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French police fire tear gas at protesters on Champs-Elysees

Thousands of 'yellow vests' take to streets • Kuwait urges citizens to avoid demos

PARIS: Police fired tear gas and water cannon yesterday in central Paris against "yellow vest" protesters demanding French President Emmanuel Macron roll back tax hikes on motor fuel. Some 3,000 police were deployed in the capital as demonstrators who have blocked French roads over the past week wearing their now signature high-visibility jackets caused another day of disruption after calls to bring Paris to a standstill.

AFP reporters said several thousand had gathered by early yesterday on the famous Champs-Elysees where they clashed with police trying to prevent them moving down to the Place de la Concorde near the Louvre museum. The Kuwaiti Embassy in Paris warned, in a statement yesterday, Kuwaiti citizens to avoid crowded areas near labor demonstration sites. In the statement, the embassy urged Kuwaitis to exercise caution and contact it in case of an emergency.

Police said the protestors had tried to break through a cordon several times but had been prevented from doing so, with tear gas used more than once. "We have just demonstrated peacefully, and we were teargassed," said Christophe, 49, who traveled from the Isere region in eastern France with his wife to protest in the capital. "We see how we are welcomed in Paris." Police said yesterday's incidents were linked to the "presence of members of the far-right who harassed the security forces".

Nearly 300,000 people blocked motorways, roundabouts, businesses, and fuel depots last Saturday. The

government said 81,000 'yellow vests' demonstrated yesterday across France by mid-afternoon, compared with about 124,000 at the same time the previous Saturday. Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said 8,000 took to the streets in Paris, with about 5,000 on the Champs-Elysees. He blamed the violence in the iconic boulevard on the far-right and Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Rally (formerly the National Front) party.

The police were facing seditious groups "who notably had responded to the call of Marine Le Pen and want to attack the country's institutions just as they want to attack (government) lawmakers," the minister said. Le Pen rejected the remarks, saying she had never called for violence and claiming the government was trying to make her the scapegoat. Police said eight people had so far been arrested for throwing projectiles.

The demonstrations were sparked by an increase in diesel tax, justified as an anti-pollution levy by the government but have morphed into a broad opposition front to centrist Macron. Protesters had converged early yesterday on the Place de l'Etoile at the top of the Champs-Elysee avenue, shouting "Macron resign". Police had cordoned off a zone that included the Place de la Concorde, the National Assembly and a section of the Champs-Elysees. "In this zone, no demonstration, no gathering, no march linked to the 'yellow vests' can take place," said Paris police chief Michel Delpuech.

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PARIS: A truck burns during a protest by 'yellow vests' against rising oil prices and living costs near the Arc of Triumph on the Champs-Elysees yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

Cabbie's killer arrested

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's relations and security information department said Hawally detectives identified and arrested the suspect in the murder of a roaming taxi driver in Jabriya. Detectives had received a call last week about a person stabbed in an open area in Jabriya. Eyewitnesses said a person stabbed the victim several times, then got into a taxi and fled. Detectives later located the taxi in Rawda with blood inside and outside the car, which the suspect had attempted to burn but failed. Investigations led to identifying the suspect, a Kuwaiti, who was found in a Jabriya flat. He said a dispute with the driver led him to stab the victim before escaping. He was charged with murder. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

5,000 Filipinos arrive monthly

KUWAIT: Head of the domestic labor offices union Khaled Al-Dakhnan said over 5,000 workers from the Philippines enter Kuwait monthly and denied any delays by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Manila. Dakhnan expressed gratitude for the efforts exerted by the ambassador and the embassy staff to complete procedures within 24 hours after receiving passports. Dakhnan said along with the union's secretary Ali Shammouh and board member Khaled Al-Qallaf, he had visited the embassy and found around 400 passports are processed daily, including those of domestic helpers and other workers and visitors. He added that the embassy receives 160 passports weekly from each labor office. — A Saleh

Seventh Ring Road reopens

KUWAIT: The interior ministry announced yesterday the reopening of the Seventh Ring Road, which was closed due to recent rainfall that swamped some roads and formed puddles at various public locations. The ministry said in a statement that traffic has been restored on the main road in both directions - from Dhahr to Jahra. Competent authorities are working relentlessly to remove rainwater puddles and facilitate traffic throughout the country. Kuwait recently witnessed heavy rains, unprecedented in the country since 50 years. — KUNA

Kuwaiti student killed in US

KUWAIT: Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi Friday expressed his deep sadness over a deadly traffic accident in California in which student Abdulrazzaq Fuad Al-Khamis was killed and Abdulaziz Al-Said, Abdulaziz Al-Romaih and Youssef Al-Bader were injured. Azmi sent heartfelt condolences to the student's family, praying to Allah to bless his soul and bring solace to his family. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh also mourned the student's sad demise. — KUNA

Bahrain holds parliamentary, municipal polls

DUBAI: Bahrain held a parliamentary election yesterday amid boycott calls from dissolved opposition groups which have been banned from taking part. The country's two main opposition groups, the Shiite Al-Wefaq and secular Waad, were barred from fielding candidates. King Hamad in September urged voters to take part in the vote, in which officials say 293 people - including 41 women - are running for parliament. A municipal poll coincides with the parlia-

mentary vote.

More than 350,000 Bahrainis were eligible to vote in yesterday's poll, according to justice minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al-Khalifa, adding that there were 54 polling stations across the country. Yesterday, the interior ministry warned voters to "dismiss rumors that affect the electoral process", accusing Iran of interference in the process. It urged citizens to depend on "reliable sources" after people reportedly received text messages warning them not to head to polling stations as they had been stricken from the electoral roll.

The ministry said Tehran was behind around 40,000 texts sent to Bahraini citizens that "aimed to negatively affect" the elections, adding that other

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MUHARRAQ, Bahrain: Bahraini voters cast their ballots at a polling station yesterday. — AFP

Clashes follow detention of Pakistani cleric

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan authorities launched a crackdown yesterday against hundreds of supporters of a hardline cleric whose party recently paralyzed the country with violent protests over the acquittal of a Christian woman accused of blasphemy. Hours after firebrand cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi was himself arrested late Friday, police said over 300 Tehreek-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) party supporters were detained in Punjab province in efforts to "maintain

public order".

The arrests came ahead of a scheduled party rally today in Islamabad, but Punjab information minister Fayyaz ul Hassan Chohan said TLP supporters would be banned from gathering in the neighboring province. "We are detaining supporters of TLP across the province to avoid any backlash after the arrest of their leaders," said Chohan. "Police has been deployed in all major cities of the province to deal with any untoward incident. There is a complete ban on all type of political gatherings in the province."

The country's information minister Fawad Chaudhry said the detention of Rizvi "has to do nothing with (the) Asia Bibi case," referring to a Christian woman who was on death row for eight

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KARACHI: A Pakistani policeman fires teargas towards protesters early yesterday during clashes after the arrest of hardline cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi. — AFP

Egypt unveils ancient tomb and sarcophagi

LUXOR: Egypt yesterday unveiled an ancient tomb, sarcophagi and funerary artifacts discovered in the Theban necropolis of Al-Assasif in the southern city of Luxor. In a ceremony in front of the temple of Queen Hatshepsut, Antiquities Minister Khaled Al-Anani announced that French and Egyptian archaeologists had discovered "a new tomb... with very nice paintings". Located between the royal tombs at the Valley of the Queens and the Valley of the Kings, the Al-Assasif necropolis is

the burial site of nobles and senior officials close to the pharaohs.

Among the finds in the tomb are sarcophagi, statues and some 1,000 funerary figurines called "Ushabtis" made of wood, faience and clay. The tomb dates back to the Middle Kingdom, which spanned the 11th and 12th dynasties, and belonged to "Thaw-Irkhet-If", mummification supervisor at the Temple of Mut in Karnak, according to the ministry.

Separately, archeologists from the French Institute of Eastern Archeology (IFAO) and the University of Strasbourg have discovered two sarcophagi dating back to the 18th dynasty, Anani told a news conference. One of the two contains the "well-preserved" mummified remains of a woman named Thuya.

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LUXOR: An Egyptian worker stands next to an opened intact sarcophagus containing a well-preserved mummy of a woman named "Thuya" wrapped in linen at the Al-Assasif necropolis on the west bank of the Nile yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait marks 57th anniversary of independence flag's hoisting

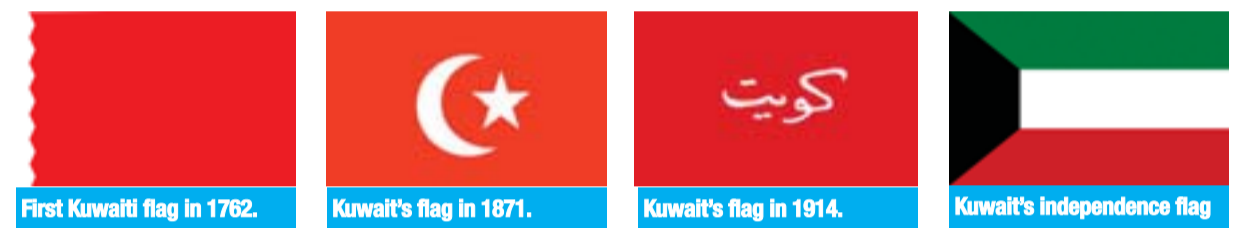


His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister at that time, attends a ceremony to lift Kuwait's independence flag in front of the UN building in 1963.



Late Sheikh Saad Al-Abdulla Al-Sabah lifts the Kuwaiti flag in Self Palace on November 25, 1961.

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait marked yesterday the 57th anniversary of hoisting the independence flag on November 24, 1961. The Kuwaiti flag went through different phases prior to independence, ending with the current banner, which flies the colors black, red, green, and white, signifying the country's glorious past and modern achievements. — KUNA



First Kuwaiti flag in 1762.

Kuwait's flag in 1871.

Kuwait's flag in 1914.

Kuwait's Independence flag

News in brief

Amir laments Iraqi flood victims

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Friday two cables of condolences to Iraqi President Barham Saleh and Prime Minister Adel Abdulmehti over the casualties due to the recent rain-caused floods. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent a cable of condolences to the Iraqi parliament's speaker Mohammad Al-Halbusi. — KUNA

Crown Prince's envoy attends Grand Prix

KUWAIT: Envoy of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah heads to the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi today to attend the finale of the Formula 1 2018 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf received an invitation from Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to be present at the race held between November 23 and 25 at the Yas Marina Circuit. — KUNA

Kuwait participates in BIE 164th session

PARIS: Kuwait participated under the chairmanship of Ambassador Sami Al-Suleiman in the 164th session of the General Assembly of the International Bureau of Exhibitions (BIE) held in Paris on the 22nd and 23rd of November. During the course of the session, the country that will host the 2025 international exhibition will be chosen from among the three candidate countries - Japan, Russia, Azerbaijan. Suleiman said. The International Bureau of Exhibitions has 170 member states and its executive committee is headed by Steen Christensen, Secretary-General Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales and Vice-President Dimitri Kerentzes. The Kuwaiti delegation includes the second secretary at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Paris, Abdullah Al-Saleh and the diplomatic attache Khaleda Al-Salem. — KUNA

School celebrates Independence Day

BEIRUT: Lebanese Minister of Education and Higher Education Marwan Hamadeh on Friday expressed gratitude for the support offered to his country by the State of Kuwait. "The leaders and people of sisterly Kuwait offered essential support to Lebanon in such areas as education, economy, infrastructure, healthcare and tourism," he said. The minister made the comments on the fringes of a celebration held by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah School to mark the 57th Independence Day of Lebanon, which fell on November 22.—KUNA

Kuwait adopts policy for empowering families: Minister

ISTANBUL: Kuwait adopts a policy aimed at cementing bonds of families and empowering their members namely the women, said a visiting senior official on Friday. Kuwait's development scheme aims at reinforcing family bonds and enabling families, namely the women, said Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh, addressing the Third International Women and Justice Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey.

Kuwait's social policies tackle status of "susceptible segments namely the children, the delinquents, the elderly and the handicapped," said Minister Sabeeh, who headed a senior-level delegation to the summit. Minister Sabeeh said that the convention's theme, 'Family Empowerment,' is a basis for human and social development "and a solid corner stone for a more just society."

Family empowerment is a historic demand by mankind; aimed at creating a robust social fabric and "social capital that boosts values and principles of sustainable development," she said. As part of the approach to preserve the society basis in Kuwait, the Family Court was established in 2015, followed with enacting the Child Law, which guaranteed women rights, such as decreasing work hours. Moreover, Minister Sabeeh added, the supreme council for family



ISTANBUL: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh (center) poses for a group photo on the sidelines of participating in the 3rd International Women and Justice Summit. — KUNA

affairs was formed in 2006. Basically, she explained, Kuwait's family strategy aims at preserving the family and safeguarding the society.

Minister Sabeeh spoke at length about various other state-launched projects and activities aimed at cementing the society foundations, namely "the social security network," noting that Kuwait secures special allowances for

the divorcees, the widows and the low income females as well as for prisoners' families. On the summit sidelines, she said that Kuwait is partaking in this summit the first time. Earlier, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan opened the summit with a speech, calling for genders' equality and shedding light on the substantial Turkish women roles at various levels in his country. — KUNA

Partnership conference aims at unifying humanitarian work

KUWAIT: Chairman of the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq said the 8th annual Conference for Effective Partnership and Information Sharing will be held in Kuwait tomorrow. This conference aims to unify humanitarian works in combating hunger around the world through the course of setting a marker of feeding one million hungry people in one year, he added. This came during a press statement by Maatouq yesterday when he announced launching the conference, organized by the IICO, under the banner 'unified humanity against hunger.' It will be patronized by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and attended by a number of representatives associations involved in humanitarian and charitable work in and outside Kuwait.

The convention will witness launch of charitable initiatives for feeding one million hungry people around the world to

add another exceptional achievement in Kuwait's history of philanthropic accomplishments, pointed out Maatouq. He added the IICO seeks to promote efforts of combat hunger during the conference. The organization will also invite participants to announce their commitment and implement their initiatives as an extension to the Washington Conference. The Washington Conference, entitled 'Alliance of Virtue for the Common Good,' held in February, recommended in the closing statement launching a worldwide humanitarian campaign to feed one million people in societies that have been drastically affected by violent conflicts.

Maatouq added that a commission will be assigned to follow up on pledges taken by the participants toward this cause, and quarterly reports will be published on social media. He also pointed out that this conference will attract many philanthropists, underlining alarming rise in hunger rates according to figures from

international organizations, with the 2018 Hunger Map reports showing 821 million people not consuming enough food to satisfy their daily nutritional needs.

The Hunger Maps of 2018 reports also show 150 million children (under the age of 5) are not properly grown due to lack of nutrition, with one out of every three women of reproductive age suffering from anemia. Maatouq has made it clear that this is a vast responsibility undertaken by the international community and humanitarian organizations to alleviate the anguish of millions suffering by living under the "aggregate food security measures" as result of armed conflicts, climate change, drought and famine. He also added the charitable organization has goals set up for the conference which aim for similar results in alleviating such suffering and creating the appropriate measures to make what is lacking much more readily available to



Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq

whoever in need around the world. In 2010, the first Conference for Effective Partnership and Information Sharing for better humanitarian action was launched in Oman, and then the second to the sixth conferences was held in Kuwait, with the most recent, seventh one hosted by Bahrain. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Oman to Kuwait Dr Adnan Al-Ansari hosted a reception recently on the occasion of his country's national day. Senior officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

Local

Govt failed to implement replacement policy for 15 years: Lawmaker

Total number of workers grows by 3 percent annually: MP

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Member of the parliament's human resources development committee MP Safaa Al-Hashem said the 'replacement policy' was not put into practice although it had been approved 15 years ago, adding that the committee will take serious measures towards what she described as 'the government's stalling in this regard.' She was referring to the policy of replacing expatriate labor with national manpower in the public and private sectors, in a bid to rebalance the state's demographics. Hashem said Saudi Arabia and Oman are much ahead compared to Kuwait in executing similar policies.

"Had the government done the same, we would not find a non-Kuwait employee in the government sector by now," she underlined, noting that this goal can easily be

reached within five years. Hashem urged the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) to put an end to visa trafficking and set a five-year limit for expat workers to remain in Kuwait. Meanwhile, MP Mohammed Al-Dallal said the demographic imbalance issue was snowballing and that the total number of workers is growing annually by 3 percent, "which leads to overcrowded streets and traffic congestions, needless to mention the load on security forces with the presence of over 3 million expats in the country compared to only 1.3 million citizens."

Legislative committee

In other news, the parliament's legal and legislative affairs committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow to discuss seven items on its agenda including reaching a final solution for all applications made to obtain

Kuwaiti citizenship and another proposal filed by five lawmakers to establish a Sabah Al-Ahmad Generations Fund. Meanwhile, the committee assigned to investigate the aftermath of the recent heavy rain will meet today to discuss concerned bodies' readiness for such weather and their reaction during the rain.

Temporary marquees

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi said a new charter on licensing temporary marquees and tents is being prepared to include all the needed fees, locations and conditions before referring it to the Municipal Council. Responding to an inquiry by Municipal Council member Maha Al-Baghli concerning these tents, Manfouhi said they are currently licensed by only paying insurance without any fees.

Retirees' numbers

The Public Institution For Social Security (PIFFS) said that the total number of retirees receiving KD 2,000 in monthly pension is 15,275 citizens, those receiving KD 1,000-2,000 number 73,057, while those receiving less than KD 1,000 are 34,356. The above statistics were included in a response by Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf to an inquiry by MP Khalil Abdullah. Statistics also showed that the total social security subscriptions collected during the fiscal year 2016-2017 amounted to KD 2,000,057,506. Hajraf added that chapter one of the social security law regulates the categories deserving the pension once an employee dies regardless of nationality.

Robots' surgeries

Director of Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center Dr Fauzi Abul said

that 73 surgeries were conducted at the center using robots this year, adding that robots make it easier for surgeons to conduct minute surgeries on prostate and kidney tumors. Abul added that the center has received 7,590 patients this year, adding that a new male sterility clinic was opened at the center where an open day awareness activity was held about prostate cancer.



MP Safaa Al-Hashem

Books' ban

Rejecting decisions by the information ministry to ban several books, the appeals court issued new rules stating that the ban is not effective in some decisions. The court upheld rulings of the court of first instance to cancel ministry decisions to ban some books in Kuwait. Al-Qabas reported yesterday quoting informed sources, who added that "we are living in an open world and a

different era, so simple mistakes that the censorship authorities see do not require banning." Meanwhile, the sources said the administrative courts backed the information ministry's decisions in some cases, while some final rulings are pending. Some authors said on social media that censorship has gone too far and MPs must move because "we are a country of freedoms."

Op-Ed

Eliminating violence against women



By US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman

Gender-based violence is an affliction that has no place in civilized society. It is a scourge that affects women of every race and ethnicity, every social class and religion, and in every country around the world. We must work together to eliminate it.

Each year, on November 25, we commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and observe 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, culminating in Human Rights Day on December 10. The United Nations General Assembly established this day in 1999 to create a global platform for governments, organizations, and individuals around the world to mobilize and to call attention to the urgent need to end gender-based violence, in all its forms.

Gender-based violence occurs in the United States, in Kuwait, and in every other nation. Globally, an estimated one in three women worldwide have been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in their lifetime. Women and girls who seek help often have few resources and little recourse to assist them. Sadly, many are returned to their abusive situations due to a lack of resources, training, and legislation to protect them.

The impact of gender-based violence extends beyond the immediate victims and their families and friends. It also has a profoundly adverse effect on the progress of health, the justice system, the economy, and international security across societies globally.

We encourage all segments of society to join together to eradicate gender-based violence. This requires laws and the implementation of those laws in all countries to bring the perpetrators to justice. With such efforts, we can reach the worthy goal of the elimination of violence against women.

Cooperation with Kuwait helpful for int'l peace: Italian Commander

ROME: Chief of Staff of the Italian Air Force Lieutenant General Alberto Rosso has emphasized the significance of Kuwait-Italian military cooperation in serving and enhancing international peace and security. In statements on the occasion of the graduation of seven Kuwaiti fighter pilots from the flying training school at Galatina Airbase in the city of Lecce early this week, Rosso said the growing number of Kuwaiti graduates from Italian military schools gives impetus to the already flourishing military relations between the two friendly countries. He underlined the importance of building capacities of human element in modern defense systems to be able to use the cutting-edge technologies.

The Kuwaiti graduates had mastered the modern technologies during their study at the "Squadron 61 at the world-class Galatina airbase through an integrated training curriculum that used the latest" simulation devices on the ground, he said. He added that this curriculum is one of the components of training programs on the latest aircraft (346 I) to master the fourth generation of Eurofighter Typhoon and the fifth generation of (F35) aircraft.

To develop its defense capabilities, Kuwait had purchased a number of the Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft, he said, describing it as a "spectacular aircraft serving the Italian Air Force and is considered the backbone of the Air Force in Europe." He concluded that the graduated Kuwaiti pilots would benefit from the training they got in Italy in defending Kuwait and its airspace. — KUNA



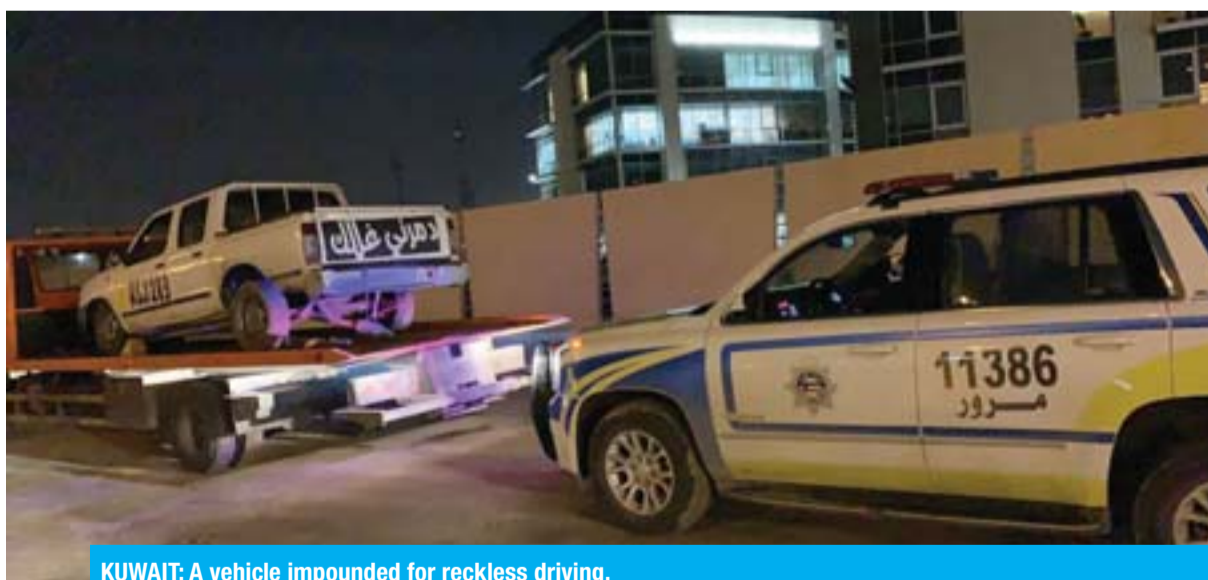
KUWAIT: A thunderbolt lights up the sky during a recent thunderstorm. — KUNA

Emergency committee ready for expected rainfall: Minister

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi said Friday that the government emergency committee had assigned several state bodies to handle the upcoming rainfall in Kuwait. He added that the committee affirmed that responsible government authorities were ready to handle any possible floods and heavy rains, adding that emergency teams were in position. The minister added that teams from various government bodies, the Kuwait National Guard (KNG), the army, and others were prepared to address any emergencies, especially in flood-

hit areas such as the Sabah Al-Ahmad city as well as the middle and southern to mid-southern regions of the country. Meanwhile, Ministry of Electricity and Water's Undersecretary Fuad Al-Aoun said that all power stations and water networks are operating properly ahead of the expected rainfall in Kuwait. He added that emergency teams were ready to address any situation created by the expected heavy rainfall and floods. The government is following on the latest developments concerning the weather conditions, affirmed the official.

Kuwait Meteorological Department of the General Directorate of Civil Aviation expected the country to continue to be affected by volatility in weather conditions based on updates and ongoing developments, satellite images and radar weather. Meteorological observer Abdul-Aziz Al-Qarawi said that the weather starts to gradually improve starting from this evening, calling on citizens and residents to follow the weather bulletin to get more updates about the weather condition. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A vehicle impounded for reckless driving.

Reckless driver arrested; vehicle impounded

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A citizen told police he saw a vehicle that appeared in a video clip with its driver driving recklessly. Traffic patrols followed the vehicle until it was parked in a Sulaiybiya garage, where the driver was arrested and the vehicle impounded.

Drug user caught

Police arrested a drug user who was with his girlfriend while driving a stolen car, as he collided with a police patrol and almost ran over policemen, Al-Rai

reported. The arrest was made when he drove through a checkpoint, so he was pursued. He refused to pull over and hid under a car shade, then attempted to drive off and hit the patrol car several times after failing to run over the policemen. He was then cut off and arrested. He was found under the influence of drugs. The woman with him was also arrested after being found wanted on several cases. The car they were in was reported stolen. Separately, a drunken man insulted policemen while attempting to escape in Farwaniya. Police found illicit material on him after he was controlled. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Thief busted

Taima detectives arrested a thief who targeted the cars of cafe patrons and stole expensive items from them, reported Al-Rai. The suspect's actions were recorded by a camera in a nearby shop, enabling detectives to identify him. Detectives waited for him in a cafe he frequented most often, then arrested him. The suspect confessed to committing the thefts, but gave no reason for his action.

local spotlight

Hate speech must stop



By Muna Al-Fuzal

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fahd Al-Afasi was in Khartoum on Tuesday to participate in the meetings of Arab justice ministers. The minister told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that Kuwait submitted a draft law to prevent hate speech to the meeting and stressed that the proposal, once approved, will promote the integration and establishment of an Arab unit.

The Executive Office of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice was held in the Sudanese capital with the participation of Kuwait and other Arab countries such as Jordan, Iraq, Qatar, Comoros, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia. I believe that it is good that Kuwait made the effort to present such a project and I hope that it will be implemented in practical terms soon, because the discourse of hatred and extremism has become evident globally and poses a threat to the lives of innocent people.

Therefore, I believe collective action is required to counter groups that benefit from all means of technology and information today to promote ideas of hatred and hostility against different beliefs and ideas, and not necessarily other religions. The term 'hate speech' has become widely known and become very influential in Arab societies, and is expanding at a time when societies are heavily dependent on social media such as Facebook, Twitter and other e-communities to shape or reshape opinions, especially young people.

The second thing here is that the choice of Sudan is correct and wise because Sudan is about to enter a new stage to strengthen its economy. It's about time. In 1993, Washington placed Khartoum on the list of state sponsors of terrorism on the pretext of supporting militant Islamist groups and bombed industrial facilities in Khartoum in 1998. The impact of this on the Sudanese economy lead to a shortage in foreign currencies, as international banks refrained from making transfers from Sudanese banks.

The lifting of the name of Sudan from the list by Washington will be a message to all investors to support the economy of Sudan and take advantage of the many resources of the country without restrictions, and clearly the Sudanese government has been working on this matter. I also believe the support of Arab countries such as Kuwait and other GCC states is essential for speeding up this process. There is an opportunity for all now.

This month, the Sudanese foreign ministry announced that Washington and Khartoum have agreed to start the second phase of a strategic dialogue with the aim of lifting Sudan from the list of countries supporting terrorism. Economists say Sudan's presence on the list of state sponsors of terrorism with Iran, North Korea and Syria is keeping investors and foreign banks away from dealing with it.

The administration of US President Donald Trump has announced its willingness to remove Sudan from the list of countries supporting terrorism if Khartoum carries out further reforms. The meeting is over now, but recommendations must start and the media must play its role as one team, whether owned by the government or the private sector.

