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Amir confident MPs will not 'misuse' constitutional tools

Political crisis looms over prime minister's grilling



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and other lawmakers yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah trusts the wisdom of Assembly members in resisting any arbitrary use or abuse of some constitutional tools. Speaking to reporters at the National Assembly, Ghanem said he conveyed a message from HH the Amir to MPs, saying: "There is an arbitrary use or abuse of some constitutional tools. It is the responsibility of members to address this."

He added that he and several other members met the Amir in order to listen to his directives and advice regarding both local and regional situations. Ghanem quoted HH the Amir as voicing confidence in members' wisdom in taking action against such practices. The speaker also expressed confidence that MPs will live up to their responsibility towards the Amir's letter and his previous speech during the opening of the current parliament session.

The remarks came as the country may be sliding into a political crisis over the grilling of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, as lawmakers said yesterday there are suspicions the grilling is unconstitutional. The grilling, filed by leading opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, is on the agenda of tomorrow's regular session for debate, but pro-government MP Khalaf Dumaitheer said he will propose that the grilling

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Kuwait residents shaken as quake hits western Iran

KUWAIT: An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.3 shook western Iran yesterday, the US Geological Survey reported. USGS said the quake was at a depth of 65 km and struck 114 km northwest of the city of Ilam, close to Iran's border with Iraq. Tremors were felt along Kuwait's coastal areas yesterday evening, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research's seismic monitor said. The earthquake's distance to Kuwait was 581 km with a depth of 10 km, head of the monitoring and crisis management department Dr Abdullah Al-Enezi said.

The Iraqi Geological Survey said the quake had been felt in the capital Baghdad and in Erbil in the Kurdistan region. Iranian state TV said rescue teams have been dispatched to the quake-hit area, adding no fatalities have been reported so far. "No reports of any fatalities yet and most of the injured were hurt while fleeing, not due to quake damage," Pirhossein Kouliwand, head of the state emergency services, told state TV. — Agencies

In sadness, EU leaders approve key Brexit deal

BRUSSELS: European Union leaders yesterday approved a historic Brexit deal, handing the baton to British Prime Minister Theresa May who must now convince her skeptical party and country to support it. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said Brexit was a "tragedy", but he and other leaders meeting in Brussels warned the withdrawal terms were now set. "This is the best deal possible for Britain, this is the best deal possible for Europe," Juncker said, after a special summit meeting to sign off on the agreement. "This is the only deal possible," he said, adding a warning: "Those who think by rejecting the deal, will have a better deal, will be disappointed in the few seconds after rejecting the deal."

May faces a major battle to get the

agreement through the House of Commons before Brexit day on March 29, with MPs of all parties - including her own - saying they will oppose it and try to negotiate a better deal. "It is important that everyone in the UK is aware that the result that is now available is the result," said Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency. "It will certainly not be renegotiated and there will be no further room for maneuver."

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte added: "Overall, I think this is the max that we can all do, both Theresa May and her government as well as the European Union. "No victors here today, nobody winning, we're all losing - but given that context, this is acceptable." Juncker, head of the bloc's executive arm, earlier said it was a "sad day". "To see a country like Great Britain... leave the EU is not a moment of joy nor of celebration, it's a sad moment and it's a tragedy," he said.

Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel hailed the deal as a "piece of diplomatic



BRUSSELS: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May listens to European Council President Donald Tusk during a special meeting of the European Council yesterday. — AFP

art" but admitted that it left her with sadness. "This is a historic summit and also historic day that evokes ambivalent feelings," she said. "It is tragic that Great Britain leaves the EU after 45 years." The leaders gathered in Brussels yesterday

morning to sign off the terms of Britain's withdrawal and an outline political declaration on the future relationship.

May, who arrived in Brussels on Saturday evening for final talks with

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KISR launches car powered by solid hydrogen

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) announced yesterday the launch of the country's first electric vehicle powered by solid hydrogen fuel from nanopowders. This came in a press release, after a visit of KISR Director General Samira Al-Sayed Omar to the program of nanotechnology and advanced materials at the institute, where she looked at the prototype of the electric vehicle powered by hydrogen fuel.

The program was led by Osama Al-Sayegh, Executive Director of the KISR's Energy and Construction Research Center, who said the center's nanotechnology and advanced materials program successfully launched the experimental prototype. "These powders were prepared by the center's compound for chemically inducing magnesium hydride adsorption by ultra-smooth granules of the glass alloy (ZrNiPd)," Sayegh added. The project's chief manager Mohammad Al-Iskandrani noted that the nano compounds used to supply the electric power required through a fuel cell capacity of 1,000 watts was patented by the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) in 2016. — KUNA

Chad president makes first-ever visit to Israel

JERUSALEM: Chadian leader Idriss Deby Itno yesterday became the first president of his country to visit Israel and pledged a new era of relations when meeting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decades after ties were severed. Both leaders called the visit "historic" as they met in Jerusalem with security issues high on the agenda. Netanyahu said as they spoke to jour-

nalists after their meeting that "we never fully stopped our contacts ... but we are now expanding them at a very rapid rate". "And we wish to do so in all areas, first of all in fighting terrorism." He said he hoped to visit the Muslim-majority central African nation.

Deby spoke of the two countries committing to a new era of cooperation with "the prospect of reestablishing diplomatic relations". But Deby also highlighted the Palestinian cause, saying pursuing relations with Israel did not change his country's concern for the long-stalled peace process. Chad remains "deeply attached to the peace process between Israel and Palestine", he said.

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JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) prepares to shake hands with Chadian President Idriss Deby as they deliver joint statements yesterday. — AFP

UAE seeks rich, educated expats with visa scheme

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates will offer long-term visas to rich property investors, senior scientists and entrepreneurs in an effort to support its economy and real estate market, which have been hurt by low oil prices. Until now, visas for foreigners to live in the Arab

world's second biggest economy have generally been valid for only a few years, and have depended on the main visa holder in each family remaining employed. The government said in May it planned to ease that policy.

Detailed rules approved by the cabinet on Saturday offer five-year residency to owners of UAE real estate worth at least 5 million dirhams (\$1.4 million), as long as ownership is not based on loans, state news agency WAM reported. Renewable 10-year visas will be provided to foreigners with investments in the UAE of at least 10 million dirhams, if non-real estate assets account for at least 60 percent of the total. Investors can bring spouses and children into the country.

Other rules offer five-year visas to entrepreneurs and 10-year visas for scientists and researchers with top qualifications. Outstanding students can stay for five years. The UAE is currently locked in a diplomatic dispute with Britain after a UK academic was jailed for life on spying charges. Share prices of UAE property firms, beaten down by slumping real estate prices, moved little yesterday in response to the new visa rules. Analysts said they were probably not enough on their own to change investment or employment trends.

Some parts of the economy that rely on white-collar professionals - a class of people who might buy homes

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Local

Amir meets state officials, MPs, visiting Cypriot minister

Kuwait, Cyprus sign deal to help Kuwaitis in case of evacuation



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the Foreign Minister of Cyprus Nikos Christodoulides.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, who was accompanied by members of the parliament's office for the third session of the 15th legislative term. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Ghanem and members of the parliament's office later yesterday.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received His Highness the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Foreign

Minister of Cyprus Nikos Christodoulides. Minister Christodoulides handed His Highness the Amir a letter from President of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades.

Agreements signed

The visiting Cypriot Foreign Minister also held a meeting with his Kuwaiti counterpart, during which they addressed the close relations between Kuwait and Cyprus, ways of promoting and developing them in all fields, the latest regional and international developments and issues of mutual interest. Following their meeting, both sides signed an air service agreement, a memo of understanding for bilateral cooperation for receiving and helping Kuwaiti nationals in case of evacuation via Cyprus.

The deals reflect the determination of both friendly countries to develop and cement bilateral relations in all fields and on all levels. The meeting and signing ceremony were attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled

Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Administrative and Financial Affairs Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghanem, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Cyprus Waleed Al-Kandari, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Saleh Al-Lughani and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry. Speaker Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad also met with the visiting Cypriot minister yesterday.

Bahrain's elections

In other news, His Highness the Amir congratulated Bahrain on the success of its parliamentary and municipal elections, which witnessed unprecedented voting numbers on Saturday. In a cable addressed to Bahrain's King

Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, he commended the process, which occurred under a "democratic and transparent" atmosphere. "During this unprecedented turnout, the people of Bahrain expressed their faith and adherence to their democratic values in order to best serve their country, and achieve its ultimate interests," he said.

