Washington in more than a century, manages to oust Hyde-Smith, "it will be an upset of the status quo the likes of which we haven't seen" in decades, Bruce added. —Reuters

Student loan debt a crippling burden for millions in US

WASHINGTON: Michael Bloomberg's record \$1.8 billion donation for financial aid to Johns Hopkins University highlights the problem of student debt in America, which can still be a burden even years after graduation. According to the Department of Education, 42.2 million Americans were repaying a federal student loan at the end of June 2018 for a total sum of nearly \$1.5 trillion, the largest volume of debt after home loans. Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York, said he was making the gift to his alma mater to help qualified low- and middle-income students more easily afford access to university in a country where post-secondary education fees at elite schools routinely exceed \$50,000 a year, a prohibitive barrier for most families.

"I was lucky: My father was a bookkeeper who never made more than \$6,000 a year. But I was able to afford Johns Hopkins University through a National Defense student loan and by holding down a job on campus," Bloomberg, who also founded the financial news service of the same name, wrote in a New York Times op-ed. The donation, believed to be the biggest ever to a university, "will ensure that we are able to recruit more first-generation and low-income students and provide them with full access to every dimension of the Johns Hopkins experience," its head Ronald Daniels said. Currently, 44 percent of students at the institution in Baltimore, Maryland, complete

their studies in debt, on average owing more than \$24,000, university data shows.

'Drop in the ocean'

For Sandy Baum, a university professor at the Urban Institute, Bloomberg's gift is "great" but "that's just a drop in the ocean." His move would have had a bigger impact if he gave money to improve the quality of education for more students, in less elite private or public institutions, she told AFP, adding that they sorely lack funding. Baum is not opposed to student loans because for most students, the choice becomes one between not going to university or borrowing to go. Most students' loans, she says, amount to between \$15,000 and \$20,000 but getting \$40,000 in debt is not unusual for a bachelor's degree (four years of study).

The College Board estimates the average cost of a four-year course in a private university at \$34,740, not counting additional accommodation and living expenses. Many students take out loans from the federal government or private lenders. Some, especially the less wealthy, fall into the spiral of over-indebtedness when they find themselves unable to repay their loans. They no longer have access to credit, cannot rent a home or buy a car. A local cable channel this summer launched a game, "Paid Off," in which the participants battle it out to see who has their student debt cleared.

Fed worries

The problem worries everyone-even the US central bank. "As student loans continue to grow and become larger and larger, then it absolutely could hold back growth," Jerome Powell warned in March. Joanna Darcus, a lawyer for the consumer protection organization NCLC, welcomed Bloomberg's big

British PM's N Irish allies up pressure; Brexit row rages

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May gathers her new-look cabinet yesterday, facing some relief from party plotting over Brexit but under fresh pressure from her Northern Irish allies. The Conservative leader holds her first cabinet meeting since two ministers quit last week over the divorce deal with the European Union, raising fears the government might collapse.

Eurosceptic members of May's divided party seized the moment to launch a leadership challenge, but days later, have yet to muster the support needed for a no confidence vote. Many MPs still oppose the Brexit deal, however, including the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which props up May's government - and which late Monday used a budget vote to flex its muscles. The Northern Irish party abstained on three votes, despite their deal to support the Conservatives on finance matters, and even sided with the opposition Labor party on a fourth.

"We had to do something to show our displeasure," DUP Brexit spokesman Sammy Wilson told the BBC. Without the support of the DUP's 10 MPs, the Conservatives have no majority in the Commons, the 650-seat parliamentary chamber which will have the final vote on the Brexit deal. This raises the risk that Britain ends its four-decade membership with the EU on March 29, 2019, with no other arrangement in place. Labor minister John Trickett said: "We no longer have a functioning government. With Brexit only a few months away, something has got to give."

Broken promises

In an interview with the BBC yesterday, Justice Minister David Gauke sought to reassure the DUP, saying the Brexit deal was "the best option for us" and delivered on the 2016 EU referendum. "I hope that the DUP and the others will look at the details of the deal and see this is the right way forward for the country, given the damage that would be done to us as a country were we not to have a deal, or were we to find that the referendum result couldn't be delivered," he said. The deal agreed with the EU last week covers Britain's financial settlement, expatriate citizens' rights, and a 21-month post-Brexit transition

period in which the two sides hope to agree a new trading relationship.

But the DUP and many Conservatives are outraged by the "backstop" plan that would keep Britain in the EU's customs union, and Northern Ireland in elements of the single market, if this trade deal is not ready by then. This is intended as an insurance plan to keep the border open between Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland if and until the new trade arrangements resolve the issue. Wilson said the DUP's defiance was "designed to send a message to the government: 'Look, we have got an agreement with you but you have got to keep your side of the bargain otherwise we don't feel obliged to keep ours'."

"She (May) has broken all of those promises - to the people of the United Kingdom, to her own party and to the people of Northern Ireland." Talks are still continuing in Brussels over an outline agreement on future trade ties, which will be presented to MPs alongside the divorce package, likely early next month. May herself is preparing to head to Brussels this week for talks with European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker. She will then return on Sunday alongside the other 27 EU leaders to sign off the Brexit deal. —AFP

'El Chapo' killed a man who refused a handshake

NEW YORK: Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was a ruthless killer who ordered the murder of a man who had refused to shake his hand at a meeting, a prosecution witness told jurors at Guzman's US trial on Monday. Jesus Zambada, the brother of Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada who was Guzman's alleged partner in running the Sinaloa Cartel, gave his most dramatic testimony after three days on the witness stand as he described Guzman's involvement in a series of murders.

In a cross-examination, one of Guzman's defense lawyers launched an attack on Zambada's credibility, highlighting inconsistencies between his testimony and his original statements to US prosecutors. Guzman, 61, was extradited to the United States in January 2017 and is accused of directing massive shipments of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana. He is on trial in Brooklyn federal court, charged with 17 criminal counts, and faces life in prison if convicted.

Guzman had ordered Rodolfo Carrillo, a member of the rival Juarez Cartel and brother of its leader,

killed after he declined to shake Guzman's hand at a meeting, Zambada said. The 2004 killing, according to Zambada, fueled a war between the cartels. Zambada said another target was a corrupt police official, identified only as Rafita, who worked for rival drug lord Arturo Beltran Leyva. Zambada said assassins working for El Mayo and Guzman killed Rafita after luring him out of his house by pretending they had hit his young son with a car. "The boy didn't even realize that anything happened," Zambada said. "He just kept going on to school."

Zambada admitted under cross-examination by lawyer William Purpura that aspects of his account may have changed. However, he maintained that his court testimony was true. Among examples of Guzman's deeds, Zambada had told jurors that Guzman was among the investors in a 20-ton cocaine shipment intercepted by the US Coast Guard as it was leaving Panama in 2006. Confronted by Purpura, Zambada conceded that he may not have mentioned Guzman as an investor in earlier statements he made to US authorities.

Zambada had also testified that he helped arrange for a helicopter to save Guzman from recapture following his 2001 escape from a Mexican prison. Under cross-examination, he admitted that he might not have mentioned the helicopter when he first described the escape to authorities, though he insisted the story was true. Zambada was arrested in 2008



NEW YORK: This handout photograph shows 'El Chapo' Guzman Loera's .38 Super pistol encrusted with diamonds on the handle and his initials 'JGL', which was used as an exhibit by government prosecutors during Guzman's trial in Brooklyn federal court. —AFP

and extradited to the United States in 2012. Guzman was one of the world's most wanted fugitives until he was captured in January 2016 in his native Sinaloa, after twice escaping prison. His trial is proceeding under heavy security. —Reuters

International

Beijing pioneers citizens' points system critics brand 'Orwellian'

A 'social credit' system to monitor citizens, businesses

BEIJING: Beijing's municipal government will assign citizens and firms "personal trustworthiness points" by 2021, state media reported yesterday, pioneering China's controversial plan for a "social credit" system to monitor citizens and businesses. The system's rollout has attracted international headlines, sparking comparisons to George Orwell's novel "Nineteen Eighty-Four", with critics saying it could massively heighten the Chinese Communist Party's already strict control over society.

In a roadmap plan released in 2014, China said it would by 2021 create a "social credit system" to reward or punish individuals and corporations using technology to record various measures of financial credit, personal behavior and corporate misdeeds. But it had not made any mention of using points, as proposed by Beijing's municipal government in a new plan released on Monday to improve the city's business environment. Lists of data, actions and measures will be used to create a trial system of "personal trustworthiness points" for residents and companies in the capital. The term used can also be translated as "credit-worthiness" or "integrity".

The plan did not include details of how the point system would work. But, it said, information from the system could impact market access, public services, travel, employment and the ability to start businesses, with trustworthy individuals being provided a "green

channel" and those who are blacklisted being "unable to move a step". "This is an important novel approach by Beijing to assess individuals' credit and tie it to their whole life," an unnamed official from the municipal state planner said, according to the Xinhua news agency.

The plan should serve as an example to the rest of the nation for how to improve the behavior of individuals and businesses, Xinhua said. A second system will also be set up to assess the trustworthiness of government officials and departments by measuring whether contracts and promises are honored, the results of which will be included in performance assessments. The social credit system, which is being built on the principle of "once untrustworthy, always restricted", will encourage government bodies to share more information about individual and business misdeeds in order to coordinate punishments and rewards.

Some experts say that the system remains nascent and could help tackle social problems like fraud or food security, as well as noting that punishments are mostly restricted to industry specific blacklists rather than a holistic score. A system for penalizing individuals blacklisted for such offences as failing to pay a court-mandated fines that was put in place by the central government was extended in March. The penalties include banning offenders from making luxury purchases, such as tickets for flights or high-speed rail, for up to a year. —Reuters



BEIJING: A woman gets her hair cut on a street in Beijing. —AFP

Pakistani Christian needs a German passport to leave

FRANKFURT: The lawyer for Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian acquitted of capital blasphemy charges, appealed yesterday to Germany to give her whole family citizenship to start a new life in Europe. Saiful Mulook told a news conference in Frankfurt that Bibi was now free but she and her family needed a passport to leave the country. Bibi, 53, was convicted of blasphemy in 2010 over allegations she made derogatory remarks about Islam after neighbors objected to her drinking water from their glass because she was not Muslim. The Supreme Court acquitted her last month. "The whole world is asking why she's not coming," Mulook told reporters. "The answer is first that to leave a country you need a visa or you require a passport of another country."

"If the German chancellor directs her ambassador to give a passport to her, her husband and her two daughters conferring German nationality, nobody can stop her for one second because she is no longer Pakistani," he added. "So far, no government has come forward in such an open and free manner," he said. It was unclear why citizenship, rather than a visa, was necessary for her to leave Pakistan, though Mulook said pressure from religious extremists was making it harder for Islamabad to arrange her departure. She and her family are staying at a safe house in Pakistan, despite offers of asylum from countries including Canada.

Mulook said the status of a friend of Bibi's husband, who has a wife and five daughters, whom he would like to join them, was a sticking point. Another wife of Bibi's husband and her three



FRANKFURT: Saiful-Mulook (C), the lawyer of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman who spent eight years on death row for blasphemy, speaks during a press conference next to Missio Catholic NGO's spokesman Johannes Seiberl (L) and Mulook's long-time friend Amjad Ahmad. —AFP

daughters were not seeking to leave Pakistan with Bibi, he added. German officials have said that they and a number of other countries are in talks with Bibi's family and the Pakistani government to find a way of rehoming her. Mulook, who has himself

sought refuge in the Netherlands after being threatened for taking on Bibi's case, said Bibi had no preference as to which country she would travel to for asylum. The German government had no immediate comment on the request for a passport. — Reuters

India ammunition depot blast kills 6

MUMBAI: An explosion at an ammunition dump in India killed six people Tuesday, police said, underscoring concerns over the country's handling of military equipment. Staff were disposing of Russian anti-aircraft shells out of production since 2014 when a box was dropped and exploded, the Times of India reported. "While the workers were unloading a crate of ammunition it bumped on the ground, triggering an explosion which killed four of them on the spot. Two others died on their way to the hospital," senior officer Nikhil Pingle said.

Ten others were injured in the blast in the town of Pulgaon in Maharashtra state. India's armed forces have a history of fires and other accidents which are often blamed on lax safety standards. Two years ago a blast at the same facility in Pulgaon killed 18 people, including two senior army officers. The depot, one of the country's largest that stores bombs, grenades and other ordnance, was built during World War II. In 2013, a fire on the submarine INS Sindhurakshak in Mumbai sank the vessel and left 18 sailors dead. —AFP

Pakistan summons US envoy in protest

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan summoned the US Charge d'Affaires in Islamabad yesterday to protest President Donald Trump's criticism of Pakistan's role in fighting terrorism and the killing of Osama bin Laden. Trump's comments over the last few days have angered Pakistan, including Prime Minister Imran Khan, who on Monday hit back by saying on Twitter that few allies had sacrificed or helped the United States as much as Pakistan in its war on terror, suffering 75,000 casualties.

The friction threatens to worsen already fragile relations between Islamabad and Washington, on-off allies which have repeatedly clashed over the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan's alleged support for Islamist militants. Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua called in US envoy Paul Jones "to register a strong protest on the unwarranted and unsubstantiated allegations made against Pakistan". Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Over the weekend, Trump said in an interview Pakistan doesn't "do a damn thing" for the United States despite billions of dollars in US aid, and alleged Pakistani officials knew of former Al-Qaeda leader bin Laden's location before his killing by US troops in a raid inside Pakistan in 2011.

On Monday, Trump tweeted again and doubled down on those claims. "Rejecting the insinuations about OBL, Foreign Secretary reminded the US (Charge d'Affaires) that it was Pakistan's intelligence cooperation that provided the initial evidence to trace the whereabouts of OBL," the ministry said. Yesterday, Pakistan army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa, without mentioning Trump, said "Pakistan has done much more for peace in Afghanistan" than any other country. "We have paid the highest military, economic, political and social cost and the world should acknowledge that," Bajwa added, according to comments released by military spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor. —Reuters

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Why Danske Bank scandal is a problem for Putin

The ever-widening Danske Bank money laundering scandal, involving 200 billion euros (\$228.5 billion) of "suspicious transfers" over eight years, is not only a disaster for the reputation of Denmark and its largest bank. It also points to the deep institutionalized corruption in Vladimir Putin's Russia - and the political challenge facing the president himself.

The investigation of Danske Bank's branch in Estonia, the former Soviet state through which the money flowed, is getting fresh scrutiny as whistleblower Howard Wilkinson testifies before the European and Danish parliaments this week. Wilkinson, the former head of the bank's trading unit in the Baltics, told a Danish parliamentary hearing Monday that several other major banks were involved in processing suspicious payments.

But the broader lessons of the scandal might be as much political as financial. The fact that many Russians - not just billionaire oligarchs - were laundering money through Estonia makes it clear that money laundering is a survival mechanism for Russian businesses and low-paid bureaucrats. Putin has not made serious efforts to stop the flow, seeing the flight of capital to the West as an escape valve for individuals trapped in a corrupt order. Time may be running out for that approach, however, as Russia's economy falters and laundering becomes harder to hide.

The laundering operation - involving 15,000 "non-resident" customers - served primarily a Russian market, according to a report released by Danske Bank. The operation grew out of two Estonian banks created in 1992 expressly to service a client base of retail and corporate Russian customers by moving money from rubles into another currency and sending the proceeds to a third country. In recent years, Danske Bank saw 90 percent of the pre-tax profits of its Estonian operation from these customers - virtually all of it from payment and foreign exchange transactions.

The Estonian bank is just one part of a much larger problem. Some 177 Danske Bank customers in Estonia, the report reveals, were Russian nationals previously identified as part of the "Russian Laundromat," a money laundering platform siphoning money out of Russia through a Moldovan intermediary. The "Laundromat" customers were companies registered in the UK or tax havens like Belize and the British Virgin Islands, as are the bulk of the Estonian bank's non-resident customers.

Two hundred billion euros is a substantial sum of money, but only a fraction of the estimated \$800 billion held offshore by rich Russians. To put this number in perspective, it is equal to the current wealth of all Russian households. Much of this enormous sum has been secretly transferred out of Russia during the Putin years, evidence that money laundering is not occasional criminality but an integral part of the economic system.

Soft currency

Some context: The Russian ruble is a soft currency, one that constantly loses value through inflation and government mismanagement. To preserve value, soft currency residents convert their cash into hard currencies like euros, dollars or pounds sterling. Laws are broken when banks convert soft cash - often illegally obtained or of suspicious origin - from countries that limit citizen's access to hard currencies.

Let's walk through a hypothetical transaction, one that might have been used by some of the Estonian bank's customers. Suppose a mid-level bureaucrat has a billion-ruble project (\$16 million). He asks a supplier to inflate an invoice; instead of billing for the ruble equivalent of \$1 million, the supplier bills for \$1.5 million. The supplier sends the excess to an Estonian account at Danske Bank controlled by the bureaucrat.

The rubles are converted into dollars at an unfavorable exchange rate (money laundering is not cheap). Then the bureaucrat instructs the Estonian bank to send the balance to a London bank where an account was opened during, say, a UK shopping trip. Fearful that the UK bank might think the payment suspicious, the minister's legal agent in London orders the money transferred to an account in a location like the British Virgin Islands. But tax havens sometimes raise governmental regulators' eyebrows. In order to make the money look "clean", it needs to move once more. Purchasing real estate in London or the United States has been a typical next step.

Meanwhile back home, the billion-ruble project is delayed due to lack of funds. The ministry has to get more funds allocated, and the delay means the bridge, road, new hospital, whatever, often never gets completed. Governments have cracked down on these laundering practices in recent years. Shell companies that hide the owner's identity are now illegal for expensive real estate purchases in major markets like New York and Miami: the UK took similar action this year.

Banks are also under growing pressure. The US government broke the Swiss secret bank account market in 2010 when it required notification of any US citizen's financial holdings in Switzerland. That regulation proved to be a breakthrough - an OECD initiative has now signed up about 50 countries to pass information among themselves in the same way. Even some tax havens have signed on. As money laundering becomes harder to hide, Putin is losing his escape valve. Making matters worse, international sanctions and anemic economic growth for the past six years have meant Russians' real incomes are falling and withdrawals of hard currency from Russian banks are up sharply. —Reuters



Can US-China relations be saved?

At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting on Saturday afternoon, Chinese diplomats arrived unexpectedly at the Foreign Ministry of host Papua New Guinea. Angry at Papua New Guinea's support for American wording in the meeting's final communique, they only left after police were called, Australian and other media reported.

Chinese officials denied the reports, saying suggestions they had tried to bully officials from the smaller nations were "simply untrue." But the reported face-off dramatically underscored how a gathering that had hoped to ease tensions between Beijing and Washington's allies in the region looks to have inflamed them instead. Two weeks before a landmark meeting between US President Donald Trump and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the G20 in Argentina - and just days after Trump said a list of 140 trade concessions offered by Beijing was "not acceptable to me yet" - the world's two largest economies are now more at loggerheads than ever.

This weekend's APEC meeting was the first time in its 29-year history that regional leaders failed to agree to a communique, largely over stark differences in wording over trade. It comes following heightened confrontation between US and Chinese forces in the South China Sea, tensions over Taiwan and a widely-reported warning from a former senior US military official that the two countries would likely be at war within 15 years.

Overall, the summit looks to have been a major diplomatic failure for Beijing. In

his speech, Xi sought - as he has since the Davos World Economic Forum annual meeting last year - to paint China as the defender of globalization and free trade in the face of Trump and growing American protectionism. Beijing has lent more than \$1.2 billion to the Pacific islands, roughly a third of that to Papua New Guinea, and was counting on the summit to demonstrate the reach of such "soft power."

Instead, its heavy-handed tactics - including banning non-Chinese journalists from Xi's meeting with regional leaders - seems to have backfired. China found itself at odds with almost all the other nations at APEC, while US Vice President Mike Pence's speech made it clearer than ever that Washington now intends to oppose and offer its own alternatives to China's landmark Belt and Road initiative, which promotes expanding ties between Asia, Africa and Europe, including billions of dollars in infrastructure investment.

The United States and key regional allies Japan, Australia and New Zealand are now being increasingly naked in their own use of economic clout. Sunday saw the signing of a multi-million dollar agreement between Papua New Guinea and the four states to invest millions in electricity infrastructure, seen a deliberate move to counter Beijing and safeguard US and Australian military bases.

How this will play out at the G20 is not a foregone conclusion. After Pence's unambiguously aggressive posture at APEC, Trump could take a more conciliatory approach with Xi in Argentina. The US president has, after all, long been a

proponent of starting negotiations with a show of force before moving to a deal. Alternatively, that meeting could simply highlight growing differences, as seen with Trump's acrimonious spat with French counterpart Emmanuel Macron during the World War One truce commemoration ceremonies on Nov. 11.

Within Washington and Beijing, many believe their countries are locked in a likely worsening multi-decade face-off. It's a situation that leaves nations in the middle forced to pick a side - and often divided on how to do so. It's also a growing challenge for international and particularly Western firms whose business model leaves them little choice but to work across the world.

In June, Chinese officials explicitly warned US executives their firms risked becoming victims of growing tensions with the United States over trade; Chinese firms in the US have also felt mounting pressure. Both Washington and Beijing are also increasingly open about pressuring other countries - in October, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo advised Panama and other Central and Latin American states against deals with China.

In nations as disparate as Venezuela, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, politics is becoming increasingly polarized between Beijing-backed authoritarians and more pro-Western elements - a dynamic with increasingly geopolitical overtones. Last week, Filipino president Rodrigo Duterte - who explicitly courted China after the Obama administration condemned a drug crackdown that saw hundreds of extrajudicial killings - criticized US naval activity

in the South China Sea, saying Beijing was already "in possession" of the area. The comments - ahead of a visit from Xi - was seen at odds with many within the Filipino military and wider political establishment, desperate to counter Beijing's gradual militarization and occupation of disputed reefs and atolls.

While the trade dispute remains the preeminent driver of US-China tensions, it may be these military confrontations that prove the most dangerous. Military links between Washington and Beijing have soured substantially in recent months, with US Defense Secretary James Mattis canceling a visit to Chinese counterparts and China disinclined from the major US-led RIMPAC exercise this summer. Perhaps even more seriously than their posturing over the South China Sea, both nations appear to be doubling down over Taiwan, considered by Beijing a rogue province.