Moreover, reconsideration of educational curricula is also an important issue, and should be free of ideas or topics that encourage hate or extremist tendencies. I believe that media and education have a key role in leading and spreading hateful ideas. Nowadays, media channels are often used for insulting and slandering for political reasons, making hate media a tool of war and a threat to the lives of innocent people that endangers peaceful societies.

I think the road may seem long to achieve such calls, but this is a successful start.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City after a rainy day. — Photo by Abdullah Al-Muhareb (KUNA)

'Score with Zain' campaign awards Hanan Saleh Al-Hadad with BMW X6 mega prize

Company hosted Q8 Pulse Radio (88.8 FM) at main headquarters in Shuwaikh

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the conclusion of the first edition of its promotional campaign 'Score with Zain', where the company announced Hanan Saleh Hussain Al-Hadad as the winner of the BMW X6 mega prize. The announcement was made LIVE on air through Q8 Pulse Radio (88.8 FM), where Zain hosted the station at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh and distributed many valuable prizes to listeners.

Zain launched this campaign as part of its continuous efforts to offer its customers the latest innovative solutions in the world of Value Added Services. The company is always keen on offering the best and most advanced services to its customer base, considered the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait.

On the occasion of concluding the first edition of the campaign, Zain hosted the stars of Kuwait Pulse Radio (88.8 FM) Talal Al-Yagout, Mohammed Dashti, Saleh Jerman, and Fawzi Ibrahim at Zain's Innovation Center (ZINC) at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh, where the latest episode of the popular radio program 'Al-Yagout and Al-Ansari's Diwaniya' was broadcasted LIVE throughout three hours. The mega draw was conducted on air with the presence of the representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the winner of the BMW X6 mega prize was announced. In addition, many competitions were held on air for the listeners, who participated and won valuable prizes.

The first edition of 'Score with Zain' launched on June and continued until November, where Zain offered its cus-



Q8 Pulse stars at Zain's main headquarters.

tomers the chance to win many valuable prizes, including a weekly cash prize of KD 500, a Gold Bar worth KD 6900, smartphones and electronic devices, as well as the BMW X6 M Pack mega prize offered at the end of the first edition of the campaign.

'Score with Zain' offered customers informative sports content and exclusive videos through SMS on a daily basis, including facts about the best athletes, the most

exciting tournaments, and the most important sporting events around the world. Zain is currently preparing the second edition of the campaign to be launched soon with all-new valuable prizes.

Zain strives to offer customers the latest services and solutions in the world of Value Added Services, all with the aim of surpassing customers' expectations. The company will continue leading the Kuwaiti telecommunica-

tions industry by launching unprecedented services, products, and solutions in addition to value added services geared at maintaining its leading position in the Kuwaiti market. Zain launched this exciting promotional campaign to reinforce its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best products and services to meet its customers' personal and professional telecommunications needs.



KUWAIT: The mega prize winner with Zain officials.



Local

'Benevolent Refrigerator' reflects Kuwait's bright humanitarian image

Leaving surplus food for people in need



KUWAIT: Meals organized in a fridge. — KUNA photos



A meal box placed in a fridge.



Farwaniya Mayor Mutlaq Al-Mi'asib checks one of the 'Benevolent Refrigerators.'

KUWAIT: 'Kuwait's benevolent refrigerator,' a new charitable work carried out by the Kuwaiti well doers, stands high as a testament to a relentless desire and an unflagging quest of people who stretched their white hands to assist the needy all over the globe. A new charitable work of this benevolent people, many Kuwaitis have decided to install 'benevolent refrigerators' in front of their homes to be a corner for the needy and a practical solution for the surplus food left behind after conclusion of a wedding or a party. Instead of the food being thrown in the garbage, people keep it in these refrigerators so that the poor and the

needy can benefit from it, without waiting for reward or thanks. As a manifestation of the well-known reputation of the Kuwaitis, those refrigerators spread from Khalidiya, Shamiya and Nuzha to Yarmouk, Omariya, Fintas, Sulaibikhat, Ardiya, Jahra and Andalus to Farwaniya, Surra and Adan. These refrigerators, formed with the Kuwait Food Bank and voluntary efforts to distribute food to those in need, form one of the leading factors in Kuwait, and at the Arab and international levels, and is among the best countries for the 2018 hunger index issued by the International Food Policy Institute of the United Nations.

This project needs special care and attention to be able to overcome the seri-

ous challenges it faces, and so that this good work adds a new human achievement to Kuwait's record. "The refrigerator in our area is a good initiative by my neighbor Ali Al-Sanea, who has been the first to come up with this idea," said Namshan Al-Namshan, a former adviser to the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs. He added that the first erected refrigerator was meant to save the surplus food for the needy people, pointing out that his neighbors also pitched in in this humanitarian project. Namshan emphasized that what is supplied into these refrigerators is "the main meal of the family, and not what is left on the table."

Farwaniya Mayor Mutlaq Al-Mi'asib

said meanwhile that the food refrigerators "are in line with solutions to reduce the proportion of wasted food," calling for the donation of surplus and use the remaining food for another meal or use of inevitable food in the manufacture of organic fertilizer. He suggested that refrigerators should be organized by informing the owners to set them up by the nearest cooperative branches in the area, expressing hope such refrigerators be monitored by health ministry or municipality personnel to ensure hygiene. Hasan Ajeel, another charitable worker, hailed a good example of refrigerators set up in the areas of Sulaibikhat and Ardiya where food in those refrigerators was nicely organized. — KUNA



Namshan Al-Namshan



A worker loads a fridge with new meals.



A 'Benevolent Refrigerator' placed between two water coolers.



Meals placed randomly in a fridge, which calls for more attention to keep them clean.

Weekly roundup of Kuwait's humanitarian action

KUWAIT: Living up to its UN recognition as an 'International Humanitarian Center,' Kuwait continued aiding people in need throughout the world last week, which ranged from aid relief work to awareness initiatives and calls for dialogue and peace. Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on November 19th that it has continued its 'Warm Winter' relief campaign for the benefit of Syrian brothers in Syria's neighboring countries through the campaign headquarters this week at Al-Kout Mall. Deputy Chairman of KRCS Anwar Al-Hasawi said in a press statement that the campaign launched two weeks ago through donations and gifts of good people is not only aimed at providing heating means but also create an integrated environment to meet the harsh winter conditions for those who are in need. Hasawi called on all individuals and institutions in Kuwait to support this campaign with their donations, adding that they can donate through the official website of KRCS or through the headquarters of their campaign at Al-Kout Mall or visit the society in Shuwaikha.

In Iraq, where the Consulate General of Kuwait in Erbil celebrated on November 21st the International Children's Day through a ceremony for children with special needs through a training course. The Kuwaiti Consul General in Erbil Omar Al-Kandari said that the rehabilitation course comes within the interests of Kuwait in various aspects of life for the displaced and on the occasion of the International Children's Day. Kandari pointed out that this occasion comes within the framework of the implementation of the initiative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to help the Iraqi people in the humanitarian campaign 'Kuwait beside you' to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. Meanwhile, Erbil governor Nawaz Hadi hailed various Kuwait aid and said in a statement that Kuwait added to its activities for displaced people and refugees in the region, another humanitarian activity in the field of awareness and psychological rehabilitation for people with special needs.

Kuwait has established during the last period a psychological rehabilitation for students who have been through wars and destruction, for teachers from Mosul and attended by educational specialists from Kuwait. Kuwait has paid great attention to the health of displaced Iraqis and the Kurdistan region of Iraq, where it sent tons of medicines and medical supplies by air and land to treat the displaced Iraqis. In Baghdad, the Iraqi

Medical Association Unified Relief and Development, a humanitarian organization inaugurated a conference hall at its new headquarters in the name of 'Kuwait Hall' in recognition of its relief efforts in support of Iraq. Kuwaiti Ambassador Salem Al-Zamanan praised the naming of the hall on behalf of Kuwait, pointing out that this reflects the role of his country in humanitarian relief in Iraq. Zamanan stressed that Kuwait believes that the security, stability and safety of Iraq is the security, stability and safety of the entire region.

Spreading awareness

Kuwait's humanitarian role is not limited to providing aid and relief, but rather spreading awareness, peace and dialogue. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Islamic Charitable Organization, Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq in Berlin confirmed this on Monday, November 19, when he called for the promotion of dialogue channels between religions and civilizations. This came in a speech delivered by Maatouq at the international conference entitled 'Development of Interreligious Dialogue and Civilizational Dialogue for Cooperation' hosted by Berlin for two days. Maatouq praised the Islamic civilization, saying that it "embodied the best models of tolerance and co-existence among nations and peoples of different civilizations, cultures and races to recognize a system of shared values." He called for the final statement of the conference to include a recommendation to condemn all extremist practices and policies that threaten the security and safety of the peoples of the world, regardless of the religion of the perpetrators of extremism and their culture.

As usual, Kuwait's efforts have been internationally acclaimed. This time the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) praised the Kuwaiti role in two different occasions. "I would like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to the State of Kuwait for its generous contribution to the basic services of UNRWA for Palestinian refugees," said Peter Mulrean, Director UNRWA Representative Office in New York. This support comes from Kuwait, while in 2018 UNRWA faced the most serious financial crisis in its history. This support played a vital role in supporting UNRWA's core services for education, health, relief and social services for more than 5 million Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the West Bank, including Jerusalem, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) announced at a press conference that it will host the eighth annual conference of active partnership and exchange of information for better humanitarian action. IICO Director General Bader Al-Sumait said that the Kuwaiti attention for humanitarian activities is an affirmation of its role and leadership in the humanitarian field. Sumait revealed that the conference will be held on Monday, 26 November under the slogan "One humanity



ERBIL: The Consulate General of Kuwait in Erbil celebrates the International Children's Day through a ceremony for children with special needs. — KUNA

against hunger" under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Chairman of the Media Committee of the Conference Khaled Al-Khulaifi said that the media objectives of the conference are embodied in the awareness of the dangers of hunger that threaten many countries of the world. Khulaifi noted that the conference will be covered by several media outlets and will include a number of media events.

Al-Sumait Prize

The Board of Trustees of Al-Sumait Prize for African Development announced on November 21st the selection of three winners of this year's award in the health sector in recognition of their efforts and contributions in the field of health improvement in the African continent worth \$1 million. Half of the award was handed to Dr Salim Abdul-Karim, Director of the AIDS Research Center and Deputy Director of Research at the University of Kwazulu, South Africa and a professor at Columbia University in the United States, said a press release of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), which oversees the award. The other half was equally shared between Professor and Vice President of the Wilmer Institute of Ophthalmology at Johns Hopkins University in the United States Dr Sheila K West and the Rakai Health Sciences Program, an independent non-profit research center based in Rakai in the Republic of Uganda.

Professor Abdul-Karim won the award in recognition

of his research, which focused over the last three decades on the mechanisms of the development of HIV / AIDS as well as on the development of vaccines for prevention and treatment of the disease, the statement added. The decision of the Board of Trustees to award Professor West was the result of her research, which focused on ways to eliminate trachoma in Africa and its contribution to the fight against blindness among children and adults in Africa. It pointed out that Rakai Health Sciences was awarded for its role in the improvement of public health in the African continent through the fight against HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

The statement quoted Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Al-Sumait Prize as saying: "Our goal by presenting this award is to promote positive change throughout the African continent." KFAS Director-General, Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, said that this year's winners of Al-Sumait Award for African Development represent high scientific achievements and pioneering contributions. Al-Sumait Prize for African Development, valued at \$1 million, is provided by the Government of Kuwait annually to individuals or institutions in one of the three areas for food security, health or education. The award is the result of an initiative by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to honor the legacy of the late Dr Abdul-Rahman Al-Sumait, a Kuwaiti doctor who dedicated his life to addressing health, education and food security challenges facing the African continent. — KUNA



Authorities heighten security at disputed Indian religious site

Climate change could cost US 'hundreds of billions' a year

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BASTI AMEERWALA, Pakistan: A Pakistani man pumps water at a hand pump next to a toilet in Basti Ameerwala village in central Punjab province. —AFP

Women's fight for toilets in rural Pakistan

People see open defecation as routine, and as fertilizers

BASTI AMEERWALA: For as long as she can remember, Ayesha Siddiqua has fought her male relatives for access to toilets—but a sanitation drive by new premier Imran Khan could make life easier for women in patriarchal Pakistan. "I told them: 'You can go where you want, but me, my movements are restricted!'" said Siddiqua, who is in her 60s, in Basti Ameerwala, a small agricultural village in central Punjab province where residents have been relieving themselves in the open for generations.

Women in the village have long been forced to hide their bodily functions from the conservative, deeply patriarchal society, Siddiqua and other female residents said. Restraining themselves over long days working in the fields, they wait for night and the cover of darkness—braving snakes, dogs, or even unpleasant encounters with strange men, Siddiqua's daughter-in-law Tahira Bibi said, her face hidden by a brown veil.

"I would limit my consumption of water and eat less just to avoid going to the bathroom in the daytime," the 35-year-old said, describing a ploy used by all the women interviewed by AFP in the region. For the last month and a half, however, Tahira Bibi has not had to wait. A small red-brick cottage housing a pastel green squat toilet has been erected in front of her house. The initiative has come from a Pakistani non-profit, the Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP), whose team has ventured into the remote hamlet to preach hygiene—mainly, they say, to men.

Toilets 'not a priority' for men

Providing toilets is the responsibility of men in the region, according to Altaf Hussain, a program officer for LPP. "When we ask them, they are ashamed that their women have to defecate outside," he said. "So they tell us they have never thought about toilets. They are surely lying. They can spend money on TV, smoking, other things, but latrines are not a priority." Added to this, he says, is a cultural issue: "People see open defecation as routine, and as fertilizers for their soil. They are not aware of the consequences." The United Nations children's agency says 22 million Pakistanis relieve themselves in the open. In rural areas just 48 percent of the population has access to toilets, compared with 72 percent in the cities.

Some 53,000 children die each year from diarrhoea in Pakistan after consuming polluted water, according to UN data. Typhoid, cholera, dysentery and hepatitis are common. Those who do not die "tend to see reduced capacity of their body to absorb nutrients", says Kitka Goyal, a UNICEF expert on water and hygiene. That can be a factor in stunting, which afflicts 44 percent of Pakistani children. Tahira Bibi says one of her four children died after "stomach problems", while another was at one point in critical condition. "We thought it was God's will," she said soberly.

'Pride' in toilets

The UN, which marked World Toilet Day this week, says the lack of toilets costs Pakistan up to \$2.5 billion per year. Khan, who came to power in August, vowed last month to "eradicate the deficit of toilets in the country by 2023". His counterpart in neighboring rival India, Narendra Modi, launched his own aggressive sanitation drive in 2014. New Delhi claims it has slashed the number of people forced to defecate in the open from 550 million that year to less than 150 million today.

Khan's government, meanwhile, has launched "Clean Green Pakistan", a massive social and environmental initiative seeking to shift behavior in areas including sanitation, minister of climate change Malik Amin Aslam said. He did not offer details, however. Non-profits such as LPP, which is not part of Clean Green Pakistan, are already paving the way in places like Basti Ameerwala, where 15 out of 60 households now have latrines.

In the neighboring hamlet of Chah Jamalianwala, where LPP also works, 35 out of 60 houses have one, six of which have been built in recent weeks. Mohammad Nasir, a frail man of 45, is one of the last to have taken the step. Like many other men in the area, he did not consider a toilet a priority—having relieved himself in neighboring fields for 28 years, and spending his money instead on a satellite dish, television and solar panel.



BASTI AMEERWALA: A Pakistani woman comes out from a toilet in Basti Ameerwala village in central Punjab province. —AFP

Finally, after his doctor warned him about his wife's health, his small field is equipped with roofless latrines. The construction cost him 15,000 rupees (\$110), a month's salary—but, he says, he feels "pride" at finally having a toilet. —AFP

Spain threatens Brexit-EU deal

BRUSSELS: Spain's demand for a veto on the future of Gibraltar loomed yesterday as the final stumbling block standing in the way of a smooth Brexit deal, as Theresa May headed to Brussels for 11th-hour talks. The British premier plans to meet EU leaders Jean-Claude Juncker and Donald Tusk, even though European diplomats insist the agreement is finished and ready for EU leaders to approve today.

But Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has warned that he will boycott today's summit if London and Brussels do not confirm his country's veto over any future accord on ties with Gibraltar. If there is no final agreement on both Britain's withdrawal treaty and a political declaration on post-Brexit EU-UK ties, Tusk may be forced to cancel the summit and plunge the process back into doubt. This would undermine May's bid to sell her draft Brexit deal to a hostile Westminster parliament and increase the risk of a "no-deal Brexit" most observers warn would be an economic calamity.

Nothing in the painful 17-month withdrawal process has gone smoothly, and on Friday,

Sanchez insisted that Madrid holds a veto over the fate of Gibraltar in any post-Brexit negotiation of new EU-UK ties. Visiting Cuba, Sanchez said Spain must negotiate directly with London on Gibraltar and approve any changes to its relationship to the European Union in a future agreement between Britain and Brussels. "If there's no agreement, it's very clear what will happen, there very probably won't be a European Council," he declared, referring to today's summit of 27 EU leaders ahead of their encounter with May.

Gibraltar, a rocky outcrop home to a port and around 30,000 people, is a British territory claimed by Spain and a bone of contention as London negotiates a new relationship with Brussels after Brexit on March 29. In London, a Downing Street source insisted: "We have negotiated on behalf of the whole of the UK family. That includes Gibraltar and the overseas territories." In legal terms, Spain's disapproval would not halt the divorce settlement, but it would embarrass EU leaders keen to show that the 27 are united, and might delay today's largely symbolic summit.

More uncertainty

And, as Madrid has noted, any final relationship negotiated between London and Brussels after Brexit day on March 29 would have to be approved by all remaining member states—giving Spain a de facto veto further down the line. May

is due in Brussels later on to see EU Commission president Juncker, head of the bloc's executive, and EU Council president Tusk, whose institution represents the member states.

But European diplomats said no more substantive negotiations are planned for this weekend and it was hoped today's summit would simply see leaders sign off on the fruit of 17 months of dialogue. A European source said the meeting's minutes would include language stressing the importance of Britain maintaining a level playing field for business during the 21-month post-Brexit transition. And the summit will give the European Council the lead over the Commission in negotiating future ties-in part to reassure Madrid that its voice will be heard before any final settlement. After that, May will still have to sell the deal to the British parliament, an even greater political challenge.

May has refused to say whether she would resign if parliament eventually votes down the divorce agreement, but the political temperature in Westminster has reached boiling point. "If we were to leave the EU without a deal, I have no doubt that the consequences for the UK economy would be very serious indeed," British finance minister Philip Hammond warned yesterday. "This deal will be done tomorrow and then it is our job to present it to the British people, to members of parliament and to make the case, in the national interest, for supporting this deal," he told the BBC. —AFP

Russia poses bigger threat to UK than terrorist groups

LONDON: Russia "indisputably" now poses a bigger threat to Britain's security than terrorist groups like Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaeda, the head of the British army said in an interview published yesterday. General Mark Carleton-Smith warned Moscow had shown a willingness to use its military to pursue its national interests while seeking to "exploit Western vulnerabilities".

"Russia today indisputably represents a far greater threat to our national security than Islamic extremist threats such as Al-Qaeda and (IS)," he told The Daily Telegraph. "Russia has embarked on a systematic effort to explore and exploit Western vulnerabilities, particularly in some of the non-traditional areas of cyber, space, undersea warfare." Relations between Russia and Britain have sunk to historic lows this year. London has blamed the country's military intelligence service for orchestrating the poisoning with a nerve agent of ex-Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the

English city of Salisbury in March.

The incident prompted a wave of tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions between Moscow and the West, as well as a ratcheting up of US sanctions. Carleton-Smith, 54, said following IS battlefield losses in Syria and Iraq, the Western alliance must switch focus to the threat posed by Russia—and do so through NATO. "The physical manifestation of the Islamist threat has diminished with the complete destruction of the geography of the so-called Caliphate," he said. "We cannot be complacent about the threat Russia poses or leave it uncontested." "The most important conventional military response to Russia is the continued capabilities and coherence of the NATO alliance."

The former special forces commander was speaking in his first interview since becoming Britain's chief of the general staff in June. He made the comments after visiting British troops deployed in Estonia as part of a NATO battle group intended to deter aggression from neighboring Russia. Carleton-Smith also took the opportunity to downplay the need for a separate European army, as recently encouraged by French President Emmanuel Macron. "I would not support any initiative that diluted the military effectiveness of NATO," he said. —AFP

International

Islamic State claims 118 killed in self-styled 'West Africa province'

At least 44 soldiers die in an attack near Niger border

LAGOS: The Islamic State group has claimed to have killed 118 people in its self-styled West Africa province in the last week, after a series of attacks against military bases in northeast Nigeria that have raised fears of a resurgent Boko Haram. The Islamist militant group said in a video posted online that it conducted five operations in Chad and Nigeria between November 15 and 21, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadist activity.

No other details were given but the claim follows recent attacks on army bases in Borno state, northeast Nigeria, which has been the epicenter of the deadly nine-year conflict. Security sources said at least 44 soldiers were killed in an attack in Metele village, near the border with Niger, on Sunday, although one soldier who escaped gave a higher toll.

"The truth is we lost more than 100 men because we were quickly routed," he said on condition of anonymity from the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, on Friday. "We were outgunned, so we tried to fight. We realized it was unrealistic so we decided to leave." Most of the soldiers were killed as the trucks they were in tried to crash through a perimeter fence at the base but got stuck. Senior officers were among the dead, he added. Even a search team that came to find the bodies of fallen soldiers on Tuesday was attacked, the soldier said.

Acid attacks, beatings, crowdfunding: ABC of Thai domestic violence

BANGKOK: Assaulted with acid by her husband as she slept, Chorlada Tarawan died hours later, refused treatment by a Bangkok hospital as a final indictment of her worth. Brutalized in life, ignored in her hour of pressing need, Chorlada has galvanized Thailand in death and become a symbol of the pervasive and persistent violence so many Thai women face. Activists protested with her coffin outside the hospital, and petitioned the health ministry to investigate the hospital's "moral negligence". The husband has been arrested, said police officials, under pressure to act after a surge in grisly stories about male-on-female violence.

"To be abused by her husband, then denied by the hospital shows how we treat abuse victims," said Jadet Chaowilai, director of advocacy group Women and Men Progressive Movement Foundation. "Everyone failed her. Particularly the society that regards domestic violence as a private matter, and tells women to stay quiet," he said, ahead of Sunday's International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The statistics make for grim reading. One in three women around the world has experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partner, according to the World Health Organization.

Of women who were victims of homicide in 2012, nearly half were killed by intimate partners or family members, it said. Yet women who experience violence are often blamed and their testimonies doubted, said Phumzile Mlambo-Ngeuka, executive director of United Nations Women. "Fear of reprisals, of not being believed, and the stigma borne by the survivor have

Ahead of Nigeria's election, opposition weaponizes soldier deaths, bloodshed

LAGOS: Hundreds of Nigerian soldiers have been killed in recent months by Islamist militants who the president vowed to defeat when voted into power in 2015 - and the bloodshed has become a useful weapon for opponents aiming to topple him in coming elections. Muhammadu Buhari's administration has been largely silent about the fighting in the northeast as, in battle after battle, soldiers have died. On Thursday Buhari's political opponents disclosed that 44 soldiers had been killed in an attack in the village of Metele, in the northeastern state of Borno, on Sunday.

The move is calculated to undermine

Nigeria mulls arming the highway police; but would guns and traffic chaos mix?

LAGOS: From dealing with daily traffic snarls and potholes to unruly drivers in rickety vehicles with expired documents, Nigeria's highway patrol officers have a lot on their plate. At the same time, they have to face the risks from armed robbers who attack unsuspecting road users idling in monster traffic jams. But an increase in crime on the roads has sparked fresh debate over whether members of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) should be allowed to carry firearms. The chief marshal of the FRSC, Boboye Oyeyemi, has said some 70 operatives were either shot dead by robbers or knocked down by hit-and-run drivers in 2016. Those deaths would have been prevented if his

Regional threat

AFP has reported at least 17 attempts to overrun army bases since July. Many have been claimed by the IS-backed Boko Haram faction, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). Security analysts said more attacks were expected in the run-up to February 16, when Nigerians go to the polls to elect a new president and parliament. But Yan St-Pierre, a counter-terrorism specialist with the Modern Security Consulting Group, said there were implications beyond Nigeria's borders. The intensity and regularity of recent attacks indicated ISWAP now had "a capacity for sustained warfare" and "a significant number of fighters and materials" at its disposal.

Asked whether that meant external support from IS remnants from elsewhere, he told AFP: "Without a doubt." He added: "ISWAP's attacks occur against military and foreign targets with increasing frequency in Nigeria, Chad and Niger, with an increasing presence in Cameroon." That "not only demonstrates that ISWAP has the capacity and the

silenced the voices of millions of survivors of violence and masked the true extent of women's continued horrific experiences," she said in a statement.

Silent epidemic

Across the world, women of all ages endure violence despite legislation to prevent it. Male-dominated societies and deep-rooted traditions are often blamed - whatever the cause, the same pattern of degradation repeats. In Mauritania, violence against women is seen as an act of love and an accepted practice among some ethnic groups. In Britain, the government has proposed new measures including electronic monitoring devices for abusers to tackle the "silent national health epidemic" of domestic abuse. Russia last year eased some penalties for domestic violence, while a long-awaited law in Morocco does not go far enough to protect women from abuse, activists say. In Thailand, the Domestic Violence Victim Act was enacted in 2007, vowing harsher punishments for abusers and better protection for women.

But this has not proved a major deterrent, as few cases are reported, said Busayapa Srisompong, a lawyer and founder of a non-profit that helps victims of domestic abuse. Busayapa, herself a survivor of domestic violence, said even she had struggled to file her complaint, with the police advising her to "go back and work things out". She persisted and won her case, but that is rare. "Domestic violence has been normalized and justified for so long that even the few women who dare to speak up and go to the police are discouraged from filing a report," she said.

"Even in court, the prosecutor will often tell the victim to go back to her husband for the sake of the family. Imagine the effect it has on a traumatized woman," she said. There is scant official Thai data on violence against women. A survey of about 2,500 Thai women in four provinces showed one in six women faced intimate partner violence, according to a study by researcher Montakam Chuemchit at the Chulalongkorn University

the security credentials of the president as he seeks a second term in three months' time, say politics and security analysts. Buhari is a former military general and commander-in-chief who came to power promising to defeat the insurgents and whose administration has claimed for years to have beaten Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA). The candidate for the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) is Atiku Abubakar, a businessman and former vice president seeking to topple Buhari.

The Senate president, Bukola Saraki, is also PDP and tightly controls the upper house of parliament, which suspended its session on Thursday to honour the fallen after announcing the deaths. The PDP "are playing politics with conflict," said Idayat Hassan, director of the Abuja-based Centre for Democracy and Development. "They know elections can be won or lost based on the issue of security," she said. "Many people will be very angry. The government has made no statement, they have not confirmed it, so

operatives had guns, he claimed. FRSC spokesman Bisi Kazeem said officials were legally entitled to do so. "The provision is there in the FRSC Act but the government has to approve and gazette it before it can be implemented," he said. Nevertheless, industry sources said an armoury had been built for the agency in the capital, Abuja, should the green light be given. Last year, the lower chamber of parliament, House of Representatives passed a resolution urging the government to procure weapons for the road marshals.

Guns are symbol of power

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country of more than 180 million people, returned to civilian rule in 1999 after decades of military rule. Politicians having replaced generals are in charge of the country. But uniforms are still everywhere - and many of those who wear them are armed. They include the army, navy and airforce, the police, customs, immigration and prison service, officers from the anti-drug agency and the civil defense corps. Some believe adding to the list is a recipe for disaster - particularly for anyone dealing with Nigeria's hot-headed and frequently frustrated motorists under the tropical sun.

mobility to successfully organise attacks in multiple areas but that its interests are fully regional", he said. "Put in the context of expanding IS activity in the Sahel - especially eastwards - this regional focus is an important change that affects ISWAP military operations."