His Highness the Amir also sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to Mohammad Al-Fadhli for winning the men's sabre event at the Junior World Fencing Championships in Tehran. His Highness the Amir praised this achievement and wished him success to continue his sports performance and more achievements to raise Kuwait's name in various regional and international sports forums. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables marking the occasion. Separately, His Highness the Amir is set to attend and patronize at Bayan Palace the 18th edition of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah's Informatics Award. The event will be held today at 10:30 am. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and members of the National Assembly's office.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Cypriot counterpart Nikos Christodoulides sign an air service agreement to receive and help Kuwaiti nationals in case of evacuation.

KFAS announces winners of 2018 prizes

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) is pleased to announce the list of winners of the foundation's 2018 prizes: the Kuwait Prize for Kuwaiti and Arab researchers, Scientific Production Prize for Kuwaiti scientists and Al-Nouri Prize for the best PhD thesis in Education in the Arab world.

Recognizing the importance of celebrating scientific achievements by awarding researchers and academics for their contributions, KFAS has launched these awards as part of its mission to motivate and support human capabilities, recognize life-achievements and encourage researchers to sustain their efforts in producing high-quality research in Kuwait and the Arab world.

The announcements came after the endorsement of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait and Chairman of KFAS Board of Directors, of the decisions of the Board, based on recommendations forwarded by the Prize Council and the reports of the evaluation and selection panels.

Four fields

The Kuwait Prize 2018 is awarded in four fields, the first of which is Fundamental Sciences (Biological Sciences) and was jointly awarded to Professor Hilal Ahmed Lashuel from Yemen, Director of the Laboratory of Chemical Biology of Neurodegeneration of the Brain Mind Institute in the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, based in Lausanne, Switzerland, and Lebanese Professor Mohamed H Sayegh, Vice President for Scientific Research and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

KFAS Director-General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin has credited Professor Lashuel for his work to elucidate the molecular and structural basis of protein misfolding, aggregation and the mechanisms by which these processes contribute to the pathogenesis of neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer's disease (AD), Parkinson's disease (PD), and Huntington's disease (HD).

Professor Sayegh, on the other hand, was awarded the prize for his globally recognized achievements as a prominent scientist and researcher in the field of transplantation medicine, not to mention his valuable research in renal medi-

cine and transplantation immunobiology, Shihab-Eldin noted.

As for the Applied Sciences (Clean and Sustainable Energy Technologies) category, the award went to both Dr Zakya H Kafafi from Egypt, Adjunct Professor at the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering of Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, and to Dr Husam N Alshareef from Palestine, Professor of Material Sciences and Engineering at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST).

Dr Shihab-Eldin added that Dr Kafafi was awarded the prize for her research on the uses of organic solar cells to generate clean and sustainable energy and to improve their performance and efficiency, while Dr Alshareef was awarded the prize for his work in the domains of energy harvesting and energy storage, including the development of storage devices, such as batteries and super-capacitors.

The third award for Economics and Social Sciences (Economy), also went to two winners. The first is Dr Imad Moosa from Iraq, Professor of Finance and Economics at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in recognition of his research and publications on exchange rates, monetary policy, stock markets and effects of environmental policies.

The second winner is Professor Badi H Baltagi from Lebanon, Professor of Economics and Senior Research Associate at the Center for Policy Research, the Maxwell School at Syracuse University for his outstanding work on Theoretical Econometrics and Econometric Analysis and Panel Data theory. His research and books had a major theoretical impact and often cited as references in subsequent papers, establishing him globally as a leading theorist in the domain of econometrics.

Dr Shihab-Eldin added that the winner of the fourth category in Arts and Literature, the Studies of Arabic Language and Literature prize, is Dr Muhsin Al-Musawi from Iraq, Professor of Arabic Literature at Columbia University. Citing his research on critical studies of the rich Arabic cultural and innovative contributions to postcolonial literature in English.

Four Kuwaiti researchers

Moving to the Scientific Production Prize, Dr Shihab-Eldin announced that four Kuwaiti researchers have bagged the awards, given this year in the four fields of Physical Sciences and Mathematics, Engineering Sciences, Medical Sciences and Allied Health Sciences and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Dr Tareq Mohamed Al-Refai, Associate Professor at the Physics Department at the

Faculty of Science at Kuwait University, won the Physical Sciences and Mathematics category. Al-Refai has 17 scientific papers published in refereed journals and has participated in 12 international conferences.

As for the Engineering Sciences category, Dr Khaled Jabr Hassan Al-Fadala, Associate Professor at the Department of Mechanical Engineering in the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, was awarded the prize for his 28 scientific papers published in refereed journals as well as his participation in 19 regional and international conferences.

Dr Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Medicine at Kuwait University, and general surgery consultant at the Amiri Hospital, won the prize in the category of Medical Sciences and Allied Health Sciences. He has published 47 papers in refereed journals and participated in 90 international conferences.

The prize in the fourth category, Social Sciences and Humanities, went to Professor Abdullah Mohammed Abdullah Al-Hajri, Head of the History Department at the College of Arts at Kuwait University. He has published 17 papers in refereed journals, wrote three books and participated in five regional and international conferences.

Anwar Al-Nouri Prize

As for the Anwar Al-Nouri Prize, Dr Shihab-Eldin announced that winner is Dr Dalia Ahmed Mostafa from Egypt, an independent researcher and translator, for her thesis "The Construction of Muscularity through Mother's Socialization of Children in Egyptian Society: A Socio-Anthropological Study."

Earlier this week, KFAS was pleased to announce the winners of the 2018 cycle of Al-Sumait Prize in the field of Health. The prize is awarded annually to individuals and/or institutions within one of the proposed three fields of Food Security, Health and Education.

An initiative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the prize honors the late Dr Abdulrahman Al-Sumait, a Kuwaiti doctor who dedicated his life to addressing the health challenges facing Africa. The prize aims to recognize the best studies, scientific projects, applied research and innovation that have made a significant and lasting influence in advancing progress to economic and social development in Africa, helping the continent's nations overcome poverty, hunger, lack of potable water, injustice or to improve health care, literacy and the allocation of economic resources.

KCCI ready to establish partnerships with Cypriot companies

KUWAIT: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) is ready to use its potentials to open new economic horizons to establish investment, commercial and strategic partnerships between Kuwaiti companies and their Cypriot counterparts, board member Mohammad Al-Saqer said yesterday. KCCI participated in Kuwait-Cyprus Economic Forum, which was held in Kuwait yesterday with the presence of Cypriot Foreign Minister Nicos Christodoulides and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Cyprus Waleed Al-Kandari, Saqer said in a statement.

The Cypriot economic delegation included representatives of the private sector, headed by President of Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry Christodoulos

Angastiniotisa and companies representing the sectors of real estate development, hotels, investment, banks and infrastructure. The meeting discussed strengthening joint economic relations in addition to the investment environment in Cyprus, as well as presenting the vision of New Kuwait 2035, including major projects in the sectors of oil industry, infrastructure, ports, health and education, Saqer added.

The local private sector will play a key role in the implementation of these projects through the public-private partnership system, which opens great areas of cooperation with the Cypriot side for fruitful cooperation and seeking to expand the base of economic cooperation between the two friendly countries, he confirmed.

Meanwhile, Christodoulides said that his country's government is striving to adopt laws that create a fertile environment for attracting foreign capital, adding that his country has vital sectors for investment, mainly tourism, agricultural production and the manufacture of various foodstuffs. Christodoulides called on the Kuwaiti business sector to visit his country and learn about the opportunities for investment projects. — KUNA

Kuwait, EU to discuss cooperation

KUWAIT: Kuwait Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah left yesterday for Brussels to head Kuwait's delegation attending political consultations with the European Union (EU), open Kuwait's office at NATO and hold meetings with several officials of the Belgian Foreign Ministry. The Kuwaiti delegation comprises Assistant Foreign

Minister for Europe Affairs Waleed Al-Khubaizi and Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar.

The first-ever Kuwaiti-European strategic dialogue which is due tomorrow will focus on cooperation in security, energy and development, Khubaizi said. Attended by senior officials of both sides, the dialogue is part of a cooperation agreement signed by Kuwait and the European Union in 2016, Khubaizi said yesterday. The Brussels meeting reflects the mutual interest of both sides in elevating the level of bilateral relations up to broader horizons, he said. — KUNA

Local

11,443 nationals moved from private to public sector jobs in three years

Panel poised to renew debate on taxing expats' remittances

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: In what can be seen as a blow to the government's plan to encourage national manpower to seek jobs in the private sector, recent statistics showed that 11,443 citizens resigned from their private sector jobs since 2015 and joined the government. Recent social security statistics show a drop in the number of citizens joining the private sector, namely in the period between 2015 and 2017, according to sources familiar with the figures. "This drop reflects citizens' wish to enjoy more stability and security in government jobs and avoid the growing pressure on them in the private sector," said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The workers' shift to the public sector goes against the government's push to recruit more citizens in the private sector, which not only hampers efforts to resolve the problem of unemployment, but also impedes the state's plans to address the country's demographic imbalance. While national manpower makes up nearly 75 percent of the public sector's labor force, it makes up less than 5 percent of the total number of workers in the private sector, according to the Central Statistical Bureau's statistics.