It's a dynamic that has the region worried and unsettled - but unsure how to act. Japan has been the most obvious example of a country independently trying to improve its own relations and diplomatic channels to Beijing. Events at APEC will make that ever harder - as will newly heightened rhetoric and weapons testing from North Korea, perhaps a sign a more isolated China now feels less bothered when it comes to restraining Kim Jong Un. At the end of the month, Trump and Xi will have the opportunity to reverse their increasingly dangerous path. If they cannot do so, all sides may face some very unpleasant surprises to come. —Reuters

Bitcoin for payments a distant dream

The use of bitcoin for commercial payments has dropped dramatically this year, even as the original digital coin starts to fulfill one of the basic features of any payment currency: Stability. The value of bitcoins handled by major payment processors shriveled nearly 80 percent in the year to September, data from blockchain researcher Chainalysis shows. That suggests the cryptocurrency is struggling to mature from speculative asset to a serious alternative to state-issued money. Months of relative calm in bitcoin prices after the wild swings of last winter had fueled hopes it would become widely used for payments, its intended purpose.

But its collapse in use as a payment currency has instead left big finance and crypto insiders eyeing better technological infrastructure to help bitcoin take off as a way to pay. "There would have to be a stability requirement if it is to become another form of money," said Joni Teves, a strategist at UBS in London. "But one thing that would take bitcoin into the mainstream is scalability - is it able to process the value or volume of transactions that money tends to do?"

The blockchain technology, where all bitcoin activity is recorded and validated, can only process a fraction of the transactions per second that major credit card companies can. That renders its mass use impractical. Bitcoin still endures torrid swings in price, as this week's 30 percent plunge shows. For a spell last month, though, the cryptocurrency was more stable than US stocks. Despite that growing stability, the value of bitcoin payments collapsed to \$96 million in September from a December high of \$427 million, the data from Chainalysis shows.

The firm surveyed 17 bitcoin payments processors, including Atlanta-based BitPay, one of the biggest. Most merchants that accept bitcoin do not do so directly, instead using intermediaries like BitPay to convert bitcoin to fiat currencies. Comprehensive data on bitcoin used for payments is patchy, as trades with other currencies tend to be included along with its use for commercial payments. That said, separate figures for individual payments processors reflect the downward trend. At Vancouver-based Coinpayments, for example, incoming and outgoing transactions slumped by more than half between January and October, according to blockchain analysis site OXT. "Bitcoin payments processing is seeing a slow but consistent decline," said Lex Sokolin, global director of fintech strategy at research firm Autonomous Next, of the data on Coinpayments.

First decade

Through its first decade, Bitcoin has attracted a mix of investors, some convinced that it can reshape global finance by displacing traditional means of payments and others attracted by rapid gains that pushed it close to \$20,000 in December. It has since lost three-quarters of its value, falling below \$4,500 on Tuesday, burning businesses along the way that had hoped to profit from growing investor interest. Chip designer Nvidia Corp, for example, saw its shares fall sharply last week after it blamed disappointing results on unsold chips piling up after the cryptocurrency mining boom evaporated.

Bitcoin's relative stability this year has nevertheless raised expectations that its payments use by both individuals and companies will spread. "The lack of volatility is a good step in the right direction that starts to make it viable for some of the non-retail use cases," said Zeeshan Feroz, UK CEO of Coinbase, one of the biggest cryptocurrency exchanges. But both mainstream financial firms and cryptocurrency entrepreneurs say stability is not enough. To gain traction, bitcoin needs to be faster and cheaper, they say. —Reuters

APEC fails to live up to its name

The C in APEC stands for Cooperation. But when the two biggest members are fighting a trade war and using the forum to attack each other's policies, it was always going to be hard work delivering on that. The weekend's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Port Moresby was one of open disagreement, led by disputes between the United States and China over trade, security and which would be the better investment partner for the region.

As APEC approaches its 30th anniversary, the failure to agree on a communique for the first time calls into question its relevance in a crowded summit calendar and as the Trump administration makes clear its aversion to multilateralism. "It does mark the death of APEC's founding trade vision," Euan Graham, executive director of La Trobe Asia at Australia's La Trobe University, said on Twitter, adding APEC was the "most disposable of the regional summits".

Rather than cooperation, the theme seemed to be conflict and containment as Beijing and Washington directly criticized each other's policies and staked their claims as to why they were the security and investment partner the Pacific should choose. "It's not even supposed to be binding, it's APEC," said one diplomat involved in negotiations for the communique, surprised that the members could not agree on what is usually a humdrum summary of issues discussed. "China and the US hijacked the APEC spirit, I suppose."

The United States even preferred its own terminology of Indo-Pacific, which it defines as running from "the western shores of Latin America to the furthest reaches of the Indian Ocean", with US Vice President Mike Pence

mentioning APEC five times and Indo-Pacific 41 times in his APEC speech on Saturday. Without mentioning China by name, the US State Department sought to cast the blame for the lack of a communique elsewhere, lamenting what it characterized as the unwillingness of some to sign on to a statement agreeing to promote free and fair trade. "It is unfortunate that not all economies - despite their rhetoric - could support these positions," it said in a statement.

Speaking in Beijing on Monday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the United States attended APEC in a "blaze of anger", causing disputes and disagreements and damaging the "harmonious atmosphere" of the meeting. "APEC is a platform to deepen cooperation, not a place to criticize each other. China attended to promote cooperation and seek consensus, not to get into a boxing ring," Geng told reporters.

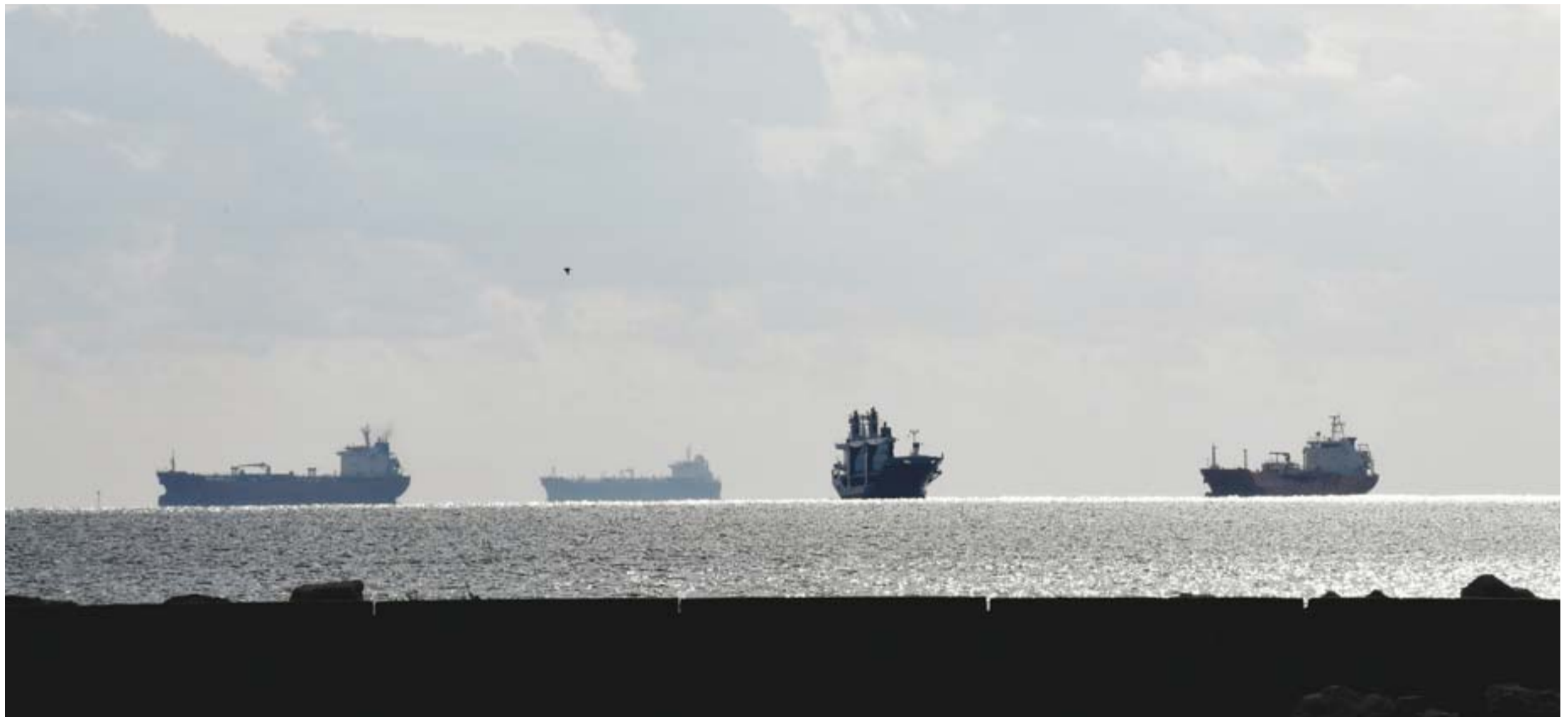
'Not a big deal'

Founded in 1989 with a view to fostering trade and economic ties around the Pacific Ocean, it operated at a ministerial level until 1993 when US President Bill Clinton established the annual leaders meeting. Each meeting had produced a joint statement at its conclusion, until Sunday. "This is very concerning from a systemic perspective. The WTO faces similar challenges," said Charles Finny, a Wellington-based trade consultant and a former New Zealand government trade negotiator.

In an editorial, Chinese state-run tabloid the Global Times said the absence of a communique was "not a big deal", and placed more significance on an upcoming meeting between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The two leaders are expected to meet at the G20 summit, which starts in Argentina next week. "It is hoped Washington makes serious preparations for the summit and not pin its hopes on exerting pressure," said the tabloid, which is known for its nationalistic stance. —Reuters

Business

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2018

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Oil and gas tankers wait off shore on November 19, 2018 at the Fos-Lavera oil hub near Marseille, southern France. —AFP

Bitcoin value falls below \$5,000

Broad selloff gathered steam on the opaque cryptocurrency market

LONDON: The value of bitcoin slipped Monday below \$5,000 (4,366 euros) for the first time since October 2017 as a broad selloff gathered steam on the opaque cryptocurrency market. Data compiled by the Coinbase digital exchange showed the world's most popular virtual currency losing 12.5 percent of its value from Friday evening to stand at \$4,914.21 by 1930 GMT Monday.

The rout began on Wednesday and has also affected widely-traded other cryptocurrencies such as ethereum and ripple. Bitcoin opened trading on Wednesday at \$6,326 and has since seen its market capitalisation fall to less than \$90 million for the first time in over a year. The still-nascent sector is not completely transparent and analysts have struggled to

understand what precisely prompted the latest drop.

At least some of it has been attributed to a battle for control of a smaller crypto operator called bitcoin cash. That currency has split in two — a process traders describe as a “hard fork” — and who owns it at the moment is not entirely clear. Bitcoin cash was down around 20 percent on the day. The confusion has highlighted what analysts have been warning for some years: crypto trading is too unregulated and risky to be considered a safe investment for the public at large.

'Fool's errand'

Bitcoin has suffered a painful year of declines from its all-time high of \$19,511 in December 2017. Some of

the currency's problems have been attributed to its business model. Bitcoins are created through a process called computer “mining”. This essentially involves using massive banks of interconnected processors to solve complex math problems. The computations get progressively harder to crack the more bitcoins there are on the market. The electricity costs involved grow as a result. One market estimate made last month put the cost of mining one bitcoin at \$7,000. This means market players are currently creating new coins at a loss.

Traders had been hoping to get a big boost with the approval by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of a bitcoin exchange-traded fund (ETF). The investment instruments essentially

operate as a stock that closely tracks each bitcoin's market value. ETFs are one of the most popular trading mechanisms and the SEC's green light would give the bitcoin market a massive infusion of outside cash. But the SEC has thus far balked out of concerns about fraud.

Some of the losses since Wednesday have also been linked to a warning from the accounting group KPMG last week about the dangers of viewing bitcoin as a real currency. “To fulfill the requirements of ‘store of value’, cryptocurrencies must be much more stable,” the KPMG report said. “Extending credit in a currency that risks significant devaluation or borrowing if the value appreciated beyond the borrower's ability to pay would be a fool's errand,” said the report. — AFP

French police remove fuel protesters as protests wane

PARIS: French police moved to dislodge protesters blocking roads and fuel depots yesterday as the government took a harder line on the so-called “yellow vest” movement against environmental taxes on fuel. Hundreds of thousands of people blockaded roads across France on Saturday wearing high-visibility yellow vests in a national wave of defiance aimed at centrist President Emmanuel Macron.

The disruption underlined the anger and frustration felt by many motorists, particularly in rural areas or small towns, who are fed up with what they see as Macron's anti-car policies, including tax hikes on diesel. Interior Minister Christophe Castaner has instructed police to begin breaking up the remaining roadblocks, particularly those around fuel depots and sites of strategic importance. “We can see today that there are real excesses from a movement that was for the most part conducted in good spirit on Saturday,” he told France 2 TV.

One person was accidentally killed and 530 people have been injured, 17 seriously, over four days of protests that have come to encompass a wide variety of grievances over



RENNES: A protester gestures during a traffic slow down operation on the fourth day of action by the “yellow vest” (Gilets Jaunes in French) movement against high fuel prices which has mushroomed into a widespread protest against stagnant spending power under French President. — AFP

the rising cost of living. Several of the injuries were caused by motorists trying to force their way through roadblocks, but some protesters have also been accused of intimidating people or putting their lives in danger. A 32-year-old man with a history of violence was given a four-month prison sentence by a Strasbourg court for endangering lives by forming a human chain to cross a motorway.

Elsewhere, four men in the southeastern city of Saint-Etienne were arrested and charged with planning to take advantage of the heavy police deployment at the weekend to mount a terror attack, according to Le Parisien newspaper. Yesterday, the movement appeared to

be losing steam with only around 10,000 people still manning the barricades nationwide, down from nearly 300,000 on Saturday. Further protests are planned at the weekend with some calling for a blockade of Paris.

The “yellow vest” movement, which began on social media and has won backing from opposition parties on both the left and right, accuses Macron of squeezing the less well-off while reducing taxes on the rich. “It's about much more than fuel. They (the government) have left us with nothing,” Dominique, a 50-year-old unemployed technician told AFP at a roadblock in the town of Martigues, near the southern city of Marseille. — AFP

New Petrobras CEO rules out privatization

RIO DE JANEIRO: A University of Chicago-trained economist named on Monday to head Brazil's Petrobras will not privatize the state-run company, but wants to push ahead with selling non-core assets and to focus on oil exploration and production. Brazil's incoming far-right government announced Roberto Castello Branco as the next chief executive of Petroleo Brasileiro SA, amid a debate over how far to pursue asset sales at the indebted company, Latin America's largest by market capitalization.

Castello Branco's appointment is the latest in a string of market-friendly selections by President-elect Jair Bolsonaro, many of them influenced by his adviser and future Economy Minister, Paulo Guedes. The appointments have raised hopes among investors that the former army captain, who takes office on Jan 1, will deliver significant reforms needed to improve Brazil's creaking public finances,

including a pension overhaul.

Castello Branco, who in the past has spoken in favor of privatizing Petrobras, on Monday said he had not been tasked with selling off the company but signaled his intention to cut costs, do away with some of the company's downstream operations and focus on its core business. “The privatization of the company is not in question. I do not have a mandate to think about it,” he told the Folha de S Paulo newspaper, adding that he expected Brazil's Supreme Court to approve a path enabling the company to continue selling assets such as majority stakes in two blocks of refineries and in a gas pipeline company.

In an earlier interview, with the O Estado de S. Paulo newspaper, he said BR Distribuidora, Petrobras' fuel distribution unit, was not a natural fit for the company and does not generate returns, sending its shares up almost 6 percent as investors bet the government may sell its 70 percent stake in the unit. Castello Branco also said he would consider all current asset sales, including that of liquid petroleum gas distribution company Liquegas. “Petrobras' competence is in oil exploration and production,” he told the newspaper. — Reuters

Business

iPhone demand worries send ripples through global markets

Oil falls half a percent on global economic worries

LONDON: World stock markets fell on Tuesday as worries over softening demand for the iPhone prompted a sell-off by tech stocks around the world, while the arrest of car boss Carlos Ghosn pulled down Nissan and Renault. The dollar sagged on concern about the U.S. economy after home builder sentiment weakened and oil prices fell half a percent despite OPEC production cuts.

News around Apple Inc triggered the latest bout of stock market selling, after the Wall Street Journal reported Apple was cutting production for its new iPhones. The European tech sector sank 2.2 percent, hitting its lowest level since February 2017, following Asian tech stocks lower. Shares of companies supplying chips to Apple suffered.

The selloff was compounded by an auto sector drop led by Nissan and Renault after Ghosn, chairman of both car-makers, was arrested in Japan for alleged financial misconduct. The broad European STOXX 600 index was down 0.5 percent to a four-week low, and futures trading suggested another tough session was likely in the United States, with Nasdaq Futures down over 1 percent.

"Most of Europe had a red session yesterday and that has been compounded by the news on Apple and tech stocks overnight. The overall climate is risk-off," said Investec economist Philip Shaw. "Beyond stocks, the Italian bonds spread (over German bonds) is at its widest in about a month now, and Brexit continues to rumble on - uncertainty is very much hurting risk sentiment," he said.

Italian government bond yields jumped to a one-month high on Tuesday and Italian banking stocks dropped to a two-year low, hurt by risk aversion and concerns over the

Italian budget. Euro zone money markets no longer fully price in a 10-basis-point rate rise by the European Central Bank in 2019, indicating growing concern about the economic outlook in the region.

Slowing momentum

Earlier, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan dropped 1.2 percent, with Samsung Electronics falling 2 percent. In Japan, Sony Corp shed 3.1 percent. Japan's Nikkei slipped 1.1 percent, with shares of Nissan Motor Co tumbling more than 5 percent after Ghosn's arrest and reports he would be fired from the board this week.

Global stock markets have suffered a shakeout in the past two months, pressured by worries of a peak in corporate earnings growth, rising borrowing costs, slowing global economic momentum and international trade tensions. Trillions of dollars were wiped off equities in a particularly torrid October. In currencies, the dollar hovered near a two-week low against a basket of currencies. Data released on Monday showed U.S. home builder sentiment recorded its steepest one-month drop in more than four years in November.

The dollar had also been undercut by Fed Vice Chair Richard Clarida and Dallas Fed President Robert Kaplan, who raised concerns late last week about a possible global slowdown. Oil prices lost ground as fears about slower global demand and a surge in U.S. production outweighed expected supply cuts by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Brent crude slipped 0.6 percent to \$66.39 per barrel. —Reuters



TOKYO: A pedestrian looks at a stock indicator board showing the share prices of Japanese companies. —AFP

Greece eyes pot of gold as medicinal cannabis licensed

ATHENS: Greece on Monday issued the first licenses to private companies for growing medicinal cannabis in the country, part of an attempt to tap a burgeoning market worth billions. Greece legalized cannabis for medical use last year and in March lifted a ban on growing and producing it. Two licenses were granted on Monday, and another 12 will be issued by the end of this year, the Economy and Development Ministry said.

"There is huge interest, mainly from Canada and Israel ... some of them (potential investors) are huge," Stergios Pitsiorlas, the deputy economy minister, told a news conference. Legalizing cannabis for recreational purposes is not under consideration, Pitsiorlas said in response to a question. Pitsiorlas said the first medicinal cannabis products were expected to hit the market in about 12-18 months time. The industry was mainly export-oriented, he said. Thousands of patients in Greece are thought to use cannabis for a range of serious medical conditions, though authorities don't have precise figures.

Several countries, including Britain, Germany, Italy and Denmark, already allow the prescription of medicinal cannabis, and in June Canada became the second country in the world, after Uruguay, to fully legalize marijuana, ending a 90-year ban. Under Greece's licensing system, medicinal cannabis products would be available on prescription from chemists. It would not be subsidized through state health insurance schemes, Health Minister Andreas Xanthos said.

The first licensed cannabis hothouses will be in Larisa in central Greece, and in Corinth in the Peloponnese. The 14 licenses were expected to create more than 750 jobs and represented about 185 million euros (\$212.05 million) in investment. "Our message is that the country is open for investments," said Vassilis Kokkalis, deputy minister of agriculture.

EasyJet logs soaring annual profit

LONDON: EasyJet's annual net profit jumped by almost a fifth on strong sales and record passenger numbers, the British no-frills airline announced yesterday. Profits after taxation jumped 17 percent to £385 million (\$460 million, 400 million euros) in the 12 months to September, EasyJet said in a statement. The total number of passengers rose 10.2 percent to a record high of 88.5 million. Pre-tax profit surged 41.4 percent to £578 million, as revenues rose 17 percent to £5.9 billion.

The carrier made a smaller-than-expected loss on its purchase of Berlin's Tegel Airport from bankrupt German carrier Air Berlin. "EasyJet has delivered a great performance during the year," said chief executive Johan Lundgren, who has been in the job since last December. "Our financial success and increasing customer loyalty demonstrate the resilience of our operations, the underlying strength of our business and our unrivalled customer experience."

EasyJet added that it was continuing to prepare for Brexit, operating via three airline divisions based in Austria, Britain and Switzerland, in order to be able to continue flying in Europe. It expressed confidence that flying rights would continue as normal despite turbulence over Brexit talks. "Both the EU and the UK have said that their objective is to maintain flights between the EU and the UK, whatever the Brexit outcome," the group said. "This gives EasyJet confidence that flying rights will be maintained, and it continues to work with EU institutions, EU member states and the UK to ensure that this is achieved." —AFP

UK plc prepares for messy Brexit as clock ticks down

LONDON: British companies selling everything from washing machines to flights, food and mortgages plan to spend tens of millions of pounds in case the political brinkmanship gripping the country leads to a disorderly Brexit. With barely four months until the world's fifth largest economy leaves the European Union, a raft of major companies set out plans yesterday to counter any trade delays and downturns that could stem from a no-deal scenario.

Electronics products, which stocks more than half a million industrial and electronics products, said it would spend 30 million pounds (\$38.6 million) in the six months to the end of next March to increase its holding of high-turnover goods in Britain and Europe. AO World, the online electricals and white goods retailer, might increase stock to mitigate supply chain friction while Compass, the world's biggest catering firm, is looking to build inventory and vary menus before March 29.

"We are planning very seriously for all scenarios," said Chief Executive Dominic Blakemore of Compass which provides meals for train customers, hospitals and corporate headquarters. "We

have been working with our suppliers for quite some time to think about how we carry a bit more inventory, how we source supply and how we vary our menu."

Britain's vote to leave the world's largest trading bloc has created a raft of challenges for companies, with financial services groups shifting some assets and people to Europe while manufacturers hunt for storage space to stockpile parts. Supporters of Brexit say once it has left the country will be free to negotiate new trade deals around the world and ditch regulations they say hamper growth.

But mounting tensions in Westminster, where lawmakers from all parties are opposed to Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit deal, have sparked fears Britain may leave the EU with no deal, prompting customs checks that clog up borders and fracture long-standing supply chains. Issues being addressed include stockpiling, changes in suppliers and production, and changes to regulation.

Ready or not?