Political capital

More than 27,000 people have been killed since the insurgency began in 2009 and some 1.8 million are still homeless, as aid agencies battle the humanitarian fall-out of the fighting. President Muhammadu Buhari, who was elected in 2015 on a pledge to defeat Boko Haram, has claimed the jihadists were "technically defeated". The recent attacks have cast doubt on that assertion and the main opposition Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP) is questioning Buhari's security record.

PDP presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar sent a condolence message to the families of those who were killed and said the losses were "a clear sign that our

troops need to be better funded and better equipped". Soldiers have complained of being over-stretched and under-resourced. Senate leader Bukola Saraki said a delegation of senators would travel to the northeast to visit frontline troops, as others questioned the effectiveness of the counter-insurgency. Peter Ayodele Fayose, a former state governor and leading PDP figure, added: "It is time that we face the reality that Boko Haram is not technically defeated."

Public opinion

Amachi Nwokolo, a security analyst at the Roman Institute of Security Studies in Abuja, said the insurgency had become politicized. "Now, as election season and Christmas approach, we are likely to see an upsurge in attacks. These terrorists are not dumb. They will certainly want to create chaos around the election." Political analyst Chris Ngwodo said the PDP would likely want to make capital out of the current situation but added it had not translated into a loss of support for Buhari or the APC. "I can't see that these attacks have shifted public opinion here," he said from Maiduguri. "Borno still feels like Buhari territory. The opposition will look for chinks in the armor of the ruling party but I don't know if they can generate the kind of traction from these kinds of incidents." —AFP



Nigerian army bases attacked



NARATHIWAT, Thailand: Participants march on a street during a demonstration urging to stop violence against women and children, in Narathiwat. —AFP

in Bangkok, published earlier this year. But nearly 90 percent of rape cases go unreported, according to a study published last year by UN Women.

Private matter

Local media have carried a slew of stories detailing graphic attacks on women, a phenomenon that appears to be on the rise. Earlier this week, a man was arrested for killing his pregnant wife and mutilating her body. In June, a man confessed he had beaten his ex-girlfriend with a hammer, then cut her body into pieces and disposed of them in a wooded part of Bangkok. The same month, two men separately shot their ex-girlfriends to death in public. One man beat his girlfriend live on Facebook. In another case that made headlines, a man sued his ex-girlfriend for defamation after she wrote on social media that she had suffered abuse. She did not name her abuser, yet the man sued her in a provincial court. His lawyer told the judge that domestic violence was "a private matter," said Busayapa, who represented the woman. —Reuters



Atiku Abubakar

soldiers, four security sources told Reuters on Thursday.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, and others in northeast Nigeria in recent days. "This is a legitimate campaign issue," said Matthew Page, an associate fellow with Chatham House's Africa Program. "The military strategy in the northeast has been failing," he said. "This type of failure to exert control over the national territory isn't sustainable in the long run. It reflects really poorly on the incumbent president with the man on the street." —Reuters



LAGOS: Motorists wait in a traffic jam under banners bearing a portrait of Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari. From dealing with daily traffic snarls and potholes to unruly drivers in rickety vehicles with expired documents, Nigeria's highway patrol officers have a lot on their plate. —AFP

Opponents believe it will further militarize the country and aggravate tensions, as security forces deal with threats from Boko Haram jihadists or violence between herders and farmers. —AFP

Surge in strength? Questions asked over Boko Haram

LAGOS: Increasing numbers of Boko Haram attacks against troops have raised questions about the group's current strength, capability and support, as Nigeria's main opposition seized on mounting casualties to criticize the government's record on security before next year's election. AFP has reported at least 17 attempts to overrun army bases since July, most of them in the remote northeast state of Borno, which has been the epicentre of the nine-year conflict. A strike this weekend on a base in Metele village, near the border with Niger, killed at least 44, according to security sources, although unconfirmed reports put the death toll much higher.

More than 27,000 people have been killed since 2009 and some 1.8 million are still homeless, while aid agencies are battling the humanitarian fall-out of the fighting. Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari made defeating the Islamist insurgents a key plank of his 2015 election campaign and has said the jihadists were "technically defeated". But the repeated attacks, many of which have been claimed by the IS-backed Boko Haram faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), have cast doubt on the truth of that claim.

Regional threat

Security analysts tracking the conflict said more attacks were expected in the run-up to February 16 next year, when Nigerians go to the polls to elect a new president and parliament. But Yan St-Pierre, a counter-terrorism specialist with the Modern Security Consulting Group (MOSECON) in Berlin, said there were implications beyond Nigeria's borders. The intensity and regularity of recent attacks indicated ISWAP now had "a capacity for sustained warfare" and "a significant number of fighters and materials" at its disposal.

Asked whether that meant external support from IS remnants from elsewhere, he told AFP: "Without a doubt." He added: "ISWAP's attacks occur against military and foreign targets with increasing frequency in Nigeria, Chad and Niger, with an increasing presence in Cameroon." That "not only demonstrates that ISWAP has the capacity and the mobility to successfully organise attacks in multiple areas but that its interests are fully regional", he said. "Put in the context of expanding IS activity in the Sahel - especially eastwards - this regional focus is an important change that affects ISWAP military operations."

Political capital

Seven local employees of a French drilling firm and a government official were killed in southeast Niger on Thursday when suspected Boko Haram gunmen stormed their compound. Eight Chadian soldiers were killed in an attack in the Lake Chad region last month. Both areas are known hotspots for Boko Haram activity. Nigeria's government and military have not commented publicly on the latest deaths in Metele and have strongly denied previous reports of heavy casualties. But Buhari's main challenger at next February's election, Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), sent a condolence message to the families of those who were killed.

He said the losses were "a clear sign that our troops need to be better funded and better equipped", after soldiers complained of being over-stretched and under-resourced. On Thursday night, Senate leader Bukola Saraki, a Buhari critic who defected from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to the PDP earlier this year, also spoke out about the deaths. He announced that a delegation of senators would travel to the northeast to visit frontline troops, as others in the party questioned the effectiveness of the counter-insurgency. "It is time that we face the reality that Boko Haram is not technically defeated," said Peter Ayodele Fayose, a former state governor and leading PDP figure. —AFP

International

Climate change could cost US 'hundreds of billions' a year

Sea levels on the rise amid heavy rain and floods

TAMPA: Climate change is already hurting the global economy and will cost the US hundreds of billions of dollars annually by century's end unless drastic action is taken to cut carbon emissions, a major US government report warned on Friday. "With continued growth in emissions at historic rates, annual losses in some economic sectors are projected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the century—more than the current gross domestic product (GDP) of many US states," the latest edition of the National Climate Assessment said.

"Without substantial and sustained global mitigation and regional adaptation efforts, climate change is expected to cause growing losses to American infrastructure and property and impede the rate of economic growth over this century," it added. The effects will spill over into global trade, affecting import and export prices and US businesses with overseas operations and supply chains, it added. Some of these impacts are already being felt in the United States, the report said, and recent extreme weather and climate-related events can now be attributed "with increasingly higher confidence to human-caused warming."

Compiled by more than 300 scientists, the Fourth National Climate Assessment Volume II is a congressionally mandated report that spans more than 1,000 pages. US President Donald Trump dismissed last year's report, and just this week appeared to confuse weather with climate when he tweeted: "Brutal and Extended Cold Blast could shatter ALL RECORDS - Whatever happened to Global Warming?" Trump also yanked the United States out of the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord, signed by more than 190 nations

to limit carbon emissions.

David Easterling, director of the technical support unit at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Centers for Environmental Information, said there had been "no external interference" in the report. Scientists found "clear and compelling evidence that global average temperature is much higher and is rising more rapidly than anything modern civilization has experienced," he told reporters. "And this warming trend can only be explained by human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere."

Cascading effects

Reporters questioned the timing of this year's release, which came on the Friday after Thanksgiving, a national holiday when many people are traveling and shopping. A NOAA spokeswoman said the report was "out earlier than expected" and was released ahead of two major scientific meetings on climate change in the coming weeks. Meanwhile, the report warned that even if major cuts are made to harmful greenhouse gases (GHGs) like carbon dioxide and methane, the damage will linger for years. "Because several GHGs, in particular carbon dioxide, reside in the atmosphere for decades or longer, many climate-influenced effects are projected to continue changing through 2050, even if GHG emissions were to stop immediately," said the report.

Sea levels are continuing to rise, and extreme events like heavy rain and floods continue to increase worldwide, which will "cascade across economic sectors," Easterling said, warning of "substantial net damage to



CALIFORNIA: Vehicles are stuck on a road after being trapped by a mudslide on California Highway 58 in Mojave after torrential rains swamped the area and forced drivers and passengers to flee on foot. —AFP

the US economy." The report said it was "very likely that some physical and ecological impacts will be irreversible for thousands of years, while others will be permanent." The publication is designed to inform policy makers but does not make any specific recommendations on actions to take.

"In light of the report's findings, it's critical that federal, state and local governments take aggressive action to protect US residents by both reigning in emissions

and helping communities adapt to the climate impacts that are now inevitable," said Brenda Ekwurzel, the director of climate science at the Union of Concerned Scientists and one of the study's authors. Rush Holt, chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said the economic warning shows that "policymakers can no longer afford to dismiss or ignore the overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change." —AFP



Climate change hurting world economy

Europe urged to scrap 'outdated, harmful' rape laws

LONDON: European countries must overhaul "outdated" laws that let rapists off the hook and perpetuate a culture of victim-blaming, rights groups said yesterday. Only eight out of 31 countries surveyed by Amnesty International define rape as sex without consent, according to research published on the eve of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The rest have legal definitions of rape based on force, threat of force, coercion or the victim's inability to defend themselves. "Time and again, surveys show that many people still believe it's not rape when the victim is drunk, wearing revealing clothes or not physically fighting back," said lead researcher Anna Blus. "Sex without consent is rape, full stop. Until governments bring their legislations in line with this simple fact, the perpetrators of rape will continue to get away with their crimes."

The survey covered the 28 EU countries plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Research by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights suggests one in 20 women has been raped. But rights groups say rape remains hugely underreported in Europe, despite movements like #MeToo which have spurred women to speak out about sexual violence. The countries which define rape as sex without consent are Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden and the United Kingdom. —Reuters

UN grants sanctions exemption for Korea railway survey

SEOUL: The UN Security Council has granted a sanctions exemption for the two Koreas to jointly conduct a survey on reconnecting railways across their border, a spokesman for the South Korean presidency said yesterday. The two Koreas last month agreed to start the survey no later than late October and to hold the groundbreaking ceremony sometime between late November and early December, as the countries pursue a reconciliation drive. But the possibility of the project running up against UN sanctions imposed on North Korea over its nuclear programs has caused delays. "It is significant that this project has received support from the United States and international community", said Kim Eui-Gyeom, spokesman for the presidential Blue House in Seoul. Railway experts from both sides will criss-cross the country on survey trains together, Kim said in a statement, adding that the process will "bring inter-Korean cooperation to a new level". Yonhap news agency said the South was expected to bring fuel for train locomotives, and other unspecified materials for the survey in the North.

Delivering fuel to North Korea could potentially have been in breach of a UN cap limiting imports to 500,000 barrels a year. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Tuesday any inter-Korean rapprochement had to move forward "in tandem" with efforts to denuclearize the peninsula, and could not come sooner. US president Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a historic summit in Singapore earlier this year, signing a vaguely worded deal on denuclearization. But since then, talks on denuclearization have stalled, with meetings either deemed unproductive, pushed back or cancelled altogether. —Reuters

Canada francophones gear up for fight over education and rights

OTTAWA: A French-language university cancelled by Ontario's government this month has kindled the passions of Canada's francophone minority, who are set to replay their historical rights struggle. In addition to nixing the proposed university that was to open in Toronto in 2020, the province with the largest francophone minority in the country — outside of Quebec — also cut funding for francophone theater troupes.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, the brother of Toronto's late crack-smoking mayor, responded to a barrage of criticism, saying the move "has nothing to do with personal (grudges or other) against any Franco-Ontarians." "They're great people," he told reporters. "But we also cancelled three other universities, English-speaking universities." Ford insisted that budget constraints were behind the decision which will save Ontario Can\$80 million (US\$60 million) over seven years. But it has rattled Ontario's 600,000 francophones, who represent about four percent of Ontario's population.

The move also drew criticism and calls to reverse course from the federal government and others including the government of Quebec, where francophones are the majority. Canada's nearly eight million francophones represent 20 percent of its population, but most are in Quebec. "I know personally from having taught French in Vancouver, from having spoken with minority communities right across the country, how much they look to the federal government to try and stick up for them, regardless of what the provinces do," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said.

"And we will certainly be engaged with the provincial government to try to ensure they do this." His father, the later prime minister Pierre Trudeau, enshrined bilingual language rights in the Constitution. Justin Trudeau's language minister, Melanie Joly, was scheduled to confront her Ontario counterpart Caroline Mulroney on the issue Friday. Joly also announced Can\$5 million for a "court challenges program" which provides financial assistance for important court cases that advance constitutional rights.

Francophone groups have dusted off their picket signs and plan to march for their rights in 40 locations across Ontario on December 1. "We feel betrayed," said Carol Jolin of the lobby group Assemblée de la Francophonie de l'Ontario. Ford had pledged during the June election support for the new university that was to enroll 3,000. Jolin told AFP. "Everything was going pretty well for francophones in Canada in



OTTAWA: Christmas decorations adorn a lamppost outside a post office in downtown Ottawa. —AFP

recent years," he said. "But we're worried now about a backsliding."

Kicking up old feuds

The late 1960s and the two decades that followed had marked a turning point for Canadian francophones in their fight to have their rights to an education and government services in French recognized. This included a Manitoba insurance broker's 1976 Supreme Court challenge of a parking ticket issued only in English as a means to restore French language rights in that province, and a 1990s battle against budget cuts to keep open Ontario's only francophone hospital, Montfort in Ottawa. French language rights were laid out in the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and other laws. New Brunswick went the furthest, making French one of its two official languages in 1969. But the province suffered a relapse in September when a fringe party that campaigned on slashing "costly" French services emerged as a potential kingmaker in an election that failed to secure a majority. Trudeau's Liberals have sought to make the rights row an election issue in 2019, as Ford's government is closely allied with the federal opposition Conservatives and their leader Andrew Scheer. —AFP

Short, sharp shock of a no-deal Brexit

LONDON: A London fine wine merchant this week became the latest business to announce stockpiling in case Britain splits from the European Union without a deal in March. The draft withdrawal deal reached by the two sides has not entirely removed the prospects because of deep divisions in both Britain and the EU. Doom-and-gloom predictions about life after a "no-deal" Brexit are plentiful and highly politically charged. The truth is no-one can say with certainty what happens if the divorce arrangements London and Brussels hope to sign off on Sunday are ripped up by the EU or UK parliament. But here are some things London is telling Britons to brace for in the first days of a worst-case scenario.

Rip-off roaming

We check our mobiles constantly and this is where people could notice things first. Free roaming would no longer apply and UK mobile phone operators can start charging extra for subscribers who pop off to "the Continent". London is also urging people in Britain's Northern Ireland to watch out for "inadvertent roaming" when straying too close to the EU border in Ireland.

Grounded at Heathrow

Heathrow and other big airports can be a nightmare at the best of times. But planes getting grounded when Brexit strikes at

2300 GMT on March 29 because airlines lose their licences would create chaos that ripples across the world. London says it would "envisage" granting European carriers special permission to keep flying - and that it would "expect" the 27 EU countries to do the same.

Forms, forms, forms

Prepare to start signing your name. A lot. Thousands of companies that do business with Europe would have to fill out reams of customs and duties declarations. Tourists who want to rent a car may need to get international driving permits because their UK licences become invalid. And even pets might need to jump through new administrative hoops that require them to get new passports. People might want to check theirs as well. Those that expire within six months of travel might need to be renewed in advance.

Drug dilemma

Things turn more serious for those who rely on medication. Officials are talking to drug companies about creating a six-week "buffer stock" on top of the three-month one they already have in place. This should help cover any short-term disruptions at the border. Britain will also waive the need for EU firms to re-test their drugs under new rules.

Shoppers beware

That one-click purchase at your favorite online store might start looking slightly less tempting. The government says "increased costs and slower processing times" for pay-



BRUSSELS: EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and British Prime Minister Theresa May leave after a press briefing during a meeting at the EU Headquarters in Brussels. —AFP

ments made in euros are a possibility. Parcel deliveries could get more expensive because waivers for certain import and sales taxes would expire.

Flicks and tunes

Catching up on the latest Netflix releases while coasting on a high-speed Eurostar train may suddenly become a whole lot harder. Britons could theoretically lose access to streaming services - everything from Spotify to Amazon Prime - while abroad because the UK would no longer be in Europe's "digital

single market". And the Eurostar service itself might be in trouble because old licenses of UK train operators in Europe will be invalid.

Meat pies

Britons are proud of their Stilton cheese and Scotch whisky. But the status of everything from Cornish pasties to Melton Mowbray pork pies will be up in the air because they will lose their "geographical indication" status in Europe. Britain's 86 GI-protected products make up a quarter all its food and drink exports. —AFP

International

Taiwan poll spotlights social, political rifts; Ballot features 10 referendums

Millions of Taiwanese vote in key elections

TAIPEI: Millions of Taiwanese went to the polls yesterday in key elections which tap into a raft of divisive issues, from relations with Beijing to gay rights. The island-wide vote for political representatives, from village up to city level, is a mid-term test for embattled President Tsai Ing-wen as she faces a backlash over domestic reforms and concerns about deteriorating ties with China.

The ballot also features 10 referendums, including pro- and anti-gay marriage votes and a bid to change the name under which Taiwan competes at international sports events that has already angered China. There were long queues at polling stations yesterday morning with Tsai urging people to come out and vote as she cast her ballot in New Taipei City. "I feel that this is a democratic society and people can express their views on many issues," she told reporters.

College student Kwan Chin-shun, 18, voting in Taipei, said she wanted to support the referendum calling for equal marriage rights. "There's nothing wrong with loving someone of the same sex," he said. There are competing referendums on gay rights, with "pro-family" groups calling for marriage to be legally defined as between a man and a woman. A landmark court decision legalizing gay marriage is still to be implemented and LGBT groups are concerned a referendum win for conservative campaigners could limit their newly won rights.

'Outside forces'

The referendums come as an extra headache for Tsai and her ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP),

which faces strong challenges in major seats. Tsai has framed the local elections as a way to "tell the world" that Taiwan will not bow to Beijing, which has ramped up military and diplomatic pressure since she took office in 2016. China sees self-ruling Taiwan as part of its territory and is incensed that Tsai will not acknowledge the island as part of "one China", unlike her predecessor Ma Ying-jeou of the Beijing-friendly Kuomintang party (KMT). Tsai was voted president by a landslide two years ago as the public feared the KMT were getting too close to Beijing, and she has played up the importance of Taiwanese identity on the campaign trail.

She has called China's pressure "omnipresent", flagging up a recent row at the Golden Horse film awards in Taipei which saw a mainland actor referring to the island as "China, Taiwan" after a Taiwanese filmmaker had voiced her support for independence. Taiwan's Investigation Bureau also says it is probing Chinese influence on the elections through campaign funding of candidates. At a final campaign rally Friday night in Taipei, Tsai said Taiwan's democracy was faced with a crisis due to "outside forces". But the KMT is billing the local polls as a vote of no confidence in Tsai, vowing to promote peaceful relations with China and boost the economy.

Tsai's pension and labor reforms have been unpopular and despite a growing GDP, some voters complain they have not seen any benefits as salaries remain stagnant and the cost of living rises. Some also blame cross-strait tensions for denting their livelihoods, including



NEW TAIPEI CITY: Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen (center) arrives at a polling station to vote during local elections in Zhongho, New Taipei City yesterday. —AFP

grass-roots groups that traditionally vote DPP. Tsai Bao-hsing, head of Liuchiu Fisherman Association in Pingtung county, Tsai's home town said many of the group's members would vote KMT to "punish the DPP"

for failing to promote the export of fish products to China as Taiwan seeks to diversify to other markets. Polls close at 4:00 pm local time (0800 GMT) with results not expected until today. —AFP



A mid-term test for embattled President

Authorities heighten security at disputed Indian religious site

AYODHYA: Indian authorities will launch a major security operation at the ruins of 16th-century mosque in Ayodhya today when tens of thousands of Hindu monks and religious leaders gather to urge the government to build a new Hindu temple on the disputed site. A militant Hindu mob demolished the centuries-old mosque in 1992, triggering communal riots that killed about 2,000 people across India. As millions of Hindus believe that the mosque stood at the birthplace of Lord Ram, one of their most revered deities, the dispute continues to be at the core of tensions between Hindus and India's Muslim minority. Hindu groups insist that there was a temple at the site before the mosque was built in 1528.

"More than 200,000 people will attend," said Surendra Jain, All India Joint General Secretary of the Vishva Hindu Parishad, a Hindu nationalist organization, which is holding a 'dharma sabha' or religious congregation in Ayodhya. "We assure everyone, though we don't need to, that not even a twig will be disturbed." Ahead of a general election that must be held by May next year, leaders from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its associates have become more vocal in their demand the government introduce legislation paving the way for a new Hindu temple on the site. —Reuters

Prominent Syrian activist among 2 gunned down

KAFR NABAL: A prominent Syrian activist was gunned down Friday with a colleague in the country's last rebel bastion, in another blow to the dwindling civilian society that helped spark the 2011 uprising. Raed Fares and Hamod Jnaid were "shot dead by unknown assailants riding in a van in the town of Kafr Nabal" in the northwestern province of Idlib, their radio station Fresh FM said on its Facebook page.

Fares—who founded the broadcaster—was an influential figure known for his often humorous signs in English and Arabic criticizing President Bashar al-Assad's regime during weekly protests at the start of the revolt. Radio station colleague Ali Dandush, who was in the backseat of the car carrying the two activists when it was ambushed, said three men got out of a van and unleashed a deadly volley of gunfire. "I would have preferred to die with them," Dandush said. "They meant everything to me."

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said the two men died of their wounds from the attack, for which there was no immediate claim of responsibility. "They were famous for their criticism of rebels committing violations or arresting civilians, especially when it came to jihadist groups," Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. More than half of Idlib and the surrounding region is controlled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), an alliance led by jihadists of Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, while most of the rest is held by pro-Turkey rebels. The Islamic State (IS) group also has a presence in the province. Targeted killings and kidnappings have for months plagued Idlib, with angry residents blaming all sides.

'Voice of Kafr Nabal'

Both men had been detained "several times" by HTS in the past, the Observatory said. Fares, a 46-year-old father of three children, had been repeatedly targeted since he founded Fresh FM in 2013 to counter what he called "fundamentalist narratives" in Idlib. IS fighters raided the radio's offices on several occasions, but regime forces also bombed it, he said.

"In 2014, I almost lost my life when two armed men opened fire at me and shot me in the chest," Fares wrote in an op-ed for the Washington Post in June, after US funding to Fresh FM was cut. "I was abducted four times by Al-Qaeda militants and released a few days later after being tortured." Jnaid, who also worked at the radio, was an advocate for freedom of expression and the rule of law. "I want freedom of opinion. I want to be able to speak and not be scared," he said in a video posted on Facebook earlier this year.

Born in 1980, Jnaid had five children, including a disabled girl, according to his friends. Several hundred people attended funerals for the slain activists in their hometown of Kafr Nabal on Friday afternoon. Bilal Bayush, a friend and fellow activist, rushed to the hospital as soon as he heard about the shooting. He and others waited anxiously as Fares fought for his life in the operating room, until the doctor emerged to give them his condolences. "They had been the voice of Kafr Nabal since the beginning" of the uprising, Bayush said. "We buried them, but we still don't fully realize" that they have died, he said.

A September deal between regime ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey held off a major regime assault to retake Idlib. But a buffer zone has yet to be implemented around the region, as stipulated by the deal, after jihadists refused to withdraw from a planned demilitarized area by mid-October. Syria's civil war has killed more than 360,000 people and sent millions fleeing from their homes since it started in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-regime protests. It has since evolved into a complex conflict involving world powers and jihadists. —AFP

Erdogan's AKP gets local election boost from nationalists

ISTANBUL: Turkey's nationalist MHP will support President Tayyip Erdogan's AK Party candidates in local elections in three key cities next year, the MHP leader said yesterday, in a boost to the AKP's election prospects. The AK Party and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) formed an alliance before presidential elections last June, but were subsequently at loggerheads over a disagreement about the MHP's call for an amnesty for some jailed criminals. A month ago MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli said his party would not seek an alliance with the AK Party in the March 2019 municipal elections which are being held across Turkey. At the time his comments triggered a weakening of the lira over concerns that it would lead to political instability.

However, Bahçeli announced a change of position yesterday saying the MHP would not put forward city mayoral candidates for Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, Turkey's three biggest cities. "Whoever the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) candidates are in these three big cities our support will be total," Bahçeli told officials from his party in a speech in Antalya. The MHP's candidates in other municipalities across Turkey would continue to stand, he said, adding there was no "secret agreement" behind his party's decision.

It was not clear what prompted the change in Bahçeli's position. Bahçeli and his MHP party had been staunch critics of Erdogan's AK Party before they reached agreement on their election alliance this year. Their alliance had been expected to continue despite last month's decision not to cooperate in the local elections. The local elections themselves will have little impact on the balance of power in Turkey generally. Under the presidential system ushered in by the June elections, Erdogan already wields extensive power. —Reuters

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For govts right and left, season of discontent

Democratic governments are rarely popular for extended periods, and often have to scrape by with low polls, noisy demonstrations and constant pressure from the media. And though authoritarian regimes can squash dissent and muzzle the news, they too face rising discontent. These patterns aren't new, but now they happen as administrations of every kind are under increasing, and new, pressures - and the challenge of recession looms.

In the democratic world, France is the present exhibit A. Some 300,000 of its citizens wearing yellow safety jackets came out in force last weekend to protest quite hefty fuel price rises. The numbers went down to around 10,000 after several days of demonstrations, but a planned blockade of Paris this weekend will show if the protests are deeply felt enough to last, or have been a one-off show of dissatisfaction.

French President Emmanuel Macron is presently held in low esteem: an early November poll showed the candidate he beat to become president, Marine Le Pen of the right-wing National Rally, formerly known as the National Front, is two points above him in voting intentions for the European parliament elections next May.

Many of the French protestors are from rural areas and small towns, where public transport is scanty. The protests often underscore the theme that the centrist Macron is the "president of the rich," unworried by several rises in fuel prices - measures the government says are designed to prompt a shift to more environmentally friendly vehicles. Faced with the choice between cleaner air or lower prices, the protestors choose the latter - and at least one poll shows that 73 percent of the country supports them.

Where there is some space for protests in authoritarian states, people use it - often, too, manifesting a determination to protect living standards. In Russia, "trust" in President Vladimir Putin has sunk to 39 percent. "Approval" of the president is higher, at 67 percent in September, though a drop from 82 percent six months earlier. The major reason is another sharp rise - this time in Russia's retirement age, from 60 to 65 for men and 55 to 60 for women. As Macron can point to his once-popular pledge to run a "green" government, so Putin can show that the plunging population of Russia has left too few economically active workers supporting too many retirees. But still they come on to the streets.

In Egypt, the falling popularity of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi stems from austerity measures he introduced in 2016 after a \$12 billion IMF loan specified cuts and other painful reforms. This year he won the presidential election with 97 percent of the vote; the other candidate had made it clear he was a Sisi supporter. Egyptian voters, knowing dissent can be savagely punished, had nowhere else to go. Abstention was the real protest, with the turnout at 41 percent - even lower than the 47 percent who went to the polls in the previous presidential election.

In China, protest is tightly suppressed as President Xi Jinping continues to press the Communist party to both spread his political thoughts - now formally written into the constitution - to every one of China's vast, 1.4 billion population, and to ensure that control be as total as possible. Growth is still over 6 percent - but that is significantly lower than in the past several years, and is still falling. Xi seems to be anticipating unrest as budgets are cut and is raising defenses ahead of time.

Economic slowdowns always have social and political consequences, sometimes violent. A new recessionary period is confidently predicted, and probably soon. The Economist noted last month that "the IMF thinks growth will slow this year in every other [than the United States] big advanced economy. And emerging markets are in trouble." When that happens, countries both free and unfree are likely to struggle to contain the effects.