Observers believe that all attempts to 'rebalance' the state's demographics - expatriates currently make up nearly 70 percent of Kuwait's total population - are futile unless the government figures out a way to reduce the private sector's heavy reliance on foreign workers, and encourage citizens to leave the less demanding,

more lucrative government job for a relatively more taxing, less rewarding career in the private sector.

Expats' remittances

In the meantime, the newly-elected parliamentary human resources development committee renewed demands to tax expats' remittances, as it also recently expressed full support of imposing the policy of replacing expatriate public sector employees with citizens, resolving the unemployment issue, adjusting the demographic imbalances, and imposing health insurance on visit visas.

In this regard, Al-Rai daily quoted head of the committee MP Khalil Al-Saleh yesterday, who said that the panel will meet next week to set a working plan, with passing the strategic payroll alternative and reducing the number of expats in the country on top of its priorities. Saleh added that the committee will demand immediate imposition of a certain quota per community living in Kuwait to prevent the domination of any of them in the local labor market in both the government and the private sectors. Saleh noted that the committee will also discuss reports by the parliamentary financial affairs committee concerning taxing expat remittances. The legal and legislative committee had earlier this year rejected proposals to tax expats' remittances, saying they were unconstitutional.

Jleeb's development

In the meantime, Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipal Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi



KUWAIT: The National Assembly's building and other Kuwait City landmarks are seen in this file photo.

blamed the lack of labor cities to house thousands of low-wage workers currently inhabiting Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh for failure to implement a study prepared by Kuwait Municipality towards the end of 2015 to develop private residence the area. Roumi described the difficulties facing the project in a memo to the National Assembly, saying that they include 'bachelor' residences, construction debris, encroached lands and

bad facilities, besides infrastructure that cannot cope with the high population density and ownership of open areas. "It is not possible to implement that study unless labor cities are built, so laborers living in that area can be moved, besides having the budget for reclaiming property in coordination with the finance ministry," he said in the memo, adding that the municipality plans to study Jleeb in more detail.

News in brief

53 percent Kuwaiti women mistreated

KUWAIT: A recent field study revealed that 53 percent of Kuwaiti women are exposed to mistreatment by men, adding that husbands and fiances mistreat women the most (50.2 percent), while 20 percent believe ex-partners are the main culprits. The study was based on a face-to-face survey with 767 persons in Kuwait. It is notable that Kuwaitis do not consider violence as their top concern, as corruption and education came first and second. Results showed that 67 percent of participants see violence as something related to culture and traditional values, as they agreed that it happens largely to women from cultures that adopt traditional values about the role of women and men, such as masculine dominance. The majority believes violence is linked to drug use, while one-third said it is due to psychological and financial problems. — Al-Qabas

Housing loans

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Jenan Bushehri asked the parliament's financial affairs committee to grant her more time to discuss and study a proposed bill exempting deceased citizens from paying their housing loans and probe its possible impact on banks' funds. In this regard, parliamentary sources said that the proposal needs further lengthy studies because of its relation to public funds that are already being squandered. — A Saleh

E-government

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior (MoI) recently completed preparations for using emails for its civilian employees by the beginning of the new year, said informed sources, noting that the new mailing system will put an end to the use of paper correspondence and join the e-government project. The sources added that 30 officers and employees from various sectors' administrative affairs departments will undergo a special training course at MoI's information center this month. — A Saleh

Anti-corruption conference

KUWAIT: Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) will hold an international conference on January 15-16, 2019 under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the participation of the UN. Chairman of Nazaha Abdurrahman Al-Nemash said that the event is in line with the government's plans to boost transparency in Kuwait and the region. The conference is also within Kuwait's development plan (Kuwait Vision 2035), indicated Nemash, who added that the event will also contribute to goal 16 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, which focuses on providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. — KUNA



KUWAIT: In a symbolic gesture, Artist Mohammad Sharaf recently set up a 'graveyard' at an open space in the Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref where the Kuwait International Book Fair is currently held, with tombstones carrying titles of publications banned from Kuwait. The 'graveyard', which authorities later removed, was set up in protest of Kuwait's policy of banning books deemed illegal or unsuitable for local customs and traditions. — By A Saleh



Defense Minister meets Islamic Salafi Alliance members

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah tackled yesterday at

Bayan Palace with members of the Islamic Salafi Alliance issues of mutual concern. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense

said in a statement, Sheikh Nasser met with Ahmad Baqer, Ali Al-Omair, Ahmad Al-Duaij, and Mubarak Al-Tasha. — KUNA



Worker missing in warehouse collapse

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A worker went missing after storage shelves in a 1,500 sq m warehouse owned by a major company along Salmi highway collapsed yesterday with tons of goods on them. Four fire brigades arrived to the scene and began their rescue mission, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement yesterday in which it indicated that search was ongoing for the missing worker. Furthermore, it warned that the remaining shelves are too risky and might fall apart at any moment, which necessitates utmost caution and safety

Pharmacist releases medicine guidebook

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti female pharmacist Iman Al-Doukhi released a medicine guidebook which introduces over 800 medications for various types of diseases with simplified explanations and suggested treatments. Speaking about her new book at the Ministry of Health's media center, Doukhi said it explains how each medicine acts within the human body, the uses of each medicine, its side effects and the most important warnings. "This book is a comprehensive medicinal encyclopedia. It is the first of its kind in Arabic and in the Arab world," she underlined, noting that the book is designed in a way to make it as easy to use it by non-specialized readers.

Winter clothes project

Kuwait Food Bank recently launched its winter clothes



procedures to protect the lives of both firemen and warehouse personnel.

project 2019 to serve thousands of needy families. Accordingly, the bank urged all charitable and benevolent people to take part in the project to help needy families inside and outside Kuwait. Speaking on the occasion, Kuwait Food Bank Manager Salem Al-Hamar said the project is meant to achieve the bank's social message in sponsoring orphans and taking care of needy families, adding that the project targets providing those people with enough warm clothes, blankets and other winter needs.

Imported fish auction

Kuwait Fishermen Union urged relevant bodies including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) to move the imported fish auction from the Sharq market to the new location in Rai to keep Sharq market only for local fish. A statement issued by the union stressed that some people are trying to prevent the transfer although the imported fish auction had been temporarily moved from Mubarakiya to Sharq for a limited period of two months, but has remained there. The union also warned that the presence of imported fish in Sharq market encourages commercial fraud concerning fish origin.

Legalese

Salary cuts

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed



I know that I often write about the Kuwait labor law. This is because most of the questions that I receive every day from clients and readers are regarding companies or employment issues. I am very grateful that I get to assist employers and employees alike to have a more healthy and fruitful relationship together whilst following the labor law and create mutual consent for both parties. It can be difficult sometimes to find a balance between the employer and employee, and therefore for the next few weeks, I will be writing about more in-depth topics that concern employers and employees alike to help create that balance. Today I have answered questions regarding salary cuts.

No salary

Question: My salary is based on commission only, and I was okay with that, because my company was making a lot of profit and I was getting my commission/percentage of that. Now that the company is not doing so well, my boss has decided not to give us a salary. Is this legal? We are still expected to go to work.

Fajer: Like I mentioned above, it can be very difficult at times to find that balance between the employer and the employee, and although the employer is trying to provide jobs and create a business, he or she was not expecting to not make profits this month and that might put them in a situation. Although commission-based salaries, ie salaries based on the net profits of a company, are permissible under Kuwaiti law, Kuwait labor law has mandated that monetary compensation needs to be provided to the client even if the company or establishment makes no net profit. Also, the commission received should be more than what an average employee with that job would receive in the Kuwaiti market.

Mistakes at work

Question: I only received half of my salary this month and this is because my boss said that I have made many technical mistakes at work. This really puts me in a situation at home with my family. I just wanted to confirm if this is legal?

Fajer: Salary deductions because of technical mistakes are legal, but there is a certain process under Kuwait labor law that needs to be followed. Also, the salary deduction cannot be more than that of five working days, so receiving only half of your income is a labor law violation in this situation. If your technical mistakes, or days that you have missed, or other concerns that your employer are equal to more than five working-day salary cuts, anything more than five days needs to be taken out of your next month's salary.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@tl-legal.com.