Hours after a handful of companies put out their plans at 0700 GMT, the Bank of England had some sobering words. "I have the impression from talking to businesses (...) that most are not prepared for a no-deal Brexit, and don't know really how to," Bank policymaker Michael Saunders said. Those companies with a plan are pushing ahead.

British low-cost airline easyJet, which carried 88.5 million passengers in its latest financial year, has changed its legal



LONDON: Pro-European Union, anti-Brexit demonstrators wave European Union (EU) and Union flags as they protest outside of the Houses of Parliament in central London. —AFP

structure and secured new operating licences to enable it to continue flying into Europe. It is now working to change its shareholder base so that by Brexit day more than 50 percent of its investors will be based in the European Economic Area when excluding Britain. That measure currently stands at 47 percent.

"Basically what me and Andrew (Findlay, CFO) are going to do right now after today is continue to go and see European shareholders and talk to them about the story of easyJet," Chief Executive Johan Lundgren told reporters as he presented results. Many company executives in Britain have previously been reluctant to stray into politics for fear of angering customers, but with time running out they are starting to speak out.

AO World said it may need to increase inventory in the short term. It currently holds enough stock in Britain for 35 days. Halma, a maker of safety equipment for the medical, infrastructure and resource markets, set out in detail how it could be affected, including higher costs and inflation, greater liabilities for pensions and disruption to its work force, supply chain and regulation. CEO Andrew Williams said the group had some flexibility because its string of companies around the world could work together to share production if required. Other companies remained more coy. The owner of Clydesdale and Yorkshire Bank said the "inherently uncertain" environment was casting a shadow over the country's short term economic prospects. —Reuters

Warba Bank announces five winners of 'Al Sunbula' draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held its week 42nd draw for Al-Sunbula account yesterday. The draw announced the 5 lucky winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Bank officials. The bank proudly announces the lucky 5 winners who received 1000 KWD each are: Fayez Salem Awad Almutairi, Salem Mohammad Abdulaali Alotaibi, Abdalnasir Hamzah Ali Alzaid, Helail Sanad Helail Alharbi & Humoud Abdullah Saleh Aljarwan.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic on this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing Al-Sunbula account

Thailand to help rubber farmers after price slump

BANGKOK: Thailand approved a new subsidy and other measures yesterday to help its rubber farmers, who are struggling amid a slump in prices and have threatened protests. The world's biggest rubber producer has been hit by a 40 percent decline in prices over the past two years, accentuated again recently as a trade war between the United States and China hurt Chinese demand for Thai rubber.

The government approved the package of

measures, worth 18.6 billion baht (\$567 million), at a cabinet meeting, but drew criticism from the rubber farmers' association which said the measures would only help about 1 in 10 farmers. Rubber farmers are a powerful force in Thailand and the government wants to avoid a repeat of protests seen in 2013.

The measures will take effect in January and include a direct subsidy of 1,100 baht (\$33) per rai of land (0.16 hectare), capped at 16,500 baht, for small rubber farmers who are registered with the Rubber Authority of Thailand. Rubber tappers who work on registered farms but do not own the land will get a handout of 700 baht (\$21) per rai of land, capped at 10,500 baht. "We estimate that this measure will benefit about one million farmers and 300,000 rubber tappers," Luck

Wajanawat, deputy minister of agriculture and cooperatives, told reporters. Farmers already receive some government subsidies.

Last year Thailand produced 4.5 million tons of rubber from 20.32 million rai of land and exported 85 percent of the overall production. Thai benchmark RSS3 rubber grade <RUB-RSS3C-BKK> was quoted at \$1.35 per kilogram, free-on-board Bangkok, yesterday. Rubber farmers, who have been threatening to stage a protest in recent weeks, say the new measures are too limited and will not help those who are not registered with the authority. "This will only help about 10 percent of farmers," Manat Boonphat, the president of Small Rubber Tapper and Farmer Association of Thailand told Reuters.

Manat said the government would be bet-

ter off buying rubber from farmers at a price above the market rate. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha has appealed to farmers not to stage a protest by promising to help them. In 2013, hundreds of rubber farmers staged protests around the country, blocking roads and a regional airport in the south. They were part of much larger demonstrations in Thailand which eventually turned into a bigger political movement that paved the way for the 2014 military coup. Prayut said yesterday that farmers need to adjust to the changing global economy, and said the government would press ahead with plans to reduce the country's rubber-growing areas and increase domestic consumption of rubber to help reduce price fluctuations in the long term. —Reuters



Business

Nissan shares continue plunge as Ghosn faces ouster after arrest

The arrest sent shockwaves through auto industry and beyond

TOKYO: Nissan and Mitsubishi shares plunged yesterday after chairman Carlos Ghosn was arrested for alleged financial misconduct that reportedly included exorbitantly priced houses and diverted compensation. The two automakers have already said they will propose removing Ghosn, and Renault — which the titan also heads — said it would meet later to discuss his fate.

The arrest of the superstar executive sent shockwaves through the auto industry and beyond, and Japanese officials scrambled to send reassuring messages about the stability of the three-firm alliance that Ghosn oversaw. "Keeping a stable relationship (among the companies) is important," industry minister Hiroshige Seko told reporters. "As the government, we will do anything we can," added Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, without elaborating.

It was a stark indictment on the legacy of the 64-year-old, until now feted for his success in turning around failing companies with hard-nosed tactics that earned him the nickname "Le Cost Killer" in France. In France, the government said it had found no evidence Ghosn had cheated on his taxes there, though the allegations levelled by Tokyo prosecutors did not include any claim of tax evasion. A day after the astonishing news of Ghosn's arrest first emerged, there was vanishingly little new information about his situation and no official confirmation of his whereabouts.

However, sources confirmed he was being held at a detention centre used by Tokyo prosecutors. Television footage showed a van reportedly belonging to the French embassy entering the compound yesterday. Japanese prosecutors have said Ghosn is being held on suspicion of under-reporting his income by around five billion yen (\$44.5 million) over five years. Nissan CEO Hiroto Saikawa said a months-long investigation prompted by a whistleblower had uncovered years of financial wrongdoing, including the under-reporting of his salary and misuse of company assets.

Public broadcaster NHK reported Nissan had provided Ghosn with houses in four countries "without any legitimate business reason," and that Nissan paid "huge sums" for the homes in Rio de Janeiro, Beirut, Paris and Amsterdam. Representative Director Greg Kelly, who was also arrested yesterday with Ghosn, reportedly ordered other executives to "hide salaries", the Yomiuri Shimbun said. It also reported that some compensation due to other executives ended up going to Ghosn, without specifying how the process had worked.

Local media reported prosecutors had negotiated a plea bargain for only the second time since Japanese law changed this year that would allow Nissan officials who are cooperating to receive lesser charges or lighter penalties. The massive scandal prompted Nissan shares to plunge, closing down 5.45 percent in Tokyo, while Mitsubishi had fallen 6.84 percent by the end of the trading day.

'It's all about money'

As Ghosn's once towering legacy unravelled, there was no word from the auto boss or any of his representatives. Instead, his own handpicked successor as Nissan CEO accused him of accruing too much power, in a harshly worded news conference on Monday. "Too much authority was given to one person in terms of governance," Saikawa told reporters at Nissan's headquarters. "I have to say that this is a dark side of the Ghosn era which lasted for a long time."

It was an almost unthinkable turn of events for Ghosn, who had earned a virtually unparalleled reputation, particularly in Japan, for his role in resurrecting Nissan. Ghosn has dominated the country's corporate landscape, and is a well-known figure among the Japanese public, who know him as "Mr Fix It", partly through a popular manga comic of his life story. But the tables have now turned, with the Yomiuri Shimbun on Tuesday describing executives at Nissan slamming Ghosn as "greedy". "He says the right things, but in the



TOKYO: This general view shows the Tokyo Detention House in Katsushika. Sources told AFP on November 20 that Carlos Ghosn, one of the world's most influential executives, was being held at the detention center in the capital belonging to Tokyo prosecutors following his arrest the day before. — AFP

end it's all about money," the daily quoted senior employees as saying.

Nissan said the ongoing investigation had uncovered years of misconduct by Ghosn and Kelly but refused to be drawn on whether other people were involved, saying only: "These two gentlemen are the masterminds, that is definite." The news sparked concern in France, where the state owns a 15 percent stake in Renault. President Emmanuel Macron said Paris would be

"extremely vigilant" about the stability of the firm and its three-way tie-up. Despite his international renown and rock-star status, particularly in Japan where he was a rare foreign-born executive, Ghosn was not without his detractors. He earned admiration but also anger for his ruthless restructuring at firms like Nissan. And his pay packet was regularly the subject of criticism, including at Renault, where it sparked a spat with shareholders. — AFP

Ghosn arrest shakes France, Japan alliance

TOKYO: Carlos Ghosn's spectacular fall from grace is seen by some as a stunning corporate "coup d'etat" stoked by resentment at Japan's Nissan over a lopsided alliance with French carmaker Renault. The chairman's shock arrest over alleged financial misconduct on Monday has shaken the complex Franco-Japanese coalition between Renault, Nissan and Mitsubishi and could be taken as an opportunity for the Japanese to rework it, commentators say.

Resentment in the Tokyo press had already been brewing over the structure of the alliance, which they say gives French carmaker Renault an undue share of the Japanese company's profits. And Nissan CEO Hiroto Saikawa unleashed a surprising broadside against Ghosn and his legacy as he announced the firm has been investigating the chairman's misconduct. "The tensions bubbling under the surface of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance in recent years have finally burst open in brutal fashion," David Fickling, a columnist at Bloomberg News, told AFP. "From the perspective of Japan, the French company could resemble a parasite attempting to control its intrinsically stronger host." "The question is whether this bloodshed will be enough to tame the intra-group tensions."

Japanese prosecutors have said Ghosn is being held on suspicion of under-reporting his income by around five billion yen (\$44.5 million) over five years. Corporate scandals are nothing new in Japan, but rarely are disgraced executives accused of personal enrichment. Hans



YOKOHAMA: Nissan Motors CEO Hiroto Saikawa (R) bows at the end of a press conference at the company's headquarters. — AFP

Greimel, the Asia editor of Automotive News said Saikawa was "leveraging this malleability as an opportunity to take stronger oversight over Nissan". "This clears the way for Saikawa to put his own stamp on the company and blaze a new direction," he added.

'Nissan wants to be independent'

Ghosn has long been a major player in the car industry and is credited with resurrecting the once-troubled Nissan, which he allied with Mitsubishi and Renault. In the beginning, debt-laden Nissan was the weak link but the manufacturer was reborn at the cost of severe restructuring under the auspices of guru Ghosn. Now its solid financial results are to thank for

significant contributions to its French counterpart, which has reportedly caused Japanese employees to fume.

Renault currently owns 43 percent of Nissan, while Nissan only owns 15 percent of Renault. The divisions were accentuated in 2015, after the French state temporarily raised its stake in Renault — a move that had revived concern within Nissan. "This could be a coup d'etat that had been planned in a bid to reject a Renault-initiated business integration with Nissan," said Nobutaka Kazama, an expert on corporate governance at Meiji University in Tokyo. "I think the intention to remove Ghosn and revise the alliance to one led by Nissan is clearly in the works." — AFP

Star to fallen idol: The rise and fall of Carlos Ghosn

TOKYO: Carlos Ghosn's status as an outsider in Japan brought him huge success, as his maverick style blew a gale through a musty corporate world, but his disregard of business norms may ultimately prove his undoing. The man so embraced as the savior of a once-stumbling firm that his life was made into an inspiring manga comic was under arrest and facing allegations of financial misconduct — including under-reporting his huge salary. The companies he rescued — Nissan and Mitsubishi — looked set to dump him as chairman and his legacy as a boardroom savior lay in tatters. Until this week's dramatic events, the storyline had been one of almost unbounded optimism. "Ghosn is likely the most successful foreign chairman in Japan," said Kosuke Sato, a senior economist at the Japan Research Institute. "What he did was unprecedented in Japanese corporate history." But that narrative was rapidly unraveling by Monday evening.

At a news conference hours after Ghosn's arrest his hand-picked successor as Nissan CEO offered a revisionist history that minimized the role played by the Brazil-born executive in the automaker's turnaround. Hiroto Saikawa also referred to the "dark side" of Ghosn's tenure, suggesting he had accrued too much power and had become far removed from the daily operations of the firm. And he pointedly declined to offer the deep bow of apology that has become a standard part of any press conference involving a Japanese company acknowledging misdeeds by staff.

Ghosn 'made enemies'

Japan's media, who once feted Ghosn for his role in resurrecting Nissan and reviving the country's auto industry, also pounced. The financial Nikkei daily noted he had failed to cut short his holiday when an inspection scandal at Nissan broke in 2017, and the Yomiuri Shimbun described Nissan executives calling Ghosn "greedy". "He says the right things, but in the end it's all about money," the daily quoted employees as



TOKYO: Men walk past a screen showing a news programme featuring Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn. — AFP

saying. Corporate scandals are nothing new in Japan, but a case apparently centered on personal enrichment has left a bitter taste. "Ghosn is a victim of his own hubris and success," said Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University Japan. "He was lionized for bursting through Japan's fusty corporate culture, taking no prisoners, and now he is paying the price."

"He trampled on Japanese cultural norms with his flamboyant glory-hogging ways, and his massive compensation incited jealousies and invited retaliation," he told AFP. His salary was enormous by Japanese standards and drew criticism even at the government level in France. "He certainly made enemies and was envied in the Japanese establishment because in a sense he breached the norms of CEO compensation," said Robert Dujarric, director of the Institute of Contemporary Asian Studies at Temple University Japan. "Ghosn also had a CEO lifestyle. The major Japanese bosses are more discreet," he added. — AFP

What misconduct is Ghosn accused of, how did it come to light?

TOKYO: Japan was shocked by news that Nissan Motor Co Chairman Carlos Ghosn, who was widely respected for rescuing the car maker from near bankruptcy, was arrested on Monday for alleged financial misconduct. Nissan said that Ghosn, who is also chairman and CEO of Renault and chairman of Mitsubishi Motors, would be fired from his post as Nissan chairman on Thursday.

What is Ghosn accused of?

Nissan CEO Hiroto Saikawa told a packed press conference on Monday night that the company had found that Ghosn had been using corporate money for personal purposes and under-reporting his income for years in official company filings to the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Another board member, Greg Kelly, was also deeply involved in the misconduct, Nissan said. Saikawa said he couldn't elaborate as the cases are being investigated by prosecutors, who have declined to comment.

Prosecutors said that Ghosn and Kelly conspired to understate Ghosn's compensation over five years starting in fiscal 2010 as being about half of the actual 9.998 billion yen (\$88.9 million). Public broadcaster NHK said Nissan paid billions of yen to buy and renovate homes for Ghosn in Rio, Beirut, Paris and Amsterdam, citing unnamed sources. The properties had no business purpose and were not listed as benefits in TSE filings, NHK said.

Ghosn, 64, has not been formally charged. The Asahi newspaper reported that he and Kelly had submitted to prosecutors' questions after getting off a plane on Monday afternoon at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. Saikawa confirmed they had been arrested. Ghosn and Kelly have not been seen since and their exact whereabouts are not known. Suspects are typically taken to the Tokyo Detention Center, which is linked to the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office.

How did this come to light?

Nissan's Saikawa said Ghosn's alleged improprieties came to light through a whistleblower, after which the company began an internal investigation and informed prosecutors. Japanese media reports say the informant is a member of Nissan's legal department. The Asahi reported, without citing sources, that the informant gave the prosecutors infor-

mation in a plea bargain, implying the person may have provided evidence in exchange for a lighter sentence.

How much control did Ghosn have?

After becoming CEO of a struggling Nissan in 2001, Ghosn was hailed as the automaker's savior by implementing an aggressive cost-cutting plan. Known for his flair and confidence, Ghosn won respect for his business acumen and for shaking up Nissan's traditional corporate culture, which may have made it difficult to hold him accountable. Ghosn became CEO of Nissan partner Renault in 2005, chairman of Nissan of 2008 and chairman of Renault in 2009, giving him considerable sway over both companies. On Monday, Saikawa acknowledged that too much power had been concentrated in Ghosn. "Looking back, after 2005 when he became CEO of both Renault and Nissan, we did not really discuss the implications," he said. France's finance minister Bruno Le Maire said yesterday Ghosn should not remain in charge of Renault after his arrest in Japan.

How could he pull off this alleged deception?

This is the big question. If the misconduct continued for years, as Saikawa said, analysts question how this could have passed undetected for so long, unless internal auditors and senior management turned a blind eye.

What's next for Ghosn?

Under Japanese law, a suspect can be detained by prosecutors for up to 20 days before being charged or released. Tsutomu Nakamura, a former prosecutor at the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors office, predicted that Ghosn will be indicted on Friday, Dec 7, the last working day before that maximum period. Ghosn is allowed access to a lawyer during his time in detention.

If bail is granted, it would be "exorbitant, in hundreds of millions of yen," or millions of dollars, Nakamura said. But in major cases like this, "often no bail is granted until after the arraignment at the first court session". Falsifying corporate annual reports, which Ghosn and Kelly are accused of, carries a maximum penalty of up to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of up to 10 million yen, under the Financial Instruments and Exchange Act. — Reuters

Business

Ooredoo pushes network enhancements across companies in preparation for 5G

One step ahead of competitors in the global race to deliver 5G services

DOHA: From North Africa and the Arabian Gulf to Southeast Asia, Ooredoo is pushing forward with a group-wide modernization program to enhance customers' digital experiences, all in an effort to stay one step ahead of competitors in the global race to deliver 5G services. As part of the company's heavy investment in building world-class networks across its footprint - providing a greater range of opportunities for people to access employment, education, and entertainment wherever they are - Ooredoo is leading the technology scene, achieving world's firsts on many levels.

Ookla, the global leader in internet testing and analysis, has named four of Ooredoo's operating companies as "Fastest Mobile Network" in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Myanmar for the first half of 2018. The results confirmed as well the Ooredoo Qatar has the fastest mobile network in the world. These results were based on in-country tests that were made during Q1-Q2 2018 in each of the winning markets.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al Thani, Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo Group, said: "Today, most communication needs depend on wireless devices, whether to make crystal clear calls or to use the Internet and stay connected anywhere. At Ooredoo, we pay close attention to how our customers use our network to be able to respond with the necessary enhancements and enable them to experience seamless, superfast connectivity at all times." Ooredoo Group continues to invest heavily in the markets where it operates, implementing network modernization projects across companies.



Introducing 5G

Building on an impressive number of earlier milestones, including the first-in-the-region trials of 5G on Qatar National Day in 2016, the completion of 10 5G-ready base stations in May 2017, and the launch of the 5G Business services trial in partnership with Qatar Airways in November 2017, Ooredoo Qatar was the first operator in the world to have launched a live commercial 5G network in May 2018 - a major technological breakthrough for Ooredoo and the telecommunications industry worldwide.

As well, Ooredoo Qatar has reached another world-first milestone, with the delivery of the first commercial 5G home broadband devices. Today, with more than 85 5G network towers on-air around Doha, the company is pushing forward with testing the world's largest live 5G network. And indeed, most recently Ooredoo Qatar showcased the true power and speed of 5G with Smart City technology that will be available in the future.

At the event, Ooredoo has successfully tested a number of technologies in different locations around The Pearl Qatar, including the world's first Self-Driving 5G connected Aerial Taxi, a 5G Experience Bus and a futuristic 8K VR experience on a modern House Boat. In Kuwait, Ooredoo has launched 5G on a number of test sites, with internet speeds reaching more than 2Gbps. The launch comes as the company prepares to release the biggest, highly advanced network across Kuwait in 2018.

This launch follows the completion of a network upgrade in more than 1,100 locations across Kuwait,

aimed at increasing network capacity. Ooredoo Kuwait has also increased the number of sites with updated LTE-A technology to better serve the latest and upcoming models of routers and smartphones. Ooredoo Myanmar successfully rolled out 4G+ across 244 townships, enabling more than 16 million people to access high speed internet services. This, in addition to becoming the first operator in Myanmar to showcase Voice over LTE (VoLTE). Earlier this year, the company completed a 4G Pro network demonstration, showcasing its readiness to bring in 5G. Trials of 5G services are expected to start this year.

Commenting on the major milestones, Sheikh Saud said: "As the number of connected devices grows, there's a greater need for data transmission and more efficient technology to support it, which is why it's now time for 5G. This technology will facilitate substantial growth in the Internet of Things, seeing that almost everything is connected and communicating. People around the world will experience the power of 5G, helping consumers enjoy the internet more and businesses to run more efficiently than ever."

Boosting network speeds and expansion

Carrying on with network modernization projects across Ooredoo companies, Ooredoo Oman has successfully expanded its high-speed 4G network to more than 900 new locations, with Ooredoo's 4G now covering over 90% of Oman's population. Ooredoo Algeria has successfully rolled out its 4G network across the country, becoming the first operator ever to cover all 48 provinces (Wilayas). Today, with the largest 4G network in Algeria, Ooredoo enables nearly 50% of the population to access superfast internet and benefit from all the digital opportunities that come with it.

In Tunisia, 92% of the population has access to Ooredoo Tunisia's 4G network, with over 350 additional 4G sites added in 2018. Indosat Ooredoo continues to expand its 4G network and plans significant expansion of its 4G coverage in 2019. To meet the evolving needs of its customers in terms of internet speeds, data usage, latency and better video experience, Ooredoo Maldives was the first operator in Maldives to have rolled out 4G network nationwide and upgraded its transmission network to full IP, enabling everyone on the Ooredoo network to enjoy a great data experience. Ooredoo Maldives was also the first Ooredoo company to have been granted a 5G spectrum license in February 2018 and plans to trial 5G technology in the near future.

In Palestine, Ooredoo's Wataniya Mobile has successfully launched 3G services in West Bank earlier this year and is seeing strong demand on the service. With this launch, Wataniya Mobile's customers are now enjoying high quality voice calls and internet access,

that investing in education is investing in future that also shapes values of citizens. He said that Future of the world is depend on students and urged students to continuously learn which is a never ending process.