Populism

The rise of populism exacerbates this. Populists don't just introduce tougher immigration rules and prompt revolt against liberal institutions; they give shape and organization to deep chasms in both rich and emerging economies. In the latter category, last month's election of the former army officer Jair Bolsonaro as president of Brazil is testament to a large nation, governed by the left for more than a decade, now expressing its fear of rampant crime, disgust over a corruption scandal enveloping the former Workers' Party administration and discontent caused by the country's dismal economic performance.

In Brazil, as in France, the United States, Italy, the UK and beyond, the haves and have-littles regard each other with mutual incomprehension, often with contempt. It's most evident in the United States because President Donald Trump likes to stir it up - as he did before the congressional midterm elections by stoking fears about Central American migrants heading for the United States. But it doesn't end there. Populism's best energy comes from a refusal to acquiesce in the inequities of the world - once a motor force of the left, more often now found on the right.

At times, the success of the national populists render the formation of government itself impossible - as in Sweden today, where neither the center-left nor the center-right coalitions can govern without support, but both refuse to make a deal with the far-right Sweden Democrats, who hold the balance of power with almost 18 percent of the vote. — Reuters



Washington Watch

1988 watershed year for Arab Americans

By Dr James J Zogby

Last week, after reading my column, "The Struggle to Advocate for Palestinians Has Never Been Easy," a reader did a bit of research, found, and then sent me an article I had written 30 years ago.

Because this three decades old piece tells an important story, I have included it below, followed by a bit of background.

"Must an Arab American Pass a Pro-Israel Litmus Test," (Los Angeles Times, 10/6/1988)

When Ruth Ann Skaff, an Arab-American community activist and Democrat from Houston, was appointed to the Democratic National Committee after the convention in Atlanta, Arab Americans were overjoyed. Skaff's appointment signaled - at last - the Democratic Party's willingness to welcome us as an ethnic constituency. But this taste of inclusion is rapidly turning bitter for those who dare to hold opinions not shared by some others in the party. For years Arab Americans have worked, to no avail, to meet with the national party leadership and be recognized as a constituent group. Our community still remembers the hurt when the Mondale campaign returned contributions made by Arab-American Democrats in 1984.

This year, working hard for Jesse Jackson, we won a record number of delegate and standing-committee slots to the Democratic convention. As a result of these efforts, and with Jackson's strong support, Skaff was appointed to the national committee. Then the storm broke. No sooner was her appointment announced than a Texas DNC leader expressed concern and regret over Skaff's inclusion in the 400-member committee. More recently, five Republican members of Congress challenged presidential candidate Michael S Dukakis to dismiss Skaff and two black DNC appointees—Los Angeles City Councilman Robert Farrell and the Rev. Willie Barrow, executive director of Operation PUSH in Chicago—for their "anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian" views.

The Democratic leadership should have immediately exposed this Republican attack for what it was - a desperate and dangerous attempt to shift to the Democrats the specter of anti-Semitism that had arisen in their own campaign when it was discovered that some former supporters of the Nazis held positions on a Bush election committee. Instead, the Democratic Party took the bait. Some Democratic members of Congress went so far as to join in the call for the dismissal of Skaff, Farrell and Barrow, while all that party chairman Paul G. Kirk could offer was a reaffirmation of his party's "solid support for the state of Israel and its unwavering intolerance of bigotry and anti-Semitism."

Why the controversy?

We are told that Skaff is disliked because of her views on the Middle East. Skaff has been critical of Israel's invasion into Lebanon and Israel's policies in the West Bank and Gaza. She supports the Palestinians' right to self-determination, including their right to choose their own leadership. She has also publicly stated that she supports security for the state of Israel. These views, according to a Gallup poll of March, 1988, are shared by a plurality of American citizens. Again, why the controversy?

Is it because Skaff, whose grandparents were from Lebanon, is an Arab American? Some leaders in the Jewish community have told us no. And yet we feel that this must be the case. Skaff is deeply committed to a broad range of concerns, including immigrant rights, an end to ethnic stereotyping, Middle East peace and reform in Lebanon—and security and justice for Palestinians. Her commitment to these issues is related to her ethnicity. Yet there are many other Americans who share these same concerns. Would her concerns be an issue if not for her ethnic origin? I think not.

No one should be required to pass a litmus test on areas of US foreign policy in order to participate in domestic politics. In particular, it strikes me as somewhat credulous to expect that Skaff would express support for Israeli policies at a time when those policies have resulted in such hardship and suffering for the people of her ancestry in the Middle East. Such a test would be, by definition, exclusionary to any Arab American. That such a litmus test links support for Palestinian rights with anti-Semitism is also patently unfair; nowhere in Skaff's personal life is there any shred of evidence of her holding such views.

Even suggesting such a loyalty test not only silences national debate on the Middle East, which is what its advocates clearly intend. It also denies to Arab Americans the opportunity to gain access to the political process where their other concerns can also be addressed. The real litmus test should be the ability of both parties to include representatives of the Arab-American community and to allow free and open debate on issues of concern to all Americans. Arab Americans have come of age. We refuse to accept the limiting definition of ourselves as merely the "other side" of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We are not a faction but a constituency, and we demand inclusion—in this instance, our rightful place in the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party should welcome into its ranks Ruth Ann Skaff and the constituency that she represents, and it should defend, even encourage, her right to debate all issues of concern to that constituency. The fundamental principles of our democracy guarantee these rights to all citizens. It seems so logical. Right? So, why is the storm still brewing?

The reason for the storm was that at the 1988 Democratic Convention, led by Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign, we had introduced and then debated from the podium of the convention an amendment to the party's platform calling for "mutual recognition, territorial compromise, and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians". It should not have been controversial, but it was.

I had been warned by party leaders. They said "If you even mention the 'P-word' (meaning, Palestine) in the convention, you will destroy the Democratic Party." We not only had a vigorous public debate, we also had a floor demonstration of over 1,000 delegates calling for "justice for Palestinians."

The reaction was near hysteria and Skaff, Farrell, and Barrow, who had all been Jesse Jackson delegates, bore the brunt of this hysteria. Republicans sought to use the Palestine debate against the Democratic Party. And, instead of defending us and the importance of open debate, the Democratic Party leadership covered. The party's 1988 nominee, Michael Dukakis, went so far as to reject our community's endorsement.

This episode marked the end of Arab American exclusion from the national party. At the end of 1988, when Ron Brown, Jesse Jackson's campaign manager, became the Chair of the Democratic Party, he publicly welcomed the community into the party, speaking at our events (ignoring pressure to shun us), and including Arab Americans in party affairs. When Bill Clinton became President in January of 1993, even more doors were opened.

As I have noted, even with these opportunities, we face renewed challenges to fully engage and raise our voices demanding justice for Palestinians - with efforts underway to criminalize legitimate criticism of Israel and support for Palestinian human rights. What we have learned from past experience is that with a strategy grounded in hard work, persistence, reasoned discourse, and the support of allies, we can face down our adversaries and prevail.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

One of Algeria's last farriers fears for trade's future

Clutching a glowing red horseshoe between blacksmith's tongs, Meddah Larbi delights in his passion caring for horses' hooves, as one of Algeria's last farriers. At his workshop at the Chaou-Chaoua national stud farm in Tiaret, 340 km southwest of Algiers, Larbi hammered the hot horseshoe on an anvil. He has spent years crafting shoes of all shapes and sizes, after first visiting the workshop with his horse as a 16-year-old. "At the sight of an old man wielding a horseshoe over the coal forge, taking it from the flames, I fell in love. I knew that was what I wanted to do," Larbi said.

He left school to become the apprentice of the farrier at Chaou-Chaoua and after four years took over the job when his mentor retired. For the next decade, the former champion showjumper continued to ride competitively, combining his passion with a useful craft. "In Algeria, riding horses is more of a hobby than a trade," he said. "I had to have a profession to live by, to have social security." His tools of the trade hang

from the workshop walls, some pieces dating from its establishment in 1877 by French colonialists. "For me, the best symphony is the sound of the hammer on the hot iron. It's as if I've turned the radio on, it fills me with happiness," said 39-year-old Larbi. Some of the tools he still uses have barely changed since the Middle Ages, while the work of a farrier dates back more than 1,000 years. In recent times, more and more people are turning to machine-made horseshoes, which are lighter. Even those factory-made shoes still have to be adapted, however, and fitted to each horse's hoof.

'No foot, no horse'

Despite the technological developments, Larbi remains determined to continue crafting his own horseshoes. Working eight-hour days in Tiaret, he passes his free time with private clients across Algeria. The process of removing an old horseshoe, cleaning and caring for the hoof before adding the new shoe can take up to four hours per horse. The work is tough and farriers need to be fit, Larbi said, with long days spent bending down holding onto a horse's leg.

As well as patience and precision, he must have a deep knowledge of equine anatomy as in emergencies farriers can be called upon to serve as vets. They can come across abscesses or laminitis - a disease affecting the hoof - which need immediate attention.



Algerian farrier Meddah Larbi installs a horseshoe onto a horse at a horse breeding farm perched in the country's Tiaret region on April 24, 2018. — AFP

While Larbi remains enthusiastic about his work, he has been unable to find an apprentice to whom he can pass his skills on. Most young Algerians find the work "hard and thankless, and they don't want to learn," he said. There is no formal training center for farriers in Algeria, and Larbi said two apprentices he took under his wing quit after six months. In the past 20 years, the number of Algerian farriers has fallen from around 15 to no more than six, apart from those working for the Republican Guard. But there is no shortage of work, with one private breeder having to

hire a foreign farrier to work full time. "When my schedule is full, I can have up to 200 horses each month" with most of them being private clients, said Larbi.

Although he receives a minimum wage as a civil servant for the national stud farm, his lucrative private work can see him earn more than a million dinars (\$8,400) a year, twice the average salary in Algeria. Yet with few people willing to learn the craft, Larbi worries about its future. A farrier's expertise is also vital to the health of a horse, he said, highlighting an old saying: "No foot, no horse." — AFP

Business

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NEW YORK CITY: People shop at the Macy's flagship store on 34th St on Black Friday on Friday in New York City. — AFP

US holiday shopping season kicks off

Retailers look to millennials for shopping cheer

NEW YORK: As the US holiday shopping season kicked off Friday, retailers were looking to an unexpected savior to keep the tills humming: millennials.

The generation of 22 to 37-year-olds have long been seen as cash-strapped and debt-laden after graduating college into a jobless economy after the 2008 global financial crisis. But as businesses across the US economy rolled out online promotions and doorbuster sales to market the "Black Friday" start to the annual holiday shopping season, retailers were targeting young adults as key to growth. "This holiday season retailers will experience the growing purchasing power of Gen Z and millennials," National Retail Federation president Matthew Shay said.

The NRF has projected growth of up to 4.8 percent this year in overall retail spending in November and December to as much as \$721 billion. NRF survey data showed that 43 percent of adults between ages 18 and 24 expect to spend more compared with last year and that 38 percent of those between 25 and 34 will spend more.

By contrast, only nine percent of those 65 and older plan to buy more.

Those forecasts challenge the lingering sense of younger adults as still economically encumbered, a perception mocked by toymaker Hasbro with "Monopoly for Millennials," which was released in time for Christmas. In this version of the classic board game, contestants try to accumulate the most "experience" points. "Forget real estate. You can't afford it anyway," reads the box.

The Monopoly reboot has been selling well, despite drawing eyerolls from some critics who say it relies on tired tropes.

'Able to splurge'

NRF spokeswoman Ana Serafin Smith said a strong labor market, robust economy and tax cuts were among the factors that left millennials "in a good economic state to be able to splurge."

Courtney Voss, a 31-year-old New York-based flight attendant, said she had already spent a lot this year and planned to stay within budget. But both Voss and her boyfriend had salary boosts this year, and she said many of her friends are doing better as well.

"At this point, the majority of my friends have pretty

good jobs and they're making good incomes," she said. Samuel Ball-Brau, 30, who works in finance in New York, looks forward to spending more this year.

"Finally we can afford to repay back all of the support our loved ones have given us," he said.

Forecasters have been upbeat on the overall outlook for the holiday shopping season, which accounts for as much as 30 percent of the annual sales for some vendors.

IHS Markit this week projected a 4.4 percent rise in overall holiday sales this year, pointing to a "roaring job market" as the "gift that keeps on giving," while warning that recent stock market volatility could be something of a damper.

More sales on smartphones

Some of the intensity of "Black Friday" has diminished in recent years as retailers have spread out the period of promotions and also begun saving specials for "Cyber Monday" early next week. But foot traffic was still expected to be heavy for an intense shopping day that has occasionally led to stampedes and other violence. Police killed a gunman Thursday night after a

shooting that closed a mall near Birmingham, Alabama—although the details were sketchy and the assailant's motive has not been established.

IHS projected that online sales would account for 18.9 percent of overall business, up from 17.8 percent a year ago. Through 10 am Eastern Time, Black Friday online sales stood at \$643 million, up 27.8 percent from last year, and putting retailers on track for \$6.4 billion for the day, according to Adobe Digital Insights.

More sales are expected to be completed on smartphones, the result of bigger phone screens, faster connections, fewer hitches on retailer websites and the use of Apple Pay and other programs that speed sales, said Taylor Schreiner, Director of Adobe Digital Insights.

Jessica Rabe, 24 and the co-owner of DataTrek Research in New York, said she and other millennials use Instagram and other social media platforms in shopping, in part for clues to a brand's values, such as its stance on inclusion and diversity.

"The most effective companies use models of all sizes, races and backgrounds," she told AFP in an email. "Hiring a diverse staff is also an in-store cue that shows the company cares about these issues." —AFP

Oil plunges nearly 8% despite talk of output cut

BOSTON: Oil prices slumped up to nearly 8 percent to the lowest in more than a year on Friday, posting the seventh consecutive weekly loss, amid intensifying fears of a supply glut even as major producers consider cutting output.

Oil supply, led by US producers, is growing faster than demand and to prevent a build-up of unused fuel such as the one that emerged in 2015, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is expected to start trimming output after a meeting on Dec. 6.

But this has done little so far to prop up prices, which have dropped more than 20 percent so far in November, in a seven-week streak of losses. Prices were on course for their biggest one-month decline since late 2014. A trade war between the world's two biggest economies and oil consumers, the United States

and China, has weighed upon the market.

"The market is pricing in an economic slowdown — they are anticipating that the Chinese trade talks are not going to go well," said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Price Futures Group in Chicago, referring to expected talks next week between US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the G20 summit in Buenos Aires. "The market doesn't believe that OPEC is going to be able to act swiftly enough to offset the coming slowdown in demand," Flynn said.

Brent crude futures settled down \$3.80 a barrel, or 6.1 percent at \$58.80. During the session, the benchmark dropped to \$58.41, the lowest since October 2017. US West Texas Intermediate crude (WTI) lost \$4.21, or 7.7 percent, to trade at \$50.42, also the weakest since October 2017. In post-settlement trade, the contract continued to fall.

For the week, Brent fell 11.3 percent and WTI posted a 10.8 percent decline, the largest one-week drop since January 2016. Market fears over weak demand intensified after China reported its lowest gasoline exports in more than a year amid a glut of the fuel in Asia and globally.

Stockpiles of gasoline have surged across Asia, with inventories in Singapore, the regional refining hub, rising to a three-month high while Japanese stockpiles

also climbed last week. Inventories in the United States are about 7 percent higher than a year ago.

Crude production has soared as well this year. The International Energy Agency expects non-OPEC output alone to rise by 2.3 million barrels per day (bpd) this year while demand next year was expected to grow 1.3 million bpd. Adjusting to lower demand, top crude exporter Saudi Arabia said on Thursday that it may reduce supply as it pushes OPEC to agree to a joint output cut of 1.4 million bpd.

However, Trump has made it clear that he does not want oil prices to rise and many analysts think Saudi Arabia is coming under US pressure to resist calls from other OPEC members for lower crude output. If OPEC decides to cut production at its meeting next month, oil prices could recover, analysts say. "We expect that OPEC will manage the market in 2019 and assess the probability of an agreement to reduce production at around 2-in-3. In that scenario, Brent prices likely recover back into the \$70s," Morgan Stanley commodities strategists Martijn Rats and Amy Sergeant wrote in a note to clients.

If OPEC does not trim production, prices could head much lower, potentially depreciating toward \$50 a barrel, argues Lukman Otunuga, Research Analyst at FXTM.

Volatility spikes to 2-year high

By the middle of November, commodity trading advisory funds tracked by Credit Suisse prime services had dropped 1.5 percent on the month, owing to the losses in energy futures and the increased volatility. Mark Connors, global head of portfolio and risk advisory at Credit Suisse, told Reuters this week that the action among macro and CTA funds reflects a risk-aversion trade, as net long positions have dropped from near five-year highs to roughly even exposure between longs and shorts.

Hedge funds and other money managers cut their net long positions in Brent by 32,263 contracts to 182,569 in the week ended Nov. 20, according to data provided by the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) on Friday. That's the lowest net long position since December 2015. Volatility, a measure of investor demand for options, has spiked to its highest since late 2016, above 60 percent, as investors have rushed to buy protection against further steep price declines.

The decline in oil prices pulled US energy shares lower. Oil majors Exxon Mobil Corp and Chevron Corp fell more than 3 percent and were the leading decliners on the Dow Jones Industrial Average Oilfield service providers Schlumberger NV and Halliburton Co also fell nearly 3 percent. —Reuters

KFH unveils 'KFH-Go', first digital self-banking station in Kuwait

Mandani: Initiative confirms our leadership in FinTech, meets our customers' aspirations

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House "KFH" inaugurated in Ishbiliya Co-op its first fully-automated 24/7 e-station with an advanced and wide range of technical devices and self-service instruments. The station is regarded as a fundamental shift in the image of bank stations towards more convenience, simplicity and speed for Customers. It is also a first step towards the expansion of similar stations as part of an ambitious futuristic plan set up by the bank under the mantra "KFH-Go: Digital Self-Banking Station".

The automated station boasts a variety of devices to provide the whole portfolio of 24/7 e-banking services. At the opening of the state-of-the-art e-station, in the presence of KFH-Group CEO, Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh and the executive management, Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH, Waleed Khaled Mandani said that the new automated station is an advanced step that represents clearly the achievements of KFH in diversifying retail banking services and is a new self-banking channel to deliver better and more effective Customer experience via an innovative automated station. This reiterates KFH drive to lead the market in the field of FinTech and enhance its leadership in the Islamic financial services. He pointed out that the smart e-station "KFH-Go" offers the customers round the clock services covering the vast majority of the services and transactions provided by traditional stations, hence making it the preferred choice for many customer sections particularly the youth.

Mandani added that the new e-station is not permanently staffed and contains state-of-the-art XTM and ATMs as well as two cash deposit machines (Bulk Deposit) each capable of accepting 300 notes in a single transaction with the capability of communicating directly with the telephone service personnel in audio and video calls via XTM machines. Customers can access more than 30 services, including cash withdrawals without a card through the mobile phone using the "QR code", IDs or phone number, as well as conducting "Murabaha" business transactions, requesting credit cards and prepaid cards, updating data and phone numbers, activating bank cards, opening deposits and accounts and a host of banking and financing services, therefore dispensing with the need to visit the station or deal directly with the staff. This means more fluidity in accessing our services quickly, safely and accurately.

Mandani stressed that launching the station would

help achieve a seamless quality of service and a broader scope for gaining customer satisfaction and enriching the concept of advanced banking experience that meets the increasing needs of KFH customers. He pointed out that the bank plans to expand similar e-stations by mid-2019. In view of the anticipated great demand on the station services, KFH will continue to improve the efficiency of the implemented technologies, raise the e-systems to international standards and expand interactive services such as instant printing of ATM cards and cheques, receiving gold biscuits, given that KFH caters for the largest customer base in the market through various channels such as the stations, ATM withdrawal and deposit machines, retail outlets and Internet and mobile banking services which make the new station a vital link in a chain of the best and latest technical tools and instruments.

Mandani added, "This station is a qualitative leap in the era of digital self-banking, which is based on direct interaction between the customer and advanced machines and platforms. We are working to cover new areas through digital stations. Starting with Ishbiliya station, we carefully chose the area due to its location in the center of many areas, as well as the distinctive nature of its inhabitants, where the advantage of accessibility of the station is a factor in the choice of place".

"With activating the role of digital banking, KFH aims to expand its customer base, meet the expectations of current customers, improve their experience as well as provide integrated and new banking services. E-services also reduce costs, increase efficiency and quality, providing KFH with an advantage that enhances its competitive position and qualifies", Mandani said.

Through the self-banking station, the first of its kind in Kuwait, with the design, performance and density of the devices and services levels, customers can process dozens of transactions with no need to visit the station. The self-banking unit services include opening a second account, setting up a business or deposit, request a debit/credit card, update phone/mobile number, update data and cash withdrawal without a card (cardless withdrawal) or through a mobile number as well as dozens of other banking transactions. Also, the new station includes XTM device and Shamel ATM machine and four ATM machines, two for cash withdrawals and two for bulk cash deposits.



Mazin Al-Nahedh with KFH team



The opening ceremony



Waleed Mandani speaking about the service



Unveiling KFH GO



Mazin Al-Nahedh and Fahad Al-Mekhaizeem with Ishbiliya Co-op officials



Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh explains the features of the new digital branch

Business

Warba Bank says share capital hike subscription starts today

Bank expects strong turnout with heavy online subscription

KUWAIT: Warba Bank announced that the offering period in capital increase for exercising pre-emption right starts today (Nov 25th) and ends on 9th Dec 2018. The total shares' value amounts KD 90MM (50 par value and 40 share premium); the subscription share price is 180 fils, including 100 fils par value and 80 fils share premium.

The Bank asserted that for the first time in Kuwait, an online subscription of 16,500 shares or less could be processed online. The payment could be made through the K-net electronic payment service by following simple steps on the URL <http://www.ipo.com.kw>, where subscribers will register their civil number/ commercial registration number, consequently the system will define their eligibility or ineligibility to the subscription. Then the subscriber will set the number of shares to be

subscribed and pay the price amount through the electronic payment service.

Shaheen Hamad Alghanem, Warba Bank's Chief Executive Officer, expected a strong turnout and heavy traffic for the share capital increase, in view of the huge amount of inquiries the Bank has received that is in addition to the deep confidence the Bank enjoys today amongst shareholders and customers, as well as the sustainable growth Warba Bank's financing and investment's portfolio is witnessing.

In the same context, the minimum subscription volume is one share with no maximum limit for the ownership of the Bank's shares except for those who want to own 5 percent or more of the Bank's shares who need to get a prior approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait. Following the end of the subscription period and the



Shaheen Alghanem

final allocation and completion of all necessary regulatory procedures, a shares' receipt will be issued to be listed and traded on Boursa Kuwait (KSE) without any restriction. Warba Bank said that the non-shareholders subscription period starts on Dec 16 to 27, 2018.

Warba Bank has initiated this step of increasing its share capital based on indicators of its performance and strategy. The

share capital increase aims at strengthening the Bank's capital base in line with Basel III requirements for capital adequacy and for the general objectives of the Bank, including engagement in strategic long-term investments and reinforcing the maximum exposure limit to a single obligor, which will provide more opportunities to increase the size of the Bank's financing portfolio, acquire new categories of customers, expand business operations and cross-selling opportunities; and increasing the maximum investment limit, which will positively enhance and lead to the growth of the investment portfolio.

The Capital Increase will support investment in the long-term capital expenditures thus enhancing the Bank's growth and ability to take part in mega financing projects to further support the national economy.

Gulf Bank thanks Kuwaiti heroes with a special offer

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is expressing its gratitude to Kuwaiti heroes, in light of their dedication in dealing with incidents from the repercussions of rainfall during the last week, which led to evading any catastrophes that may have threatened the security and safety of the residents of Kuwait.

Kuwaiti Heroes special offer will be active from November 18th, 2018 to February 28th, 2019 wherein government employees will be able to benefit from a multitude of offers by transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank. Eligible participants will receive a cash gift of up to KD300, alongside a free credit card for 2 years without fees and an option to apply for a free loan of up to KD 10,000 with 0 percent rate of interest. Participants will also qualify to enter the Salary Account draw for a chance to win a cash prize of KD 250,000.

Mohammed Al-Qattan, Deputy General Manager - Retail Banking Group at Gulf Bank, commented on the offer: "Gulf Bank would like to thank the heroes of Kuwait, who came to our aid in facing the repercussions of rainfall. In honor of their dedication, we have created a unique offer to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation of their efforts. Gulf Bank is committed to giving back to our beloved country and to all the people of Kuwait."

Employees of the Ministry of Defense; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Electricity & Water; Ministry of Public Works; Kuwait Municipality; Kuwait Fire Service Directorate; Emergency Medical Services; National Guard; Ministry of Information and Civil Aviation are eligible for the offer.

Gulf Bank is one of the leading conventional banks in Kuwait with total assets of KD 5,683 million for year ended 31 December 2017. The Bank provides a broad offering of consumer banking, wholesale banking, treasury, and financial services through its large network of 58 branches and more than 200 ATMs in Kuwait.

26 new winners in Al-Hassad Islamic Account

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 21st of November 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Nasser Kareem Humaidan.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Nouri Hussain Wakka, Syeda Foazia Hashim, Thamer Nawaf Al-Ruwaiee, Waddah Adeeb Al-Amoudi, Naser Mohammed Al-Mudhaf, Dalal Fawzi Al-Dabbous, Faisal S Al-Dousari, Khaled Rajab Boshehri, Abdullaziz Khaled Al-Shayji, Mohd A/Aziz Al-Mailam, Nawal Sayeb Al-Enezi, Nawal Saleh Al-Shemaimri, Yasmeen Khaled Al-Hsainan, Fatemah Abd Al-Nabi Al-Ghatam, Ghulam Rasool Ismail, Asadallah Merza Zadah, Basmah Fayeeg Al-Khalah, Lafi Saad Al-Hatani, Shareefah Jassim Al-Mesbah, Tarq Abdulkareem Al-Shayji, Norah Bader Al-Abdullah, Suhaila Jawad Rajab, Nabil Joseph Kotran, Fatema Othman Abdurahman, and Fatema Qurban Khayami.

Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

Breakthrough or breakdown: G20 sets trade war turning point

PARIS: The United States and China have in the coming week what may be their last chance to broker a ceasefire in an increasingly dangerous trade war when their presidents meet in Buenos Aires.

With global growth increasingly suffering from frictions between the two biggest economies, tensions will come to a head when Donald Trump and Xi Jinping meet on the sidelines of a G20 summit in Argentina. Washington is set to raise tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports to 25 percent from 10 percent in January if there is no agreement.

"We are optimistic about the summit as an opportunity to avoid further escalation, but not to pull back already announced tariffs," CBS economists wrote in a research note. They said that time was simply running out before the end of the year to come up with a different tariff schedule. Washington accuses Beijing of not playing fairly on trade while China says the United States is being protectionist. "If no deal is reached, investors should come to realise that tariffs are no longer a bargaining chip to bring China to the negotiation table," Daiwa Capital Markets analyst Kevin Lai wrote in a research note.

"Rather, tariffs are becoming part of a longer-term strategy to unplug China from globalisation, contain its economic power (and hence its soft and hard power alto-

gether) and give the US greater strategic advantage," he added. The OECD warned this week that a full-blown trade war between China and the United States could knock global growth 0.8 percent lower by 2021, and even more for the two countries.

"Trade is the biggest threat to our economic outlook and the lack of dialogues is a very high concern to us," OECD chief economist Laurence Boone said as she presented a downgraded global growth forecast on Wednesday.

Brexit worries

Though the fallout from the China-US standoff is hitting other regions as well, in Europe Brexit will also occupy minds as British Prime Minister Theresa May struggles to win backing for Britain's EU withdrawal treaty.

Securing the backing of the 27 other European Union governments in Brussels on Sunday is only a first hurdle, as a bigger obstacle looms in early December when May will seek the UK parliament's backing.