Local

INJAZ Al-Arab gears-up for 12th annual Young Arab Entrepreneurs Competition

To be held in Kuwait under the patronage of His Highness the Amir

KUWAIT: INJAZ Al-Arab - member of Junior Achievement Worldwide - is hosting their 12th annual Young Arab Entrepreneurs Competition in Kuwait between November 26 and 29, 2018. The competition will see 80 students from 11 countries across MENA compete over 12 award categories before their peers and a panel of high-profile judges.

Held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the event will welcome over 180 attendees from INJAZ teams, volunteers and chaperons. The competition will conclude with a glittering award ceremony to be held on November 28, welcoming over 400 guests, including high-school and university students.

Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi, INJAZ Kuwait CEO said: "INJAZ Kuwait has always remained at the forefront to support young Arabs and Kuwaitis capabilities to develop their entrepreneurial skills. The regional competition will provide an excellent platform for our students to gain hands-on experience in dealing with real-life challenges as well as equip them with the required knowledge and practical experience to succeed in their careers."

The regional competition is organized in strategic partnership with Alghanim Industries, and national esteemed entities namely Gulf Bank and Zain, and with the

support of esteemed local partners including LOYAC, NAS, Kuwait Airways, Kout Food Group, Al Shaheed Park, Ali Abdulwahab and Sons, Jumeirah Hotel and Aramex. On the regional and global front, Citi Foundation, MetLife Foundation, FedEx, MBC Al-Amal and Boeing are recognized as signature sponsors. The participating students

will be competing over 12 awards including the 'Citi Client Focus Award', 'FedEx Access Award', 'Boeing Business Challenge', 'MBC Al Amal Pitch of the Year' and 'MetLife Innovation Award', 'Company of the Year', 'Product of the Year' and 'Social Impact'. Each award will be presented to one high school and one university teams. The judging panel hosts representatives from Google, Honeywell, Investcorp, MBC Group, Gulf Bank, MetLife Foundation, Zain, FedEx, Citi Kuwait, Boeing, McKinsey and Schneider.

Launched in 2007, the INJAZ Al-Arab competition aims to nurture the entrepreneurial skills of the Arab youth and help create future job opportunities. The annual competition follows the completion of individual country rounds and closes six months of training in work readiness, financial literacy and entrepreneurship based on INJAZ Al-Arab's internationally acclaimed Company Program.



Featuring 80 students from 11 countries



KUWAIT: Laila Al-Mutairi, INJAZ Kuwait CEO, among representatives of partners and sponsors.

Zain sponsors 12th INJAZ Al-Arab Young Entrepreneurs Competition

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the twelfth annual INJAZ Al-Arab Young Entrepreneurs Competition entitled 'Next Stop... Forward'. The regional competition, organized by INJAZ Al-Arab and INJAZ Kuwait, is hosted this year by the State of Kuwait under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Zain, being an INJAZ Al-Arab Success Partner, took part in the press conference held to announce the twelfth edition of the competition. The company's support to this regional competition comes as part of its Strategic Partnership with INJAZ Al-Arab, which extends throughout the years under the umbrella of Zain's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards developing the youth and education sectors.

During her participation in the press conference, Zain Kuwait's Sustainability Manager Haya Al-Mana said: "Zain is proud to be present today as a strategic partner to INJAZ Al-Arab and as a sponsor of the 12th INJAZ Al-Arab Young Entrepreneurs Competition under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Zain has always been a main supporter of such academic initiatives that cater to developing and nurturing the skills of the youth. This is our responsibility as a private sector organization, where we must dedicate our capabilities and resources to contribute in developing the Youth sector within the society in which we operate."

Mana added: "Zain is considered a leading supporter of innovation and entrepreneurship across Kuwait, where we launched and supported many initiatives throughout the past years. This year, we launched the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC), a hub for entrepreneurs and digital investments and a platform for the innovations of students, youth, and entrepreneurs. ZINC encourages young minds to think and act creatively outside of the norm in an open, supportive environment for entrepreneurs to generate new ideas and develop them into viable opportunities."

The INJAZ Al-Arab Young Entrepreneurs Competition is the culmination of six months of experiential learning and application based on INJAZ Al-Arab's internationally acclaimed Company Program, which is executed by a

select group of corporate mentors who work hand-in-hand with students on establishing, marketing and liquidating a real business. The Competition is an annual celebration of the achievements of students who participated and won the National Company Program Competition in their countries after demonstrating sound knowledge in business planning, market research, marketing, sales and feasibility studies.

Operating in 14 countries across the Middle East and North Africa, INJAZ Al-Arab is the largest non-profit organization dedicated to overcoming unemployment in the region and aims to inspire a culture of entrepreneurship and business innovation among Arab youth. Partnering with leading companies in the private sector, INJAZ Al-Arab equips Arab youth to drive the economies of the Arab World forward through training designed to inspire them to develop ambition, entrepreneurship and professional skills.

Zain continues its strategic partnership with INJAZ, through which the company seeks to support and inspire the youth from across Kuwait's universities and schools. Through their partnership, Zain and INJAZ organize a number of educational initiatives all year long to foster the energies of Kuwait's youth and support them to further develop and prosper. Zain's support to this event showcases the company's dedication to empowering the entrepreneurial skills of youth.

Qualitynet participates in Cyber Security Conference

KUWAIT: Qualitynet, Kuwait's first ICT, Data Communications and Internet Services provider, participated as a sponsor and exhibitor in the first Gulf Cyber Security Conference and Exhibition, held between the 20th and 21st of November under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, at Radisson Blu Hotel, Kuwait.

"Qualitynet's sponsorship and participation in this conference reflects its leadership as the pioneering Telecom Services Company providing protection systems for the government sector and all its institutions, in addition to the private sector - especially financial institutions," said Essa Al-Kooheji, Chief Commercial Officer at Qualitynet. "The threat of e-security is real and strong, where most operations and activities are increasingly dependent on technology, exposing them to increasing security threats.

Their reliability, reputation and profitability are what we protect, with our cyber security expertise, provided by Qualitynet in strategic partnership with QUADRON, a Hungarian cyber security expert," he added.

Kooheji confirmed Qualitynet's participation in a discussion session, where they shared expertise on the impact of cyber threats on businesses, and how to be prepared for them. He explained how measures to protect banks and financial institutions from breaches are crucial to maintaining information security amidst the rising frequency of cybercrime and fraud. Among the topics discussed were the importance of developing and adopting security strategies for cyber security, the need for cooperation and coordination between private and public institutions and the many ways to protect devices and equipment in high-risk sectors such as banking and government institutions.

During the conference, a dialogue session was held with the Director of Business Development at Qualitynet - Hani Abuelkhair, and the CEO of NATMED - Mohammad Al-Saraf, during which he explained ways to avoid cyber threats and how to customize solutions depending on the volume of business and type of threat. Qualitynet was honored by the organizers of the conference, where Essa Al-Kooheji received the honorary shield.



KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait's Sustainability Manager Haya Al-Mana (second from right) attends the press conference.

Association seeks to help Kuwait doctors benefit from world expertise

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: A large number of Health Ministry doctors lauded the success of a conference organized recently by Kuwait Association of Surgeons (KAS) under the slogan 'safe surgery'. The conference was organized under high standards, and that benefits from the workshops exceeded all

expectations, according to the doctors. They hoped that KAS continues to promote health improvement with the same 'serious level of performance and approach', and have maximum benefit from the expertise that was available during the conference.

Meanwhile, KAS Chairman Dr Salman Al-Sabah said that the association sought from the very beginning to enable doctors in Kuwait to benefit from world expertise and refresh their surgical skills. He said the conference dealt with safe surgery to reach the best results, introduced the latest in the field, and focused on the high degree of safety.

Dr Salman said there were three workshops on the sidelines of the conference: one about medical errors and responsibility, the second was on safe medical equipment and the third on surgical complications. "All three were successful in transferring expertise to our surgeons," Dr Salman said, adding that the conference's recommendations will be submitted to the health ministry in order to hasten their implementation.



KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Bassel Al-Sabah tours an exhibition held on the sidelines of the conference.



KUWAIT: Essa Al-Kooheji (left) receives the sponsor award.



KUWAIT: Officials stand at Qualitynet's booth at the exhibition.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Cloudy sky over Kuwait City yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwaitis spend 11 percent of annual income on tourism

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti citizen spends 11 percent of his or her annual income on tourism, travelling and recreation, according to a recent study carried out by the World Trade Organization (WTO). This rate is the highest in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), followed by Saudi citizens who spend 7 percent, Qataris who spend 5.7 percent, Omanis who spend 3.3 percent and Bahrainis who spend 2.1 percent annually on tourism, the study shows.