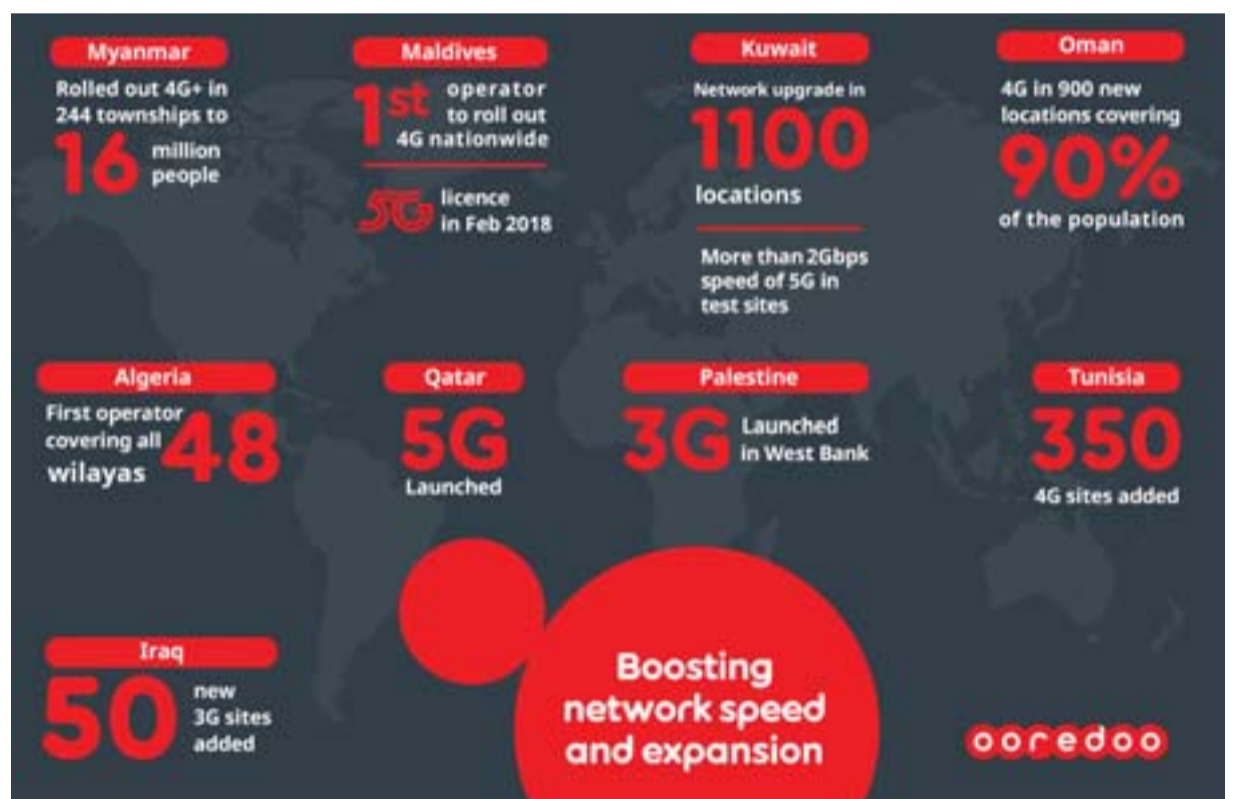
Shaikh Nayan also congratulated Yusuff Ali on receiving the honorary doctorate and said that "Yusuff Ali played an important role to strengthen India-UAE relationship and for setting benchmarks in entrepreneurial leadership. Shaikh Nahyan also praised the commitment of Yusuff Ali to fellow human being and described him as a persona with impressive record of achievement." More than 300 students were also awarded graduation degrees by Sheikh Nahyan. Also present on the occasion were Dr Tayeb Kamali, Hamad Abdulla Al Shamsi, Chairman of Amanat Holding, Chancellor, PVC and other dignitaries



Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani



The launch ceremony of the 5G network in Kuwait last June.



video calls and mobile TV via their smartphones, using the company's fastest 3G network in the West Bank. Ooredoo's Asiacell in Iraq is enabling people to enjoy faster internet speeds, as the company continues to expand its 3G coverage nationwide, building more than 50 new 3G sites in new areas of the country with plans to trial 4G services later this year.

Also this year, Asiacell successfully restored 200 sites in a numbers of areas and modernized and upgraded more than 300 sites to 3G. Sheikh Saud concluded: "We will continue investing in our networks to ensure seamless connectivity that caters to our customers'

growing digital needs. Our 4G networks deployments across our global footprint is substantially improving both spectral and energy efficiency, which in turn is increasing network capacity for devices that are currently available to customers.

Most importantly, we continue to lead the evolution of the 5G ecosystem, working to provide life-changing network enhancements to our customers that will see them enabled to experience connectivity and the Internet of Things in a whole different way - from driverless cars, to flying taxis, to even making purchases that are delivered through 5G-connected drones."

Philanthropist Yusuff Ali receives honorary doctorate from Middlesex University

DUBAI: The renowned Middlesex University conferred its honorary doctorate on leading businessman and philanthropist Yusuff Ali MA yesterday. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan was the chief guest of the graduation event. While addressing the graduates and dignitaries, Sheikh Nahyan stressed the importance of education, which defines the character of an individual. Sheikh Nahyan further said



ABK closes for Prophet Muhammad's birthday

KUWAIT: On the occasion of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday, ABK would like to announce that it's

branches will be closed for business on Thursday 22nd November 2018. The Bank will resume business as usual on Sunday 25th November 2018. ABK's online service and Call Center will be available 24 hours a day during the holiday and can be reached by contacting an ABK customer service agent via Ahlan Ahli at 1899899 or visit eahli.com

Al Sayer wins platinum award from GORD

DOHA: Al Sayer Holding was bestowed with the prestigious Sustainability Award from Gulf Organization for Research and Development (GORD) at the 2018 Sustainability Summit recently held in Doha, Qatar. GORD is recognized as the first performance-based system in the MENA region, developed for rating the green buildings and infrastructure.

According to Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer Executive Board Member and Chairman of Sustainability committee "Al Sayer Holding is reinstating its continued

commitment having awarded the prestigious Sustainability Award for 2016 for adopting sustainability best practices in design of the landmark Toyota City project."

For 2018 Al Sayer won the award under commercial sector for their leadership and commitment to adopt sustainability best practices in the Operations of the headquarter building at Free Trade Zone Area in Kuwait. Sustainability initiatives for Green building were adopted in the field of Energy, Water, Indoor Environment, Waste Management and Facility Management. "We are extremely honored to cooperate with GORD to actively engage in adopting the innovative green building ideas to strengthen the resilience towards climate change by moving to low-carbon societies, reducing emissions and improving the understanding of climate science to realize a greener world" added Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer.



AUB closes on Prophet Muhammad's birthday

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Ahli United Bank (AUB) congratulates and extends its warm wishes to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government, the citizens of Kuwait and all residents across the country. In related matter, Ahli

United Bank announced in a press release that it will suspend its business tomorrow, Thursday 22 November 2018, and will resume work as usual on Sunday 25 November 2018.

AUB reconfirmed that customers will be able to communicate with the Bank through the Bank's electronic channels, including the mobile application and the 24/7 telebanking 'Hayakom' service on 1812000 to conduct all their banking services and answer all their enquiries or through the internet banking at www.ahli-united.com.kw and the Bank's social media platforms. Furthermore, customers can also conduct their financial transactions through the Bank's ATMs which are conveniently located across Kuwait.

Twitter CEO Dorsey sparks Indian social media storm

Twitter CEO trolled for 'hate mongering' against Brahmins

MUMBAI: Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has been accused of inciting hate against India's highest caste after being photographed holding a poster declaring "smash Brahminical patriarchy" during a visit to the country. Dorsey was snapped holding the offending poster alongside six women who participated in a discussion last week on the role of Twitter in India, where caste is a flashpoint issue and grievances can turn violent.

The reference to Brahmins, the traditional priestly class who sit atop the rigid caste hierarchy, outraged some Hindus when the photograph was posted online Sunday evening. "Do you realize that this picture has

potential of causing communal riots at a time when several States are going to Assembly Elections in India," tweeted Indian police officer Sandeep Mittal. "Even now an apology is not offered. Actually its (sic) a fit case for registration of a criminal case for attempt to destabilize (sic) the nation," he added.

Twitter defended Dorsey in comments posted on its official India page Monday, saying a low-caste activist had "shared her personal experiences and gifted a poster to Jack". "It is not a statement from Twitter or our CEO, but a tangible reflection of our company's efforts to see, hear, and understand all sides of important public conversations that happen on our service

around the world," the company said. Another user, tweeting under the name Prasant DoshPehle (country first), wrote: "Shame on you @jack. Hate against any community or group should be condemned. Spewing hate on one to please the other isn't right."

But others praised the Twitter chief for touching on the plight of marginalized, low-caste Dalit communities and women in India, a conservative country of 1.25 billion. "Dalit lynching and oppression, incidents of which we read about every other day, do not cause as much Twitter outrage as Jack Dorsey holding up a placard saying 'End Brahmin Patriarchy'," wrote user Ranjona Banerji. South Asian historian Audrey Truschke said:

"My Twitter feed is full of elite men hyperventilating about Twitter CEO @jack holding a sign that calls out sex-based & caste-based discrimination in India."

"Caste and sexism are real and virulent in modern India. If you want to be angry about something, let it be that reality," she added. Caste politics can explode into violence in India, where a centuries-old hierarchy has divided Hindus into classes starting with Brahmins and ending with the Dalits - formerly known as "untouchables". Although the system has been officially abolished, it still prevails in rural areas and determines where people live, who they marry and what type of work they do. — AFP

The science of how cats' tongues keep them clean

WASHINGTON: US researchers, armed with high-speed video cameras, have revealed the secret to cat grooming. It's all in the tongue. Just not the way they thought. A cat's tongue contains 300 little scoop-shaped spines called filiform papillae which they moisten with saliva to clean their fur, said the report Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a peer-reviewed journal. Until now, the scientific consensus on the matter was that these papillae were cone-shaped, almost like little claws. But in reality, these structures, made of keratin, end in U-shaped hollows at the tips, wicking saliva from the mouth and transferring it to the fur and skin.

"It looks just like a half pipe," said co-author Alexis Noel, a researcher at the Georgia Tech Research Institute. "It's very much like a coffee straw when we stick a straw into fluid, the water actually wicks up into this little cavity surface. So when the cat goes to groom, it's able to take these fluids into the spines and penetrate them



Photo shows a domestic cat grooming its fur. The cats' tongue contains 300 small, rigid, spoon-shaped papillae that allow them to wet the hair base with their saliva, US researchers have observed using high-resolution cameras. — AFP

deep into the hairs and be able to distribute their cleaning saliva throughout all of the hairs," Noel, whose background is in mechanical engineering, told AFP. Cats spend about one quarter of their lives cleaning themselves. They spend about 14 hours a day sleeping.

Maintaining their fur helps remove fleas, debris and excess heat. Cat fur consists of an exterior layer for protection and an interior one for warmth. Six different types of

felines were studied, including domestic cats, tigers and lions. Researchers also dissected the tongues of dead cats, and filmed in high speed video the tongues of domestic cats in action. Researchers say practical applications could include futuristic human hairbrushes modeled after the feline tongue. There could also be industrial uses. "This could be really helpful for carpet cleaning technology, so as to distribute cleaning fluid deep into carpets," Noel said. — AFP

Surge in China theft of Australia company secrets, report says

SYDNEY: China has sharply escalated cyberattacks on Australian companies this year in a "constant, significant effort" to steal intellectual property, according to a report published yesterday that angered Beijing. The investigation by Fairfax Media and commercial broadcaster Channel Nine comes just days after US Vice President Mike Pence accused Beijing at the APEC summit of widespread "intellectual property theft".

The report said China's Ministry of State Security was responsible for "Operation Cloud Hopper", a wave of attacks it said were detected by Canberra and its partners in the "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance—the US, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. An unnamed senior Australian government official told Fairfax the activity was "a constant, significant effort to steal our intellectual property", while other officials expressed frustration that firms

and universities were not tightening their security. Cyber experts echoed the government sources, with US cybersecurity company CrowdStrike saying they "noticed a significant increase in attacks in the first six months of this year".

"The activity is mainly from China and it's targeting all sectors. There's no doubt the gloves are off," CrowdStrike vice president Mike Sentonas told Fairfax. The alleged attacks took place despite an agreement between Canberra and Beijing last year "not to conduct or support cyber-enabled theft" of intellectual property and other commercial secrets. The Chinese foreign ministry dismissed the report, saying it was "without foundation in fact". The allegations are "unprofessional, irresponsible, and obviously have ulterior motives", ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular press briefing. — Reuters

Eel trafficking in EU, world's 'biggest wildlife crime'

PARIS: Billions of euros worth of critically endangered eels are being trafficked each year from Europe, ending up on tables in China and Japan in what campaigners say is "the largest wildlife crime on Earth." Stocks of European eel (*anguilla anguilla*) have plummeted 90 percent in three decades as mankind has developed the wetlands and dammed the rivers it needs to grow and feed in, and experts fear criminal gangs

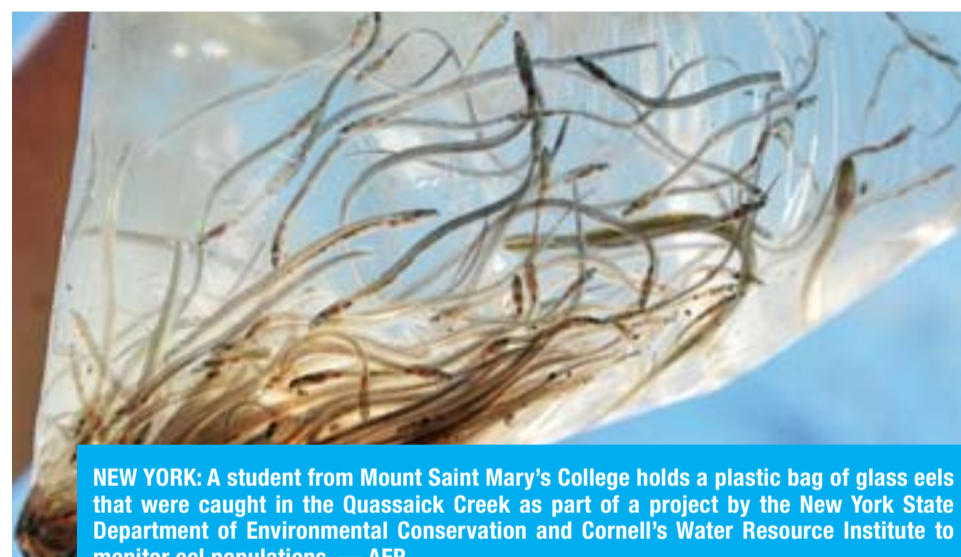
smuggling the lucrative fish are pushing it towards oblivion. Despite growing alarm from conservationists, hundreds of tons of eels are still legally and illegally fished each year. In France—which catches more of the fish than any other EU state—the issue has taken on political dimensions.

"There's around 10 percent of stocks left compared to 30 years ago due to habitat loss and what we've done to the migration pathways in Europe," Andrew Kerr, chairman of the Sustainable Eel Group (SEG) that works to conserve the species said. The eel's vertiginous decline has provoked some action from governments and law enforcement agencies. It is now listed in the CITES international convention on trade in endangered species, resulting in strict national catch quotas.

The problem, according to Michel Vignaud, head of fishing regulation at

France's National Biodiversity Agency, is exploding Asian demand for a product viewed as both a delicacy and an aphrodisiac. "We cannot legally export eels outside the EU, but the prices are different in Asia. There is a real Asian demand for eel," he said. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization said that in 2016 China produced close to a quarter of a million tons of eel for consumption, far ahead of Japan—where eating eel is seen as bringing good luck and fertility—and the EU.

The bloc's law enforcement agency EUROPOL estimates as many as 100 tons of baby eels—known as glass eels for their translucent skin—are trafficked abroad each year: equivalent to around 350 million fish. "Glass eels trafficking involves environmental crime, smuggling, document fraud, tax evasion and money laundering," a spokesman said. — AFP



NEW YORK: A student from Mount Saint Mary's College holds a plastic bag of glass eels that were caught in the Quassaick Creek as part of a project by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Cornell's Water Resource Institute to monitor eel populations. — AFP

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- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

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IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC
American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

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

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ 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 Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

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

What's On

The Sheraton Kuwait awarded as Kuwait's Luxury Historical Hotel



Fahed Abushaar

The Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel continues to offer award-winning standards of excellence and hospitality since its inception in 1966 and providing the widest selection of accommodations. The property has established over half a century collection of achievements and accomplishments and now with the recent "World Luxury Hotel Awards" ceremony which was held at the Ayana Resort & Spa in Bali Indonesia, we were the Country Winner for the third time to win as Luxury Historical Hotel for 2016, 2017 & 2018 respectively. It was a recognition of sustained commitment to excellence and outstand-

ing achievement in the international luxury hospitality industry. With a proven track record of achievements enforcing its presence over many years in the industry supported by the loyalty of its guests and as well as all the major companies that continues to trust us, more than anything else, we consider this as the real honor, the continued patronage of our clientele.

More to offer

The Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel adds value to its high-end services from the extraordinary weddings being held in its great ballrooms especially the

Diamond Grand Ballroom throughout the generations, exceptional celebrations done at the majestic Crystal Ballroom, intimate gatherings at the Coral Ballroom and fully-equipped function rooms are also available for corporate events.

Never ending choices for our restaurant patrons to choose from: Italian, Indian, Persian, Lebanese and International cuisine. The Riccardo, Bukhara, Shahrayar, Le Tarbouche, Al Hambra and the English Tea Lounge continues to mesmerize guests with refined taste and more importantly we have branched out to the Avenues Mall, bringing these incomparable restaurants closer to

the people's heart, where they can enjoy shopping and dining at the same time.

Fahed Abushaar - Complex General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait Hotels stated "I am extremely honored and I would like to thank each member of our hotel family for their outstanding diligence and the loyalty of our guests as we could not have received these awards without their trust and validation. We shall maintain the highest standards of excellence in service and hospitality adding that these awards and the continuing trust of our guests are the true symbol of success - as the social enduring icon of Kuwait.



Burgan Bank offers a chance to watch 'Creed 2' for free

Burgan Bank, in collaboration with Grand Cinemas, announced yesterday that its Youth Account Holders will be offered the exclusivity to watch the first screening of the new movie "Creed 2" for free at the luxurious movie theatre of Grand Cinemas located in Al Hamra Luxury Centre. The movie screening will be held on Thursday November, 29th, 2018, wherein each customer is entitled to 2 free tickets on one of the two shows, at 6:00 pm or 8:45 pm.

To book the free seats, Youth Account Holders are required to visit Grand Cinemas box office in Al Hamra Luxury Centre and present their Youth ATM card. The bank strives to reward its Youth account holders with exclusive offers that fits their lifestyle. The Youth Account is dedicated for young individuals, between the ages of 15 to 25, and who seek to attain a successful future. Furthermore, account holders receive free prepaid MasterCard and an ATM card which entitles them to discounts at selective merchants along with an exclusive discount at Grand Cinemas Theatres, Al Hamra Luxury Centre and The Gate Mall.



Two world-class exhibitions during the 'Italian Week'

To mark the third edition of the Italian Week in Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre will host two world-class exhibitions titled 'Drive In' and 'The Shapes of Water'. The month-long exhibitions are in partnership with the Italian Embassy.

'Drive In' is a gateway into the work of acclaimed Italian artist Marco Casentini. It explores the interplay between memory and space, and allows visitors to share the artist's feelings as he retraces his travels around the world. Since August 2017, this touring exhibition has moved from one famous hall to the next before arriving in Kuwait, which marks its final stop.

'The Shapes of Water' exhibition addresses the importance of water and its significance in worldwide sustainability. It offers visitors design samples from the Triennial Design Museum in Milan and some other samples produced by students from the Department of Architecture at Kuwait University. The touring exhibition has visited a number of GCC countries before coming to Kuwait.

Spearheaded by the Fine Arts Centre, both exhibitions will open their doors to visitors between 21 November- 22 December 2018, and will be located in the temporary exhibition gallery at the Science and Technology Museum. The Fine Arts Centre is part of Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre, and was designed to create world-class programs and workshops featuring accomplished local and international artists to empower Kuwaiti youth and trigger their interest in the creative sector.

Announcement from the Embassy of South Africa

The Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in the State of Kuwait has the pleasure to inform you that the South African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will be leading a business delegation to Kuwait today. The sectors included are: agro-processing (meat, dairy products, and beverages), chemicals used for agriculture, food, industry, water purification, oil and gas, construction and engineering, electro-technical, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, veterinary medicines, health and beauty, work wear (safety boots) and clothing, textiles and leather.

The purpose of the visit is to further strengthen the commercial relations between South Africa and Kuwait, to promote South African products and services as well as to establish business relationships with potential

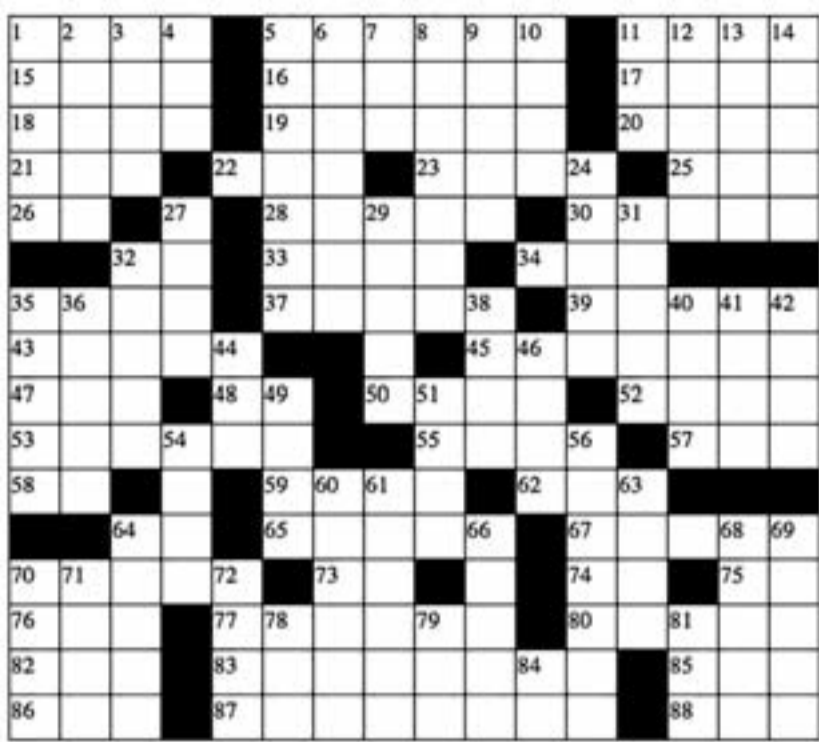
Kuwaiti counterparts. The Embassy, in collaboration with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, will hold a Trade Seminar on 21 November 2018 at 10:00 am at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). During the Seminar, trade opportunities in the above-mentioned sectors will be presented. The Seminar will be followed by Business to Business (B2B) meetings at KCCI.