"This conclusion - that the base case is that the (House of) Commons will vote against the deal - is rapidly becoming something approaching a consensus in London," TS Lombard analyst Constantine Fraser wrote in a research note. As geopolitical factors such as trade frictions and Brexit cloud the economic outlook, central bankers' speeches next week will be scrutinized for any hint of a rethink about their monetary policy paths.

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell is due to speak on Wednesday in New York and the president of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, takes his turn on Thursday in Frankfurt.

With little in the way of market-moving data during the week, news headlines are more likely to drive the risk appetite of investors, already on the defensive after recent bouts of market volatility. — Reuters

APEC host says WTO and trade row scuppered joint declaration

HONG KONG: The host of a fractious Asia-Pacific summit said Friday that "alternative" views on free trade and WTO rules prevented members agreeing a joint communique for the first time ever, five days after the US-China trade row overshadowed the APEC meeting.

In a chairman's statement following last weekend's summit, Papua New Guinea prime minister Peter O'Neill said members had been unable to agree on sections concerning reform of the World Trade Organization, and also protectionism. "Most economies agreed to the following text, while a small number had alternative or additional views on paragraphs 9, 16 and 17," said O'Neill.

The highlighted paragraphs included a commitment to "improve the functioning of the WTO" by working "together to improve its negotiating, monitoring and dispute settlement functions".

Another urged economies "to advance trade in the region in a free, fair, and open manner, in a way that will support non-discriminatory, and mutually advantageous trade and investment frameworks."

During the summit, Chinese president Xi Jinping had lashed out at US trade protectionism, saying it was a "short-sighted approach" that was "doomed to failure". Sources said going into the meeting the United States had pressed for the leaders to issue what amounted to a denunciation of the WTO and a call for its wholesale reform—a step too far for Beijing, which would likely get less preferential treatment under any changes.

O'Neill wrote that his own statement "reflects the full discussion, including areas where member economies did not reach full consensus."

The annual gathering, held for the first time in Papua New Guinea, was overshadowed by speeches from Xi and US Vice President Mike Pence, which appeared to represent competing bids for regional leadership. Pence warned smaller countries not to be seduced by China's massive Belt-and-Road infrastructure program, mocking Beijing's "constricting belt" and "one-way road" initiative. For the first time ever, the leaders failed to produce a joint declaration—usually a technocratic exercise in fudging differences, overstating agreement and promising great things to come. — AFP

Trump backs Mnuchin after reports of dissatisfaction

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump on Friday praised the work of his treasury secretary after a report said the president was dissatisfied with his pick and blames him for the appointment of a Federal Reserve chairman who has raised interest rates.

"I am extremely happy and proud of the job being done by @USTreasury Secretary" Steven Mnuchin, Trump said on Twitter.

Citing Trump's advisors, the Journal reported that Trump has also voiced his displeasure over Mnuchin's skepticism toward punitive trade actions against China, as well as recent volatility of the stock market. Quoting a person familiar with the matter, the Journal reported that during a conversation with someone who praised Mnuchin's performance, Trump mentioned turbulence on the stock market and asked: "If he's so good, why is this happening?"

The Trump White House has been notorious for its high turnover, with heavyweights including former secretary of state Rex Tillerson and attorney general Jeff Sessions pushed out after losing their boss's confidence. Trump said the report about Mnuchin was "fake news," a retort he also issued in late 2017 over reports that Tillerson would leave the administration.

Working in Mnuchin's favor is his long history with Trump and reputation as an unswerving loyalist who does not allow disagreements to spill out into the public domain.

The main sticking point, however, is reportedly Trump's annoyance with Jerome Powell, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, whose ascendance he pins on Mnuchin—although Trump nominated Powell to the post. The Fed, an independent body, has raised its benchmark interest rate three times this year, much to the chagrin of Trump who views the hikes as a threat to the economy and his re-election chances in 2020.

Trump has reportedly mused among his advisors that he would have been better served by picking Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase, when he formed his cabinet in 2016. — AFP



SYDNEY: India's President Ram Nath Kovind (second left) and Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison (second right) display booklets of the Australian Financial Review (AFR) India Business Summit in Sydney on Friday. — AFP

Wall Street drops, S&P 500 confirms correction

NEW YORK: US stocks closed lower in a shortened post-holiday trading session on Friday as the energy sector tumbled on continued weakness in oil prices, and the benchmark S&P 500 confirmed its second correction of 2018.

The three major US indexes all fell well over 3 percent for the week, with the Dow industrials and the Nasdaq posting their biggest weekly percentage declines since March. The S&P 500 ended about 10.2 percent down from its Sept. 20 closing record high, confirming it had entered a correction.

The S&P last entered a correction earlier this year after posting a then record high in late January, and falling more than 10 percent by early February. That correction lasted roughly seven months, until the index posted a fresh record high in late August. On Friday, the S&P 500 energy sector fell 3.3 percent, dragged down by another plunge in oil prices, amid fears of a supply glut even as major producers consider cutting output. Oil prices have plunged some 30 percent since the start of October.

Shares of oil majors Chevron and Exxon Mobil dropped 3.4 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively.

Aside from energy, declines in Apple and Amazon weighed on the S&P 500, underscoring the drop in technology and internet stocks that has marked this latest swoon in equities. "I see this as a continuation of the mar-

ket trying to come to terms with slower growth next year," said Alicia Levine, chief market strategist at BNY Mellon Investment Management in New York. "Today's price action is part of that story."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 178.74 points, or 0.73 percent, to 24,285.95, the S&P 500 lost 17.37 points, or 0.66 percent, to 2,632.56 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 33.27 points, or 0.48 percent, to 6,938.98. Trading volume was relatively light with the session ending at 1 pm ET following the Thanksgiving Day holiday, so the day's action might carry less significance.

Volume on US exchanges was about 3.4 billion shares, well below the 8.2 billion average for the full session over the last 20 trading days. "When everyone comes back, we'll get a clearer indication of what it might look like for the rest of the year," said John Carey, managing director and portfolio manager at Amundi Pioneer Asset Management in Boston. "Today just confirms the recent weakness due to persisting worries about the economy and the effect of higher interest rates on price-to-earnings multiples, borrowing costs and so forth."

US shoppers formed long lines at store checkout counters on Black Friday to snap up deep discounts on clothing and electronics, offering evidence of stronger consumer spending at the start of retailers' make-or-break holiday season.

The S&P 500 retailing index fell 0.6 percent. United Technologies Corp rose 2.6 percent after the company won Chinese regulatory approval to buy aircraft parts maker Rockwell Collins Inc. Rockwell shares jumped 9.2 percent. Investors will be focusing on next week's G20 summit in Buenos Aires, where U.S. President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping are expected to hold talks amid a trade dispute that has weighed on financial markets. — Reuters

Health & Science

NASA counts down to landing of Martian quake-sensor, InSight

NASA to send human explorers to Red Planet by 2030

TAMPA: NASA is counting down to a nail-biting touchdown tomorrow of the \$993 million Mars InSight, the first spacecraft to listen for quakes and study the inner workings of another rocky planet. No one is on board the spacecraft, which launched nearly seven months ago and has traveled some 300 million miles. But part of its mission is to inform efforts to one day send human explorers to the Red Planet, which NASA hopes to do by the 2030s.

The lander is the first to reach Mars since 2012, when NASA's Curiosity rover touched down to scour the surface and analyze rocks for signs that life forms may once have inhabited Earth's neighbor, now a frigid and dry planet. InSight must survive tense entry into Mars' atmosphere, traveling at a speed of 12,300 miles per hour and swiftly slowing to just five mph (eight kph). This entry, descent and landing phase begins at 11:47 am in California — and is only half-jokingly referred to at NASA as "Six and a Half Minutes of Terror."

Of 43 missions launched toward Mars, only 18 have made it intact—a success rate of around 40 percent. All those that made it came from the United States. "Going to Mars is really, really hard," said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for the NASA science

mission directorate. "The exciting part is we are building on the success of the best team that has ever landed on this planet, which is the NASA team with its contractors and its collaborators."

French seismometer

The name InSight is derived from "Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport." The spacecraft itself stands about waist high, at 3.5 feet, and once its solar arrays are deployed they will span 20 feet. Fully fueled, InSight weighs more than 800 pounds, about the same as a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Its central instrument is a quake-sensing seismometer that was made by the French Space Agency (CNES). "This is the only NASA mission until now which is conceived around a foreign-made instrument," Jean-Yves Le Gall, president of CNES, told AFP. "So it's a mission that is fundamentally for the United States, for France and for improving our understanding of Mars." The six quake sensors on board are so sensitive they should reveal the smallest tremors on Mars, such as the faint pull of its moon Phobos, impacts from meteors, and possibly evidence of volcanic activity.

Seismology has taught humanity much

about the formation of Earth some 4.5 billion years ago, but much of the Earth-based evidence has been lost to the recycling of the crust, driven by plate tectonics. This process doesn't exist on Mars. The spacecraft also has a self-hammering probe that can burrow as deep as 10-16 feet, offering the first precise measurement of below-ground temperatures on Mars and how much heat escapes from its interior.

Landing conditions

InSight was built by Lockheed Martin, and is modeled after the Phoenix spacecraft that landed near the Martian north pole in 2008. Like Phoenix, InSight's arrival will be aided by a parachute. Its heat shield will help slow down the spacecraft and protect against the hot friction of entering Mars' atmosphere. Its landing site is flat area called Elysium Planitia, which NASA has called "the biggest parking lot on Mars." The lander must set itself down upright. And then, another critical step is for the solar arrays to deploy, since the lander's one-year mission will be fully solar-powered. NASA should know within minutes if the landing went well or not, but will have to wait more than five hours for confirmation of the solar array deployment, due to the orbit



IN SPACE: This artist's impression obtained from NASA shows InSight's entry, descent and landing at Mars. — AFP

tern of the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and Mars Odyssey which can communicate InSight's status back to Earth.

That first confirming ping at 2004 GMT Monday is eagerly awaited by the crew at mission control at NASA's Jet Propulsion

Laboratory in Pasadena, California. "I do have a lot of blood sweat and tears invested in this, and I am looking forward to a nice, safe touchdown on Monday," said Stu Spath, InSight program manager at Lockheed Martin.—AFP

CAN concludes breast cancer awareness campaign

By Abdellatif Sharaa

National Campaign for Cancer Awareness also known as Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) celebrated the conclusion of its 'Breast Cancer' Awareness Campaign that was ongoing during the month of October under the slogan 'You deserve attention.' The event was held under the patronage of Sheikh Fadiya Saad Al-Abdallah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and in partnership with Kuwait Women's Voluntary Association for Community Service (KWVACS).

CAN Chairman of the Board Dr. Abdelrahman Abdallah Al-Awadhi expressed his happiness towards the success CAN is achieving year after year, adding that the campaign's efforts are very clear within Kuwait's society. "I



am very happy to see what I hoped for 60 years ago, being fulfilled today, including the training of females on self examination, and we succeeded in training and educating our daughters, the future mothers, on self examination. Dr. Al-Awadhi thanked Sheikh Fadiya for her support. Sheikh Fadiya who chairs the KWVACS said:

"It has always been my dream, since I got involved in voluntary action, to be distinguished with what I do because it is a reflection of existing and self fulfillment. Since I became the head of KWVACS, I understood the importance of instilling creative action, principles, and that became evident with the proposal of holding a joint activity"

KCCC to hold tumor surgery workshop

Dr. Medhat Otaifa, Head of Tumor Surgery department at Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) said that the head and neck tumor surgery workshop will be held at the KCCC in the presence of an elite group of international doctors. He said that several surgeries will be carried out on some patients over a period of four days. The workshop will take place at Marina Hotel from November 25 - 29, 2018, under the patronage of Health Minister Dr. Basil Al-Sabah and in

the presence of international doctors and specialists in head and neck tumors.

Dr. Otaifa added that experts will examine cases of thyroid tumors at the meetings from 8 am to 2 pm. Surgeries will be held from Monday to Thursday in the morning while lectures will be held in the evening. The goal behind the workshop is to enhance Kuwaiti doctors performance through exposure to the latest developments in modern techniques to remove thyroid cancer.

DDI Kuwait celebrates World Diabetes Day

By Abdellatif Sharaa

Diasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) held an event at the Avenues as part of the World Diabetes Day celebration during the month of November. The event took place on Thursday evening in the presence of DDI Director General Dr. Qais Al-Dawairi, who was keen to be present due to the importance of spreading awareness about diabetes and its complications if left unattended.

Activities included blood sugar level tests, besides instructions and information on how to handle diabetes and avoid and delay complications of the disease. There was also a dance that called upon diabetics to lead a normal life and now allow it to take hold of one's life. Dr. Qais added that



DDI believes that awareness contributes significantly to prevention and reduces the number of cases, especially among those who have risk factors to getting the disease.

The number of diabetics in Kuwait is approaching 23 percent of the population which is Really high and raises a danger flag and must be addressed. DDI has taken the initiative to go to the public with awareness activities and answer questions regarding the disease, besides distributing leaflets with information on all that is related to diabetes.



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What's On

ACK holds graduation ceremony



By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) held the graduation ceremony for a group of students including the 16th batch of diploma and 11th batch of bachelors of the class of 2017/2018 on Tuesday at the Jumeirah Hotel. The graduation ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Hamad Al-Azmi the Minister of Education and Higher Education. Dr. Habib Taher Abul, Secretary General of the Private Universities Council, Ministry of Education and Higher Education addressed the ceremony patronage speech and welcomed the attendees.

ACK President Professor Isam Zabalawi said: "We are gathered tonight to celebrate the graduation of a new cohort of the Australian College of Kuwait students, and to confer upon them with their degrees as an acknowledgement and endorsement for all the hard work they have put in during the past few years. We are here to honor their achievements whether joining their predecessors in the public or private sectors, or in pursuing their higher education or in developing their own startups as innovators or entrepreneurs."

"Tonight, is an occasion not only for our graduates, but also for their families and friends, our partners from Australia and Canada, academic faculty members, members of our administrative body and all who are present here," he added. Central Queensland University and Cape Breton University played a major role in leading the students to receive internationally recognized qualifications enabling them to have opportunities to apply what they have learned and to

practice it at national, regional, and international levels.

"At ACK, the primary core value is to 'Enable Human Potential within a Culture of Care.' This in conjunction with ACK's vision: To generate human capital equipped with practical knowledge and employability skills that contributes to the economic development and welfare of Kuwait, are the underpinning pillars of ACK. ACK is based on the principle that learning is the vehicle that we as students, faculty members and staff use in order to know, to do, to be and to live together and to transform our society," he added.

He also addressed the graduates saying that ACK is proud of them and of the knowledge, attributes and employability skills they have acquired, enabling you to work in a modern and authentic environment. "At ACK, our conducive environment energizes you to meet the needs of the workplace and to have a positive attitude as well as the consciousness associated with the social and ethical responsibilities," stressed Zabalawi.

He also thanked the parents of the graduates for their trust in ACK. He thanked his colleagues and faculty members for performing their duties in a professional manner with dedication and for bringing with them their own international experience and dimensions. Furthermore he thanked the members of the administrative body who work tirelessly to create and maintain a safe and engaging learning and working environment for everyone on campus. And he thanked the organizing committee for this special ceremony.

International Strategic Partners

Rick Pierrynowski, Dean, School of Science and

Technology, Cape Breton University welcomed the new graduates, the ACK Chairman Abdullah Al-Sharhan, and other officials. "I know you've worked very hard over the past several years to complete your various academic programs and you are now eagerly looking forward to the next stage of your lives. The knowledge you've acquired is certainly a powerful achievement and if you use it well, it will enable you to have a rewarding career and to make a valuable contribution to society," he pointed out.

"How to learn' is as important as what the students learned. The fact that you're here today demonstrates that you've successfully acquired this skill too. Through the determination you've shown, the study methods you've employed and the research skills you've developed you've demonstrated your capacity to learn," stated Pierrynowski.

"No academic program, no matter how thorough, can prepare you for every situation and challenge you'll face in the workplace. Technology changes; business practices change; industries change; so there is always something new to learn. Therefore, regardless of where your professional interests may take you, you will never really stop acquiring new knowledge; or learning new skills. But in addition to your capacity to learn you have other resources available to help you to meet this challenge as well," he noted.

The graduates are well prepared at this time not only to contribute immediately in their field of endeavor, but also to go forward as a lifelong learner. "Therefore, I wish to join with your administrators, faculty, staff, family and friends in congratulating you

on a job well done and in wishing you every success in your future career wherever it may lead you," concluded Pierrynowski.

Alastair Dawson- Eniro Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice President Central Queensland University Australia said that he is proud to acknowledge the graduating students who, by graduating this evening, now embark on the next exciting phase of their lives. This graduation marks only the beginning of the journey professionally. "What you do from this point onwards depends on you. Your College, the Australian College of Kuwait, has provided you with an important boost to your professional life but what you do with that opportunity in the future now depends upon you," noted Eniro. Keep in touch with your college. "It will offer you more opportunities in the future, depending on how you advance your career. Find a mentor, if you don't already have one. Someone who can help and guide your career and professional development. And importantly, build your networks. There are many global studies which suggest that the most critical element, after study, in building people's careers, is the strength of the network they build," Eniro explained.

"Whatever path you follow from this point onward, we know, if history is a good indicator, that most of you will hold your time at ACK with great fondness, as much as the staff of ACK will have valued your contribution as a student of the college," concluded Eniro. The Bachelor Degree graduate representative and the Diploma Degree graduate representative delivered their speech. This was followed by the conferral of degrees and diplomas.

PAI, EQUATE, NTEC sign accord for renewable energy project

Public Authority for Industry (PAI), EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, and National Technology Enterprise Company (NTEC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a renewable energy project at the PAI. The agreement includes EQUATE supporting the installation of a renewable energy facility on the roof of the PAI through NTEC.

This MoU is in alignment with the vision of His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to generate 15 percent of Kuwait's electrical demand from renewable energy including solar by 2030. The agreement was signed by PAI Director-General Abdulkarim Taqi, EQUATE President and CEO Dr Ramesh Ramachandran and NTEC Group CEO Anas Meerza.

During the event, Taqi said: "We highly recommend and encourage all and every initiative with regards to the efficiency of the energy and power sector that will eventually relieve the burden on Kuwait's power supply. PAI's future plans include developing clean energy units and its related technological aspects."

"Throughout the years, PAI and EQUATE have enjoyed a partnership to ensure the development and progress of the industrial sector. The flourishing and growth of this collaboration, which now includes other partners, is part of making a difference in terms of implementing EQUATE's sustainability strategy that focuses on economy, society and the environment, which covers renewable ener-



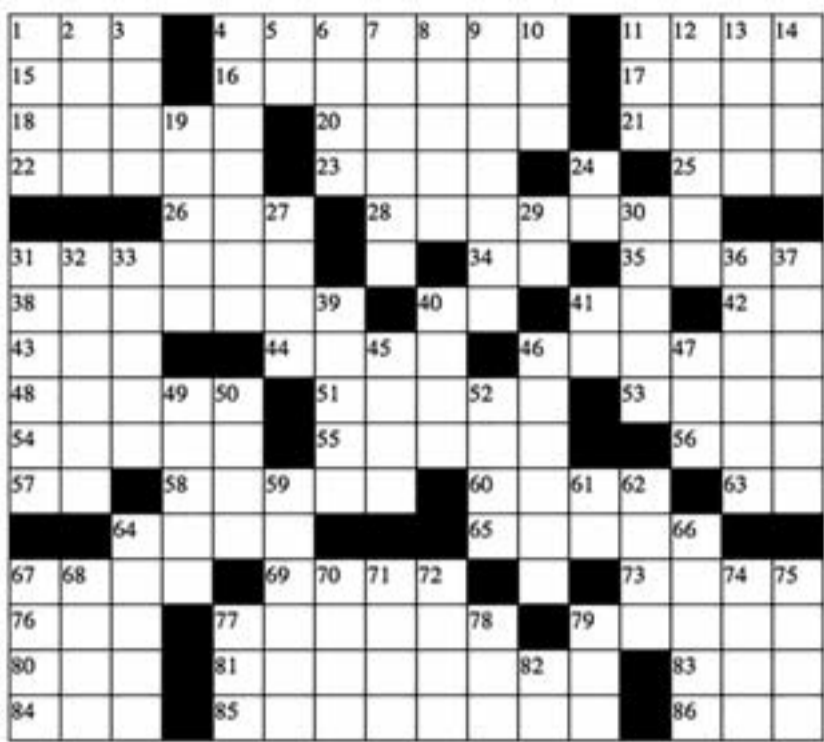
gy. We are looking forward to execute this project, which will play a role in conserving energy and protecting the environment." Ramachandran said.

In addition, Meerza said, "NTEC being part of the public sector in Kuwait is keen to bring and

implement the up-to-date technology in various domains and mainly the renewable energy. NTEC played a vital role to structure a state of the art set-up and form a new model of the relationship and partnership among various sectors."

Stars

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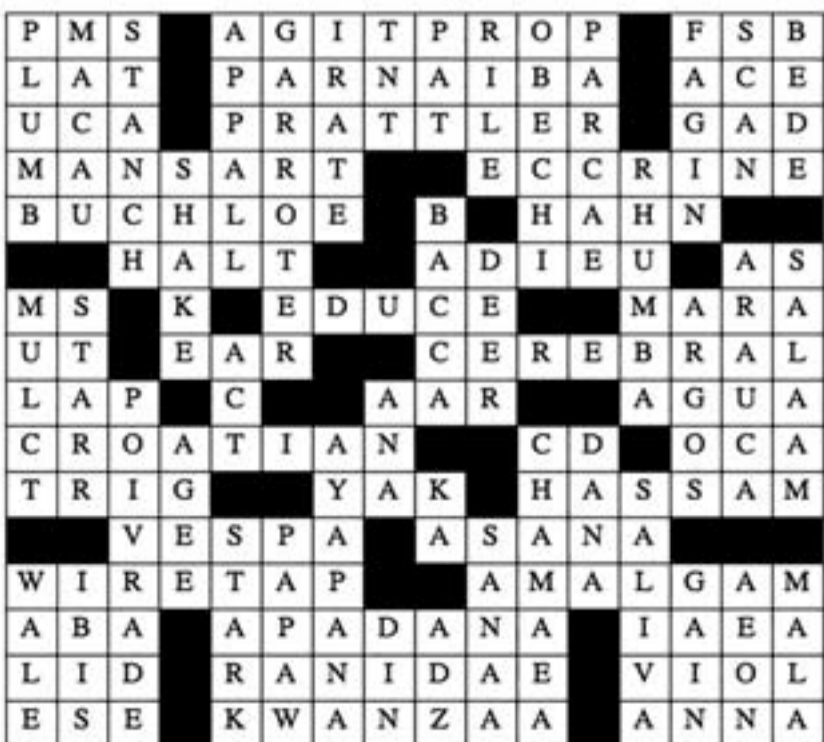
ACROSS

1. A small lump or protuberance.
4. Estimation of the amount of lumber in a log.
11. United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
15. The sign language used in the United States.
16. The type of environment in which an organism or group normally lives or occurs.
17. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
18. The state prevailing during the absence of war.
20. (possibly Roman) Goddess of horses and mules and asses.
21. An narrative telling the adventures of a hero or a family.
22. Of or relating to or involving an area.
23. A flat thin rectangular slab (as of fired clay or rubber or linoleum) used to cover surfaces.
25. The shape of a raised edge of a more or less circular object.
26. A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
28. Remove the scales from.
31. East Indian tree whose leaves are used for fodder.
34. A very light colorless element that is one of the six inert gasses.
35. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
38. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
42. Being nine more than forty.
43. Slender bristlelike appendage found on the bracts of grasses.
44. Flat tableland with steep edges.
48. Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
51. The place where some action occurs.
53. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
54. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus *Draba* having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scape or leafy stems.
55. The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
56. The virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).
57. A public promotion of some product or service.
58. A genus of Indridae.
60. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
63. A Mid-Atlantic state.
65. A pale rose-colored variety of the ruby spinel.
67. (Scotland) A slope or hillside.
69. A Loloish language.
73. An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.
76. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
80. Rare (usually fatal) brain disease (usually in middle age) caused by an unidentified slow virus.
81. A genus of herbs and shrubs belonging to the family Euphorbiaceae.
83. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
84. Grass mowed and cured for use as fodder.
85. French general who became Emperor of the French (1769-1821).
86. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
2. A person who makes use of a thing.
3. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
4. Lac purified by heating and filtering.
5. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
6. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
7. Any oily organic compound insoluble in water but soluble in organic solvents.
8. Eaten as mush or as a thin gruel.
9. God of wisdom or prophecy.
10. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
11. An associate degree in applied science.
12. Made afraid.
13. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
14. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
19. A hidden storage space (for money or provisions or weapons).
24. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
27. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
29. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
30. (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
32. Relating to or existing in the mind or thoughts.
33. Any of various plants of the genus *Senna* having pinnately compound leaves and showy usually yellow flowers.
36. Any of numerous pale-colored butterflies having three pairs of well-developed legs.
37. The part of a garment that is attached at armhole and provides a cloth covering for the arm.
39. (Judaism) A Jewish festival (traditionally 8 days) celebrating the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.
40. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
41. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
45. Interface consisting of a standard port between a computer and its peripherals that is used in some computers.
46. Cut the head of.
47. The syllable naming the sixth (subdiatonic) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
49. Lower in esteem.
50. (Polynesian) An alcoholic drink made from the aromatic roots of the kava shrub.
52. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
59. A river that rises in northern Colombia and flows generally eastward to the Orinoco in central Venezuela.
61. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
62. The 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
64. After the expected or usual time.
66. An ancient upright stone slab bearing markings.
68. A Hindu prince or king in India.
70. Strike sharply.
71. A town in Hawaii on the island of Hawaii.
72. Any group or radical of the form RCO- where R is an organic group.
74. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
75. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
77. Cooking utensil consisting of a wide metal vessel.
78. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
79. Of a light yellowish-brown color n 1.
82. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Thursday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you are experiencing an unrealistic feeling today. You may be having to really resist the urge to daydream. Focusing on the tasks set before you seem impossible. You may find your friends and co-workers become frustrated when dealing with this side of you. A bit of soul-searching may be in order. You need to force yourself to snap back to reality and pick up where you left off. Get to the root of the matter that has you preoccupied so you will be able to push forward. Once you realize what caused this mood you should be able to push on and lead a more productive day, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, today may find you a bit unsatisfied with your surroundings. It may be someone or the physical place you are in that is just not sitting right with you. You may feel as if someone or something is holding you back or may just feel frustrated by your life in general. This may be a great time for an evening out and about. Change your surroundings. Clear your head but choose your company wisely to avoid any conflict as this is a time you need to have fun. You have to find a comfortable balance between work life, family, and social life. Taurus, remember it is good for you to get out and enjoy yourself from time to time.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, no problem is too big for you today. This is a great day to make decisions and solve problems. You will find a way around any obstacle that is placed in your path today. This is a day you are in total control and guide yourself easily through the day. You may find an awesome opportunity comes your way today. With your sense of direction this will be a perfect deal for you, Gemini. Jump on this offer.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, remember to count to ten and take deep breaths. Buckle up. Today will be one of those days. You will need to exercise patience and self-control today. This will be a day you may feel pushed beyond your breaking point. You will easily be able to make clear decisions regarding others today. This is a time even frustration and anger will not effect your ability to remain in control of business, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, do you know the difference in sympathy and empathy? This is a day you find yourself you are empathic of others. You are starting to look beneath and beyond the surface what others expose of their self. Call it intuition or whatever you would like. You know how to read people. This may be a talent and curse all rolled into one. The level of empathy you are starting to feel for others may be dragging you down. You have to learn to care for others without emotionally taking their problems on as your own. You are loved and admired for your caring nature, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, resist the need to be "wonderful." Such a reputation may sound good at first, but it's a trap. It sets up unrealistic expectations. It leads to a need to please. And that leads to conflict-inner and outer. Don't punish by trying to maintain an unrealistic reputation. Be yourself. Do what's natural. Remind yourself that you are enough just the way you are, Virgo



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, when you hear the phone ring today, answer it. You have a friend in need and you are just the person to help them out. You are understanding. There is no issue too personal that your friend feels they can not discuss with you. Your guidance and knowledge are priceless to this person. The first person they feel they need to run to when things go wrong. Be careful to not take on emotional baggage when offering your advice. This is not your circus and these are not your monkeys. You have to remember there is a difference between sympathy and empathy. Use caution, Libra. The weight of the world does not belong on your shoulders.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, you are experiencing an unrealistic feeling today. You may be having to really resist the urge to daydream. Focusing on the tasks set before you seem impossible. You may find your friends and co-workers become frustrated when dealing with this side of you. A bit of soul-searching may be in order. You need to force yourself to snap back to reality and pick up where you left off. Get to the root of the matter that has you preoccupied so you will be able to push forward. Once you realize what caused this mood you should be able to push on and lead a more productive day, Scorpio.