On that regard, Kuwaiti tourism activist, feminist and media figure Nabila Al-Anjery renewed her call to establish a special ministry or authority for tourism in Kuwait. "Reviving tourism and enforcing it in Kuwait has become an urgent necessity in light of the Kuwait vision 2035 and its development plans for a new Kuwait," she underlined, reminding of the need to

diversify national income resources and utilize renewable energy in order to stop relying on oil as the only source of income.

Furthermore, Anjery added that many countries depend on tourism as a main source of national income, noting that the United States has the highest rate of annual tourism income at \$210 billion followed by Spain at \$68 billion, France at \$60 billion, Thailand at \$57 billion, UK at \$51 billion, Italy at \$44 billion, Australia at \$41 billion and Germany at \$40 billion.

"We in Kuwait should not ignore such facts if we are serious in finding other national income resources," she added, noting that it is possible to turn Kuwait into a tourist attraction, and expressed hopes that the project of developing Kuwaiti islands would begin so as to increase the number of foreign tourists as well as activate local tourism.



Nabila Al-Anjery

KOTC launches three multimillion gas tankers

KUWAIT: CEO of Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah yesterday announced the launching of three very large gas carriers worth KD 64.8 million (around \$213.3 mil-

lion). The VLGC-LPG gas tankers are part of a tanker-building contract signed with South Korea's Hyundai Heavy Industries, which includes the building and delivery of three giant gas carriers, he said. Each tanker can carry around 84,000 cubic meters, he said, adding that the tankers would be built in line with up-to-date world safety and environment specifications and standards. Sheikh Talal confirmed that Hyundai's commitment to schedules enshrined in the contract, expecting that Kuwait would take delivery of the first gas carrier by the end of 2019. —KUNA



KUWAIT: CEO of Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah attends a ceremony marking the launch of three multimillion gas tankers. —KUNA

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Protest in Myanmar's Rakhine state opposes Rohingya return

Indian police face-off with tribe in missionary killing

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Ugandan Navy personnel collect bodies of victims by capsized cruise boat on lake Victoria at Mutima village, about 50km south of capital Kampala. —AFP

60 feared dead after pleasure boat sinks

30 bodies recovered in Uganda pleasure boat disaster

KAMPALA: Thirty people drowned and more than 60 were feared dead after a pleasure boat sank in Lake Victoria, Ugandan police said yesterday, in the latest such incident on Africa's largest body of water. "Thirty bodies have been recovered and 27 people rescued," said police spokesperson Zura Ganyana, adding the boat had sunk 150 meters (yards) from the lakeshore. "According to one of the survivors there were more than 90 people on board," said Asuman Mugenyi, director of operations for the Uganda police.

Witnesses claimed the vessel may have been rushed back into service following a renovation in order to take advantage of the profitable end-of-year party season. The boat carrying nearly 100 revellers sank in bad weather on Saturday in the latest deadly incident to affect passenger boats on Africa's largest lake. Lawn games at the Mutima Country Resort, close to the capital Kampala, were pushed aside yesterday to make way for an open-air morgue where police collected the bloated bodies of victims.

Boat rides, with drinking, dancing and music, are popular on the lake. "It's a big party," said Washington Serunjogi, whose sister Justine Namayanja was missing after taking the cruise on Saturday. "Justine had been on three cruises before and I knew something was wrong yesterday because she always updated her WhatsApp and Facebook with selfies but last night she didn't," Serunjogi said. Serunjogi said that, like many Ugandans, his sister did not know how to swim. James Matovo, a 26-year-old youth leader at the Buzindere fish landing site who saw the boat cap-

size on Saturday evening, said it had been "cold and very windy" when the boat pitched over.

Rescuers become victims

He said that rescue services were slow to respond. "If people had help earlier so many more people would have survived," Matovo said. Instead, local fishermen went to help. "We rushed to help but the passengers couldn't swim and when we got beside them with our boats they grabbed us," he said. Matovo said some of the rescuers also drowned as a result. "People kept coming on the fishing boats and (one man) was overwhelmed. He was pulled down and he drowned," he said. "I've seen a lot of accidents but nothing as bad as this," said Matovo, who along with other witnesses had recently seen the boat being fixed up.

Richard Kikongo, a local official, described the distinctive boat—which sported shark-style teeth painted on the bow—as "not in good condition". The boat's owner and his wife were among the dead. Mugenyi said overloading and bad weather were likely to blame. "We expect (the number of passengers) is beyond the capacity of the boat. It was overloaded and unfortunately people were drunk," Mugenyi said. "We suspect the mechanical condition of the boat and the weather contributed to the sinking."

Police spokesman Emilian Kayima said rescue efforts were continuing. Lake Victoria is the site of many boat disasters. In September, hundreds died when the MV Nyerere passenger ferry sank on the Tanzanian side of Lake Victoria. With a surface area of 70,000 square kilometers, the oval-shaped lake is



Bystanders look on as they watch rescuers search the site of a capsized cruise boat on Lake Victoria near Mutima village, south of Kampala, Uganda yesterday. —AFP

roughly the size of Ireland and is shared by Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. Ferry accidents are not uncommon on the lake and the number of fatalities is often high due to a shortage of life jackets and the fact that

many local people cannot swim. In 1966, more than 800 people lost their lives on Lake Victoria when the MV Bukoba sank off the mainland town of Mwanza, according to the Red Cross. —AFP

Police killed wrong man responding to US mall shooting

WASHINGTON: A policeman appears to have shot and killed the wrong person in responding to a shooting in an Alabama shopping mall that left two others wounded, police said Saturday, correcting an earlier account of the Black Friday incident. Police in Hoover, Alabama, originally said 21-year-old Emantic Fitzgerald Bradford pulled a gun and opened fire during a physical altercation in the Riverchase Galleria mall, wounding an 18-year-old man. A 12-year-old girl was also wounded in the incident.

A uniformed Hoover police officer then shot Bradford dead as he ran from the scene brandishing a gun, police said. "New evidence suggests that while Bradford may have been involved in some aspect of the altercation, he likely did not fire the rounds that injured the 18-year-old victim," Hoover police said in a statement. "This information indicates that there is at least one gunman at large, who could be responsible for the shooting of the 18-year-old male and 12-year-old female," he said.

US media published photographs of Bradford, who was black. There have been a series of fatal encounters in recent years between US police and African Americans, who formed the Black Lives Matter Movement in response. The police officer involved has been put on administrative leave pending an investigation into the incident by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency. —AFP

Iraq floods leave 21 dead in 2 days

BAGHDAD: At least 21 people have died and tens of thousands displaced by heavy rains that have battered Iraq over two days, the health ministry and United Nations said yesterday. Women and children were among the dead, health ministry spokesman Seif Al-Badr said. Some had drowned, but others had died in car accidents, were electrocuted, or were trapped when their houses collapsed. At least 180 more were injured, he added. Iraq and neighboring countries have been hit by heavier-than-average rainfall in recent weeks, resulting in deaths and widespread damage. The country's north has borne the brunt of it, and the UN's Iraq office said the downpour had forced tens of

thousands of people out of their homes. An estimated 10,000 people in Salahaddin province and 15,000 people in Nineveh are in desperate need of help, including families living in displacement camps, the UN said. In the Al-Sharqat district in Salahaddin, about 250 kilometers north of Baghdad, thousands of homes were left totally underwater by the rains. And in Mosul, the Islamic State group's onetime bastion in Iraq, the heavy storms submerged two floating bridges along the Tigris river, which bisects the city. They were the only way to move between Mosul's eastern and western halves, after its bridges were all bombed by the anti-IS fight. Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi announced Friday he was establishing a "crisis cell" of security forces and local authorities to coordinate a response. The ministries of electricity, oil, and trade had also indicated their willingness to help. Iraq is one of the hottest countries on earth but when heavy rains do hit, they can result in casualties because of deteriorating public infrastructure. —AFP

International

CIA cannot be trusted on Khashoggi conclusion, senior Saudi prince says

Khashoggi's daughters promise to keep his legacy alive

ABU DHABI: A senior Saudi prince cast doubt upon the reported CIA finding that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul last month, saying the agency could not be counted on to reach a credible conclusion. "The CIA is not necessarily the highest standard of veracity or accuracy in assessing situations. The examples of that are multitude," Prince Turki Al-Faisal, a senior member of the royal family, told journalists in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

The prince, a former Saudi intelligence chief who has also served as ambassador to the United States, said the agency's conclusion that Iraq possessed chemical weapons before the US invasion in 2003 showed it could be unreliable. "That was the most glaring of inaccurate and wrong assessments, which led to a full-scale war with thousands being killed," he

said, speaking at an event hosted by the Beirut Institute think tank. "I don't see why the CIA is not on trial in the United States. This is my answer to their assessment of who is guilty and who is not and who did what in the consulate in Istanbul."