Under the auspices of the Palestinian ambassador to Kuwait, Rami Tahboub, Sham Abu Ghazaleh recently held the annual Palestinian Heritage Exhibition at Khalidiya. The exhibition attracted a large number of visitors including diplomats and Palestinian art and heritage lovers. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Stars

CROSSWORD 2065



ACROSS

1. Expel or eject (saliva or phlegm or sputum) from the mouth.
5. Not tired.
11. Disturb in mind or make uneasy or cause to be worried or alarmed.
15. The last imperial dynasty of China (from 1644 to 1912) which was overthrown by revolutionaries.
16. The inner sole of a shoe or boot.
17. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
18. Type genus of the family Unionidae.
19. United States minimalist painter (born in 1936).
20. English monk and scholar (672-735).
21. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
22. Mature female of mammals of which the male is called 'buck'.
23. A term used in Scottish names of promontories.
25. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
26. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
28. A track or mark left by something that has passed.
30. Enthusiastic approval.
33. A flat thin rectangular slab (as of fired clay or rubber or linoleum) used to cover surfaces.
34. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
35. A small nail.
37. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
39. A drawing illustrating the relations between certain quantities plotted with reference to a set of axes.
43. East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.
45. Loss of the ability to swallow.
47. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
48. Minor or subordinate.
50. A rounded thickly curled hairdo.
52. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
53. Mar or spoil the appearance of.
55. The highest level or degree attainable.
57. A federation of North American labor unions that merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1955.
58. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
59. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
62. A syndrome that occurs in many women from 2 to 14 days before the onset of menstruation.
65. United States impresario who was born in Russia (1888-1974).
67. A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
70. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
73. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
74. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
75. The atomic weight of an element that has the same combining capacity as a given weight of another element.
76. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
77. Pertaining to or resembling amoebae.

80. Jordan's port.
82. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
83. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Clinoril).
85. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
86. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
87. Cause to grow thin or weak.
88. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Short and fat.
2. Division of a usually pinnately divided leaf.
3. Any division of quantity accepted as a standard of measurement or exchange.
4. An inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others.
5. Rice cooked with broth and sprinkled with grated cheese.
6. Of or relating to the enteron.
7. The compass point midway between south and southeast.
8. 1 species.
9. The twelfth month of the civil year.
10. Made of fir or pine.
11. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
12. Of or relating to or involving an area.
13. Father of the storm gods Marut.
14. Deciduous South African tree having large odd-pinnate leaves and profuse fragrant orange-yellow flowers.
24. English film actress (1913-1967).
27. A large number or amount.
29. Genus of erect herbs of the Middle East having showy flowers.
31. A unit of weight for precious stones = 200 mg.
32. Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
36. (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
38. Made from residue of grapes or apples after pressing.
40. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
41. French cabaret singer (1915-1963).
42. Precipitation of ice pellets when there are strong rising air currents.
44. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
46. Ceremonial elegance and splendor.
49. Not only so, but.
51. A card game in which players bet against the dealer on the cards he will draw from a dealing box.
54. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
56. The act of clasping another person in the arms (as in greeting or affection).
60. A major waterfall in southern Africa.
61. Relating to or characteristic of Arabs.
63. A branch of the Tai languages.
64. A genus of Platalea.
66. To some (great or small) extent.
68. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
69. Jordan's port.
71. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
72. Serving as or forming a base.
78. Failing to speak or communicate etc when expected to.
79. Black tropical American cuckoo.
81. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
84. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if you are entering a period of emotional change. You may have mixed emotions about some situations in your life, but you are torn between right and wrong and good and bad. You feel a great need to make some kind of changes in your lifestyle. The only thing that is bringing you any sense of peace is staying on the go and keeping your mind preoccupied to prevent dwelling on the problems at hand. Do whatever you need to do to keep peace in your world and stress at arm's length. This may be a time you have a great desire to further your education and gain as much knowledge as possible. We have always been told knowledge is power and it seems you long for power now. Spend your time taking in all this world brings your way.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Make a plan and put it in action. The ins and outs of your daily life have become mundane. You need excitement and change. Even though plans for a getaway may not go smoothly, the actual trip is just what you need to refresh and rejuvenate. Your focus tends to be centered on the wants and needs of those around you. This is a time in your life it will be best to put yourself first. Remember you must first take care of yourself to be able to help others.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You find yourself in admiration of the mystical world around you. You are more determined than ever to put your talents to use whether artistic or psychic. You may find you are faced with opportunity to use these talents and bring the mysterious, the glamorous, and the intriguing into your life. You may be curious of how your mind could be so active and overwhelmed by the ideas that are flowing through in over drive. You feel the need to express these ideas as fast as they come to you and could catch yourself talking the ears off of anyone that would listen.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You find that your thoughts are staying about two steps ahead of your actions today. Your mind is in overdrive. You are quick and on your toes. There is no doubt you are extremely intelligent, and others are attracted to this quality. You may find that you can be of great counsel to others today. Your opinions matter to those close to you. You may find yourself seeking knowledge and wanting to surround yourself with others that have the same desire. Education is extremely important to you and you may find yourself led to continue yours in some form, whether it be additional training in your field of work or enrolling in new courses. Cancer. Surrounding yourself with your love ones and those who know you best will be very beneficial to you today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

All that sparkles may not be gold, but it sure does catch your eye. You have deep appreciation for the beauty surrounding you and find it hard to pass by any sparkling treasure in your path. Admire it and move on Leo, and this could be a very good financial period for you if you can resist the urge to spend. This may be a time of change in your life. The changes you are about to make or may be making may not be supported by those close to you. You may experience conflict or major pushback. You are longing to broaden your horizons, a longing to grow and have new experiences. Remember, Leo, these things cannot occur without change.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You don't care how, you want it now! This is your attitude when it comes to life today. You have taken love a step farther. Obsession is a more appropriate description of how you feel about your goals. This could be an extremely passionate time in your world. Jealousy and possessiveness may be emotions that play a role in your world. You may find your ambition is in overdrive and you will not stop until you have exactly what you want.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Far from reality is where you may find your thoughts today. Dreaming of what the future holds can lead to peace and clarity in your life. Set a goal. Picture yourself accomplishing this goal. Imagine how you will feel once your dream becomes a reality. Make a list of everything you need to do to accomplish this. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Make it happen. Dedication and determination can lead you to the position in life you wish to be. Love to learn and learn to love, Libra. The world has much more to offer you. Know this and own it!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Stress plays a bigger role in your life than usual. Under pressure is not the best position to be in to make decisions. When tensions are high like you may experience today, it is best to put off any decisions for later. Hit the road, take a drive, or just do what it takes to add a bit of relaxation into your world. You may find someone turning to you for advice or as a shoulder to cry on. Pouring your time into helping someone may seem to relieve your stress and minimize your own problems. Helping others could be the best way to help yourself.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

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



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your self-confidence may be a little off today. Not to worry. Confidence is not something you are born with. It is not part of your DNA. You can boost yours with a simple mantra. It could be "I am strong. I can handle whatever comes my way today" or "I am blessed. I have a lot to give, and I will make every effort to share my talents with others." You can use the same mantra everyday or find a new one to fit each day. When you feel confident, it is apparent and contagious. Others respond to it.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This day may find you longing for change. A new style, new friends, new experiences may be calling out to you. You want to break out and break away from the mundane life you have been leading. A major change is on the horizon. You may be led to really change things up in your life. Don't run out and get a tattoo or make any changes that can be reversed because this phase could fade as fast as it appeared. This change is in attitude is very evident to those around you and you may find you are being met with much opposition.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today finds you all about "YOU"! Your hard work and dedication seem to have finally paid off and you are on top of the world. You are admired by your peers and it seems as if the world is raining sunshine directly on you. You are on fire and seem to find sharing the spotlight with others and showering them with kindness, appreciation, and gratitude is extremely rewarding to you. You want to share this feeling and make sure others around you feel your gratitude and love. You feel as if you want everyone to feel this feeling. You are full of love of life and love of those all around you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Look Up!

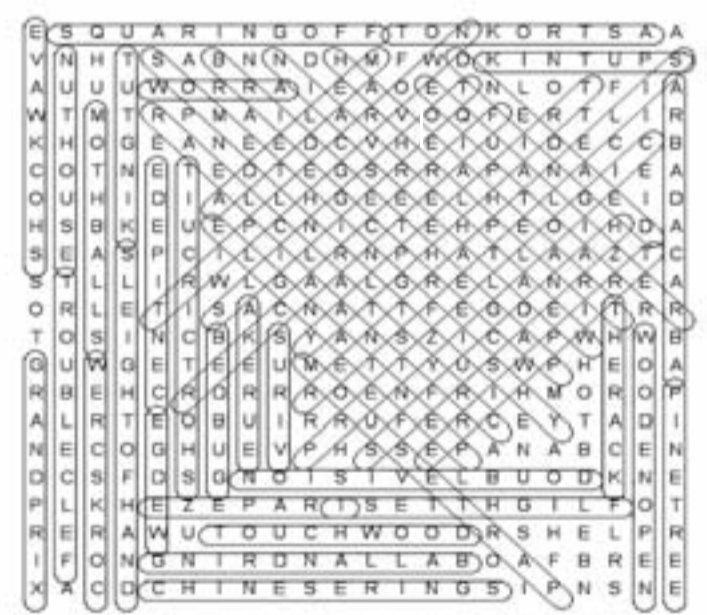
Find and circle all of the items that you might see when you look upward. The remaining 24 letters spell an additional item you might see.



- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| AIRPLANE | GALAXY | METEOR SHOWER | SMOG |
| BIG DIPPER | HAZE | MOON | SOLAR ECLIPSE |
| BIRDS | HELICOPTER | PLANETS | STARS |
| BLIMP | HOT AIR BALLOON | POWER LINES | STREET LIGHT |
| BLUE SKY | JET EXHAUST | RAINBOW | THE SUN |
| CHIMNEY SMOKE | JUPITER | SATELLITE | TREETOP |
| CLOUDS | KITE | SATURN | UNIVERSE |
| COMET | LIGHTNING | SKYDIVER | VENUS |
| DRONE | MARS | SKYSCRAPER | |
| FIREWORKS | MERCURY | SKYWITING | |

Yesterday's Solution

Livewire Puzzles

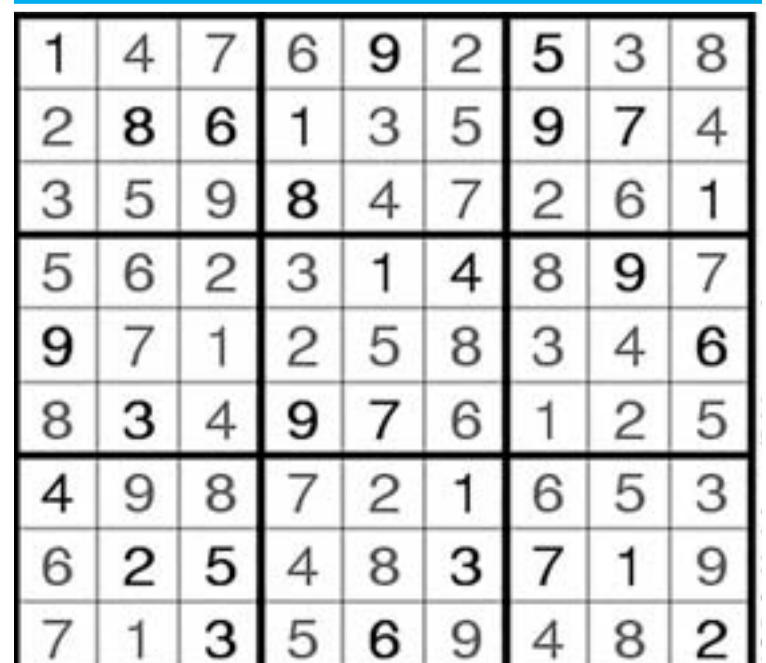


The hidden phrase is: A HANDFUL OF PATIENCE IS WORTH MORE THAN A BUSHEL OF BRAINS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2018



An Indian artist from Ram Sutar Art Creations climbs onto a window while working on a mural of buffaloes on a wall at Railway Colony, created as part of the ongoing 'Paint My City' project for the upcoming Kumbh Mela festival, in Allahabad yesterday. — AFP

In Pakistani village, home is where the cave is



Pakistani villager Ameer Ullah Khan takes care of a cow outside his cave home in Nikko village.



Pakistani villager Faqeer Gul offers noon prayers in his cave room in Nikko village.



Pakistani villager Ameer Ullah Khan (left) chats with a friend in his cave room in Nikko village, about 60 kilometers from the capital Islamabad, near the highway town Hasan Abdal.

Bomb-proof, earthquake-resistant and cheap: thousands of Pakistanis are choosing to hunker down in caves northwest of Islamabad, snapping up the hobbit-like homes amid a nationwide housing shortage. Located around 60 kilometers (40 miles) from Pakistan's capital, nearly 3,000 people live in caves in the village of Hasan Abdal, according to councilor Haji Abdul Rasheed—whose own home is among the dwellings carved into the rugged, earthen hillside embankments. Rasheed's spartan cave—or "buray" as it is locally known—consists of a few minimally furnished rooms complemented by a breezy veranda.

The caves are usually dug by hand, with residents using clay to plaster the walls—a practice which serves as a bulwark against landslides, they say. "There is nothing like it. If you build a mud house, it collapses during the rains. This does not collapse," says Rasheed. "It's earthquake-proof and bomb-proof." Although locals have been living in caves for at least five centuries since the area was settled by a Mughal tribe, a surge in housing prices has renewed the appetite for the cavernous homes, which cost much less than their urban counterparts. "We bought this because it's cheaper... we dug it ourselves," says resident Ameer Ullah Khan.

The modern-day cave dwellers also recommend the structures as ideally suited to Pakistan's weather—staying cool as summertime temperature soar past 40 degrees Celsius and providing a warm cocoon during the area's chilly winters. "We mostly spend our summers here... using the caves as our residence and to store our belongings, includ-

ing our wheat and corn harvest," says Muhammad Sohail, who lives elsewhere the rest of the year.

Life is not all easy however: lacking sufficient natural light, the caves rely on electricity cabled in from outside to power TV sets and mobile phones, while indoor plumbing is a rare luxury. But with cave prices averaging around about 40,000 rupees (\$300) compared to brick homes that start around 250,000 rupees, locals and property experts say they are much more affordable than other rural options. "Even in the countryside, you need at least half a million rupees to get a small piece of land to build a house," real estate agent Sakhi Riaz told AFP.

The lower costs have allowed some residents to splurge on extras, from rose gardens to terraced fruit orchards. One local "godman" has even gone so far as to build a huge residential complex to host hundreds of devotees who flock to the area for religious festivities. The humble abodes are seen as an increasingly attractive option as Pakistan battles a dearth of affordable housing, with the country's rapidly growing population hovering around 207 million. Freshly elected Prime Minister Imran Khan has vowed to address the crisis by building as many as five million new homes even as an ongoing financial crisis has raised questions about how he will pay for it. — AFP



A young Pakistani villager sits in a cave room in Nikko village.



Pakistani villager Ameer Ullah Khan washes his hands outside his cave home in Nikko village. — AFP photos

Looted St Mark mosaic returns home to Cyprus

Cyprus has welcomed home a rare sixth-century mosaic more than four decades after it was looted from a church, Cypriot authorities said yesterday. "The mosaic of Apostle Mark... has been repatriated to Cyprus from the Netherlands," Cyprus' antiquities department said in a statement. The mosaic was stolen from the church of Panayia Kanakaria in northern Cyprus following the Turkish invasion in 1974. It was one of several icons looted from the church during this time. "The walled mosaics of Panayia Kanakaria, dating back to the sixth century AD, are highly important works of art and among the few remaining early Christian mosaics in the world," the antiquities department said.

Dutch art investigator Arthur Brand tracked down the mosaic in Monaco after a nearly two-year chase across Europe. It was handed over to the Cypriot antiquities department and the Church of Cyprus during a private ceremony Sunday in The Hague. Dubbed the "Indiana Jones of the art world" because of his exploits to recover stolen works, Brand won world fame in 2015 after finding two massive bronze statues made by Nazi sculptor Joseph Thorak that are referred to as "Hitler's Horses". He told AFP the Cypriot mosaic depicting the Byzantine saint "was in the possession of a British family, who bought the mosaic in good faith more than four decades ago". "They were horrified when they found out that it was in fact a priceless art treasure, looted from the Kanakaria Church after the Turkish invasion," he said.

The family agreed to return it to Cyprus in exchange for a small fee to cover restoration and storage costs, Brand said, adding that the relic was worth five to 10 million euros (\$5.7 to \$11.4 million). The Byzantine-era mosaic, believed to have been made around 550 AD, was one of many that adorned the walls of the Panayia Kanakaria church northwest of the capital, Nicosia. According to the Cypriot department of antiquities it was "violently detached and stolen from the church, between 1977-79 by the Turkish looter and art dealer Aydin Dikmen" along with other mosaics. Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded and seized its northern third in response to an Athens-engineered coup to unite the island with Greece. — AFP

Lifestyle | Awards



Executive Producers Sofie Peeters, Tim Van Aelst with cast and crew celebrate their win for Non-Scripted Entertainment Award for 'Did You Get The Message' (Hoe Zal Ik Het Zeggen?) during the 46th International Emmy awards gala in New York City. — AFP photos



Director Jose Eduardo Moniz (left), writer Maria Joao Costa (center), Portuguese actress Joana De Verona (right) and producers pose with the Telenovela Award for 'Ouro Verde'. — AFP photos

International Emmy Awards: UK's 'Man In an Orange Shirt' and Spain's 'Money Heist' among winners



Executive producer Marc Perkins (left) and director producer Christine Garabedian (right) pose with their award for the Documentary 'Goodbye Aleppo'.



Director Hernan Caffiero (left) and producer Antonino Ballestrazzi (right) pose with their award for Short-Form Series for "Una Historia Necesaria".



US writer/producer Greg Berlanti poses with his Founders Award.



German actress Anna Schudt holds her award for Best Performance by an Actress.



Danish actor Lars Mikkelsen holds his award for Best Performance by an Actor.

European talent came to the fore at the 46th annual International Emmy Awards on Monday held in New York City. Shows from the UK, Germany, Spain, Belgium and Portugal all took home the big prizes at the ceremony held at the New York Hilton Midtown and hosted by comedian Hari Kondabolu. In all, the 11 awards went to actors and programs from 10 countries. Danish star Lars Mikkelsen (House of Cards, Sherlock) won the best performance by an actor award for his role as priest Johannes in the religious drama Herrens Veje (Ride Upon the Storm).

Germany's Anna Schudt won the best performance by an actress award for playing comedian Gaby Kester in the dark comedy Ein Schnupfen hatte auch gereicht (The Sniffles would have been fine). Spanish heist drama La Casa de Papel (Money Heist) won the coveted best drama series prize. The drama, created by Alex Pina, focuses on an elaborate multi-day raid on the Royal Mint of Spain.

The BBC picked up the best doc award for its harrowing Syria-war documentary Goodbye Aleppo, as well as the best TV movie/miniseries prize for multi-generation drama Man in an Orange Shirt, starring Vanessa Redgrave and written by Patrick Gale. The gala event also saw two special awards presented. Fox Television Group chairman and CEO, Dana Walden presented the International Emmy Directorate Award to Sophie Turner Laing, CEO of Endemol Shine Group. And Blindspot star Sullivan Stapleton and producer Julie Plec presented the International Emmy Founders Award to prolific writer-director-producer Greg Berlanti.

The full winners list is below:

Arts programming
Elgar Keret: Based on a True Story
BALDR Film / NTR
Netherlands

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR
Lars Mikkelsen in Herrens Veje (Ride Upon the Storm)
DR Drama / ARTE France / SAM le Fran.Aais
Denmark

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS
Anna Schudt in Ein Schnupfen hatte auch gereicht (The Sniffles Would Have Been Just Fine)
Zeitsprung Pictures / RTL Television
Germany

COMEDY
Nevsu
Endemol Shine Israel / Reshet13 / Geshar Multicultural Film Fund / Avi Chai Foundation
Israel

DOCUMENTARY
Goodbye Aleppo
BBC Arabic
United Kingdom

DRAMA SERIES
La Casa de Papel (Money Heist)
Atresmedia / Vancouver Media
Spain



Executive Producers Sofie Peeters (center), Tim Van Aelst (right) and fellow nominee (left) pose with their award for Non-Scripted Entertainment Award for 'Did You Get The Message'.

NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE U.S. PRIMETIME PROGRAM
El Vato - Season 2
Universo / Endemol Shine Boomdog
United States of America

NON-SCRIPTED ENTERTAINMENT
Did You Get The Message?
Belgium

SHORT-FORM SERIES
Una Historia Necesaria (The Suspended Mourning)
Tridi Films / CNTV / Escuela de Cine de Chile
Chile

TELENOVELA
Ouro Verde (The Payback)
Plural Entertainment Portugal
Portugal

TV MOVIE/MINI-SERIES
Man in an Orange Shirt
Kudos / BBC / Masterpiece
United Kingdom —www.hollywoodreporter.com



Chief Executive Officer of Fox Dana Walden (left) poses with CEO of Endemol Shine Group Sophie Turner Laing (right) winner of the Directorate Award.



(From left) Ghanaian-US actress Nana Mensah, producer Antonino Ballestrazzi, director Hernan Caffiero and a guest pose with the award for Short-Form Series for "Una Historia Necesaria".

British producer Diederick Santer (left), director Michael Samuels (center), actress Dana Delany (second right) and British author Patrick Gale (right) pose with the TV Movie/Mini-Series award for "Man in an Orange Shirt".

Lifestyle | Awards



Executive Producer Sonia Martinez (second left), screenwriter Esther Martinez Lobato (second right) and Spanish Screenwriter Alex Pina (right) pose with their award for the Drama Series 'La Casa de Papel'.



(From left) Rutger Lemm, Marloes Blokker, actor Erich Bergen and Stephane Kaas pose with the award for Best Arts Programming for "Etgar Keret: Based on a True Story".



Actor Yossi Vasa (center), director Shai Ben Atar (second right) and producers pose with their award for best comedy "Nevsu".



Actress Javicia Leslie (left) and actor Brandon Micheal Hall (right) pose with Executive Producers Fernando Gaston (second left) and Alejandro Rincon (second right) winners of Non-English Language US Primetime Program award.

'I want to thank me,' rapper Snoop Dogg on getting Hollywood star



Rapper Snoop Dogg attends the ceremony honoring him with a Star on Hollywood Walk of Fame in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos

Rap great Snoop Dogg thanked himself on Monday as he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame just days before the 25th anniversary of his debut album "Doggystyle." "I want to thank me for believing in me," the 16-time Grammy nominee said after the star was unveiled on the famed walk. "I want to thank me for doing all this hard work. I want to thank me for having no days off. I want to thank me for never quitting. I want to thank me for always being a giver, and trying to give more than I receive. I want to thank me for trying to do more right than wrong. I want to thank me for just being me at all times," the West Coast hip-hop legend known for his wry sense of humor added.