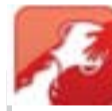
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, a difficult path may lay ahead. You may find that career opportunities could hinder your need for change and self-growth. What may be best for your personal life may totally interfere with your career. Now is a great time to understand those around you. This could be a special time for you and someone you love. Keep your priorities straight and do what is best for your future. Remember, they say money can't buy happiness, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, how do you feel about your position in life? If you answer this in any way other than positive then now is the time for change. You are able to see things very clearly now. Set a goal and make any necessary changes in your life to help accomplish it. With your strength and determination, nothing can hold you back. You are in a great position to be able to communicate your feelings to others. You will find support for your dreams and ideas from those closest to you. Reach for the stars, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Aquarius, this is a time you may begin to see and truly appreciate the beauty in all that surrounds you. Times when you feel like this, it is best if you steer clear from the mall. These are the times you tend to overindulge and bring home everything in sight. You love it and have to have it are words you would be hearing yourself say. Focus on your family and nature and the beauty all of these things possess. You may find yourself overspending if you focus on material possessions, Aquarius



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, what a wonderful day! Today finds you full of love and appreciation for life. You may have a new outlook on life and a deep gratitude for all that is around you. This mood could leave you showing much affection to those close to you. You find a great sense of peace and fulfillment as you receive this affection in return. You are radiant today. Others will feel attracted and drawn to your warm presence. You may find yourself doing a bit of soul searching as you have found peace in your world and this is a place you want to remain, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

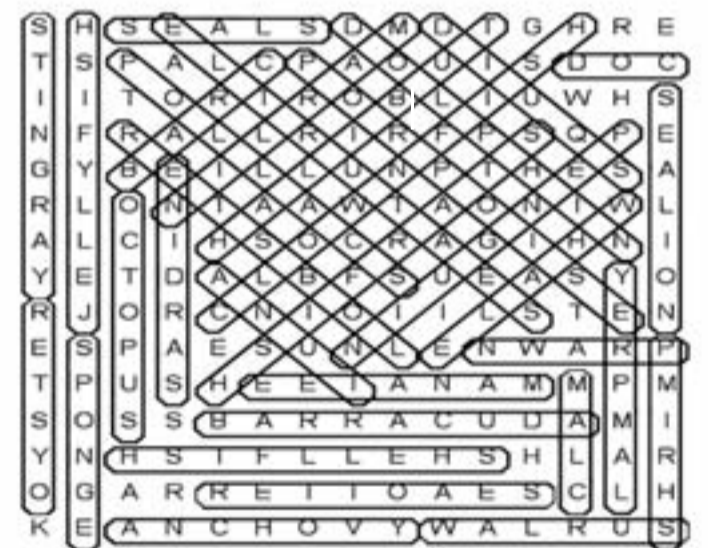
Meryl Streep Movies

Find and circle all of the Meryl Streep movies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 40 letters spell an additional Meryl Streep movie.



- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| A CRY IN THE DARK | HEARTBURN | OUT OF AFRICA |
| ADAPTATION | IRONWEED | PLENTY |
| BEFORE AND AFTER | JULIA | PRIME |
| DANCING AT LUGHNASA | KRAMER VS. KRAMER | RENTITION |
| DARK MATTER | LIONS FOR LAMBS | SHE-DEVIL |
| DEATH BECOMES HER | MAMMA MIA | SILKWOOD |
| DEFENDING YOUR LIFE | MANHATTAN | SOPHIE'S CHOICE |
| DOUBT | MARVIN'S ROOM | STILL OF THE NIGHT |
| EVENING | MUSIC OF THE HEART | THE DEER HUNTER |
| FALLING IN LOVE | ONE TRUE THING | |

Marine Life



- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ANCHOVY | MANATEE | SEA TURTLE |
| BARRACUDA | MARLIN | SEALS |
| CLAM | OCTOPUS | SHELLFISH |
| CLOWNFISH | OYSTER | SHRIMP |
| COD | PENGUIN | SPONGE |
| CRAB | PORPOISE | SQUID |
| DOLPHIN | PRAWN | STARFISH |
| HALIBUT | SARDINE | STINGRAY |
| JELLYFISH | SCALLOP | TUNA |
| LAMPREY | SEA LION | WALRUS |
| LOBSTER | SEA OTTER | WHALE |

The hidden message is: GREAT WHITE SHARK

Daily SuDoku



Thursday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2018



Light displays are pictured during a photocall at Kew Gardens in south west London during an event to promote the launch of the "Christmas at Kew Gardens" event. The Kew at Night Christmas trail is illuminated with numerous light-art installations especially commissioned. — AFP

TO RECLAIM BAGHDAD, IRAQI ARTISTS GRAPPLE WITH ITS GHOSTS



Zaid Saad talks to a reporter in the Iraqi capital Baghdad.



Artists practice at the Abu Nuwas Theatre that was destroyed in 2003 during the war in the Iraqi capital Baghdad.



Artists practice at the Abu Nuwas Theatre that was destroyed in 2003 during the war in the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

Dressed in a multi-coloured beanie and grey sneakers, Zaid Saad had just finished setting up his contemporary art exhibit on Baghdad's sandy riverbank when police showed up. The piece was part of a two-day walking tour of Iraq's capital, an effort by young artists to address social dilemmas and reclaim Baghdad's identity after more than a decade of violence. But at virtually every turn, organizers came up against some of the very stereotypes they sought to break down, from blast walls to jumpy security guards and skeptical members of Iraq's conservative society.

Saad's art, for example, was set up in a highly-sensitive area: directly across the Tigris River from Baghdad's Green Zone, the walled-off enclave housing parliament, other government offices, and numerous embassies. Police officers arrived as he was preparing to unveil his work, leading to a flurry of phone calls and handwritten authorizations before Saad was finally able to introduce the piece to an audience of around two dozen. "Sanduq" or "Crate" in Arabic brought together 11 cardboard boxes, each representing an Iraqi who risked the sea route to Europe. A radio nearby blared testimonies of relatives or friends who wished them well.

"I want to deliver the message that we should stay here. We should build our country first, and then go to other places," Saad, 27, told AFP. "They left because of the pressures and everything that happened here, which turned Iraq into an unlivable country. The main reason is the government present in the Green Zone," he said.

'Better than nothing'

Art, he insisted, could be a way to address the toughest challenges facing Iraq today: waves of emigration, the aftermath of the Islamic State group, poverty and pollution. "Iraqi society has gotten used to all forms of demonstrations and protest. It wants something new," said Saad, a

member of Iraqi art collective Tarkib. "Art, especially contemporary art, is new here. So it'll have an effect," he added. Iraq has been rocked by waves of instability, from the 2003 US-led invasion to years of sectarian violence and bombings, to the three-year war against IS that ended last year. Those 15 years have scarred the capital, with many streets sealed off by police and blast walls surrounding any building deemed to be a possible target. One segment of the "Baghdad Walk" ran parallel to a stretch of protective concrete T-walls separating a bustling open-air market from a public bank. Hussein Matar, the stocky photographer leading this portion of the stroll, was unphased. "Everything negative in the city is just skin-deep. We can change it," he told AFP.

Matar had shot new versions of decades-old photographs of Baghdad's heralded past, hanging the paired pictures on the dilapidated classical Iraqi homes of Rasheed Street. Despite his optimism, most of Baghdad's heritage has been permanently "disfigured," warned Caecilia Pieri, associate researcher at the French Institute of the Near East. And initiatives like the walk, while an improvement, were only reaching a small segment of Iraqi society. "There are more cafes with young people, more creative initiatives, but it is in the restricted realm of educated urban bourgeoisie," said Pieri, a specialist in Iraq's modern urban history. "It's better than nothing, but not enough to irrigate the whole society."

History 'stronger than art'

Indeed, the scrums of shoppers along Rasheed were more interested in the tables of watches, shimmering carp, and fake Adidas than the public art exhibit. "Are you Iraqi?" one asked the walkers, as puzzled passersby looked on. As the sun set on Baghdad's Tahrir (Liberation) Square, artist Luay Al-Hadari erected his contribution: a pink statue of a woman with snapped chains dangling from each wrist. Draped in a



plastic sheet modeled after a traditional robe, the figure represented women IS had abducted and sexually exploited during its reign over parts of Iraq. "I cut the chain, her hands are up in the air—there's hope in the piece," said Hadari, who told AFP he chose Tahrir Square because the artwork was about liberation.

Hours earlier, he had to make last-minute adjustments to the statue's makeshift robe to cover more of her body. "Most people won't understand the concept and will consider it nudity," Hadari said in a nod to Iraq's conservatism. Ali Amer, a 34-year-old engineer attending the walk, said the onus was on Iraqi society itself. "Our city's filthy? We're the ones who dirtied it. It isn't safe? We're creating the problems," he told AFP. "Today was an attempt to solve these problems, that's why I wanted to take part." Abu Adhraa Al-Rubaye, a burly man selling phone accessories near one of the art installations, was less sure. "We grew up on violence. There's no hope it'll change through art," he said. "War, after war, after war—history is stronger than art." — AFP

An artist practices at the Abu Nuwas Theatre that was destroyed in 2003 during the war in the Iraqi capital Baghdad. — AFP photos



Zaid Saad (center) talks to spectators in the Iraqi capital Baghdad after a contemporary art exhibit on the banks of the Tigris River.



An Artist sits at Abu Nuwas Theatre.



In this file photo Dancers entertain the audience during the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) in Lagos. — AFP photos



In this file photo French rapper Gandhi Djuna aka Maitre Gims (right) and French TV host and Master of Ceremony Virginie Guilhaume (left) speak during the 31st Victoires de la Musique, the annual French music awards ceremony at the Zenith concert hall in Paris.

'Africa's Grammys' celebrate hits of the continent

After a 15-year career in banking and marketing, Nigerian Mike Dada was looking for a platform to "communicate the strength of Africa to the rest of the world". He decided to set up Afrima-the All Africa Music Awards-Africa's equivalent of the Grammys, whose fourth edition takes place this weekend in Ghana's capital, Accra. In 2014, penniless but passionate about music, he worked with private sponsors in Nigeria and a partner in Kenya. Together, they organized the awards ceremony to "create jobs" and "make Africans proud", he told local media, earning the backing of the African Union. In four years, Afrima has managed to carve out a space as a platform to showcase the bubbling, innovative and prolific African music industry that has exploded in the past decade. In Accra, it's not World Music the continent is going to celebrate.

Instead, it's Afropop, the Nigerian-born style which mixes Congolese soukous, Ivorian coupe-decale, Ghanaian Highlife and Jamaican dancehall that has got Africa's youth dancing. "Music is a bridge," said Olivier

Laouchez, chief executive of Trace TV, a French music channel popular on the continent. "In Senegal, we listen to Nigerian hits in nightclubs and South Africa's kwaito (afro-house) is exported to all radio stations on the continent. "Today, what is bringing Africa together... is sport and music."

Diaspora

One category has been dedicated to artists from the vast diaspora. This year, the contenders include Franco-Malian Aya Nakamura and the surprising Afrotronic, an artist of Chadian origin who dresses like Daft Punk and makes house music with Sahelian rhythms and lyrics in Spanish. Maitre Gims, who comes from Democratic Republic of Congo and is repeatedly played on French radio, has racked up more than 200 million views on YouTube with "J'me Tire" ("I'm outta here") and is Afrima's most nominated artist this year. The rapper is as much of an unknown to English-speaking Africa as Nigeria's Davido is to French audiences, despite his 100

million-plus views on YouTube. "Thanks to Afrima we get to know musicians from all over the continent," Oris Aigbokhaevbolo, a journalist with the Music in Africa website, told AFP.

Take, for example, Diamond Platnumz, a Tanzanian who hit the spotlight after winning three Afrima awards two years ago. "Love you Die", his duet with Nigeria's Patoranking, is now being played around the world. "Ghana has always been good (in terms of music) and countries like Sierra Leone or even Gambia are coming up," said Aigbokhaevbolo, who in 2015 was named the continent's best music journalist. "It makes us feel that we are not the only country producing music on the continent", said the Nigerian.

Nigeria v South Africa

Still, despite efforts to create regional "best artist" categories, Nigeria and South Africa will dominate the evening. The big names are regular features from one year to the next: Nigeria's Davido, Wizkid and Tiwa Savage are

fixtures, while South Africa's Cassper Nyovest and Nasty-C have made repeat appearances. The two countries, sub-Saharan Africa's biggest economies, have gone head-to-head for years. Today, they are virtually the only countries on the continent to have sophisticated music industries, with professional production facilities, agents and copy-right lawyers.

Even though South Africa may have a more modern industry, Nigerian artists benefit from a local market of 190 million people, boosting audience numbers. "We had to limit Nigerian songs for our new ranking show of African hits," Laouchez said. "Otherwise they would have outshone the entire continent!" Nigeria has been a clear leader of the Afropop revolution for 10 years. But it remains to be seen if they will maintain their edge on Saturday night against a continent that wants to be finally heard. — AFP



In this file photo French-Lebanese musician Ibrahim Maalouf performs during the Francofolies Music Festival in La Rochelle. — AFP photos



In this file photo French musician Ibrahim Maalouf performs in Carhaix-Plouguer, western of France during the third day of the 25th edition of the Festival des Vieilles Charrues.

Star trumpeter Maalouf convicted over schoolgirl sex assault

Star trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf, famed for his award-winning film soundtracks and mixing of eastern and western sounds, was handed a suspended prison sentence for sexual assault on Friday by a French court. Maalouf, 37, was found guilty of assaulting a 14-year-old schoolgirl who was doing work experience at his music studio in a suburb southeast of Paris in 2013. The girl, now aged 19, testified in court that he had kissed her and grabbed her without her consent. Maalouf denied the allegations and portrayed her as an infatuated fan who was bitter after being rejected.

The court in Creteil, a southeastern suburb of Paris,

handed him a 20,000-euro (\$23,000) fine as well as the suspended prison term. Born in Lebanon, Malouf fled with his parents-both musicians-during the country's 15-year-civil war and settled in France. He plays a four-piston instrument invented by his trumpeter father in the 1960s, as well as playing the piano, composing and teaching. He has played with Sting and Elvis Costello among other music stars and last year won French cinema's highest award, a Cesar, for the soundtrack of the film "In the Forests of Siberia". — AFP



Palestinian musician Bashar Murad works at a recording studio in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem.



Palestinian musician Firas Harb uses Spotify app on his phone in Beit Sahour.

Spotify's Palestinian launch puts local artists on the map

Palestinian musicians are fast reaping dividends from their presence on Spotify, which launched its internet streaming service in the Middle East and North Africa last week. "The Arab hub provides a unique platform that brings the full spectrum of Arab culture and creativity, past and present," said Suhel Nafar, a musician from the Israeli city of Lod who serves as the music streaming service's senior Arab music and culture editor.

Spotify is the first major streaming company to launch a program specific to the occupied Palestinian territories, allowing local artists to reach new global audiences despite local challenges. "As Palestinian artists, we face a lot of restrictions. Some cannot travel to perform in

another country," said Bashar Murad, a Palestinian singer based in East Jerusalem, an area that Israel captured, along with the West Bank, in a 1967 war. He said Spotify is helping him to get his music heard. "After the launch, my monthly followers (on Spotify) increased from 30 to something like 6,500," Murad added.

On-the-go

However, the lack of high-speed cellular services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will limit the app's on-the-go use. "I will have to be at home or at a cafe or a place where there is good internet connection to be able to upload my songs to Spotify," said Mohammed Al-Susi, a rap artist from Gaza who registered for Spotify last week. The Palestinian territories are the only Arab market included in Spotify's regional launch that lacks 4G broadband infrastructure, although some consumers use speedier networks in neighboring Israel. The West Bank launched a 3G service in late 2017, but Gaza only has a 2G service. — Reuters

Russian rapper jailed for performing in the street

One of Russia's most popular rappers was sentenced to 12 days in prison Thursday for performing in the street after a string of his concerts were reportedly cancelled under pressure from authorities, his lawyer said. Dmitry Kuznetsov, better known as "Husky", was detained late Wednesday as he rapped to a crowd of young people from the roof of a car in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar. The venue where he was due to perform had cancelled the concert at the last minute under pressure from officials, the Kommersant newspaper reported.

A video on social media showed police detaining the rapper as he sang "I will sing my music" to chanting crowds. A court in Krasnodar sentenced the 25-year-old rapper to 12 days' jail for "hooliganism", his lawyer Alexei Avanesian told the Interfax news agency. At a second hearing, however, Kuznetsov was acquitted on a charge of organizing an unlawful gathering.

A third hearing will be held for "refusing to submit to a medical examination", according to the Mediazona news site. Husky, on a tour of 16 Russian cities, has said venues in several places have cancelled his concerts in recent months under pressure from law enforcement agencies. — AFP



Rapper Dmitry Kuznetsov, better known as 'Husky'.

Bono felt 'emasculated' when he lost his voice

Bono felt "emasculated" when he lost his voice. The U2 frontman had to cut short a gig in Berlin, Germany, in September when it taken him until now to be as "great" as the rest of the band. He said: "I shouldn't tell you this but the band played some New York show in Madison Square Garden [this year]. And I looked around and I went, 'Oh my, this is the most potent this band has ever been.' "It's not like there was an earlier period where I thought, 'This is nearly as good as back then.' This is like better. "Then I realized they have always been very good-to-great. I heard early Marquee shows back and realized the band, the musicians in the band, have always been very good-to-great, but I wasn't. "I was a great lightning rod and frontman but when I heard those Marquee shows from 1980, I



Justin Bieber and Hailey Baldwin

'Married man' Justin Bieber says wants to be more like Jesus

Justin Bieber marked his first Thanksgiving as a married man, saying that "love isn't always easy" but adding he was trying, like Jesus Christ, to be more patient and selfless. The Canadian pop singer, 24, who married model Hailey Baldwin in a hush-hush civil ceremony in September, told his 102 million Instagram followers that Thursday's US Thanksgiving holiday was the first he had hosted. "First thanksgiving as a married man, first time hosting thanksgiving," Bieber wrote in a posting on Friday.

"Relationships are hard and love isn't always easy but thank you Jesus for showing me how! Every day is a learning process, trying to be more like him, patient, kind, selfless, boy I got a long way! But god's grace is sufficient!" he added. Bieber and Baldwin both attend the evangelical Hillsong Church, which was founded in Australia in 1983 and now has branches worldwide with a big youth following.

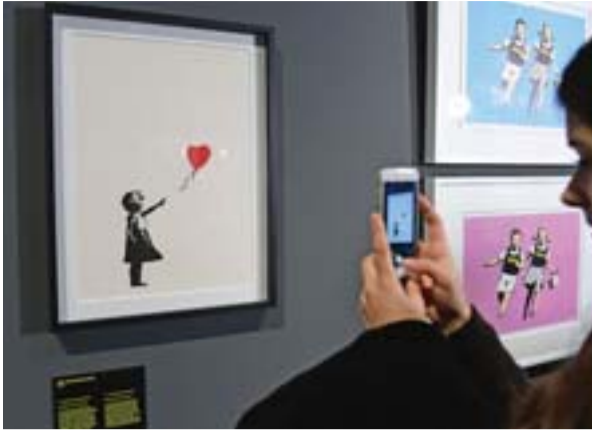
Bieber, who found fame as a baby-faced 15 year-old, and Baldwin first unofficially confirmed their marriage in comments on social media last week when the "Sorry" singer called Baldwin "my wife" and the model changed her Instagram name to Hailey Bieber. Thursday was also the 22nd birthday of Hailey Bieber, which Bieber's mother Patti Mallette marked with an Instagram Story showing her son singing "Happy Birthday" and presenting his wife with a cake. "I'm SO #THANKFUL to have you as a daughter!!!" Mallette added on Twitter. — Reuters



Bono

don't think I was great. But I've caught up with them." At the time of the axed show in Berlin, Bono's bandmates Adam Clayton, Larry Mullen and The Edge posted a message on the band's website and admitted they were baffled by what had happened to the singer. It said: "We're so sorry for tonight's cancellation. Bono was in great form and great voice prior to the show and we were all looking forward to the second night in Berlin, but after a few songs, he suffered a complete loss of voice. "We don't know what has happened and we're taking medical advice. "As always, we appreciate our audience's understanding and all our fans' support in Berlin and those who travelled from afar. We will update you very soon." — Bang Showbiz

Lifestyle | Features



A visitor takes a photo with a mobile phone of a 2004 limited edition screenprint 'Girl with Red Balloon' during a press preview of an exhibition of British street artist Banksy 'The Art of Banksy' at the MUDEC, the Museum of Cultures in Milan. — AFP photos



Visitors take photos with mobile phones of a 2003 limited edition screenprint 'Flower Thrower' or 'Love Is In The Air'.



A visitor watches Banksy's 2003 screenprint 'Turf War'.



A visitor watches Banksy's 2005 screenprint 'Choose Your Weapon'.

Banksy the rebel on show in Milan

His identity is a mystery that adds to his allure, but a new exhibition in Italy dedicated to street artist Banksy looks beyond the feverish headlines to explore his works as vehicles for protest. The solo show, organized by the Museum of Cultures in Milan, is "the first on Banksy organized by a public museum—apart from the one in Bristol put on by the artist, but that was a one-off performance," curator Gianni Mercurio said Tuesday. The Italian show was organized without Banksy's say-so and was "very difficult, it was like working with a ghost," he told AFP.

Banksy's true identity has been a closely-guarded secret since the start of the 1990s. He is known to be British and comes from Bristol. He uploads photographs of his works onto his website, but never comments. "Banksy owes a lot of his success, or rather to his popularity, to the fact that he is an anonymous artist. It's a contradiction: his notoriety comes from his anonymity," he said. Mercurio said he opted for "a slightly academic approach" in putting together the exhibition, entitled "A Visual Protest",

which opens Wednesday and runs until April. "I want the public to understand who Banksy is as an artist and not just as a media phenomenon. He has become a myth and that means his art has become secondary," he said.

'Storyteller and realist'

The show starts by looking at the artist's influences, from the Situationism movement to the May 1968 uprising in Paris. It explores key works such as "Love is in the Air", a stencilled graffiti which captures a man in the act of throwing flowers instead of a Molotov cocktail in a peaceful but hard-hitting protest. The show for the first time unites under one roof around 80 works, including paintings, sculptures and prints by the artist, as well as 60 record and CD covers he has designed. Several works show how Banksy subverts world-famous images by changing elements in them to alter their meaning. In "Flag", he takes Pulitzer prize-winner Joe Rosenthal's photograph of five Marines and a Navy corpsman raising the US flag and replaces them with young rebels from Harlem,

who are raising it over a burnt-out car.

In "Turf War", he transforms British former prime minister Winston Churchill into a Punk icon, calling it "creative vandalism". The exhibition also pays tribute to Banksy's famous rats, who he transforms into rappers, violin players or artists. Banksy's art, at once satirical and politically engaged, denounces everything from consumerism to US imperialism or war. In "Can't beat the feelin'", for example, Mickey Mouse and Ronald McDonald are superimposed onto the famous photograph of the naked girl fleeing napalm bombings in Vietnam, holding her hands as she runs.

"Banksy's essence is the message. He is a storyteller and a realist because he uses elements and people from everyday life," Mercurio said. "He has revived the rebel and political side of street art which had been abandoned. Which is to his great credit". — AFP



A visitor takes a photo with a mobile phone of a 2003 spray paint on two formica panels 'Toxic Mary'.



A visitor attends a press preview of an exhibition of British street artist Banksy 'The Art of Banksy' at the MUDEC, the Museum of Cultures.



A visitor views photos of Banksy's graffiti taken on site, during a press preview of an exhibition of British street artist Banksy 'The Art of Banksy'.



Visitors watch Banksy's 2003 screenprint 'Bomb Hugger' (center) during a press preview of an exhibition of British street artist Banksy 'The Art of Banksy'.



A visitor watches Banksy's 2004 screenprint 'Love Rat'.

Belgium impounds touring Banksy works over insurance fears

Belgian authorities have impounded millions of euros worth of works by street artist Banksy after an exhibitor in Brussels realized they may not be insured, a lawyer said Friday. The exhibitor, Strokar, informed the authorities that the 58 paintings, photos and silkscreens may not be covered if any were damaged or stolen, Strokar's lawyer Stanislas Eskenazi said. "My client is a small non-profit which only provided an exhibition space. It wanted to protect itself against an enormous risk," Eskenazi told AFP, confirming Belgian media reports.

Contacted by Strokar, an administrative court in Brussels this week appointed a bailiff who put the works under lock and key on Thursday, he added. Steve Lazarides, a former Banksy agent who broke with the British street artist in 2009, assembled the works, which are valued at 15 million euros (\$17 million) and belong mainly to private collectors.

The exhibition "Banksy Unauthorized" was organized without the involvement of the mysterious pseudonymous artist, whose identity is known to only a few friends. Acting as an intermediary, German-based firm "On Entertainment" invited Strokar to exhibit the works in the Belgian capital, Eskenazi said. The firm said it had the rights and permits to show the works but it is not clear under what conditions those rights were granted or whether the works are insured, the lawyer added.

The Belgian court must now settle the matter in the next few months in a case pitting Lazarides and his firm Lazinc against On Entertainment. Eskenazi said the German firm declined to show Strokar the insurance contracts for the works when it asked for them after the exhibition on street art began earlier this month. "They said: 'it's our problem, not yours,'" the lawyer said. In handing down its ruling, the court said the works "appear to be very exposed without the agreement of those with the legal rights over them," L'Echo newspaper reported. "There are reasons to fear for their safety, in a way that it appears necessary to secure them as quickly as possible," it added. — AFP

France to return African treasures to Benin

French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday agreed to return 26 cultural artefacts to Benin "without delay", a move that could put pressure on other former colonial powers to return African artworks to their countries of origin.

The decision—which Macron said should not be seen as an isolated or symbolic case—came as the president received the findings of a study he commissioned on repatriating African treasures held by French museums. Macron agreed to return the 26 works, mainly royal statues from the Palaces of Abomey—formerly the capital of the kingdom of Dahomey—taken by the French army during a war in 1892 and now in Paris' Quai Branly museum.

In addition, he proposed gathering African and European partners in Paris next year to define a framework for an "exchange policy" for African artworks. The president "hopes that all possible circulation of these works are considered: returns but also exhibitions, loans, further cooperation", the Elysee palace said. Ousmane Aledji, director of the Benin cultural centre Artistik Africa, said he was pleased to see "a new form of cultural exchange" with France, Britain has also faced calls to return artefacts, including the Elgin Marbles to Greece and the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, while museums in Belgium and Austria house tens of thousands of African pieces.

Legislation to return art?

Calls have been growing in Africa for restitution of artworks, but French law strictly forbids the government from

ceding state property, even in well-documented cases of pillaging. In 2016 Benin demanded France return items including statues, artworks, carvings, sceptres and sacred doors. While that request was initially denied, in November 2016 Macron raised hopes in a speech in Burkina Faso, pledging to "return African heritage to Africa". Following his speech, Macron asked French art historian Benedicte Savoy and Senegalese writer Felwine Sarr to study the matter.

Their report, a copy of which has been seen by AFP, has been welcomed by advocates of the restitution of works which were bought, bartered, or in some cases simply stolen. It proposes legislation be developed to return thousands of African artefacts taken during the colonial period to nations that request them. There are conditions, however, including a request from the relevant country, precise information about the works' origins, and the existence of proper facilities such as museums to house the works back in their home country. Macron's office said that museums will be invited to "identify African partners and organize possible returns" and should quickly establish "an online inventory of their African collections". The president also called for "in-depth work with other European states that retain collections of the same nature acquired in comparable circumstances".