The CIA has concluded that Prince Mohammed ordered the operation to kill Khashoggi, as first reported by the Washington Post, and briefed other parts of the US government on its findings, sources told Reuters last week. US President Donald Trump has disputed that the agency reached a conclusion on the murder, saying instead "they have feelings certain ways." A Turkish newspaper also reported on Thursday that CIA director Gina Haspel signaled to Turkish officials that the agency had a recording of a call in which the crown prince gave instructions to "silence" the journalist.

Khashoggi was killed at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct 2 in an operation that Turkish authorities have said was ordered by the highest level of Saudi leadership, prompting the kingdom's biggest political crisis in a generation. After offering numerous contradictory explanations, Riyadh said Khashoggi was killed and his body dismembered after negotiations to persuade him to return to Saudi Arabia failed. The kingdom's public prosecutor is seeking the death penalty for five suspects charged in the murder, but has said Prince Mohammed had no prior knowledge of the operation.

Khashoggi's daughters

In a poignant farewell to their father published in The Washington Post, the daughters of slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi vowed that "his light would never fade" and

that his legacy lived through them. Khashoggi, former Saudi royal insider who became a critic of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was murdered at the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul last month. His death unleashed a global wave of criticism against the crown prince, who Saudi officials say had no role in the killing. "This is no eulogy, for that would confer a state of closure," Noha Khashoggi and Razan Jamal Khashoggi wrote in a Post opinion piece published online Friday. "Rather, this is a promise that his light will never fade, that his legacy will be preserved within us."

The 59 year-old journalist was at the consulate in Istanbul seeking documents needed to marry his Turkish fiancée. Riyadh-after weeks of denial-said he was killed in a "rogue" operation. The daughters remember their father, affectionately referred to as "Baba," as a "loving man with a big heart"

who traveled widely and always returned bearing "gifts and fascinating stories." "As bittersweet as it was, we knew from a young age ... that he was an important man whose words had an effect on people over a great distance."

It was vital for him "to speak up, to share his opinions, to have candid discussions," the daughters recall. For him "writing was not just a job; it was a compulsion. It was ingrained into the core of his identity, and it truly kept him alive. "Now, his words keep his spirit with us, and we are grateful for that." Khashoggi had created a new life in the United States, but "he grieved" for his native Saudi Arabia, never abandoning hope for his country. "Dad was no dissident," the daughters wrote. "If being a writer was ingrained in his identity, being a Saudi was part of that same grain." —Agencies

Sri Lankan president Sirisena vows never to reappoint ousted PM

COLOMBO: President Maithripala Sirisena yesterday reignited the power struggle that has crippled Sri Lanka's government for more than a month, vowing never to reappoint arch-rival Ranil Wickremesinghe as prime minister. Wickremesinghe's party has a majority in parliament and Sirisena's bid to replace him with the country's former strongman Mahinda Rajapakse has already failed.

But Sirisena choked back tears in a meeting with foreign correspondents as he accused Wickremesinghe, who he sacked on October 26, of being "highly corrupt". "Even if the UNP has the majority I told them not to bring Ranil Wickremesinghe before me, I will not make him prime minister," he said, referring to Wickremesinghe's United National Party. "Not in my lifetime," he added in comments that the UNP said showed the president uses Sri Lanka like his own "private coconut estate".

Sirisena dismissed Wickremesinghe following a host

of personality and political clashes since they formed a coalition in 2015. He named Rajapakse as new premier and tried to dissolve parliament but the Supreme Court and legislators blocked the moves. Wickremesinghe, who continues to occupy the prime minister's residence, and Rajapakse, who has the premier's official offices, have both refused to back down. That has left the country officially without a prime minister, heightening international fears about Sri Lanka's stability and looming foreign debt repayments.

'Private coconut estate'

Sirisena said at his official residence that he will appoint a commission to investigate corruption under Wickremesinghe since January 2015. "He is corrupt. His economic policies are not good for local industries. He pursued an extremely liberal form of government that is not compatible with our culture." Wickremesinghe's UNP hit back at the former ally. "He can choose any superintendent for his private coconut estate, but in government he must recognize the leader of the largest single party in parliament," UNP spokesman Harsha de Silva said.

De Silva said the UNP welcomed any corruption investigation, but insisted that existing inquiries into high profile murders and corruption under Rajapakse should be pursued with vigour. Close family and

associates of Rajapakse face allegations of murder and siphoning off millions of dollars of public money. Sirisena almost lost his voice as he recalled how he asked Wickremesinghe to step down in February when their respective parties were beaten in local elections. "I told him that we lost the election because his economic policies had failed. I told Ranil in this very room to step down, but he refused," Sirisena said. He added that there had been "hundreds" of clashes between the two that had become an open secret in the coalition government. Sri Lanka's parliament meets on November 27 and 29 to discuss a motion by the UNP to cut off government spending.

Government finances will stall on January 1 unless a 2019 budget is passed. If the UNP wins the vote, it could force Rajapakse to withdraw his claim to the leadership, and compel Sirisena to name a prime minister from the UNP. "If the UNP shows a majority, I believe Mahinda will do the right thing (and stand down)," said Sirisena, although he reiterated that he would still not reappoint Wickremesinghe. Asked if he could constitutionally ignore the leader of the largest party in parliament, Sirisena said he would rely on tradition. "There is a tradition that the person appointed PM should be able to work with the president. I cannot work with Ranil. The UNP will have to bring somebody else." —AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena addresses the Foreign Correspondents Association (FCA) yesterday. —AFP

Bahrain to hold run-off vote for parliament in Dec

DUBAI: Bahrain will hold a second round of voting for 31 of 40 seats in parliament next week, the government said yesterday, in an election from which opposition groups have been barred. The authorities said voter turnout on Saturday was 67 percent, higher than a turnout of 53 percent in 2014 when opposition groups boycotted elections in the small Sunni Muslim-led, Western-allied kingdom. Activists had called for a boycott of this vote, describing it as a "farce", amid a crackdown on dissent by the ruling Al Khalifa family since the Shiite opposition staged a failed Arab Spring uprising in 2011.

Al-Wafaq, one of the main dissolved opposition groups, disputed the official turnout figure, saying in a statement that it had not exceeded 30 percent. A run-off vote will be held on December 1, according to a statement carried on the Bahrain News Agency. Only 23 of 40 current members ran for re-election. Two incumbents won their races, while another seven remain in the running to retain their seats in parliament, which has limited powers. Bahrain has closed opposition groups, barred members from running in elections and prosecuted scores of people, many described by human rights groups as activists, in mass trials since 2011.

Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and



MUHARRAQ: A Bahraini voter casts her ballot at a polling station in the Bahraini city of Al-Muharraq, north of Manama, as they wait to cast their vote in the parliamentary election. —AFP

Endowments Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa said Saturday's turnout ensures a "clear mandate" for parliament. "Bahrainis' commitment to exercising their ballot was a clear indication of Bahrainis' support for the process of democratization ... and showed their rejection of external forces who have deliberately sought to derail the electoral process," he said in a statement late on Saturday. Bahrain, home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, accuses Iran of fostering unrest that has seen demonstrators clash with security forces, who have been targeted by bomb attacks. Tehran denies the charges. —Reuters

Partial reopening of Baghdad Green Zone delayed

BAGHDAD: The partial reopening of Baghdad's high-security Green Zone to through traffic, planned for yesterday, has been postponed for several days, a government official said. The enclave has been home to Iraq's parliament, government offices, United Nations agencies and western embassies since the US-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003. Earlier this week, Iraqi authorities began removing concrete barriers to ease access to a key route that cuts across the enclave, ahead of a planned opening yesterday, reportedly at the orders of Prime Minister Adel Abdel-Mahdi.

But yesterday morning, a government official told AFP that "the reopening will not take place before the next two days, or perhaps by the end of the week". "An important thoroughfare will be opened, but we must secure its surroundings and seal access to perpendicular streets," the official said on condition of anonymity. The road leads from the banks of the Tigris River northwest through the Green Zone and into other parts of Baghdad. Authorities say allowing through traffic would ease congestion in other parts of the city. But on either side of the route lie the offices and homes of Iraqi officials and international diplomats.

The UK embassy and the UN informed staff members they were implementing tougher safety measures inside the zone from yesterday, citing an "elevated threat level." The US embassy has declined to comment on the reopen-



BAGHDAD: Photo shows one of the entrances to Baghdad's fortified Green Zone. —AFP

ing. The Green Zone, ringed by blast walls topped with barbed wire and guarded by Iraqi security forces, remains inaccessible for most Iraqi citizens. Even if the planned opening goes ahead, Baghdad residents would not be able to access the rest of the zone by car or on foot. Abdel Mahdi, who was appointed premier in October, is keen to portray Iraq as fully secured, nearly a year after the Islamic State group was ousted from its last urban strongholds.