Snoop—real name Calvin Broadus—rose to fame in 1992 when he was featured on Dr Dre's solo debut album "The

Chronic." He has since sold over 35 million albums worldwide. He also is a regular star of films, from "Scary Movie 5" (2013), to "Starsky and Hutch" (2004) and "Training Day" (2001). His television appearances include many chats with his friend Martha Stewart.

"Doggystyle," released on November 23, 1993, debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 and sold more than 11 million copies worldwide through November 2015. His other well-known works include "Gin & Juice," "Who Am I? (What's My Name?)," and "Drop It Like It's Hot." Attending the ceremony on Monday were talk show host Jimmy Kimmel, record producer Quincy Jones and fellow rapper Dr Dre. — AFP



Rapper Snoop Dogg (right) and his dad Vernell Varnado.



Snoop Dogg, with Jimmy Kimmel (left), Quincy Jones and Dr Dre (right) is honored with a star on The Hollywood Walk Of Fame on Hollywood Boulevard.



Rapper Snoop Dogg and his family.



Snoop Dogg, with Pharrell Williams (left) is honored with a star on The Hollywood Walk Of Fame.

Bollywood actress apologizes for #MeToo comments

Bollywood actress Preity Zinta apologized yesterday over comments she made about India's #MeToo movement that sparked a furore on social media. Zinta was accused of belittling victims after saying she wished she had faced sexual harassment. "My reason for saying 'I wish something like this would have happened to me' in the film industry with a smile was because I would have reacted and slapped the person," she said. Zinta said she was a "huge supporter of the movement" and claimed that her comments, given in an interview with entertainment site Bollywood Hungama, were taken out of context.

The 43-year-old star of the 2003 hit "Koi Mil Gaya" (Found Someone) added that she herself had been the victim of abuse. "To all the women out there, I'm sorry if I have unintentionally hurt your sentiments on the #MeToo movement," she said. India's belated #MeToo movement has seen women share accounts of alleged harassment by several powerful men in the worlds of Bollywood, business, journalism, politics, comedy and even cricket since gaining traction in late September. The trigger appears to have been actress Tanushree Dutta, who accused well-known Bollywood actor Nana Patekar of inappropriate behavior on a film set 10 years ago.

Since then, a slew of popular Bollywood figures have been accused of sexual misconduct, including Vikas Bahl, Sajid Khan and Alok Nath. All have denied the claims. Last month, M.J. Akbar resigned as India's junior foreign minister after at least 20 women accused him of sexual harassment during his time as a newspaper editor. Akbar—who denies the allegations—is suing one of the complainants, Priya Ramani, for defamation. — AFP



Preity Zinta

'Fantastic Beasts' enchants North American box office

Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling's new movie "Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald" enchanted the North American box office over the weekend, taking in around \$62.2 million, industry tracker Exhibitor Relations said Monday. This second Harry Potter prequel came in slightly behind the first "Fantastic Beasts" movie, which earned \$74.4 million in its opening three-day weekend, but it has already scored an impressive \$253.2 million overseas. Warner Bros plans three more "Beasts" movies. Written by Rowling and directed by David Yates, "Grindelwald" stars Eddie Redmayne as Newt Scamander as he works with Albus Dumbledore (Jude Law) to take down the evil Gellert Grindelwald, played with typical panache by Johnny Depp.

In a rare weekend when neither horror nor superhero movies dominated, second place went to family-friendly "The Grinch" from Universal, which tallied \$38.6 million. The ever-popular Dr Seuss tale has Benedict Cumberbatch voicing the ill-tempered green title character, with support from Rashida Jones, Kenan Thompson and Angela Lansbury. In third spot, with \$16 million in ticket sales, was Fox's "Bohemian Rhapsody," the foot-stomping biopic about Freddie Mercury and rock group Queen. Rami Malek has drawn strong reviews for his portrayal of the British singer/songwriter.

Fourth went to new Paramount release "Instant Family," starring Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne as a married couple who take in

three foster kids over the holidays. It earned \$14.5 million and has drawn an "A" rating from audiences polled by CinemaScore. In fifth was Fox's "Widows," at \$12.4 million. Directed by Steve McQueen of "12 Years a Slave" fame, it stars Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez and Elizabeth Debicki as a group of women who try to pull off a heist after their husbands are killed in a botched robbery. Rounding out the weekend's top 5 were:

- "The Nutcracker and the Four Realms" (\$4.8 million)
- "A Star Is Born" (\$4.3 million)
- "Overlord" (\$3.8 million)
- "The Girl in the Spider's Web" (\$2.5 million)
- "Nobody's Fool" (\$2.2 million)—AFP



Lifestyle | Features



The 'Fried Tarantula' from Cambodia is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum in Malmo, Sweden. — AFP photos



A visitor reacts as he observes the "Mouse Wine" from China presented at the Disgusting Food Museum.



A "Jell-O Salad" from the US.



The 'Balut', a developing bird embryo boiled in its shell from the Philippines.



The 'Nsenene', a bar snack from Uganda.



Natto, fermented soybeans from Japan, are presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.

Maggots, licorice and cobra hearts at Sweden's 'Disgusting Food Museum'

Cheese teeming with squirming maggots, sheep's eye juice and mouse wine: the "Disgusting Food Museum" explores why a dish seems delicious to some, but for others is stomach-churning. On show for three months at an old slaughterhouse in the southern Swedish city of Malmo, the exhibit—created by Samuel West, who previously served up the Museum of Failure—promises to shock the senses. "Disgust is always subjective because it comes with what we grew up with. It's kind of an indoctrination," says museum director Andreas Ahrens. "If we grew up with something, we don't find it disgusting," he says.

To highlight the point, the exhibition puts foods from around the world on an equal footing, so lobster and foie gras are presented in the same way as chewy kiddie sweets and rabbits' heads. Gastronomic explorers are warned on entry: the exhibit is not for the squeamish. But, conveniently, the entry ticket is a sickness bag. Bag in hand then, visitors venture off on a world tour of specialties, some of which may seem to a Western palate like ingredients in a witch's brew but are considered delicacies.

"The Disgusting Food Museum exists to let people explore the world of food and to see both their own food and (other food) from the lens of another culture," says Ahrens. Its founder "began by thinking of other museums that don't exist that he would like to visit, and that led to the Disgusting Food Museum," he adds cheerfully.



Visitors touch the "Bull genital" from China.

Cheese and fermented shark

"I think it is by far one of the most interesting museums I've been to," says Charlie Lam, a 23-year-old Hong Kong student. Touring the exhibit with friends, she inspects the 80 dishes on display, cautiously sniffing some, and, when curiosity gets the better of her, tasting a few. She says she'll never forget the Su Callu, an ineffable Sardinian cheese served in dried tripe with a lingering aftertaste of ammonia, or the Icelandic delicacy of fermented shark, known as hakarl. And she finds salty licorice, a hugely popular candy in the Nordic countries, and stinky British and French cheeses as off-putting as some of the non-Western foods are to European tastes.

Touchy feely

Many of the dishes are freshly prepared and visitors are encouraged to poke and prod some of them, and of course have a taste—museum staff make sure nobody leaves without trying at least one item. The bull's penis—an aphrodisiac in China—is a hard one to resist for many curious onlookers. "If it would be just fake food, or just plastic or things in a can, it wouldn't be as interesting. It wouldn't be as fun," says Ahrens, who happily guides people through the tables of food. "So it's an important part of the experience for the guest."

Some dishes are displayed on a video screen, such as the cobra's beating heart, which in Vietnam is savored together with its blood. "That's really what I found most surprising," admits Adam Eliasson, a 24-year-old factory worker. "Normally I'm a pretty picky eater," he muses. "I eat very few things... but here I tasted everything. And I didn't throw up!" Some dishes however, such as the tortoise soup and bat soup, the sheep's head stew and baby mouse wine remain off limits to even the bravest of visitors.

The food that is fresh, such as the cheese, is kept in the fridge for three or four days before being thrown out. Once the exhibit ends on January 27 in Sweden, Ahrens and West hope to take the show on the road to other cities in Europe and around the world. — AFP



The 'Sheep Eyeball Juice' from Mongolia.



A man takes pictures of a 'Habushu' snake wine from Japan.

Devotees, police keep vigil as mindfulness monk comes home

When meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh takes a wheelchair tour of the forested pagoda in Vietnam where he has come to die, the 92-year-old is greeted by crowds of devotees — and secret police assigned to watch him. The monk-turned-peace-activist credited with bringing mindfulness to the West, from the homes of Hollywood celebrities to Silicon Valley boardrooms, spent nearly four decades in exile.

In that time he set up retreats around the world and wrote over 100 books including on mindfulness and meditation — a cornerstone of a \$4.2 trillion dollar global wellness industry espoused by Oprah Winfrey, Arianna Huffington and tech billionaire Marc Benioff. Initially, the slight monk with a serene smile was banished for calling for an end to the Vietnam War. But the Zen master, whose reach within Buddhism is seen as second only to the Dalai Lama, was kept away as he advocated religious freedom around the world including in the communist country where all faiths are strictly controlled.

He has been permitted to see out his final days at his Tu Hieu pagoda in the ancient city of Hue, Vietnam's Buddhist heartland. But even in the twilight of his life, Thich Nhat

Hanh—unable to fully speak or walk since a 2014 stroke—is closely monitored by plainclothes police who keep vigil outside his gated compound. "It's not a completely free country, everything is subject to observation and the government always wants to have everything under their control," said one of his longtime attendants, requesting anonymity.

Tears of joy

Authorities in the Buddhist majority one-party state are wary of organized religion and last year passed a law requiring faiths to register and report all activities. The government is particularly uneasy about leaders like Thich Nhat Hanh, who counts hundreds of thousands of followers at home and abroad—including Oprah who keeps one of his books by her bedside.

Business titans like Salesforce CEO Benioff have embraced his mindfulness philosophy to boost innovation and improve bottom lines. Since his return to Vietnam last month, hundreds have flocked to his pagoda to join the monk on his outings around the temple's lush gardens. Most are devoted to his spiritual messages, not his politics.

"He taught us to love people, to love ourselves, to love nature," said Tran Thi My Thanh, who made the pilgrimage with friends from Ho Chi Minh City.

"We were so moved that we burst into tears. I couldn't control myself," she said after walking with Thich Nhat Hanh, who was wrapped in brown robes and pushed in his wheelchair by attendants. Since Thich Nhat Hanh was allowed back into the country in 2005, the first of a handful of controlled visits, he has called for greater religious tolerance. His messages have not always been welcomed: in 2009 his followers were driven from their temple in southern Lam Dong province by hired mobs. "(The government) fears any organized group that has a mass following, just like how the Chinese government treated Falun Gong," said Tuong Vu, Asian Studies director at the University of Oregon.

No more fighting

Religious leaders in Vietnam have proven their capacity to mobilize the masses. Catholic priests have led environmental protests, Hoa Hao Buddhists have waged anti-communist demonstrations, and Protestant Montagnards have

clashed with authorities over land rights in the central highlands. But Thich Nhat Hanh's disciples say they come in peace. "We know that Vietnam has difficulty, and we know the world also tries to help Vietnam open up, to have more freedom, more democracy... we try to help also, but we do it in a Buddhist way," said Thich Chan Phap An, one of Thich Nhat Hanh's closest disciples. "It's not wise to have confrontation, but it's very good to have communication," he told AFP.

It's a message that Thich Nhat Hanh harnessed in 1966 on a trip to the US where he met Martin Luther King Jr, who joined his calls to end the war and later nominated him for a Nobel Peace Prize. Thich Nhat Hanh was barred from returning home, his anti-war stance deemed traitorous by both north and south Vietnam, and spent the next 39 years in exile in France. His disciples say he is overjoyed to be back in his ancestral homeland, and after a lifetime of pushing for peace he can finally relax. "No more fighting, he is just enjoying his time," said close aide, Sister Dinh Nghiem. — AFP



Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh's long-time aide, senior nun Chang Khong (right), posing at the Tu Hieu pagoda in Hue.



Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh's closest disciple, Thich Chan Phap An, pausing inside the courtyard at the Tu Hieu pagoda in Hue.



This photo shows 92-year-old Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (center) in a wheelchair at the Tu Hieu pagoda in Hue. — AFP photos

Classifieds

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Clouds will decrease gradually with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 20/11/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	17 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	23 °C	15 °C			
ABDALY	22 °C	14 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	23 °C	15 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	16 °C			
SALMIYAH	23 °C	17 °C			
AHMADI	22 °C	17 °C			
NU/WAISIB	25 °C	16 °C			
WAFRA	25 °C	14 °C			
SALMY	20 °C	12 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	11/21	Mostly Sunny	24 °C	14 °C	NW	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	11/22	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	25 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 40 km/h
Friday	11/23	Unstable with a chance for thunder rain	21 °C	18 °C	SE	22 - 55 km/h
Saturday	11/24	Unstable with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	26 °C	19 °C	S-SE	25 - 60 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:54
Sunrise	06:16
Zuhr	11:34
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:52
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	96 %
MIN. RH	51 %
MAX. Wind	NW 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	4.29mm

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

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Sharing accommodation available for decent Christian bachelor / single

lady in Salmiya, Block-10, Street-10 (near Garden). Contact: 51177342 (C 5430) 20-11-2018

EMERGENCY



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Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	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
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9



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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 21/11/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 21/11/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	341	Sohag	00:05	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
JZR	406	Kochi	00:10	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	RBG	218	Asyut	14:25
JZR	253	Amman	00:40	IRC	527	Mashhad	14:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	KIS	6033	Mashhad	14:30
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:05
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:40	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	CLX	792	Hanoi	15:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	FDB	8066	Dubai	16:05
JZR	502	Lahore	03:35	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KAC	796	Madinah	04:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:35	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	JZR	105	Bahrain	16:55
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	504	Beirut	17:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:00
BAW	157	London	07:05	SVA	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	FDB	403	Hyderabad	18:40
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	FDB	8192	Dubai	18:50
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	KAC	381	Beirut	18:55
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	UAE	064	Dubai	19:20
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	876	Dubai	19:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
IRC	6511	Lamerd	09:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:10	RIA	641	Amman	20:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	JZR	401	Kochi	21:00
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	11:55	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
MSC	415	Sohag	12:10	RBG	214	Sohag	21:30
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
IRC	6552	ABD	13:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	JAV	622	Amman	22:15
KIS	6032	Mashhad	13:30	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
IRC	526	Mashhad	13:30	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
RBG	213	Sohag	13:45	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
CLX	792	Luxembourg	14:10	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:20	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45

Xi visits Philippines to cozy up to historical American ally

MANILA: Chinese President Xi Jinping called his visit yesterday to long-time US ally the Philippines a "milestone", as he aims to boost blossoming ties on the promise of billions of dollars in backing for mega-projects. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has proven a willing recipient of Beijing's attentions, declaring shortly after his election in 2016 his nation's "separation" from former colonial master the US.

Since then Beijing, which is competing with Washington for supremacy in the Pacific, has promised \$24 billion in investment and infrastructure loans that the developing nation of 105 million deeply needs. But over two years later, only a trickle of funding has arrived, prompting critics to question whether Duterte has been duped into pivoting toward China and giving too much ground on the South China Sea dispute.

Xi landed in Manila to a red-carpet welcome for the first state visit from a Chinese president in 13 years, which Manila hopes will finally net those investment deals. "For the Philippines, this is more than a reciprocal visit. It is an historic occasion," Duterte said in welcoming Xi to the presidential palace for the two-day visit. The Chinese leader offered similarly sweeping remarks, saying: "My visit will be a milestone in the history of exchange between our two countries." Few details were released on the deals inked yesterday, including an agreement to cooperate on oil and gas development.

China has disbursed tens of billions of dollars in loans since 2013 as it expands its political influence globally, countering the American hegemony that characterized the post-World War II order, especially in Asia.

However, even before Xi's arrival, hundreds of protestors descended on the Chinese embassy to voice opposition to closer ties with Beijing. "Philippines is not for sale," the marchers chanted, as some brandished signs saying "China out of Philippine waters" in reference to a long-running dispute over the South China Sea.

Critics are most concerned over Duterte's decision to set aside a major 2016 ruling from an international tribunal that declared as without basis Beijing's expansive claim over the waterway, in favour of courting Chinese investment. "The reality is that the Philippines under Duterte may have squandered the most solid legal ground it has against China in the South China Sea conflict," Senator Leila de Lima, a jailed critic of the president, said in a statement.

A survey of 1,500 adults out yesterday said 84 percent of Filipinos disagreed with taking a laissez-faire approach on Beijing's moves to build infrastructure and install military equipment in the sea. That stance flared onto Philippine Twitter and Facebook, where feeds were flooded with Winnie the Pooh memes in a winking expression of anti-China sentiment stirred by Xi's visit. The self-described "bear of very little brain" has been used in the past on social media to poke fun at the portly Chinese leader, a joke that has drawn crack-downs from Beijing's censors.

Filipino analyst Richard Heydarian said China's pledges induced Manila to "soft-pedal" on the South China Sea issue, but Beijing failed to hold up its end of the bargain. "We know there was a geopolitical calculation," he told AFP. "What is the



MANILA: Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) shakes hands with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte after a book signing at the Malacanang Presidential Palace yesterday. — AFP

incentive to rush if Duterte has been giving them whatever they want?" Gregory Wyatt, director for business intelligence at PSA Philippines Consultancy, said big projects

face many barriers in the Philippines, like right-of-way issues, regulatory approvals and political dissent. Chinese investments in the Philippines surged more than five-fold

in the first six months of the year after a 67 percent expansion last year, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said during a Manila visit last month. — AFP

Jar wars: The Italian plot to weaken Nutella

MILAN: Chocolate spread Nutella has long had pride of place on supermarket shelves but faces imminent attack from an Italian rival usually found in the pasta section. Italy's Barilla, known internationally for its spaghetti and maccheroni packaged in blue boxes, is preparing to launch a chocolate spread next year in a major challenge to the brand that became a global phenomenon in the 1980s, sources said.

Nutella, invented by family-owned firm Ferrero, is a favorite among sweet-toothed youngsters at home and abroad and generates annual sales of more than \$2 billion (\$2.3 billion). With 54 percent of the global market for chocolate spreads, Nutella is the leader and faces virtually no major competition as a mass-marketed brand. Cokokrem of Turkey's Yildiz Holding is the second most popular spread with a share of only 2 percent, according to market research provider Euromonitor International.

But two sources familiar with Barilla's plan say its new spread, Crema Pan di Stelle, seeks to exploit a perceived weakness of Nutella: Its use of palm oil. The ingredient has drawn a consumer backlash due to health and environmental concerns. Ferrero launched an ad campaign in 2016 to defend its use of palm oil, saying it was safe when refined at controlled temperatures and that the company only bought oil from sustainable palm plantations.

Barilla decided to mount a challenge to Nutella after sensing that Ferrero was starting to encroach on the pasta-maker's lesser-known biscuit business, one of the sources said. Industry sources said Ferrero will launch a Nutella-filled biscuit next year, seen as a direct challenge to Barilla's own chocolate cookie brand, Baiocchi. Ferrero declined to comment on the new biscuit. To take on Nutella, Barilla has prepared a recipe that contains sunflower oil, 10 percent less sugar, Italian-only hazelnuts and cocoa from sustainable farms, one source said.

Crunchy taste

Barilla, also a family-owned firm, has presented its spread to buyers at major supermarket chains and could launch it as soon as January in Italy, the sources said. Still, it faces a tough challenge. One industry expert said it could cost several million euros just to secure a spot on the same supermarket shelves as Nutella, which commands a premium eye-level position.

"Crema Pan di Stelle will increase competition for Nutella in Italy thanks to the considerable brand awareness it has among domestic customers, but Barilla will find it difficult to take the challenge abroad," said Marco Eccheli, director at the Italian unit of consulting firm AlixPartners. Contacted for a comment Barilla said it would answer questions about new products in coming weeks. The name Crema Pan di Stelle is taken from another of Barilla's successful biscuits brands, Pan di Stelle or 'bread of the stars' which is sold mainly in Italy. "It will contain crumbles of Pan di Stelle cookies to make it taste crunchy," the source said. — Reuters

With Sufi rituals, sweets, Muslims

Continued from Page 1

invocations. To the steady beat of a nearby drum and the intonation of the prayers, they whip their long, wavy hair back and forth. Yesterday was a holiday in Iraq, but most of the country - which is majority Shiite - will not celebrate the prophet's birth until Sunday.

After Airbnb, Booking.com...

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and land confiscation and theft," Omar Shakir, HRW's director for Israel and the Palestinian territories, told AFP. "It is an important and welcome step and we encourage other companies like Booking.com to follow their lead and stop listing in settlements."

HRW issued the report on the online reservations firms, entitled "Bed and Breakfast on Stolen Land", along with Israeli NGO Kerem Navot. It says Airbnb, based in the United States, listed at least 139 properties in West Bank settlements between March and July. Booking.com, based in the Netherlands, had 26 as of July, it said. A total of 17 are on land Israel acknowledges is privately owned by Palestinians, according to HRW. "Israelis and foreigners may rent properties in settlements, but Palestinian ID holders are effectively barred," HRW said. That is "the only example in the world the organizations found in which Airbnb hosts have no choice but to discriminate against guests based on national or ethnic origin," it said.

Israeli Tourism Minister Yariv Levin yesterday threatened legal action against Airbnb in the United States and Israel over its move, branding it "hypocritical

Hardline Sunni Muslims do not observe "mawlid" at all, considering it a more modern addition to Islam. When the Islamic State group seized the Iraqi city of Mosul in 2014, it banned celebrating the Prophet's (PBUH) birth. Mosul was recaptured from IS in the summer of 2017, and this year, its still-ravaged Old City is alive with people marking "mawlid". Platters of date cookies are passed around the modest homes and traditional prayers are sung across the city. Several thousand kilometres away in Pakistan, mosques are elaborately illuminated with strings of light to celebrate, while in Morocco, the day typically sees the king grant widespread amnesties. — AFP

and disgusting". In contrast, senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat has welcomed Airbnb's decision as "an initial positive step". "Israeli settlements are not just an obstacle to peace, but defy the very definition of peace," he said in a statement.

Moria Shapira, an Israeli settler who had been offering an apartment for rent through Airbnb, said she was "in shock" over the company's move. Shapira lives in the Adei Ad wildcat settlement outpost deep in the West Bank. She said she did not understand why nearby Palestinian communities could post rentals on Airbnb but she could not.

"Part of the surprise was that here next to us, in Ramallah and in Rawabi, there are advertised Airbnb apartments and it is fine," she told AFP at her hilltop home.