Museums fear losing artefacts

A UNESCO convention against the export of illicit cultural goods adopted in 1970 called for the return of cultural property taken from a country but it did not address



This file photo shows Funerary crown of the Kingdom of Dahomey dating from 1860-1889, at the Quai Branly Museum-Jacques Chirac in Paris.

historic cases, including from the colonial era. With museums fearing they could be forced to return artefacts, former colonial powers have been slow to ratify the convention: France only did so 1997, Britain in 2002, Germany in 2007 and Belgium in 2009.

On Tuesday, the governor of Easter Island in the Pacific tearfully begged the British Museum to return one of its famous statues. The London museum has held the Hoa Hakananai'a, one of the most spiritually important of the Chilean island's stone monoliths, for 150 years. Of the estimated 90,000 African artworks in French museums, around 70,000 are at the Quai Branly museum, created by ex-president Jacques Chirac, a keen admirer of African and Asian art. Elsewhere in Europe, 37,000 objects from Sub-Saharan Africa were at Vienna's Weltmuseum and 180,000 were at Belgium's Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren.

The report commissioned by Macron said such collections were effectively depriving Africans of their artistic and cultural heritage. "On a continent where 60 percent of the population is under the age of 20 years old, what is first and foremost of a great importance is for young people to have access to their own culture, creativity, and spirituality from other eras," it said. — AFP



This file photo shows the Ato ceremony of the Kingdom of Dahomey, circa 1934 on May 18, 2018 at the Quai Branly Museum-Jacques Chirac in Paris. — AFP photos



Moscow's ballet studios: Where careers take flight

In a small studio in northern Moscow, girls as young as three in tutus and pointe shoes practice their ballet moves in front of a mirror. Lined up on their mats, the youngsters have no difficulty stretching their legs up over their heads—let alone doing splits. The studio is one of dozens in the Russian capital, home to some of the world's best ballet troupes. Many are run by former professional ballerinas. Children and teenagers meet at the studio in a Soviet-era community center three times a week for classical ballet classes.

They are overwhelmingly girls, their long hair tied tightly in buns high on their heads. "We have boys, but unfortunately not many," the studio's director and former ballerina Oksana Mironova tells AFP. She proudly adds that one boy she taught is now a dancer at the Bolshoi Theatre. Mironova herself started out at a ballet school

in Saratov, a city on the Volga river. She went on to train at a Saint Petersburg academy, where she was taught by Russia's legendary prima ballerina Natalia Dudinskaya.

After a 10-year career in Moscow, she suffered a knee injury that stopped her from dancing, and opened a ballet studio in 2001. It is in these types of studios, she said, that a dancer's "willpower and character" is forged before going on to Russia's ballet academies-famed for their strict and rigid training. Mironova stressed that while "you have to shout a bit" during a class, the teachers are "warm" to the children. Russian ballet schools, she said, are considered the best in the world because of their adherence to tradition. "We (the teachers) are all professionals from these academies and theatres and we safeguard these traditions." —AFP



Girls attend a class at a ballet studio in Moscow. — AFP photos

Bollywood's T-Series to take YouTube top-spot from 'pewDiePie'

A Bollywood music giant is on course to overtake controversial Swedish vlogger PewDiePie at the top of the YouTube channel subscribers chart in the coming days in a new landmark for India's digital rise. T-Series will become the first non-English-language channel to hold top spot on the world's most popular video platform as smartphone ownership soars in the country of 1.25 billion people. "We're very excited, for the organization and for India. An Indian channel becoming number one is a big compliment for the entire country," T-Series chairman Bhushan Kumar told AFP. Few outside the Indian diaspora will know T-Series' typically upbeat song and dance videos, but they are already the most-watched on YouTube.

They have been seen more than 53 billion times, again beating PewDiePie—whose videos have notched just over 19 billion views—as well as Justin Bieber and Taylor Swift.



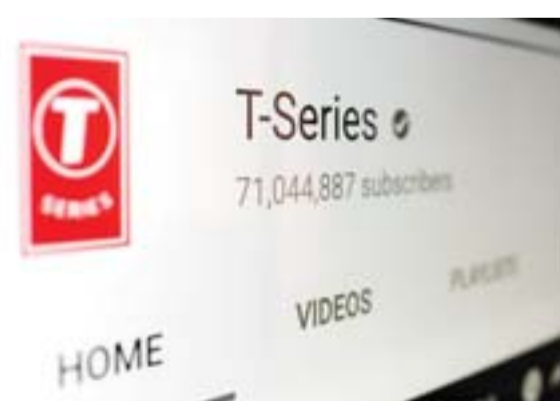
In this file photo an Indian student looks at her smartphone in Mumbai.

The Swede, whose real name is Felix Kjellberg, has had the highest number of subscribers for five years during which he has regularly been in hot water over his videos. In September last year he apologised after he was heard using a racial slur in an expletive-laden rant against an opponent while playing a live-streamed computer game. Earlier in 2017 he lost contracts with YouTube and Disney over anti-Semitic comments. He was temporarily blocked from Twitter in 2016 after joking he had joined the Islamic State group.

'World recognition'

With T-Series rapidly closing in, fans of the Swedish gamer have rallied to push up his subscriber numbers in recent days but that will likely only delay the inevitable. On Thursday both had over 71 million subscribers. PewDiePie was ahead by around 150,000 with T-Series expected to overtake it in coming days. "It will give us recognition all over the globe," chairman Kumar said. The company, one of India's biggest record labels, operates 29 channels in Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi and other languages. It also airs health fitness videos and children's cartoons.

T-Series was founded by Kumar's father, Gulshan Kumar, in 1983. He was a fruit juice seller who started selling Bollywood music cassettes and became a legendary Hindi film music producer, enjoying massive success with the soundtrack to the 1990 film "Aashiqui" (Romance). He was murdered by Mumbai mafia members in 1997. As well as producing music videos, T-Series also buys film soundtracks and collaborates with artists around India, providing a platform for their content. Its most-watched music video is Guru Randhawa's "Lahore", which was uploaded in December last year and has been viewed almost 620 million times. Kumar refused to say



This photo illustration taken in New Delhi shows the YouTube channel homepage for Indian record label T-Series, showing over 71 million subscribers to its channel. — AFP photos.

how much money T-Series makes from YouTube but Bloomberg News reported recently that the site accounts for around a quarter of its annual sales, which are about \$100 million.

'Sky's the limit'

T-Series started posting videos on YouTube in 2011. By October 2016 it had around 12 million subscribers and total hits of 11 billion, according to Social Blade, a website that tracks YouTube viewership. That month India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani, rolled out a new 4G network called Reliance Jio. He offered bargain-basement data plans, sending shockwaves through India's telecoms market. T-Series' views rose quickly before skyrocketing this year. In January, subscribers were at 31 million while its views reached 29 billion before soaring to 71 million



In this file photo India's richest man and oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani attends the India Mobile Congress 2018 in New Delhi.

and 53 billion respectively now.

"People say it's a successful channel because data is more or less free. It's not that. There are so many channels in India but we are becoming number one because of great content," said Kumar. Mobile internet users in India have increased from around 306 million in October 2015 to 478 million in June 2018, according to the Internet and Mobile Association of India. And with millions more Indians still to buy their first smartphones the country's YouTube channels are going to keep hitting new heights. "It's increasing day by day. The sky is the limit," said Kumar. —AFP

Classifieds

Sunday, November 25, 2018

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 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually southerly wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 55 km/h causing rising dust over some areas, with a chance for rain that might be

BY NIGHT: Cloudy to partly cloudy with moderate to fresh south easterly wind, with speed of 20 - 55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WATCH			Thunder Rain	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 24/11/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	18 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25 °C	15 °C		
ABDALY	24 °C	15 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	25 °C	15 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	23 °C	18 °C		
SALMIYAH	23 °C	19 °C		
AHMADI	23 °C	19 °C		
NUWAISIB	23 °C	16 °C		
WAFRA	24 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	22 °C	13 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	11/25	Partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	25 °C	17 °C	SE-NW	15 - 45 km/h
Monday	11/26	Mostly Sunny	22 °C	14 °C	NW	15 - 38 km/h
Tuesday	11/27	Partly cloudy	23 °C	14 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	11/28	Mostly Sunny	23 °C	15 °C	VRB-NW	10 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:56
Sunrise	06:20
Zuhr	11:34
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:50
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	19 °C
MIN. Temp.	16 °C
MAX. RH	100 %
MIN. RH	79 %
MAX. Wind	S 60 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	3.45mm

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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Comm 1

Applicants should have:

- Transferable residency (visa 18)
- With experienced in the same field

Please send your CV to :
info@thehouseofpudd.com

CHANGE OF NAME

Duddikunta Sreenivasulu Reddy S/o Duddikunta Venkata Reddy residing at #1-138-up, Ravindranagar, Akkayapalli, Kadapa, Y.S.R. District, and his name has been changed to Duddikunta Sreenivasulu Reddy (new name) previously called Dudduganta Sreenivasulu Reddy S/o Dudduganta Venkata Reddy (old name). (C 5434)

ACCOMMODATION

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

EMERGENCY

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 25/11/2018				Departure Flights on Sunday 25/11/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	JZR	405	Kochi	12:45
KAC	102	London	00:50	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	113	Doha	13:30
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	103	Bahrain	14:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
RJA	648	Amman	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	701	Dubai	17:05
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	504	Beirut	17:15
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	JZR	733	Dubai	18:10
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	621	Doha	18:25
QTR	8511	Doha	06:25	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	501	Lahore	18:40
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	JZR	253	Amman	19:15
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	CLX	7907	Hong Kong	19:30
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	SYR	342	Damascus	20:00
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
				GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
				KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
				KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
				UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
				JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20



The full moon glows over Panama City on Friday. —AFP

28 drown in India bus crash, many children among dead

NEW DELHI: At least 28 people, many of them children, drowned yesterday after their bus plunged into a canal in India, police said, in the latest tragedy on the world's deadliest roads. Police said they retrieved 28 bodies from the private passenger bus after it veered off the road and fell into the canal in the Mandya district of the southern state of Karnataka. A police officer at the scene told AFP that many of the victims were school children returning to their homes. "Many children are among the 28 dead," a police official told AFP by phone.

Police could not provide the exact number of passengers on board or the cause of the crash but said the driver was apparently speeding. Local media said

around 35 people were in the vehicle. Video footage on television showed locals using ropes to reach the submerged bus and pull out the bodies. Emergency workers and divers joined the volunteers to help. State chief minister HD Kumaraswamy promised help to the families.

Road crashes in India claim the lives of more than 150,000 people each year. Most accidents are blamed on poor roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving. Some 50 people were killed in neighboring Telangana state in September after a bus plunged into a valley in September. On Thursday six school pupils were killed after their van collided with a bus in central Madhya Pradesh state. — AFP



Indian villagers gather yesterday near a retrieved bus after an accident in Kanagana Maradi village in Mandya district, some 130 km from Bangalore. — AFP

French police fire tear gas at...

Continued from Page 1

He said mobile police units backed by helicopters were ready to intervene in case of violence or attempts to block the Paris ring road. "The government has done everything to demonize the movement that will take place in Paris," said protestor Clement Jonie, who came in from the suburbs. Two people have died and over 750 people, including 136 police officers, were injured during the week of demonstrations that shone a light on frustration over stagnant spending power and the roll-back in public services in some areas of France.

On Friday evening, a man with an explosive device and demanding protesters be allowed to meet the French president turned himself in to police in Angers in western France. Local official Bernard Gonzalez said: "There was a real risk, real danger, he had an explosive charge around his neck... This was not fake."

Former investment banker Macron was elected on a

pledge to put more money in workers' pockets but the effects of his reforms on purchasing power - persistently shown as one of the biggest concerns of the French - have been limited so far. The poor and low-paid are particularly incensed at his decision to hike anti-pollution taxes on diesel and petrol, while scrapping a wealth tax on the rich. Opposition parties on the hard left and right have cheered on the protesters, whose revolt was described by 77 percent of respondents in an Odoxa poll for Le Figaro newspaper as "justified".

Macron, who is under pressure to tackle pollution ahead of European Parliament elections next year in which the environment is expected to feature prominently, has refused to back down on taxing polluters. But with his ratings languishing at record lows of under 30 percent, he has sought to present a more empathetic side. "We have heard the message of citizens," one of his aides said on Thursday.

Revolts against taxes have been a feature of French public life for centuries - citizens pay some of the highest in Europe as a percentage of GDP - while fuel price protests are a common occurrence. Yesterday meanwhile, women's groups organized protests in major French cities to raise awareness about sexual abuse. — Agencies

Iran urges Muslims to unite against US

TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani urged Muslims worldwide yesterday to unite against the United States and assured Saudis they were "brothers" who had nothing to fear from Tehran. US President Donald Trump abandoned a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Tehran in May and has since reimposed crippling unilateral sanctions. "What the United States wants of (the Middle East) today is enslavement," Rouhani told an Islamic unity conference in Tehran. Instead of "rolling out the red

carpet for criminals," Muslim governments should unite against the United States and "the region's cancerous tumor", Israel, he said.

Rouhani urged Iran's rival Saudi Arabia to end its dependence on "insulting" US military aid. "We are ready to defend the Saudi people's interests against terrorism and superpowers with all our might," he said. "We do not ask \$450 billion for it and will not insult you." Riyadh cut diplomatic ties with Tehran in January 2016 after protesters stormed its diplomatic missions in Iran following its execution of a prominent Shiite cleric. It accuses Tehran of fomenting unrest among Shiites in the Gulf Arab states and the two governments have supported opposing sides in devastating civil wars in Syria and Yemen. — AFP

Egypt unveils ancient tomb...

Continued from Page 1

Egyptian authorities regularly announce archaeo-

logical discoveries with great fanfare, although the country is often accused of a lack of scientific rigor and neglect of its antiquities. Archaeological sites, particularly in Luxor, make Egypt a major draw for foreign tourists. Hit by the turmoil that enveloped Egypt after the 2011 uprising that ousted longtime president Hosni Mubarak, the tourism sector has picked up this year. — AFP

Clashes follow detention of...

Continued from Page 1

years before the Supreme Court overturned her blasphemy conviction last month. The court's decision sparked furious demonstrations led by the hardline TLP, with protesters calling for Bibi's execution as they blocked major roads, leaving large swathes of the country paralysed.

In response, the government made a deal with the Islamists to impose a travel ban on Bibi, who was released from jail earlier this month as she awaits the outcome of a final review of her case. The TLP has vowed to return to the streets if she is allowed to leave the country. Early yesterday, clashes took place in the southern city of Karachi between Pakistani paramilitary forces and protesters over the arrest of Rizvi. "Khadim Hussain Rizvi has been taken into protective custody by police and shifted

to a guest house," tweeted Chaudhry. "It's to safeguard public life, property and order ... Law shall take its course and it cannot be left to individuals," he added.

A notification issued by the Punjab government said the cleric will be detained for 30 days. The notification said there was "credible" information that the cleric would create a law and order situation. In a video message released on Friday, another TLP leader Pir Afzal Qadri called for fresh protests, saying police had arrested dozens of party workers in the port city of Karachi as well as Lahore.

Blasphemy is a massively inflammatory issue in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where even unproven allegations of insulting Islam and Prophet Mohammed can lead to lynchings and murders. Bibi's conviction stemmed from a 2009 incident when she was asked to fetch water while out working in the fields. Muslim women laborers objected to her touching the water bowl as a non-Muslim, and a fight reportedly erupted. A local imam then claimed Bibi insulted Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Bibi has consistently denied the charges, and her prosecution rallied international rights groups, politicians and religious figures. — AFP

Asheeri had tweeted that he and his family would boycott the polls.

Al-Wefaq called for a boycott of this year's parliamentary election after a law issued in June barred "leaders and members of political associations dissolved for violating the kingdom's constitution or its laws" from fielding candidates. Experts have questioned the value of a parliamentary election in which the opposition is not allowed to participate. Neil Partrick, a specialist in Gulf Arab politics, said such polls had "no political or practical substance" regardless of boycott calls. According to Jane Kinninmont, an analyst specializing in Gulf politics, many citizens will either boycott or "simply not bother to vote" in this year's elections. — AFP

Bahrain holds parliamentary...

Continued from Page 1

messages came from people inside the kingdom. At least six people were detained and charged this month for "obstructing the electoral process", according to Bahrain's public prosecutor. One of the six was Ali Rashed Al-Asheeri, a former member of parliament with Al-Wefaq, according to the London-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy.

Sports

Mickelson edges Tiger Woods in playoff to earn \$9m cash prize

Exhibition clash between two of golf's greatest rivals

LOS ANGELES: Phil Mickelson sank a four-foot birdie putt on the fourth extra hole to pocket \$9 million and beat Tiger Woods in an exhibition clash Friday between two of golf's greatest rivals. Mickelson and Woods sparred over 22 rounds of match-play golf in front of an invitation-only gallery of 700 people at the Shadow Creek Golf Course in Las Vegas.

Mickelson clinched the victory with a short putt after Woods' tee shot landed on the green but he left his six-foot birdie putt short. "What a match it was," Mickelson said. "My heart can't take much more."

Mickelson had several putts to win earlier in the match that failed to drop, but he made no mistake on the final go at the par-three, 93-yard hole for the winner-take-all triumph. The match lasted five hours and finished in darkness as organizers had to use flood lights to illuminate the green on the final hole.

While both the 48-year-old Mickelson and the 42-year-old Woods are past their prime, Friday's meeting between the 19-time major winners still provided some entertaining golf. But since their heyday in the late 1990s and early 2000s, however, both Woods and Mickelson have been in steady decline.

While they both recorded victories on the PGA Tour in 2018, it has been five years since Mickelson

won a major, while Woods hasn't hoisted a major since 2008. Woods had to console himself with making the shot of the match on the 17th when he nailed a long birdie chip shot from the back of the green to stay alive in the match.

"Just like old times," Woods said after celebrating with a familiar fist pump. "I needed it. He had a chance to close out so I needed something special to happen." Mickelson walked up the fairway knowing that if he made birdie and Woods made par the cash grab would be his.

"He does this crap to me all the time-for 20 years" said Mickelson. "Tiger is the greatest of all time." With the invite-only gallery in attendance, golf fans were forced to watch the exhibition via a US\$19.99 pay per view televised format.

The duo both wore microphones and they filled time in the early going with plenty of verbal banter back and forth, but Mickelson admitted struggling to find enough to say as the match wore on.

"I am trying to be more talkative but I am just not on the back nine," he told Woods as they left one of the Shadow Creek tee boxes. "We got back into our old mode again trying to beat each other's brains in," Woods replied. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: Phil Mickelson celebrates with the winnings after defeating Tiger Woods as Ernie Johnson looks on during The Match: Tiger vs Phil at Shadow Creek Golf Course on Friday in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

Kuwaiti shooters win fifteen medals at Arab Shooting Championship

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti shooters won fifteen medals during competitions of both individuals and team during the sixth and seventh day of the Arab Shooting Championship being held in Qatar with the participation of more than 200 athletes representing 10 Arab countries.

Kuwait on Thursday won gold medals in the individual and teams trap for men and women, second place for individuals trap, second place in the 50m three position rifle individuals and teams.

Abdelrahman Al-Faihan won the men's trap gold medal and Khalid Al-Mudhaf silver and Qatar's Rashid Al-Athba was third.

Meanwhile the team of Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, Khalid Al-Mudhaf and Talal Al-Rashidi the team gold, as Qatar was second and Morocco third.

In the women's category Sarah Al-Hawal, Shahad Al-Hawal and Hajar Abdelmalek won the gold medal, Oman won silver and Qatar took the bronze, while in the individual's competition Sarah Al-Hawal won gold, Lebanon's Ray Basil won silver and Morocco's Yasmin



Misfawi took bronze.

In the 50 meter three positions rifle Kuwait's Abdallah Al-Harby won silver medal, as Oman's Saleem Al-Maliki won gold and his compatriot Hamad Al-Khalidi won bronze medal.

Kuwait's team of Abdallah Al-Harby, Majid Al-Thafiri and Khalid Al-Majid own silver while Oman won first place and Qatar third.

Meanwhile Kuwait shooters continued their winning ways on Friday as shooter Yousuf Al-Mutairi won the youth trap and gold medal while his team mate Bader Al-Adwani won the bronze medal in the same event.

The team of Yousuf Al-Mutairi, Bader Al-Adwani and Yousuf Al-Rashidi won the teams' trap gold while Qatar was placed second.

In the women juniors 10 meter air rifle Kuwait's Yara Al-Khalaf won first place as Qatar's Shahad Al-Darweesh was second and Oman's Rawaa Al-Hassani won third. The team of Yara Al-Khalaf, Batool Ashkanani and Reem Al-Rashidi won first place Qatar second and Oman third in the same event. The mixed team of Abdelrahman Al-Faihan and Sarah Al-Hawal won silver medal in the mixed trap event, as Lebanon was first and Qatar was third.

Saud Al-Subaie won the silver medal in the men's junior 10 meter air rifle as Oman's Fahim Al-Badi won gold and Qatar's Nasser Al-Nuaimi won third.

Kuwait's 25m pistol team of Othman Al-Failakawi, Hassan Al-Mulla and Saud Al-Mutairi won the bronze medal as Qatar was first and Oman second. — KUNA



Bach wants closer co-operation with Tokyo to ensure clean 2020 Games

TOKYO: International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach said he wanted closer co-operation from Japanese officials to ensure the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games were the cleanest on record in terms of doping. "What is also important is that we want these Olympic Games to be absolutely clean Olympic Games," Bach said yesterday during a visit to Tokyo 2020 venues in Fukushima with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

"Therefore, we would appreciate if we could enjoy closer co-operation with your government, also in this respect in the future." The IOC and the wider Olympic movement have been under pressure ever since Russia was banned from the 2018 Winter Olympics after the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) found evidence of huge, state-backed, systematic doping and cover-ups in Russian sport.

Bach, who was full of praise for preparations for the Olympics in 20 months' time, said he wanted the Games to be a great success in every respect, stressing the needs of athletes and keeping to budget among the priorities.

He said he was confident of a balanced budget, which is good news for organisers who have been under pressure since cuts were made at the end of last year. Last December, Tokyo organisers unveiled a budget of \$12.6 billion for the Games, a \$300 million reduction from projections earlier in 2017. Bach made the trip to Fukushima to see the Azuma Baseball Stadium which will host the first events of the Tokyo Games on July 22, 2020. The area was ravaged by a 2011 earthquake and tsunami that killed some 18,000 people and caused meltdowns at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima. — Reuters

NBK to award more than 100 participants during the Walkathon

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) will award more than 100 participants in the 24th Annual Walkathon alongside the grand draw for two new Nissan cars from Al Babbain Group. The Walkathon is scheduled to kick off on Saturday 8th, December 2018.

Titled "We're Stronger... With Every Step", NBK Walkathon this year will hold great surprises. Online registration is open through NBKWalkathon.com until 28th November. Applicants can then receive their assigned T-shirt and number at the NBK's registration point at the Green Island on the Gulf Road in Salmiya starting from Thursday 29th of November until Thursday 6th of December. The number for each participant will contain a step-counting chip. Abdul Mohsen Al Rushaid, NBK Public Relations Executive Manager said "the participation in NBK's Walkathon is increasing year after year, and we are extremely thrilled to take our involvement with this exciting event to a new level."

"Our commitment towards being connected with the community is the reason why we feel it is important for us to maintain the Walkathon annually," added Al Rushaid.

Referees assigned by the Kuwait Amateur Athletic Federation (KAAF) will be present to arbitrate the race. The first ten winners from each category will be rewarded with valuable cash prizes. As every year, The Ministry of Interior and The Ministry of Health, represented by the Medical Emergency, are joining the forces to support the race. The Municipality of Kuwait and the Touristic Enterprises Company also provided the necessary approvals for the closing ceremony at Shuwaikh Beach Park. The Fire Department will contribute to provide emergency support for the race while the Ministry of the Interior will deploy patrols in the area extending to

Shuwaikh Park to ensure normal process of the race.

Ten winners will be selected from each of the 10 categories of participants. The walk for both the female and male participants will start from the Green Island on the Gulf Road to the Shuwaikh Beach Park, parallel to the Gulf Road, next to KPC building for a distance of 11 Km. For the first time this year, NBK initiated a new racing category for participants aged 60 years old and above to encourage a healthier lifestyle among all members of the society. NBK strongly supports sporting events and encourages sporting activities as means to promote a healthier and more active lifestyle for members of the community. Throughout the years, NBK also organized several social awareness programs including educational, environmental, health and many other active initiatives.

For more information, visit NBK's page on Facebook at NBK Official Page or follow NBK on Twitter and Instagram @NBKGroup.



Abdul Mohsen Al Rushaid



Burgan Bank is the Diamond Sponsor of Kuwait National Arabian Horse Festival 2018

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently sponsored the Kuwait National Arabian Horse Festival 2018 for the 4th consecutive year, in line with its commitment to preserve Kuwait and Arab cultural heritage and champion skills-building in sports. The 4th Egyptian Arabian Horse Competition took place between 16-17 of November 2018 and the 7th National Arabian Horse Competition was held from 29 November till 1 December 2018 at the Bait Al Arab show arena.

Organized annually by Bait Al Arab, under the umbrella of Al Diwan Al Amiri, the event was hosted under the patronage of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The high profile festival was aimed at preserving the history and breed of Arabian horses, as an important part of the Kuwaiti and Arab cultural heritage.

The National Championship was supervised by ECAHO (European Conference of Arab Horse Organizations) which is the official body concerned with managing similar local and international tournaments. The Kuwait National Arabian Horse Festival received active participation by a large number of Arab horse breeders and owners from Kuwait and around the world. The popular event



also enjoyed a large following of local and international fans and horse enthusiasts.

The Arabian Horse Center - Bait Al Arab Kuwait State Stud was established in 1980 to perpetuate the Arabian horse of true origin in Kuwait to safeguard their ancestry in Kuwait. In November 2012, by the order of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the state stud of Kuwait was transferred to the Al Diwan Al Amiri.

Committed to honoring the country's rich history, Burgan Bank continues to celebrate the importance of this tradition and spark interest in national cultural events among the local community. The bank is equally keen on encouraging the expansion of competitive sports and recreational activities to improve the overall health and development of future generations.

Sports

Jeff Skinner's OT goal gives Sabres eight-straight victory

Golden Knights' Fleury shuts out hot Flames

BUFFALO: The host Buffalo Sabres, the hottest team in the NHL, got an overtime goal from Jeff Skinner to win their eighth straight game, defeating the Montreal Canadiens 3-2 on Friday afternoon. Skinner had the tying goal with 2:26 left in the third period and then scored again, this time on a power play with 3:06 expired in the extra session. He has 17 goals this season, which is tied for the NHL lead with David Pastrnak. This marks Buffalo's longest victory streak since it tied a franchise record by winning 10 straight to begin the 2006-07 season. This season's hot streak represents an amazing turnaround for a Buffalo franchise that ranked 29th in goals allowed and last in goals scored last season. Rookies have fueled much of this Sabres streak, including Casey Mittelstadt, who scored Buffalo's first goal on Friday, and star defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, who had an assist on Skinner's game-winner.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2, FLAMES 0

Marc-Andre Fleury had 29 saves for his league-leading fourth shutout of the season as Vegas became the first team this season to shut out visiting Calgary. It was the 52nd career shutout for Fleury. He did it against a Flames team that had scored 17 goals in its previous three games, including seven in a win over the Golden Knights on Monday night in Calgary. Alex Tuch, playing in his 100th NHL game, and Colin Miller each scored goals for Vegas. David Rittich had 26 saves in suffering just his second defeat in 10 decisions this season.

AVALANCHE 5, COYOTES 1

J.T. Compher made a dazzling return to the lineup with a pair of short-handed goals on a first-period penalty kill as Colorado beat host Arizona in Glendale, Ariz. NHL points leader Mikko Rantanen also scored for the Avalanche, shortly after Compher's first-period shorties, to give Colorado a commanding 3-0 lead against Arizona goalie Antti Raanta just 10 minutes into the contest. Compher became the fourth player in the past 15 years with two short-handed goals in a span of less than two minutes.