Previous prime minister Haider Al-Abadi had also ordered the zone reopened in 2015, but it was sealed off again after only a few days. It was rumored at the time that objections by the US Embassy—which has the tightest security regulations of all in the Green Zone—were the reason. On Saturday, Baghdad's residents voiced skepticism that this time would be different. "It's been years, every day they say 'tomorrow, tomorrow'-and nothing," said Ryad Ahmed as he passed one of the planned entrances to the zone. —AFP

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International

Protest in Myanmar's Rakhine state opposes Rohingya return

Monks march against repatriation of 'runaway refugees'

SITTWE, Myanmar: Protesters in Myanmar's troubled Rakhine state demonstrated yesterday against the planned repatriation of Rohingya Muslims from Bangladesh, referring to them as "runaway refugees". About 100 people led by Buddhist monks marched through the state capital Sittwe holding red banners and chanting slogans. "There will be no benefits to us or our country if we accept the Bengalis," one monk said, according to a live video streaming of the protest.

Bengali is a derogatory term for the Rohingya in Myanmar that falsely implies they are newcomers from Bangladesh. The demonstration comes 10 days after Bangladesh and Myanmar were supposed to officially start repatriating members of the Rohingya minority who had fled violent military operations in Aug 2017. Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh said Myanmar's armed forces raped women, murdered their relatives and burned down their houses in a bid to drive them permanently out of the country after decades of persecution.

The deal to bring them back was struck a year

ago but Rohingya in the Bangladesh camps fear returning without guarantees of citizenship, safety, and equal access to healthcare and education. They also are wary of hostility from the non-Muslim residents in Rakhine. The Buddhist protesters in Sittwe yesterday reflected that view, holding signs that included calls for authorities to not "allow resettling (of) the runaway refugees" in parts of northern Rakhine state. "The government should take precise action against illegal immigrants from Bangladesh," said Kyawt Sein, a member of the protest committee.

UN investigators have called for Myanmar's top brass to be prosecuted on charges of genocide at the International Criminal Court or an ad hoc tribunal. Myanmar denies almost all claims of atrocities and says it was defending itself against Rohingya militants. Demonstrations against the Rohingya are not uncommon in Sittwe, where intercommunal violence broke out in 2012, killing hundreds and sending more than 120,000 Rohingya into internal displacement camps where most remain today. —AFP



Rohingya wary of hostility from non-Muslim residents



SITTWE, Myanmar: Myanmar's Buddhist monks march along a street during a demonstration against the planned repatriation of Rohingya Muslims from Bangladesh yesterday. —AFP

Militant attack kills 12 in north Mozambique

MAPUTO: Twelve people have been killed in a suspected Islamist militant attack in northern Mozambique, with thousands of villagers fleeing into neighboring Tanzania, police sources said yesterday. Hardline Islamists have launched several attacks in the majority-Muslim province during the last year, stoking unrest just as Maputo pushes ahead with oil and gas development in the region.

Early Friday, "there was an attack in Nangade district, where there are no security patrols. The attackers killed 12 people, mostly women and children," a police source in Cabo Delgado province, who asked not to be named said. The attack took place in the village of Chicuaia Velha, just a few kilometres (miles) from Tanzania, forcing several thousand people to seek safety cross the border, police said. A local journalist said the villagers were hacked to death with machetes or died after the attackers torched their homes.

"The district of Nangade is far from the sea where the police have focused their efforts, which allowed the assailants to enter and attack and then retreat," another police source said. "They use guerrilla tactics and attack several points simultaneously. It's hard to control the situation," he said. It was the third such incident in the last month in Cabo Delgado, leaving a total of 20 dead. Analysts say the nascent insurgency staged its first attack in October 2017 year hitting a police station and military outpost in the northern town of Mocimboa da Praia, killing two officers.

'Strong local dimension'

Originally known as Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama-Arabic for "followers of the prophet"—the group is commonly referred to by locals and officials as "Al-Shabaab," although it has no known link to the Somali jihadist group of the same name. Its links to other West Africa militant groups such as Boko Haram in northern Nigeria are also unclear. "The current insurrection is a small affair, literally barefoot, with a very strong local dimension," said Eric Morier-Genoud, a specialist in Mozambique at Queen's University Belfast. It is believed to have formed in Cabo Delgado around 2014 when its leaders called on followers to adhere to a more extreme form of Islam.

Experts believe the militants—most of whom are members of the Kimwani ethnic group—are also motivated by grievances over perceived discrimination in favor of the Makonde people, the tribe of President Filipe Nyusi. Over the last year, the insurgency has claimed more than 50 lives in gun, grenade and knife assaults. The authorities have already prosecuted more than 200 suspects, including some Tanzanians and Somalis, and shut down several mosques as part of a crackdown.

The violence has shaken government plans for Cabo Delgado, a coastal province in the far north that will be a base for development since natural gas reserves were discovered. US oil and gas giant Anadarko earlier this year temporarily evacuated workers from the area and halted operations after the US embassy in Maputo issued an alert warning of imminent attacks. The government has been using the potential energy bonanza from estimated reserves of 180 trillion cubic feet (5.1 trillion cubic metres) of gas off the northeastern shores to predict strong future growth for the former Portuguese colony. —AFP

How Ireland beat Britain in Brexit divorce battle

DUBLIN: The Brexit deal marks a clear victory for Ireland—one no-one in Britain saw coming and one which has raised the Irish government's standing at home and abroad. Ireland is tethered to Britain through a common history, enmeshed economies and a border with the British province of Northern Ireland that held up negotiations for months. Some British hardliners had argued that Ireland would simply follow along in any exit deal—a sentiment that caused outrage among many Irish and helped harden resolve.

At the centre of the dispute was a legal guarantee to keep the Irish border open, known as the "backstop", which Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar and his EU allies insisted on and Britain eventually and very reluctantly agreed to. Ireland was opposed to Brexit and is fearful both of the impact on trade with biggest economic partner Britain and any destabilizing influence on the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which ended three decades of sectarian conflict.

Bi-partisan support

When the draft accord was published earlier this month, Irish politicians across the spectrum lauded it as the best possible outcome for the Republic in contrast

to the deep divisions in the British parliament over its merits. "The Irish government's key preferences were all reflected in the divorce settlement," said Etain Tannam, a senior lecturer at Trinity College Dublin.

"Bi-partisan party support in the Irish parliament for the government's Brexit policy has been noteworthy since the withdrawal process began," she said. In the tug of war of international interests, Ireland's government now has greater traction and is earning a reputation as a shrewd bargainer—at the same time as Britain's prestige is on the wane. "The places have changed. Britain, not Ireland, is the relatively small and isolated country," Irish columnist Fintan O'Toole wrote in a column for the Guardian newspaper. "Ireland, not the British Empire, has on its side the power of a huge multinational bloc," he said, referring to Britain's previous dominant influence over Ireland.

'Dangerous instability'

Whilst Britain has been plunged into political turmoil ever since the 2016 Brexit referendum, Irish politics has been imbued with a sense of unity in the national interest. Varadkar's centre-right Fine Gael minority government is theoretically vulnerable with its reliance on the centre-left opposition party Fianna Fail through a confidence and supply agreement. But the two age-old rivals agreed to extend their pact through until the end of Brexit negotiations. "An election during this critical time would create



NEWRY: A lorry passes a sign calling for no border to be imposed between Ireland and Northern Ireland outside Newry, Northern Ireland. —AFP

a dangerous instability," Fianna Fail leader Micheál Martin wrote in an October letter to the prime minister. In polls, Varadkar's party holds a firm lead-making him one of the few clear-cut winners in the Brexit morass. When the draft withdrawal deal was announced last week Varadkar abstained from a victory lap, issuing the staid remark that it was "one of the better days in politics".

Ireland 'at heart of EU'

Ireland had four priorities in negotiations—to preserve the peace process, maintain common travel rights with the

UK and minimize the economic impact of Brexit. The final one was to reaffirm the Republic's "place at the heart of the European Union". Mindful that it will soon be isolated at the edge of the trading bloc, the Irish government has doubled down on its membership of the union with statements of solidarity. And opinion polls suggest that calls by Brexiters for Ireland to follow Britain in leaving the EU have fallen on deaf ears. A survey by pollsters Red C earlier this year found that 92 percent of the Irish population now support staying in the EU-up from 88 percent last year. —AFP

Death toll in California fire rises to 87

LOS ANGELES: The death toll in northern California's so-called "Camp Fire" rose to 87, officials said late Saturday, adding that the blaze was almost fully under control. Cal Fire, the state fire authority, said in its latest bulletin that the fire - which broke out on November 8 - was 98 percent contained. The office of the Butte County Sheriff said that 249 people remained unaccounted for - a steep drop from 474 missing reported earlier in the day. It added that only 54 of the fatalities

have been identified. More than 153,000 acres have been torched, with nearly 14,000 homes and hundreds of other structures destroyed by the powerful blaze, California's deadliest and most destructive fire ever.