Israeli settlements are considered illegal under international law and major roadblocks to peace, as they are built on land Palestinians see as part of their future state. Around 400,000 Israelis live in West Bank settlements, which range in size from tiny hamlets to large towns. A further 200,000 live in settlements in occupied east Jerusalem. Nati Rom, a resident of the Esh Kodosh wildcat settlement and a lawyer with the Lev Ha'Olam organization which fights boycott campaigns against Israel, protested over what he termed "anti-Semitic pressures". "It's regretful to see Israeli organizations that harm us, and it's more regretful to see Airbnb surrendering to these pressures - anti-Semitic pressures that harm the Jewish sector," he said, referring to the group that worked with HRW. — AFP

Egypt says cheap new drug 'Strox' threatens youth

CAIRO: For years, Mostafa Mahmoud struggled to pay for his expensive drug addiction, spending much of his meager income on hashish. A few months ago, he switched to a cheaper way to get high which he says is pushing him to his death. The 27-year-old man is among a growing number of Egyptians using Strox, a potent narcotic that is mixed with tobacco and smoked, and that Egyptian officials see as one of the biggest threats to the country's young population.

Drug addiction has long been a problem in Egypt, the most populous country in the Arab world with nearly 100 million. But the speed at which Strox use is spreading has posed a new challenge. Experts say the drug is made in local workshops by adding chemicals often used by veterinarians to a herb like marjoram. Some add pesticides for greater impact, but effectively make the drug more deadly. Users describe painful convulsions leading to hallucinations and loss of consciousness.

Authorities say the drug has killed dozens of people and has caused a spike in crime. "It is cheaper than hashish, but when you smoke it you choke, pass out and suffer cramps," said Mahmoud, who lost his job at a fruit shop due to his drug habit. While the price for one hashish joint was 50 Egyptian pounds (\$2.80), he said two Strox joints cost 30 pounds. It is spreading in impoverished areas, where living standards have plunged since a 2016 IMF-backed reforms package forced currency devaluation and cut state subsidi-

dies. Many victims are aged 15 to 20, according to Amr Othman, director of the state-run drug rehabilitation fund.

While statistics are scarce, officials say some 104,000 drug addicts were receiving free treatment at a rehabilitation centre run by the ministry of social solidarity. Of those, about 25 percent are Strox addicts, officials said, up from 4.5 percent last year. The number of arrests is also up. Over the past six months, the number of Strox-related arrests soared by 300 percent, and Strox addicts have surged to 40 percent of total drug users in Egypt from 9 percent of the total at the start of the year, according to a security source estimate.

Experts say Strox is a type of synthetic narcotic like those that spread in Western nations more than a decade ago. "Some are 100 times more potent than others," said Justice Tettey, chief of the laboratory and scientific section at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Egypt. "The frightening part is not that it's more potent than cannabis," he said. "It's that most people have no idea what they're taking. Your first one or next one could be your last one," he added. "I don't know why I use it. It is awful," Mahmoud said, describing waking up after one session to find a friend had died in his sleep from an overdose. Mahmoud and his friends were held for a few months but later freed without charge.

Recognizing the threat, authorities in September banned the unlicensed sale of chemicals used to make Strox. Othman said the decision came due to combined efforts by the ministries of health, justice and interior. Authorities have also enlisted the country's mosques, devoting a Friday sermon to rally Muslims against drugs. "Just as we are in a comprehensive fight against terrorism, we need a quick and comprehensive battle against addiction and drugs," the sermon said. "Drugs are another kind of terrorism." — Reuters

Muslim lawmaker proposes to end...

Continued from Page 1

"And this is not the last ban I'm going to work to lift," added the Minnesota representative-to-be.

The proposal earned the backing of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. "We support the effort to update this anachronistic policy and to bring the House of Representatives into conformity with the Constitution and its existing protection of religious freedom," said CAIR national executive director Nihad Awad. A record number of women, and scores of

minorities including Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans and members of the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities, will fill the ranks of the 116th Congress when it convenes beginning Jan 3.

Democrat Jim McGovern, expected to chair the House Rules Committee starting in January, said the update reflects the broader diversity in Congress. "This change will finally codify that no restriction may be placed on a member's ability to do the job they were elected to do simply because of their faith," he said. The head-covering rule has vexed some lawmakers, notably Congresswoman Frederica Wilson, who is known for her colorful hats and has pushed to get the ban lifted. Under the proposed changes, Wilson would still be barred from wearing hats on the House floor. —AFP

More than 50 dead in attack on Kabul...

Continued from Page 1

mark the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday - one of the holiest days in the Islamic calendar. At least 24 are in a critical condition.

Religious studies lecturer Mohammad Hanif said verses of the Holy Quran were being recited when there was a deafening explosion followed by "chaos" inside the packed hall. "More than 60 or 70 people were martyred," Hanif, 31, told AFP outside a trauma facility run by Italian NGO Emergency. He escaped unhurt. "They suffered burns, everyone in the halls was screaming for help."

A photo posted on WhatsApp purportedly of the function room showed blood-splattered bodies, some with clothes partially ripped off by the force of the blast, overturned chairs and broken glass strewn over the floor. President Ashraf Ghani declared today a national day of mourning for the victims of the attack, which he described in a statement as an "unforgivable crime".

A manager of the multi-storey Uranus Wedding Palace, which also hosts political and religious functions, told AFP the suicide bomber blew himself up in the middle of the gathering of around 1,000 people. "There are a lot of

casualties - I myself have counted 30 casualties," he told AFP on condition of anonymity. The aid organization Emergency said on Twitter 33 wounded and seven dead had been taken to its hospital in Kabul. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, but the Islamic State group has claimed most recent suicide attacks in Kabul, which has become the most dangerous place in the country for civilians. The Taliban condemned the attack in a WhatsApp message.

It was the bloodiest assault in the Afghan capital since a twin bomb attack on a wrestling club in September that killed at least 26 people, and one of the deadliest in the country this year. A suicide attack on Afghans protesting the appointment of a local police chief in the eastern province of Nangarhar in September killed at least 68 people and wounded another 165. No group claimed that explosion.

In January an ambulance packed with explosives detonated in a crowded street in the heart of Kabul, killing more than 100 people, mostly civilians. The attack was claimed by the Taliban. Last month's parliamentary elections sparked a wave of deadly violence across the country, with hundreds killed or wounded in poll-related attacks. It is not the first time religious scholars have been targeted by militants in the Islamic country. In June a suicide bomber struck near a gathering of clerics in Kabul, about an hour after the group had proclaimed such attacks a sin. — Agencies

Sports

Pacquiao teases Mayweather rematch after January bout

Pacquiao, the only fighter to win world titles in eight different weight divisions

NEW YORK: Filipino veteran Manny Pacquiao revealed Monday he has spoken with Floyd Mayweather about a possible sequel to their 2015 superfight, but said no decision would be taken on a rematch until the New Year.

Speaking in New York to confirm details of his January 19 fight against Adrien Broner, Pacquiao said he had discussed a rematch with Mayweather during a recent trip to Japan. "When I met up with Floyd in Japan, we talked and he said he wants to come out of retirement to challenge me," Pacquiao said.

"All I know is fighting in the ring and entertaining people. That's my job. Floyd has come out of retirement and we'll see after this fight." Mayweather scored a unanimous victory over Pacquiao in 2015's "Fight of the Century", which was largely regarded as a let-down despite being the highest-grossing fight of all time.

Since then, speculation about a possible rematch between the two welterweights has flickered, with Mayweather saying in September he was ready to fight Pacquiao. "I'm coming back to fight Manny Pacquiao this year another 9 figure pay day on the way," Mayweather wrote on Instagram.

Meanwhile Pacquiao, who will be fighting in the United States for the first time in two years in January's bout, said Monday he remained solely focused on Broner before any return with Mayweather.

"We cannot underestimate Broner and this fight," Pacquiao said. "We will discuss anything with Floyd

Mayweather after that." Pacquiao, 39, will face Broner at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao holds the World Boxing Association's regular welterweight crown, a step below US unbeaten WBA 'super champion' Keith Thurman, after stopping Argentina's Lucas Matthisse in July at Kuala Lumpur.

"I have missed fighting in Las Vegas. It has been a second home to me," Pacquiao said. "Returning to the MGM Grand Garden Arena to defend my world title against Adrien Broner is an exciting way to stage my homecoming." Pacquiao, 60-7 with two drawn and 39 knockouts in a career that began in 1995, turns 40 in December while American Broner is 33-3 with one drawn and 24 knockouts. Pacquiao, the only fighter to win world titles in eight different weight divisions, has continued fighting after reversing a decision to retire in 2016.

Early Manny retirement?

Broner, however, said Monday he planned to send Pacquiao into permanent retirement.

"I have paid my dues in this sport, and now it's time for me to get mine," Broner said. "I get more views than everybody when I fight. A lot of people are going to see me pack off Pacquiao into retirement, and without his belt." Last month, Pacquiao signed with adviser Al Haymon's Premier Boxing Champions group after being promoted by Top Rank's Bob Arum, Haymon's main rival, for the past 14 years.

The move ensures Pacquiao will have chances to



File photo shows Manny Pacquiao (right) with Floyd Mayweather after their fight.

fight the best in the welterweight division as Haymon's fighters include Americans Thurman, 28-0 with 22 knockouts; World Boxing Council champion Shawn

Porter, 29-2 with one drawn and 17 knockouts, and International Boxing Federation champion Errol Spence Jr., 24-0 with 21 knockouts. —AFP

The countdown is on: 2022 Qatar

DOHA: As the four-year countdown for 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar kicks off on November 21st, beIN is dedicating a full day in honor of one of the biggest sporting events in the world on several of its channels, live from the host nation.

From special programs and interviews to reports, beIN will broadcast the captivating history and experiences of the World Cup throughout the years through its unrivalled commentary, expertise, and exclusive footage of some of the most iconic moments in football.

Having been the official broadcaster of the FIFA World Cup since 2010, and also the official broadcaster of 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar, several beIN star presenters and guests will report live from several locations around Qatar, including the revamped and ultra-modern Khalifa International Stadium, giving viewers a glimpse into what to expect in just a few short years.

Viewers can tune into beIN's English and Arabic channels, as well as beIN's dedicated 4K channel, to catch historic World Cup matches. beIN's official social media accounts will surprise followers with additional exclusive content and live interviews from Qatar.

Commenting on 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar (tm), beIN MEDIA GROUP Sports Advisor Jonathan Whitehead said: "As the official broadcaster, beIN MEDIA GROUP's prime focus is providing millions of viewers with outstanding, top quality and dynamic coverage of the greatest football tournament in the world. As an organization with a strong and very proud



footprint in the Middle East, beIN MEDIA GROUP is tremendously excited that the FIFA World Cup will be coming to the Arab region for the first time."

"We are also enormously confident in Qatar's ability to deliver an exceptional World Cup experience, and recent major events in the country have been terrific successes: the 2006 Asian Games, the 2015 World Men's Handball Championship and next year the World Championships in Athletics. In addition to combining vibrant Qatari culture and hospitality with innovative fan and player experiences, the compact nature of

2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar (tm) will offer millions of fans a unique and distinct experience, and build a lasting legacy in Qatar and the entire MENA region," he added. beIN is the official broadcaster for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar (tm) and the 2026 FIFA World Cup, having started its journey as the official broadcaster of the FIFA tournament since 2010. Follow beIN's Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts @beINSPORTS and @beINSPORTS_MENA for Twitter Arabic for all the updates as Qatar counts down to the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

India's Kom marches toward record 7th world champ medal

NEW DELHI: India's Mary Kom yesterday advanced to the semi-finals of the women's world boxing championships, assuring a seventh competition medal and title as the most successful fighter in the event's history.

The 35-year-old pugilist beat China's Wu Yu 5-0 in the 48kg quarterfinals of the flagship contest in New Delhi, ensuring at least a bronze medal as she advances to the final four. The Indian champ was tied on six medals with Irish legend Katie Taylor before this edition of the International Boxing Association event, but Tuesday's victory over Wu will take her tally to a record seven.

"It was very tough. Once I knew her game (Wu), I planned and made the strategy accordingly," Kom told reporters. "China keep changing their boxers and do not repeat them. They have got a lot of boxers, good boxers and strong boxers."

Kom, who was the subject of a Bollywood film in 2014, will take on a familiar foe in North Korea's Kim Hyang Mi in the semi-final tomorrow. She beat Kim last year to clinch her fifth Asian Championship title, but was not underestimating her opponent. "I don't have to be too overconfident. Just be confident," said Kom, who is a five-time world champion.

"Her game can change from that last loss. She would have analysed my fight. I will look at her in the ring in the first round and then see from there." —AFP



KFH's participation in the conference

KFH participates in Kuwait Int'l Arabian Horse Festival

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival organized by Bait Al Arab Kuwait Stud Show Arena as part of its continuing efforts to support the major events and forums held in Kuwait, especially sport-related events.

The event was held under the patronage of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The festival attracts huge number of visitors from the GCC and other Arab Countries.

The Egyptian Horses championship Kuwait took has been concluded in the presence of Mohammed Al-Jabri - Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. There are still some more upcoming championships.

KFH was praised in recognition of its main sponsorship and keenness to participate in the national events and celebrations while sponsoring and supporting sport and the youth as part of its social responsibility.



Farah to run 2019 London Marathon

LONDON: European record holder Mo Farah is to run next year's London Marathon for the third time, organisers said yesterday. The multi-Olympic, world and European champion over 10,000 and 5,000 metres retired from the track after the 2017 season to concentrate full-time on the marathon, having dipped his toe in at London in 2014.

In this year's race he finished third in two hours, six minutes, 21 seconds to break Steve Jones's 1985 British record but was more than two minutes adrift of winner Eliud Kipchoge, who has since taken the world record down to 2:01.39.

With another six months of dedicated training under his belt, Farah claimed his first win over the 26.2-mile distance by taking September's Chicago Marathon in 2:05.11 — a European record.

"I'm delighted to confirm I'll be returning to race the Virgin Money London Marathon again next year," Farah said in a statement. "I've often said how racing in London is very special to me and the London Marathon gives me the chance to run in front of my fans, on my home roads, where the atmosphere is like nothing else."

"I feel I have made great strides in the past year, finishing third in London in April, and winning my first major marathon in Chicago in October. That and breaking both the British and European records has given me the confidence that I can compete against the best marathon runners in the world. "London always puts together a world-class field and I expect that will be exactly the same in 2019 and I can't wait for the challenge." Farah, 35, is the first athlete to be announced for the 2019 race, which will take place on Sunday April 28. — Reuters

Sports

Anthony Davis' scores 29 points and Randle's triple-double lead Pelicans

Embiid scores 33 and grab 17 rebounds to lead 76ers past Phoenix

NEW ORLEANS: Anthony Davis scored 29 points and Julius Randle came off the bench to add a triple-double as the New Orleans Pelicans routed the San Antonio Spurs 140-126 on Monday night. Davis, who scored a combined 83 points in his previous two games, finished the Monday game six points shy of 10,000 points for his seven-year career. The Pelicans, who improved to 8-1 at home, swept a three-game homestand in which they averaged 131 points. They have won six of their last seven games. Randle finished with 21 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists. E'Twaun Moore scored 24 points, and Jrue Holiday scored 21 for New Orleans. DeMar DeRozan scored 21 points to lead San Antonio. Bryn Forbes had 20 and former Pelican Dante Cunningham scored 19 for the Spurs, who lost for the sixth time in eight games.

KINGS 117, THUNDER 113

Buddy Hield scored 25 points, hitting 3-pointers on three consecutive possessions late in the fourth quarter, to help lift Sacramento past visiting Oklahoma City. Hield's late treys helped the Kings overcome a strong finish from the Thunder's Russell Westbrook, who scored 13 of his game-high 29 points in the fourth quarter. Westbrook, who missed six consecutive games because of a sprained ankle and the birth of twin daughters over the weekend, also had 13 rebounds and seven assists. Iman Shumpert scored 23 points for the Kings, all in the first half. Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 16 points, and Marvin Bagley III had 15 points and 13 rebounds for Sacramento. Paul George added 27 points for Oklahoma City.

BUCKS 104, NUGGETS 98

Giannis Antetokounmpo finished with 29 points, 12 rebounds and six assists to lead host Milwaukee past Denver. Eric Bledsoe added 23 points on 8-of-10 shooting, and Malcolm Brogdon and Khris Middleton added 13 points apiece for the Bucks, who have won consecutive games for the first time since a 7-0 start. Nikola Jokic scored 20 points and Jamal Murray had 17 points, eight rebounds and nine assists for the Nuggets.

HORNETS 117, CELTICS 112

Kemba Walker scored 43 points, and host Charlotte rallied from a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter to

beat Boston. Walker scored 21 of his points in the fourth quarter, singlehandedly leading the comeback until Tony Parker hit two clutch baskets in the final two minutes. Walker's 3-pointer with 33.3 seconds left gave the Hornets a six-point lead and all but settled the outcome. In the process, Walker reclaimed his spot as the league's leading scorer. He came into the night averaging 28.7 points per game, behind LeBron James' 28.8, but now holds a slight edge over James. Kyrie Irving led the Celtics with 27 points and 11 assists.

76ERS 119, SUNS 114

Joel Embiid scored 33 points and grabbed 17 rebounds to lead host Philadelphia past Phoenix. It was Embiid's 11th game this season with at least 30 points and 10 rebounds. The Sixers improved to 9-0 at home and secured their 19th straight home win dating to last season. This is their longest home winning streak since tallying 24 straight from Nov. 27, 1982, to March 23, 1983. Ben Simmons added 19 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists for the Sixers, who have won three in a row. Devin Booker led the Suns with 37 points, while TJ Warren added 21 and rookie DeAndre Ayton chipped in with 17.

PACERS 121, JAZZ 94

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 21 points and Domantas Sabonis just missed recording a triple-double as host Indiana cruised past Utah. Sabonis finished with 19 points, nine rebounds and a career-high nine assists in 26 minutes off the bench. The win was the third straight for the Pacers, who completed a sweep of a three-game homestand that also included games against Miami and Atlanta. The Pacers were playing without leading scorer Victor Oladipo, who missed his first game of the season because of a sore right knee. Ricky Rubio led the Jazz with 28 points, six assists and three steals.

GRIZZLIES 98, MAVERICKS 88

Mike Conley scored a game-high 28 points, which included seven 3-pointers, as host Memphis cooled off Dallas. The Grizzlies won for the seventh time in eight home games, while Dallas saw its season-best, four-game winning streak come to an end while losing for the seventh time in eight road games. The Mavericks' 88 points marked a season low. Conley's seventh 3-pointer with 4:26 to go in the game came on the heels



NEW ORLEANS: Quincy Pondexter #3 of the San Antonio Spurs shoots the ball against the New Orleans Pelicans on Monday at Smoothie King Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. —AFP

of Garrett Temple's second 3-pointer for a 90-84 lead. Marc Gasol, who finished with 17 points, 15 rebounds, four assists and four blocks, then splashed a jumper to give Memphis the largest lead of the game, 92-84 with 3:01 to go.

CLIPPERS 127, HAWKS 119

Tobias Harris and Montrezl Harrell combined to score 49 points and lead Los Angeles to its fifth straight win at the expense of host Atlanta. Harris scored 24 points and was 4-for-8 on 3-point attempts while adding eight rebounds and two blocks. Harrell came off the bench to score 25 points and made a career-best 15 free throws while adding 11 rebounds, five steals and two blocks. Atlanta lost its eighth straight game and the 12th of its last 13. The defeat came despite 25 points and a career-high 17 assists from rookie Trae Young.

Young broke out of a three-game scoring slump that saw him limited to single digits, including only four points in a Nov. 13 loss at Golden State. He scored 19 in the first half Monday to pace the Hawks to a 64-61 halftime lead.

PISTONS 113, CAVALIERS 102

Andre Drummond had 23 points, 16 rebounds and three blocks to boost host Detroit past Cleveland. Blake Griffin had 21 points, 12 rebounds and five assists, and Reggie Bullock contributed 21 points and four assists for the Pistons, who led by as many as 30 points. Reggie Jackson added 13 points, and Ish Smith tossed in 11 off the bench. The Cavaliers had six players in double figures, led by rookie Collin Sexton's 18 points and four assists. Jordan Clarkson had 16 points, four rebounds and four assists off the bench. — Reuters

ICC rejects Pakistan compensation claim over India

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council yesterday dismissed a compensation claim by Pakistan over India's refusal to honour an agreement to play bilateral series.

"Following a three-day hearing and having considered detailed oral and written submissions, the Dispute Panel has dismissed the PCB's claim against the BCCI," the ICC said in a statement.

The decision cannot be appealed. The dispute centred on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) according to which India and Pakistan had agreed to play six bilateral series between 2015-2023, four of which would be hosted by Pakistan.

The PCB had filed a compensation claim of \$70 million. But India refused to play Pakistan citing the Indian government's objections due to strained relations with Pakistan.

According to the agreement, the six tours would include up to 14 Tests, 30 one-days and 12 Twenty20 internationals.

The MoU was a reward to Pakistan for backing the "Big Three" plan according to which India, Australia and England had the major share of power and revenues of world cricket.

However, that arrangement fell apart and the BCCI refused to accept the MoU as a legal document, dismissing it as a "piece of paper".

India cut off cricket ties with Pakistan after the 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai which left more than 160 people killed.

The two sides have not played a full series since Pakistan's tour of India in 2007. Pakistan toured India for a limited-overs series with two Twenty20s and three one-day internationals from December 2012-January 2013 but full ties were not restored.

After negotiations about the proposed tours failed, the PCB filed a notice of dispute with the ICC resolution committee in November last year, claiming the 70 million dollars in compensation.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which has reportedly spent one million dollars fighting the case, described the decision as "disappointing."

"Following a lengthy dispute resolution process, the announcement of the decision has come as a disappointment," it said.

"PCB will determine its future course of action in this regard after detailed deliberations and consultations with its stakeholders."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) welcomed the decision, saying it had always maintained that the MoU was non-binding and that it "merely expressed an intention to play".

"The BCCI wholeheartedly welcomes the decision of the Dispute Panel. The BCCI will now move the Dispute Panel to recover its legal cost from the PCB," it said in a press release. — AFP

Weakened Australia still 'world-class', says captain Kohli

BRISBANE: India captain Virat Kohli insisted yesterday Australia have the quality to upset the odds in their Twenty20 series and said his team will be focusing on the "little things" to come out on top. The visitors open their tour with the first of three T20s in Brisbane today ahead of four Tests and three one-dayers that will keep them in Australia until late January.

In the short format, they have been by far the better team in recent times. Australia have also been weakened by ball-tampering bans to key batsmen Steve Smith and David Warner. "We definitely have a very strong side," said Kohli, who last month became the fastest to reach 10,000 runs in one-day internationals, breaking Sachin Tendulkar's record.

"When we step on the field we have 11 individuals striving for excellence, they want to be the best they can. Those are the dynamics that have allowed us to play the cricket that we are and hopefully we can build on that."

While Kohli is a dangerman for India, so are KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma, who has smashed two centuries in four T20 innings since July. They both sit

above their captain on the T20 batting rankings.