WILD 4, JETS 2

Down 2-0 through two periods, Wild launched a furious comeback in the third period to record a win over visiting Winnipeg. Eric Staal was in position in front of the Jets' net to bank in a rebound at 17:29 of the third period to put the Wild ahead for good.

Minnesota outshot Winnipeg by a 23-22 margin in the first two periods, but was hampered by five scoreless power-play chances. In five-on-five play, however, the Wild kept up the pressure, outshooting the Jets by a 16-6 margin in the final period to break down the defense with four unanswered goals.

BLUE JACKETS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 2

Josh Anderson scored twice in the first period, and Cam Atkinson scored a short-handed goal to break a tie in the second period as Columbus defeated visiting Toronto. Markus Hannikainen scored in the third period for the Blue Jackets, who avenged a Monday night loss to the Maple Leafs. It was Atkinson's sixth straight game with a goal and it was his eighth in that span. Ron Hainsey and Kasperii Kapanen scored for the Maple Leafs, who have lost two games in a row.

BRUINS 2, PENGUINS 1 (OT)

Joakim Nordstrom scored 1:57 into overtime to give Boston Bruins a win over visiting Pittsburgh. Nordstrom, in front of the net, deflected a pass from Torey Krug past goaltender Tristan Jarry. Jake DeBrusk also scored for Boston, which was playing its first home game since Nov. 11 and coming off a 1-1-2 road trip. Evgeni Malkin scored for Pittsburgh, which is 2-7-3 in its past 12 games.

LIGHTNING 4, BLACKHAWKS 2

Tyler Johnson scored a pair of goals, and Tampa Bay cruised to a win over visiting Chicago. Brayden Point and Ryan Callahan also scored for the Lightning, who beat the Blackhawks for the second time in five weeks to sweep the regular-season series. Nikita Kucherov notched three assists, and Erik Cernak had two. Artem Anisimov and Jonathan Toews each scored in a losing effort. Chicago has won only two of eight games since firing longtime head coach Joel Quenneville and replacing him with Jeremy Colliton.

DUCKS 2, OILERS 1

Rickard Rakell scored on a breakaway 14 seconds into overtime as Anaheim rallied for a victory against visiting Edmonton. The Ducks tied the score on Nick Ritchie's goal with 16.2 seconds remaining in regulation. Rakell got an assist on that goal. The Oilers suffered their first defeat in the Ken Hitchcock era. Hitchcock replaced the fired Todd McLellan as coach Tuesday. Edmonton won 4-3 in overtime at San Jose in Hitchcock's debut the same day.



LAS VEGAS: Tomas Nosek #92 of the Vegas Golden Knights takes a shot against TJ Brodie #7 of the Calgary Flames in the second period of their game at T-Mobile Arena on Friday in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Golden Knights defeated the Flames 2-0. —AFP

FLYERS 4, RANGERS 0

Sean Couturier scored two goals, while Travis Konecny and Jordan Weal each scored one to lift host Philadelphia past New York. Claude Giroux had three assists for the Flyers. Konecny contributed two assists and Couturier had one as the Flyers snapped a four-game losing streak. Philadelphia goaltender Cal Pickard was solid throughout in stopping all 31 shots for the shutout, his first of the season and fourth of his career.

BLUES 6, PREDATORS 2

Brayden Schenn, Alex Pietrangolo and Ryan O'Reilly each collected one goal and one assist as host St. Louis snapped a three-game losing streak by beating Nashville. Blues goalie Jake Allen made 26 saves as St. Louis claimed the second half of a home-and-home series with the top team in the NHL. Predators goalie Juuse Sauros

was chased after allowing five goals on 15 shots. Pekka Rinne stopped 18 of 19 shots in relief for Nashville, which had its three-game winning streak ended.

CAPITALS 3, RED WINGS 1

Michal Kempny scored the tie-breaking goal, and Alex Ovechkin added an insurance marker less than two minutes later in the third period as Washington rallied for a come-from-behind victory over visiting Detroit. Kempny had not scored a goal this season before the Capitals' last game, a victory over his former team (Chicago). He got his second goal in two games on a high slap shot from near the left point at the 6:38 mark of the third period. Ovechkin then made it 3-1 on a blast from the right circle at the end of a rush at the 8:34 mark. He finished the game with one goal and one assist. — Reuters

Five-for Rashid England's hero as Sri Lanka collapse

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka threw away a decent position in the final Test against England yesterday, collapsing from 183 for 2 at tea to 240 all out as five-for Adil Rashid and Ben Stokes skittled the hosts in Colombo.

At the close of a rollercoaster second day England were 3 without loss after four overs when bad light stopped play, 99 runs ahead with a 3-0 whitewash in their sights. In the opening session Sri Lanka's bowlers had wrapped up England's first innings for 336 within half an hour, the visitors losing their final three wickets for just 24 runs.

On Friday, Jonny Bairstow had put his marker down to be England's permanent Test number three with a no-nonsense 110, with partnerships of 100 with captain Joe Root and 99



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's cricketer Dhananjaya de Silva (R) runs between the wickets during the second day of the third Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and England at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) international cricket stadium in Colombo yesterday. —AFP

with Ben Stokes. But resuming on 312-7, Moeen Ali, continuing his indifferent series with

the bat, fell for 33, Stuart Broad for a duck and Jack Leach for 2. Left-arm wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan was the pick of Sri Lankan bowlers, taking five for 95 runs while finger spinners Dilruwan Perera and Malinda Pushpakumara took the other five between them.

With bat in hand and only five overs of the day played, Sri Lanka's batsmen laid solid foundations. Danushka Gunathilaka was the only man out for Sri Lanka before lunch, caught spectacularly by Keaton Jennings at short leg for 18 off Leach. Dimuth Karunaratne, dropped at slip by Root off Broad early in his innings, then put on a 142-run third-wicket partnership with Dhananjaya de Silva. Just before tea, de Silva fell for 73, dismissed by another lightning catch by Jennings off Rashid. But with Karunaratne still in and Root rueing his error, Sri Lanka looked comfortable.

But in the first over after tea Karunaratne went for 83, with Jennings again the catcher as he edged Rashid, and the collapse began. Angelo Mathews fell next, the ball coming off the toe of his bat to keeper Ben Foakes off Stokes for 5, before Roshan Silva became Jennings' next victim off Rashid for 3. — AFP

Pakistan 207-4 at close in second Test

DUBAI: Pakistan, who won the toss and batted, were 207-4 on the opening day of the second Test against New Zealand in Dubai yesterday.



DUBAI: Pakistani batsman Azhar Ali (R) plays a shot as New Zealand wicket-keeper BJ Watling (L) and teammate Henry Nicholls (C) look on during the first day of the second Test cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Dubai International Stadium in Dubai yesterday. — AFP

Starc called up for final Australia-India Twenty20

SYDNEY: Mitchell Starc was yesterday drafted into Australia's squad for their final Twenty20 against India in what could be his first short-format international in two years. The pace spearhead had been left out of the squad for their T20 games against South Africa and India so he could focus on the Sheffield Shield to be better prepared for the upcoming Test series against the Indians.

But fellow fast bowler Billy Stanlake turned his ankle in the warm-up for the

second match against India on Friday and has now been ruled out of the third and final game in Sydney on Sunday.

"(Starc has) got so much experience in the limited-overs games as well and we've seen how dominant he can be when he gets it right with the ball," skipper Aaron Finch said. "We'll have a look at the wicket this afternoon and discuss the side but coming straight off a Shield game with an eye on the first Test, his preparations will be really good."

Australia lead the series 1-0, with Friday's game abandoned due to rain. Starc last played a T20 for Australia in September 2016 against Sri Lanka in Colombo. His last one on home soil was in Sydney in February 2014 against England. Australia squad: Aaron Finch (capt), Alex Carey, Ashton Agar, Jason Behrendorff, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Chris Lynn, Glenn Maxwell, Ben McDermott, D'Arcy Short, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Andrew Tye, Adam Zampa. —AAPF

Bangladesh's Shakib promises better show after Windies win

CHITTAGONG: Record-breaking Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan promised an ever better performance in the next Test after he overcame fitness concerns to lead the hosts to a 64-run win against the West Indies yesterday. Shakib was included in the squad for the opening Test in Chittagong despite having barely returned to training after an injury lay-off that forced him to miss the recent home series against Zimbabwe.

But he made a dream comeback as he claimed five wickets in the match to become the first Bangladeshi to complete 200 wickets in

Tests. It had been feared he would be sidelined for at least three months following emergency surgery on an injured finger in September, but physicians declared him fit sooner than expected.

The all-rounder's participation in the West Indies opener still remained uncertain until he decided to play at the very last moment. He picked up a wicket off his very first ball in the game before finishing with 3-43 and 2-30 in the two innings, and also made a useful contribution with the bat with a first-innings knock of 34.

"I batted (in training) for only three sessions before playing the first Test. That was hardly enough, considering I resumed playing after two months," Shakib said after the match. "That was difficult for me. But I have finished the match successfully. I am sure I will play the next match in a better condition," he said. With his first wicket in the second innings Shakib claimed his 200th wickets in Tests, a record that also took him into an elite group of all-rounders. Shakib, who has now 3,727 runs, is only the 14th cricketer in history to take 200 wickets and score over 3,000 runs in Tests. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scorecard at stumps on the second day of the third and final Test between Sri Lanka and England in Colombo yesterday:

England first innings		
R Burns b Perera	14	B Mendis c Stokes b Rashid
K Jennings c Silva b Pushpakumara	13	A Mathews c Foakes b Stokes
J Bairstow b Sandakan	110	A Silva c Jennings b Rashid
J Root c Gunathilaka b Sandakan	46	N Dickwell c Foakes b Stokes
B Stokes c de Silva b Sandakan	57	M Perera c Foakes b Stokes
J Buttler c & b Sandakan	16	R Lakmal not out
M Ali c Mathews b Perera	33	P Sandakan run out
B Foakes c Dickwell b Pushpakumara	13	P Pushpakumara lbw b Rashid
A Rashid not out	21	Extras: (lb7, w1)
S Broad b Sandakan	0	Total: (all out, 65.5 overs)
M Leach c Mathews b Perera	2	Fall of wickets: 1-31 (Gunathilaka), 2-173 (de Silva), 3-187 (Karunaratne), 4-200 (Mathews), 5-205 (Silva), 6-222 (Dickwell), 7-222 (Mendis), 8-222 (Perera), 9-224 (Sandakan), 10-240 (Pushpakumara)
Extras: (b7, lb3, nb1)	11	Bowling: Broad 9-2-36-0, Leach 18-2-59-1, Ali 13-2-55-0, Rashid 13.5-2-49-5, Root 2-0-4-0, Stokes 10-1-30-3.
Total: (all out, 92.5 overs)	336	
Fall of wickets: 1-22 (Burns), 2-36 (Jennings), 3-136 (Root), 4-235 (Stokes), 5-254 (Bairstow), 6-265 (Buttler), 7-294 (Foakes), 8-328 (Ali), 9-329 (Broad), 10-336 (Leach)		
Bowling: Lakmal 11-2-33-0, Perera 32.5-1-113-3, Pushpakumara 20-3-64-2, Sandakan 22-0-95-5, de Silva 5-0-16-0, Gunathilaka 2-0-5-0.		
Sri Lanka first innings		
M Gunathilaka c Jennings b Leach	18	England second innings
F Karunaratne c Jennings b Rashid	83	R Burns not out
D de Silva c Jennings b Rashid	73	K Jennings not out
		Extras:
		Total: (no wickets, 4 overs)
		Bowling: Perera 2-1-1-0, Pushpakumara 1-0-2-0, de Silva 1-1-0-0.

Sports

Man City, Liverpool cruise as Man Utd stumble once more

City have now won 12 of their last 13 games

LONDON: Manchester City stretched a relentless winning run to eight games by thrashing West Ham 4-0 yesterday but remain just two points clear at the top of the Premier League as Liverpool were also 3-0 victors at Watford.

Manchester United are now 14 points off the leaders as Paul Pogba was hauled off by Jose Mourinho as they failed to break down Crystal Palace in a 0-0 draw at Old Trafford. Everton leapfrogged United to move up to sixth with a 1-0 victory over Cardiff, while Claudio Ranieri won his first match in charge of Fulham in a 3-2 thriller over fellow strugglers Southampton.

City have now won 12 of their last 13 games with the only dropped points coming in a creditable 0-0 draw at Liverpool last month. Pep Guardiola's men had scored 13 goals in their three previous visits to the London Stadium and had another three before half-time in another dominant display.

David Silva scored for the fourth straight game when he flicked home Raheem Sterling's cross on 11 minutes. Sterling's own stunning form in front of goal continued when he tapped home Leroy Sane's cross for his eighth goal of the season.

The roles were reversed from City's flying wingers 11 minutes before half-time when this time Sane showed great composure to turn home the England international's pass and Sane completed the rout in stoppage time.

In keeping with recent weeks, Liverpool were far less impressive but remain on City's coat-tails as Mohamed Salah, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Roberto Firmino all struck in the final quarter at Vicarage Road.

Jürgen Klopp's men rode their luck as Watford had an early goal disallowed and saw strong claims for a penalty just after the break waived away. However, the

visitors front three finally clicked 23 minutes from time when Firmino fed Sadio Mane and his cut-back was prodded home by Salah for his ninth goal of the season.

Alexander-Arnold then bagged his first for the campaign at club level with a sumptuous free-kick after opening his account for England in the international break. And despite having captain Jordan Henderson sent-off, Liverpool added a third through Firmino a minute from time.

How United wish they had the same firepower as after a bright start they again faded and Palace held out for just a second point in seven Premier League games. Pogba and Romelu Lukaku were fit enough to start after missing international duty for France and Belgium through injury, but failed to spark the hosts and Pogba was even withdrawn for Alexis Sanchez in the search for a winner that never came.

Mourinho's men were even fortunate that Marouane Fellaini wasn't shown a red card for a horrendous challenge on Palace captain Luka Milivojevic that went unpunished. Ranieri couldn't stop Fulham leaking goals in his first match in charge at Craven Cottage, but did secure a first win in 10 league games as Aleksandar Mitrovic scored twice to edge a five-goal thriller.

Stuart Armstrong also scored a double for Saints and opened the scoring before Mitrovic and Andre Schurrle turned the game around before half-time. Another great strike from Armstrong levelled before Mitrovic volleyed home to spark wild scenes of celebration from Ranieri.

Leicester showed great resilience after a difficult few weeks off the field to fight back from a goal and a man down for a 1-1 draw at Brighton. Glenn Murray opened the scoring and the visitors had James



LONDON: Manchester City's Brazilian striker Gabriel Jesus (L) and West Ham United's Irish defender Declan Rice (C) vies for the ball during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Manchester City at the London Stadium, in east London yesterday. — AFP

Maddison sent-off for two yellow cards in the opening 28 minutes, but Jamie Vardy's penalty eight minutes from time secured a point.

Gylfi Sigurdsson's solitary goal at Goodison Park was enough to see off Cardiff and continue Everton's progress under Marco Silva. — AFP

France stay alive in Davis Cup final after doubles win

LILLE: France kept their Davis Cup final hopes alive as Nicolas Mahut and Pierre-Hugues Herbert beat Croatian pair Ivan Dodig and Mate Pavic 6-4 6-4 3-6 7-6(3) in a tense doubles battle in the Stade Pierre Mauroy yesterday.

Yannick Noah's champions had their backs against the wall after losing both Friday's singles but Herbert and Mahut began the fightback, reducing the deficit to 2-1 and ensuring the last Davis Cup in its present guise will stretch into today.

The odds are still stacked in Croatia's favour as no team has recovered from 2-0 down to win the trophy since Australia beat the United States in 1939. But with 26,000 mainly flag-waving French fans set to flock back into the cavernous home of Lille's soccer club today, hope still remains.

It had looked like being a relatively comfortable win for the French duo when they had points for a double break in the third set, having won the first two in dominant fashion. But Pavic and Dodig, who had partnered Marin Cilic to a crucial win over Mahut and Herbert when the sides met in the 2016 semi-finals in Zadar, hit back to set home nerves jangling.

Herbert faltered when serving at 3-4 allowing the Croats to break serve and then hold with ease to the delight of their noisy followers high in the upper tiers. Alarm bells were ringing at the start of the fourth when France had to save three break points on the Herbert serve and he was again made to work hard at 2-2 as the momentum of the match began to swing Croatia's way.



VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ: France's Nicolas Mahut (L) watches as France's Pierre-Hugues Herbert (R) returns the ball to Croatia's Ivan Dodig and Croatia's Mate Pavic during their doubles rubber for the Davis Cup final tennis match between France and Croatia at The Pierre Mauroy Stadium in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, northern France, yesterday. — AFP

France kept their noses in front though and the fans ratcheted up the decibel levels as Pavic served at 4-5. The Croat, yet to win a Davis Cup tie, duly buckled with a double-fault at 0-30 and bedlam broke out in the stands with opposing fan clubs trying to out-sing each other. With the umpire struggling to restore order, Pavic showed incredible composure as he and Dodig somehow dug themselves out of a seemingly impossible

position to make it 5-5. Boos rang out as Pavic gestured defiantly at the massed ranks of blue amid the suspicion that Croatia would be favourites to win the rubber if they could take the tiebreak. Yet Mahut and Herbert jumped into a 4-1 lead and though the Croatians got it back to 4-3, the French pair then kept their cool with Mahut's reflex volley sealing the win. — Reuters

Malaysia join Vietnam in Asean semis

HONG KONG: Malaysia booked their place in the semi-finals of the Asean Football Federation Championship yesterday with a 3-0 win over Myanmar that ensures they advance to the tournament's last four alongside favourites Vietnam.

Vietnam finished top of group A thanks to a comfortable 3-0 win over already-eliminated Cambodia while a brace from Zaquan Adha following Nohshahrul Idlan Talaha's opener earned the Malaysians second place as a result of an impressive performance against Myanmar.

Myanmar needed only a draw to progress but, in front of a vociferous crowd at Kuala Lumpur's Bukit Jalil Stadium, the home side made most of the early running and it came as little surprise when Nohshahrul put Malaysia in front.

Syahmi Safari's darting run down the right saw him find Mohamadou Sumareh with time and space in front of goal but, when his attempt came back off the crossbar, Nohshahrul scored from close range.

Two minutes into first-half injury time Safawi Rasid was brought down inside the penalty area by Soe Moe Kyaw after latching on to Sumareh's through ball and Zaquan scored the resulting penalty.

Myanmar did little to suggest they would find a way back into the game and, with two minutes left on the clock, Zaquan added the third goal when an attempted clearance by Kyaw slammed into the striker's head before looping into Kyaw Zin Htet's goal.

Malaysia will play the winners of group B, which will conclude today with leaders Thailand playing Singapore while the Philippines travel to Jakarta to face Indonesia. The Vietnamese secured top spot with a routine win over Cambodia, with goals coming from Nguyen Tien Linh, Nguyen Quang Hai and Phan Van Duc. — Reuters

beIN SPORTS showcases 2018 FIFA World Cup Winners Trophy

DOHA: To mark the countdown for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar, beIN hosted a special day on November 21, with special programs, exclusive interviews and a visit from the world's most coveted trophy, the 2018 FIFA World Cup Winners Trophy.

The FIFA World Cup Winners Trophy, which was presented to the French National Football team at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia, was first unveiled at the 1974 FIFA World Cup Germany.

Viewers from around the world tuned in to beIN SPORTS HD1 and its free to air channel as it dedicated 24 hours of nonstop exclusive reports, FIFA documentaries, stadium site visits and interviews across their English and Arabic Channels, their dedicated 4K channel and their social media platforms.

"Arabs in World Cup", a documentary on legendary Arab football players who competed in the competition, was broadcasted along with FIFA films that included FIFA World Cup matches from 1978 to 2018.

The Morning Show was also broadcasted live and exclusive from Doha, featuring exclusive interviews and coverage from Hamad International Airport, Qatar Rail and the state-of-the-art FIFA World Cup stadiums including the revamped



and ultra-modern Khalifa International Stadium, to give viewers a glimpse into what to expect as the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar draws closer and closer.

"Qatar 2022: The Countdown is On" show was broadcasted on all the beIN SPORTS channels and featured the 2018 FIFA World Cup Winners Trophy as well as guests such as HE Hassan Al Thawadi, the Secretary General for the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy who updated viewers on the latest developments on Qatar's preparation for the big event.

Several beIN star presenters and guests including 2010 FIFA World Cup winner and Barcelona legend Xavi Hernandez, 2010 FIFA World

Cup runner up and Dutch legend Wesley Sneijder, celebrated manager Arsene Wenger and others shared their insights on some of the most memorable FIFA World Cup matches in recent history.

A documentary on Qatar 2022 was also broadcasted on beIN's free to air channel which hosted beIN stars Ayman Jadah, Yousef Seif, Hisham Al Khalsi, and Hafid Derradji who discussed their memorable experiences covering previous FIFA World Cups. beIN is the official broadcaster for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), having started its journey as the official broadcaster since the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Bournemouth FC v Arsenal FC	16:30	beIN SPORTS	
Wolverhampton Wanderers FC v Huddersfield Town	19:00	beIN SPORTS	
SPANISH LEAGUE			
Athletic de Bilbao v Getafe CF	14:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Sevilla FC v Real Valladolid	18:15	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
RCD Espanyol v Girona	20:30	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Villarreal CF v Real Betis	22:45	beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE			
Parma Calcio 1913 v US Sassuolo Calcio	14:30	beIN SPORTS	
Bologna FC v ACF Fiorentina	17:00	beIN SPORTS	
SSC Napoli v AC Chievo Verona	17:00	beIN SPORTS	
Empoli v Atalanta	17:00	beIN SPORTS	
SS Lazio v AC Milan	20:00	beIN SPORTS	
Genoa CFC v UC Sampdoria	22:30	beIN SPORTS	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA			
SC Freiburg v SV Werder Bremen	17:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Borussia Mönchengladbach v Hannover 96	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 5	
FRENCH LEAGUE			
Montpellier HSC v Stade Rennais	17:00	beIN SPORTS	
OGC Nice v LOSC Lille	19:00	beIN SPORTS	
Amiens SC v Olympique Marseille	23:00	beIN SPORTS	

Four-try England crush tired Australia 37-18

LONDON: England completed a highly satisfying November series with a crushing 37-18 four-try victory over a ragged Australia at Twickenham yesterday, claiming a record sixth successive win in the 50th meeting of the old sporting rivals.

After an early try for Jonny May it was 13-13 at the break but Elliot Daly, Joe Cokanasiga and Owen Farrell underlined England's second-half dominance as a try in each half for Israel Folau flattered the tired-looking tourists. The result followed wins for England over South Africa and Japan and a one-point defeat by New Zealand and has got them right back on track after a poor Six Nations and 2-1 series defeat in South Africa in June.

It also capped a dire year for Australia, who have now lost 11 of their last 15 matches and were second-best all day long at Twickenham. For the second week running England scored a try within three minutes as a powerful scrum set up May to cross in the right corner. Against Japan it all went wrong for the rest of the first half but England stayed on the offensive this time, albeit without making their domination count on the scoreboard.

Two Farrell penalties stretched the lead to 13-3 but the game had something of a Barbarians feel, with multiple turnovers and very little multi-phased attack - just the sort of situation where Australia's backs thrive. They were missing two of their best, however, after Adam Ashley-Cooper and Kurtley Beale were left out for disciplinary reasons. — Reuters

25 Mickelson edges Tiger Woods in playoff to earn \$9m cash prize



26 Five-for Rashid England's hero as Sri Lanka collapse



27 Man City, Liverpool cruise as Man Utd stumble once more



Real Madrid crash at Eibar 3-0

Solari and Ramos feel the heat in disastrous defeat



EIBAR: Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (L) shots the ball during the Spanish league football match between SD Eibar and Real Madrid CF at the Ipurua stadium in Eibar yesterday. —AFP

EIBAR: Santiago Solari proved the perfect caretaker but his debut as permanent coach of Real Madrid yesterday ended in a disastrous 3-0 defeat at Eibar. Four wins while in temporary charge earned Solari a contract until 2021 over the international break, only for Real to revert to the kind of chaotic display that cost his predecessor, Julen Lopetegui, his job.

The defeat also brought into focus the mindset of Madrid's players, after their captain Sergio Ramos faced allegations of an anti-doping violation on Friday night from German magazine Der Spiegel. The club denied any breach.

Eibar were stronger, more aggressive and, worryingly for Solari, appeared clearer about the plan they wanted to carry out. Marc Cucurella, brilliant down the left, teed up all three goals, scored by Gonzalo Escalante, Sergi Enrich and Kike Garcia.

Real's loss halts their revival under Solari and cost them a golden opportunity to make up ground on Barcelona and Atletico Madrid, before the pair face each other at the Wanda Metropolitano later.

Eibar shoot up to seventh, a reward for their first ever victory over Real Madrid at the 11th attempt. Ramos was not noticeably below par at Ipurua, but perhaps allegations that he failed to list the correct medication after the Champions League final in 2017, proved enough of a distraction for his teammates.

Solari, meanwhile, must now reset his team ahead of Tuesday's Champions League game against Roma, which is likely to decide the winner of Group G. Real started well enough and Gareth Bale looked in the mood when he swivelled and sent a stunning shot

into the top corner from 25 yards, only to be ruled offside. Karim Benzema went close, his finish cleared off the line by Jose Cote, but after surviving the early pressure, Eibar grew in confidence. Kike made the woodwork shake with a drive from 25 yards, with replays showing the dipping shot had been diverted by an excellent finger-tip save from Thibaut Courtois.

Madrid's goalkeeper came to their rescue again in the 16th minute, denying Enrich from Cucurella's cross, but this time Escalante was on hand to bundle in the rebound ahead of the stumbling Dani Ceballos.

Referee Juan Martinez consulted the video assistant referee but the delay only earned a repeat of home fans' cheers. Bale's free-kick was pushed wide and then he was booked for dissent as Madrid looked to be running out of ideas. Solari gave his first half-time team talk with his team behind, but their situation deteriorated in the second half.

Toni Kroos' misjudged and misdirected crossfield pass exposed the unfortunate recipient Alvaro Odriozola. Cucurella pounced, pushing Odriozola off the ball and delivering for Enrich to score.

Odriozola was forced off injured. Five minutes later it was three, this time Raphael Varane was at fault, allowing Kike to nip in and convert another whipped Cucurella cross. Madrid had more than half an hour to respond but it was Eibar who looked more likely. Fabian Orellana nutmegged Ceballos and drew a smart save from Courtois, before Charles Dias flicked an audacious volley, again blocked by the Belgian. By the end, Madrid were thankful it was only three. —AFP

India's Kom wins record sixth world boxing gold

NEW DELHI: India's Mary Kom yesterday became the most successful female boxer in world championships history after clinching her sixth gold medal in New Delhi. The 35 year-old beat Ukraine's Hanna Okhota 5-0 in the final of the 48kg category contest in front of an electric home crowd.

Her sixth gold takes her past Ireland's Katie Taylor, and level with the men's record held by Cuban legend Felix Savon as the most successful pugilist ever at the world championships. The mother of three won a silver in the inaugural women's edition in 2001 and then went on to win gold in each of the next five championships, with her most recent coming in Bridgetown, Barbados in 2010.

Kom, who was the subject of a Bollywood film in 2014, won bronze at the London 2012 Olympic Games. "Today, I was a little bit emotional because for the last few years, I was not able to fight in 48kg category," an emotional Kom said after the bout.

"The effort was very challenging for me. Because of your love and support, I hope to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. I wasn't able to qualify for Rio Games. I am still suffering," she said to the cheering crowds. Kom, charging from the blue corner, took



NEW DELHI: Mary Kom of India gestures with her gold medal after winning the 45-48 kg category final fight at the 2018 AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

control of the bout as soon as the starting bell rung. She had beaten Okhota in a previous clash at the Silesian international boxing championships in Poland in September. Kom defeated North Korea's Mi Hyang Kim on Thursday 5-0 to reach the final. — AFP