Despite Australia being without Smith and Warner who will need to serve their full 12-month bans for ball-tampering, after Cricket Australia yesterday ruled out any reductions yesterday-Kohli is adamant the hosts still pose a big threat.

"There's no denying the quality they have in their side," he said. "They still have world-class cricketers, though missing out on two of the world's best batsmen in not ideal for any team. But the guys they have, especially in the limited-overs game, can do damage at any point in time. You can never underestimate any side. We're won't be taking anything for granted."

India arrived in Australia on the back of a home thrashing of the West Indies, but their form traditionally is more fragile on the road. Kohli said they planned to "do the little things right so we can win more situations than the opposition".

"We definitely believe we have the quality to win, but it will boil down to how we think in each moment in every game we play." Australia were beaten in both white-ball formats by South Africa in recent weeks, but skipper Aaron Finch is confident they can turn their fortunes around with a more assertive approach.

"It's going to be a great opportunity for us to come out and express ourselves, play some great attacking cricket, take the game on and really try and take it to India," he said yesterday.

And Finch believes they are close to winning their first series since new coach Justin Langer took over, after Darren Lehmann stepped down following the

Brathwaite ready for Bangladesh challenge

DHAKA: West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite says he expects Bangladesh to put up a tough fight on home turf when they kick off a two-Test series in Chittagong tomorrow. The visitors start the series as favourites having thumped Bangladesh in back-to-back Tests during their tour of the Caribbean in July.

But Brathwaite exercised caution ahead of this week's series opener, saying Bangladesh could exploit their home advantage against the visiting side. "There will be few challenges, we have to expect that," he told reporters after a two-day warm-up match in Chittagong on Monday ended in a draw.

"It won't be so easy. Obviously they are very good at home. But we are ready for the challenges." Bangladesh have upstaged Test giants England and Australia on home soil in the past two years, but then struggled against weaker sides Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in 2018.

They managed a series draw against Test minnows Zimbabwe last week after their spinners salvaged a 218-run win in the second match after a shock 151-run defeat in the opener. Brathwaite, who is standing in for Jason Holder, acknowledged the threat posed by Bangladesh seamers, who will reap the return of star all-rounder and skipper Shakib Al Hasan from injury.

"(We are) expecting (a) slower type of pitch. Normal surfaces here, let's see now what happens," said Brathwaite. The opening batsman was happy with preparations for the tour, despite it following quick on the heels of a thrashing from India.



Kraigg Brathwaite

The world's top Test side beat the West Indies 2-0 in the longest form of the game before dominating the one-day international and Twenty20 international series 3-1 and 3-0 respectively.

"We have come from India, and that I think was very good preparations for us before the first Test," Brathwaite said. "Obviously quite similar conditions, so that will be good. The main thing is that the wicket is quite similar also."

The second Test will be held in Dhaka from November 30 to December 4. West Indies will also play three one-day internationals and Twenty20 internationals during their month-long series in Bangladesh from November 22 to December 22. — AFP



Virat Kohli

tampering row. "India are in great form but we feel as though we've been building really nicely without getting results going our way so far," he said.

Australia squad: Aaron Finch (capt), Ashton Agar, Jason Behrendorff, Alex Carey, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Chris Lynn, Ben McDermott, Glenn Maxwell, D'Arcy Short, Billy Stanlake, Marcus Stoinis, Andrew Tye, Adam Zampa.

India squad: Virat Kohli (capt), Khaleel Ahmed, Jasprit Bumrah, Yuzvendra Chahal, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer, Dinesh Karthik, Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Manish Pandey, Krunal Pandya, Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, Washington Sundar, Umesh Yadav. — AFP

Cricket Australia rules out cutting ball-tampering bans

SYDNEY: Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft will all have to serve their full bans for ball-tampering, Cricket Australia ruled yesterday after reviewing a submission by the players' union to cut the penalties.

CA interim chairman Earl Eddings said the board had "determined that it is not appropriate to make any changes to the sanctions handed down to the three players". Smith and Warner, then Australia's captain and vice-captain, were banned from state and international cricket for 12 months over the incident in South Africa in March, while Bancroft was suspended for nine months.

There had been pressure on the governing body to reinstate them amid a recent dire run of results, with the decision condemning Australia to a summer of cricket without their best players for Tests against India and Sri Lanka.

The scandal, which rocked the sport, had far-reaching consequences in Australia with a clean-out of top executives from CA after a scathing review blamed its "arrogant and controlling" culture as partly contributing to players bending the rules.

The Australian Cricketers' Association submitted an appeal last month, arguing that the blame attributed to CA by the independent review was grounds to have the bans lifted with the trio "punished enough".

But Eddings, who became temporary chairman this month after David Peever was forced out, said the punishment fitted the crime. "CA maintains that both the length and nature of the sanctions remain an appropriate response in light of the considerable impact on the reputation of Australian cricket, here and abroad," he said. — AFP

Sports

Van Dijk hails Dutch draw to reach Nations League semis

'Fantastic feeling' to finish top of Group One ahead of European powerhouses

GELSENKIRCHEN: Virgil van Dijk hailed the Netherlands' belief as his 91st-minute equaliser fired them into the semi-finals of the Nations League after their dramatic 2-2 draw with Germany. The point in Gelsenkirchen was enough for the Dutch to advance to the last four at the expense of world champions France after scoring twice in the final six minutes in a dramatic finish.

Liverpool defender Van Dijk volleyed home a cross in added time to complete the Dutch fight back after Quincy Promes had scored their first goal on 85 minutes. Germany, who led 2-0 after only 20 minutes through goals by Timo Werner and Leroy Sane, were punished for not being clinical enough in the second half. Van Dijk said it was "a fantastic feeling" to finish top of Group One ahead of European powerhouses France and the Germans. "We should all be proud of ourselves. I know I am," he said after the Dutch join England, Switzerland and Portugal in the Nations League's last four. "We worked so hard every game and to get rewards for that is fantastic." After missing out on qualifying for the finals of both Euro 2016 and this year's World Cup, Van Dijk said the priority is to get the Dutch to the Euro 2020 finals.

"If we can win the Nations League, fantastic, but we all want to make sure we're at the European Championships and do very well there to make our country proud," he added. Netherlands head coach Ronald Koeman praised his team for turning two of their three late chances into goals.

"It was very difficult for us, the Germans were sharper and faster in the first half," admitted Koeman. "We fought to come back in the second half and pressed. They had their chances to finish it off, but the fight and belief we showed was enough for the point.

"We didn't play great football, it wasn't our best performance, but it was enough.

"No one expected Holland to win the group. "Of course, we did not want to go down to League 'B', but winning the group was a dream." After Germany missed several second-half chances, head coach Joachim Loew rued the victory that got away from his inexperienced side. "That's the price you pay for having a young side, we have to learn to close a game down," said Loew, who started only three 2014 World Cup winners in Mats Hummels, Toni Kroos and Manuel Neuer.

"They risked everything and were rewarded. "This is a learning experience for us and we will have to analyse our performance in the last 10 minutes. "We showed for 80 minutes that we are strong and they hardly had a chance to score, which says a lot for our team." Thomas Mueller reached the milestone of 100 Germany appearances as a second-half replacement, but the future belongs to the likes of Manchester City's German winger Sane, who was outstanding.

"The result is annoying," Sane said. "We went ahead and then let them off the hook. "We should have scored the third goal, then you run the game down, but it didn't work out like that."

Fellow goal-scorer Werner, who ended his eight-game goal drought, agreed. "It's a pity, we had everything under control until the 85th minute and could have gone 3-0 up," said Werner.

"At the end, we weren't rewarded and everything fell apart again." Despite finishing the year with a 3-0 win over Russia last Thursday and a draw with the Dutch, 2018 has been a nightmare year for the Germans.

They have suffered a record six defeats in the last 12 months, exited the World Cup bottom of their group



GELSENKIRCHEN: Germany's midfielder Serge Gnabry (L) runs with the ball during the UEFA Nations League football match Germany v the Netherlands in Gelsenkirchen, western Germany, on Monday. —AFP

and are relegated to the 'B' division of the Nations League. Yet Loew, who has a contract until the 2022 World Cup, has kept his job and looks safe until the Euro 2020 finals. "It's been a very disappointing year

after the World Cup didn't go the way we wanted it to. "However, I have the feeling we are on a good path with these players and will be successful again with this young team." —AFP

Japan crush Kyrgyzstan

TOYOTA CITY: Japan overcame Kyrgyzstan 4-0 in a home friendly yesterday, maintaining an undefeated run under their new coach as they head to the Asian Cup. Just two minutes after kickoff, defender Ryosuke Yamanaka scored the opener for Japan, ensuring a memorable first game for the national team. "Since it was the game's first chance, I kicked with all my strength," Yamanaka said. "I think it was a good debut match for me." Midfielder Genki Haraguchi then sent in a free kick in the 19th minute to double the lead, delighting local fans in Toyota.

In the second half, ace striker Yuya Osako scored from a precise pass from Koya Kitagawa, and midfielder Shoya Nakajima added a fourth soon after. Japan now have four wins and a draw from coach Hajime Moriyasu's first five games in charge, following their surprise run to the last 16 of the World Cup in Russia under Akira Nishino.

Japan are aiming for a record-extending fifth title at Asia's showcase football tournament in the United Arab Emirates starting in January. "We are setting a goal to win the Asian championship," Moriyasu said.

"We want to challenge for the Asian Cup by boosting our strength to the next level based on the results of the games so far." Japan have been in good form recently. They drew 1-1 with Venezuela on Friday, with defender Hiroki Sakai netting his first goal for the Blue Samurai. And last month, they stunned World Cup quarter-finalists Uruguay 4-3. —AFP



TOYOTA CITY: Japan's midfielder Junya Ito (L) fights for the ball with Kyrgyzstan's defender Sherzot Shakirov during the friendly football match between Japan and Kyrgyzstan in Toyota city yesterday. —AFP

made 25 saves for St. Louis.

CAPITALS 5, CANADIENS 4 (OT)

Lars Eller scored with 1:26 left in overtime to give Washington a come-from-behind victory at Montreal. Montreal had won two in a row and held a 4-2 lead just 1:35 into the second period before Washington pulled rookie goalie Pheonix Copley in favor of Braden Holtby. The 29-year-old veteran shut out the Canadiens the rest of the way, stopping all 22 shots he faced. Alex Ovechkin scored twice for Washington, which also got goals from Brett Connolly and Nicklas Backstrom. Mike Reilly, Brendan Gallagher, Jeff Petry and Kenny Agostino scored for Montreal, which led 4-2 in the second period.

JETS 6, CANUCKS 3

Patrik Laine scored three goals as Winnipeg won at Vancouver. Laine gave the Jets an insurmountable 4-1 lead midway through the second period with his first goal of the night. The flashy Finn added two third-period goals, the final one an empty-netter, as the Jets posted their fourth win in five games. The injury-riddled Canucks lost their sixth consecutive game. Winnipeg goaltender Connor Hellebuyck produced 22 saves on 25 shots, while Vancouver counterpart Jacob Markstrom stopped 43 of 48.

SABRES 5, PENGUINS 4 (OT)

Jack Eichel scored 45 seconds into overtime as Buffalo erased a three-goal deficit to win its sixth consecutive game, beating host Pittsburgh. Eichel, who also had an assist, launched a shot from the right dot that caromed in off the arm of Pittsburgh goaltender Casey DeSmith. Zach Bogosian also had a goal and an assist, and Tage Thompson, Casey Nelson and Casey Mittelstadt scored for the Sabres, who picked up their fifth win when trailing after two periods. Tanner Pearson had a goal and an assist, and Derick Brassard, Phil Kessel, and Jake Guentzel scored for the Penguins, who blew a 4-1 second-period lead and fell to 1-7-2 in their past 10 games.

RANGERS 2, STARS 1

Rookie Filip Chytil scored for the fourth consecutive game, netting the tiebreaking goal early in the third period as New York ran its home winning streak to six games with a victory over Dallas. Chytil gave the Rangers a 2-1 lead with 15:28 remaining. The 19-year-old became the first teenager to score in four straight games in team history while helping New York improve to 8-1-1 in its last 10 games. Jimmy Vesey scored the tying goal for the Rangers, who own the NHL's longest home winning streak this sea-



NASHVILLE: Filip Forsberg #9 of the Nashville Predators collides with Braydon Coburn #55 as Craig Smith #15 and Dan Girardi #5 fight for the puck during the third period at Bridgestone Arena on Monday in Nashville, Tennessee. —AFP

son. Tyler Seguin tallied for the Stars, who dropped to 1-3-0 in their past four road games and mustered a season-low 17 shots.

FLAMES 7, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2

Matthew Tkachuk collected two goals and two assists, and Johnny Gaudreau had a career-high-tying four-point game as host Calgary rode a five-goal first period to a thrashing of Vegas. Flames goalie David Rittich made 20 saves to collect his seventh victory in eight decisions. This win may have been the easiest for Rittich, as his team potted five goals in a first period for the first time since March 11, 1993, versus the Detroit Red Wings. Sean Monahan scored twice for Calgary, which also got goals from Gaudreau, TJ Brodie and Sam Bennett. Nick Holden and Max Pacioretty got on the board for the Golden Knights after they fell behind 7-0.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, BLUE JACKETS 2

Zach Hyman scored the go-ahead goal late in the third period and added another into an empty net as Toronto came back to defeat visiting Columbus. It was the fourth win in a row for the Maple Leafs, who fell behind 2-0 in the first period. The Blue Jackets had won their three previous games. Tyler Ennis and Tavares also scored for Toronto. Mitch Marner and Ron Hainsey each added two assists. Cam Atkinson and Pierre-Luc Dubois each scored a goal and added an assist for Columbus. —Reuters

Former FIFA ethics head quits Swiss prosecution authority

GENEVA: A former head of FIFA's Ethics Committee has stepped down from his position on Switzerland's prosecution supervisory authority in order to not hamper ongoing investigations into football, it was announced Monday.

Cornel Borbely presided on the investigation chamber of world football governing body's ethics committee from May 2015 until his dismissal alongside adjudicatory chamber head Hans-Joachim Eckert in May 2017, following the arrival of Gianni Infantino as FIFA president.

In a brief statement, Switzerland's public prosecutors office (MPC) said that "current developments in complex investigations into football ... have resulted in this area becoming of unexpected importance in the activities of the AS-MPC (MPC's supervisory authority)".

The supervisory authority has six members, who are responsible for ensuring the smooth running of investigations conducted by the MPC.

"In order to enable the AS-MPC to count on all of its resources, Cornel Borbely has decided to step down," added the MPC.

Since a raid on a luxury hotel in Zurich in May 2015 led to the arrests of a number of FIFA executives and shone the spotlight on the corrupt underbelly of world football, Switzerland has pursued a number of cases.

Charges have been pressed against former FIFA president Sepp Blatter as well as against FIFA's former Secretary General Jerome Valcke.

Swiss investigators have also searched UEFA's offices in Nyon concerning revelations made in the so-called Panama Papers over a broadcasting rights contract signed by the organisation's former secretary general, Gianni Infantino, the current president of FIFA.

The latest series of Football Leaks allegations meanwhile shone a light on Infantino's relationship with another Swiss prosecutor, Rinaldo Arnold, spurring Swiss authorities to open an investigation.

Infantino allegedly invited Arnold to attend the World Cup in Russia, the 2016 FIFA Congress in Mexico and the Champions League final in Milan that year, in exchange for organising meetings with Swiss Attorney General Michael Lauber and other attorney general's office chiefs. —AFP



Cornel Borbely

Panthers' Trocheck stretched off but top Senators 7-5

FLORIDA: The Florida Panthers sustained a potentially devastating injury to 2017 All-Star center Vincent Trocheck but still prevailed 7-5 over the host Ottawa Senators on Monday night. Trocheck, who suffered an apparent knee injury, was taken off the ice by stretcher with 1:47 left in the second period. He was hurt when he was crunched into the boards by Ottawa's Ryan Dzingel. "It doesn't look good to me," Florida coach Bobby Boughner said postgame, according to NHL.com. "It looks long term, and there's no way to sugarcoat it." Florida got goals from Troy Brouwer, Aleksander Barkov, Jared McCann, Evgenii Dadonov, Micheal Haley, Frank Vatrano and Mike Hoffman. Hoffman extended his Panthers franchise-record points streak to 16 games, which is the longest active run in the NHL. Matt Duchene led Ottawa with two goals and one assist. Drake Batherson, Zack Smith and Brady Tkachuk had Ottawa's other goals.

PREDATORS 3, LIGHTNING 2

Ryan Johansen scored what proved to be the game-winning goal and also had an assist, and Pekka Rinne made 29 saves to lead host Nashville past Tampa Bay. Kyle Turris and Filip Forsberg also scored goals for Western Conference-leading Nashville. Mattias Ekholm added two assists. Rinne improved to 9-0-1 in his career against the Lightning. Victor Hedman and Nikita Kucherov scored goals and Brayden Point added a pair of assists for the Lightning, who had a two-game winning streak snapped. Louis Domingue stopped 31 shots.

KINGS 2, BLUES 0

Cal Petersen made 29 saves for his first career shutout in his third NHL start, all in the past four days, to lead visiting Los Angeles to a win at St. Louis. The Blues were shut out for the second straight game and lost for the fourth time in five games, and afterward they fired coach Mike Yeo. Assistant coach Craig Berube will fill Yeo's role on an interim basis. Matt Luff scored his first NHL goal in the second period and Anze Kopitar scored into an empty-net with 29.5 seconds left to secure the win. Jake Allen

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Rams slip past Chiefs in historic SO

Mahomes completes 33 of 46 passes for career-high 478 yards, six touchdowns



LOS ANGELES: Brandin Cooks #12 of the Los Angeles Rams makes a first down during the third quarter of the game against the Kansas City Chiefs at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on Monday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

LOS ANGELES: Jared Goff passed for 413 yards and four touchdowns Monday, and linebacker Samson Ebukam scored touchdowns off a fumble return and interception as the Los Angeles Rams topped the visiting Kansas City Chiefs 54-51.

The shootout, moved from its originally scheduled site to Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum because of poor field conditions in Mexico City, lived up to its billing. It was the first game in NFL history in which both teams scored 50-plus points, and it was the highest-scoring Monday night game in league history.

Former Chief Marcus Peters seemingly preserved the victory by grabbing an interception on a pass by Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes. Ebukam effected with the errant throw by pressuring Mahomes.

That gave the Rams (10-1) the ball with 1:18 left

after they converted three earlier turnovers into 21 points. However, Los Angeles then inexplicably threw three passes, one of which was incomplete, allowing Kansas City to preserve a timeout.

The Chiefs (9-2) got the ball back with 50 seconds left, but Mahomes threw his third interception, caught by Lamarcus Joyner.

Mahomes completed 33 of 46 passes for a career-high 478 yards and six touchdowns, but he turned the ball over five times. Wide receiver Tyreek Hill made 10 receptions for 215 yards and two scores, and tight end Travis Kelce had 10 catches for 127 yards and a score.

The Chiefs also scored a defensive touchdown on a 2-yard fumble return from Allen Bailey following a strip-sack by Justin Houston. The play gave Kansas City a 44-40 lead with 11:07 remaining.

Nonetheless, the Rams capitalized on the makeshift

home game, prevailing on an emotional night when they observed recent tragedies from wildfires and a mass shooting.

Los Angeles went in front 47-44 on a Goff 7-yard scoring strike to Gerald Everett with 9:38 left. Mahomes put Kansas City back on top thanks to a 10-yard touchdown pass to Chris Conley with 2:50 to go.

Without any timeouts, Goff connected on a 40-yard pass to Everett with 1:49 remaining for the go-ahead score, which Los Angeles maintained with the two late interceptions.

Los Angeles receiver Brandin Cooks finished with eight catches for 107 yards.

Goff passed for touchdowns on each of the Rams' first two series, connecting for 7 and 4 yards to Robert Woods and Josh Reynolds while picking on Chiefs cornerback Orlando Scandrick both times. Goff

went 10 of 13 on those drives while also capitalizing on five Kansas City penalties, staking Los Angeles to a 13-0 lead.

After going three-and-out on their first series, with two penalties, the Chiefs rallied for three straight scores, including TD passes of 25 and 21 yards from Mahomes to Hill and Hunt, respectively. The second touchdown provided a 17-16 edge and came in one play following a sack, strip and recovery by Bailey.

Rams standout Aaron Donald returned the favor with a sack-strip of Mahomes. Ebukam recovered the fumble and scored on an 11-yard return with 1:50 remaining in the half.

The Chiefs, however, roared back and scored with 13 seconds left as Mahomes fired an 8-yard strike to Conley. The PAT was missed, however, leaving the teams tied at 23 at halftime. — Reuters

There will be no Super League, UEFA chief says

LONDON: There will be no breakaway European Super League, UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin and Andrea Agnelli, the chairman of the influential European Club Association has told the BBC.

Instead their joint plans for the future of European football from 2024 onwards will see a revised football schedule which will possibly involve less domestic football and more European competition.

German news magazine Der Spiegel claimed to have documents which showed Europe's biggest clubs planning for a Super League from 2021.

"The Super League will not happen. It is

in a way a fiction now or a dream," Ceferin told the BBC. Agnelli, whose body represents over 200 leading teams, said the clubs and UEFA are "united" in their views on how the game should progress over the coming years.

"I can confirm we have never seen, never discussed, never been involved in the creation of this document (about a Super League)," said Agnelli, who is also chairman of Juventus one of the clubs reportedly due to be a founding member of the Super League. "We are fully engaged with Uefa in shaping the game going forward."

Ceferin—who is due to be re-elected to his post unopposed next February—and Agnelli says discussions are taking place about how to change the format of European club football's premier competition, the Champions League.

This is being done in order to obtain a more financially attractive broadcasting deal. "We have some ideas," said Ceferin. "All I can say is that any Super League is

out of the question. "Participation stays. And everybody will have an opportunity to compete in every European competition," added the 51-year-old Slovenian lawyer.

Ceferin said a planned third European competition with 32 teams will be appreciated by European clubs.

It is not the first time there have been three European club competitions as prior to it being reduced to the Champions League and Europa League—formerly the UEFA Cup—there was the Cup Winners Cup. The new competition is due to be voted in at a UEFA meeting in Dublin in early December. "It will be our duty to safeguard the great heritages of European football but on the other side I think we are very well aware that we have to safeguard markets, we have to think about upcoming markets," said Ceferin.

"Fans can rest assured that if we put our hands to making a new product it's because we want to make sure that fans across Europe engage." —AFP

UEFA – ECA PRESS CONFERENCE



BRUSSELS: Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) President Aleksander Ceferin (L) gives a joint press conference with chairman of the European Club Association (ECA) Andrea Agnelli, yesterday in Brussels. —AFP