Previously the death toll had been put at 84. Rain that soaked the Butte County fire area in the past days helped douse the remaining flames, but also made it more difficult for crews searching for bodies. "Areas experiencing significant rainfall following a wildfire are at risk for debris flow and flash flooding," the Sheriff's office warned. Cal Fire said that the remaining uncontained fire "is isolated in steep and rugged terrain where it is unsafe for firefighters to access due to the heavy rains." —AFP



PARADISE: Jacob Saylor, 11, walks through the burned remains of his home in Paradise, California. The family lost a home in the same spot to a fire 10 years prior. —AFP

Swiss reject proposal to put domestic law above international

ZURICH: Swiss voters have clearly rejected a proposal to give the neutral country's laws priority over international law, a move that critics claimed would have deeply damaged its global standing and hurt its economy. Some 63 percent of voters in a national referendum yesterday voted against the "Swiss law, not foreign judges" measure, according to the second round of projections by broadcaster SRF. The measure, backed by the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP), called for a provision to be added to the national constitution giving it explicit precedence over international agreements.

Where there is a clash between the two, Switzerland would have had to alter its international obligations so

they complied with its constitution or quit the international agreement. Backers argued that neutral Switzerland's historic autonomy was being watered down by its participation in international agreements covering areas like environmental protection, police cooperation, air transport and trade. Their campaign said such arrangements endangered the long tradition of direct democracy in Switzerland, where citizens have the final say on political decisions via referendums.

Debate over whether sovereignty has been eroded has intensified in recent years, as Switzerland struggles to clarify its relationship with the European Union, currently governed by a tangle of bilateral pacts. The SVP, the largest party in the Swiss parliament, said its proposals - also called the self-determination initiative - would empower citizens and free them from interference from international bodies like the EU. They were opposed by the Swiss government, business groups and most other parties, who said the proposal would force Switzerland to cancel existing treaties, weaken human rights protections and hurt its economy.

They said a "yes" vote would mean Switzerland having to renegotiate thousands of treaties it has signed, undermining an open economy which is highly dependent on global trade. Jan Atteslander of business lobby group Economiesuisse, said he was pleased with the outcome. "The result shows that Swiss voters are happy with the institutions we have and there is no need to change them. If this had passed it would have been a disadvantage to the economy and damaged Switzerland's standing in the world.

"We have to stick to our words internationally and be a good and reliable partner in good times and bad times." Tania Ovanne-Erias, from the canton of Geneva, said: "I voted against the initiative because I don't think we have to vote again on treaties that have already been voted. I think this initiative is absurd. "I don't think we can just think only of our country, Switzerland, we are part of a continent and a world." Switzerland also rejected a proposal to subsidize farmers who let cows and goats grow their horns naturally, amid debate over whether the practice of removing horns harms the animals. —Reuters

International

8 killed as Indian-administered Kashmir reels from deadly year

528 dead this year from armed conflict

SRINAGAR: Eight people were killed yesterday in violence in Indian-administered Kashmir, capping off one of the deadliest weeks this year in a region already suffering its worst bloodshed in a decade. Kashmir-based rights monitors say 528 people have died this year from armed conflict in the disputed Himalayan territory claimed in full by both India and Pakistan, including 145 civilians. It is the deadliest year since 2009, said the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Societies, underscoring a worsening security situation in the Muslim-majority region controlled by India and half a million of its troops.

Police said yesterday that six alleged militants and a soldier were killed in a shootout in Shopian, a southern district of the Kashmir Valley. A civilian was also killed when Indian forces fired shots into a crowd of protesters that gathered near the scene of the shootout, senior police official Munir Ahmad Khan told AFP. Elsewhere in Kashmir 10 suspected militants and four others including a teenage girl and a prominent separatist activist were gunned down in separate clashes, taking the week's total death toll to 22. Police said the activist was killed by rivals but separatist leaders said the government orchestrated his assassination.

The police official, Khan, said the high number of casualties in 2018 was the result of "good actionable information" leading them to armed rebels and their hideouts. But critics said Indian forces were escalating tensions in the restive region ahead of general elections next year in order to look tough on Pakistan and militancy. "Dead bodies of Kashmiris unfortunately sell well in Indian elections," said Khurram Parvez, program coordinator at the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Societies. "The mindset dominant in India now is that by escalating violence, the people of Kashmir will be pressured to surrender."

The UN human rights chief, in a first-of-its-kind report in June, called for a major investigation into abuses in Kashmir and the "chronic impunity" for violations perpetrated by troops there. The findings accused Indian troops of 145 unlawful killings, far surpassing the 20 people estimated to have been killed by militant groups over the study period. New Delhi rejected the report, blasting it as "fallacious". India has long accused Pakistan of arming rebel groups in Kashmir, which has been split between the rivals since 1947. Rebel groups have long waged an armed insurgency against Indian forces in Kashmir, demanding an independent state or merger with Pakistan. —AFP



KASHMIR: Kashmiri villagers parade the body of top militant commander Omar Ganai (center, covered with blankets) during a funeral procession in Kulgam district, south of Srinagar yesterday. —AFP

Police face-off with India tribe in missionary killing

PORT BLAIR: Indian officers had a nervous long-distance face-off with the tribe who killed an American missionary, in their latest bid to locate his body on a remote island, police said yesterday. The police team, who took a boat just off Indian-owned North Sentinel island on Saturday, spotted men from the Sentinelese tribe on the beach where John Allen Chau was last seen, the region's police chief Dependra Pathak told AFP. Using binoculars, officers in a police boat about 400 metres from the shore saw the men armed with bows and arrows, the weapons reportedly used by the isolated tribe to kill Chau as he shouted Christian phrases at them.

"They stared at us and we were looking at them," said Pathak. The boat withdrew to avoid any chance of a confrontation. Police are taking painstaking efforts to avoid any disruption to the Sentinelese—a pre-neolithic tribe whose island is off-limits to outsiders—as they seek Chau's body. The death of the 27-year-old on November 17 has cast a new spotlight on efforts to protect one of the world's last "uncontacted" tribes whose language and customs remain a mystery to outsiders. Fishermen who took Chau to North Sentinel—which is one of the Andaman and Nicobar islands in the Bay of Bengal—said they saw the tribe burying the body on the beach.

The Sentinelese normally attack anyone who goes to the island and Pathak said police are monitoring to see if there is a repeat of an incident after two fishermen who strayed onto the island were killed in 2006. One week after their deaths, the bodies of the two Indians were hooked on bamboo stakes facing out to sea. "It was a kind of scarecrow," Pathak said. "We are studying the 2006 case. We are asking anthropologists what they do when they kill an outsider," the police chief added. "We are trying to understand the group psychology." —AFP

Five takeaways from Taiwan vote results

TAIPEI: A massive defeat for Taiwan's ruling party in mid-term polls Saturday was seen as an indictment of President Tsai Ing-wen and called into question her approach to China, as well as unpopular domestic reforms. Tsai has pitched herself and her party as champions for democracy in the face of rising pressure from China, which sees Taiwan as part of its territory to be reunified. But some voters say worsening relations with Beijing have harmed business, while others believe she has been too conciliatory.

Why are voters angry?

Cuts to pensions and a reduction in public holidays have compounded frustrations over a stagnant economy where salaries have not kept up with the rise in cost of living. Analysts agree domestic issues were the main reason behind voters' punishment of Tsai's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which saw its key seats more than halved while the Beijing-friendly opposition Kuomintang more than doubled their share. However, concern that business is being dented by deteriorating relations with Beijing also played a part, including a dramatic drop in tourists from China since Tsai took office in 2016. Beijing has sought to punish Tsai and her pro-independence leaning party by ramping up military drills, poaching allies and successfully persuading international businesses including airlines to list the island as part of China on their websites.

China-Taiwan relations

With pressure from Beijing at play in the vote result, analysts say Tsai will need to recalibrate her policy. But while voters want assurances of stability and economic prosperity, they will not want Taiwan to move too close to Beijing—the previous KMT government was ousted after widespread public concerns over its rapprochement with China. "Striking a balance between productive economic relations with China while maintaining a pro-Taiwan stance in terms of identity and status, is elusive,"

said analyst Jonathan Sullivan of Nottingham University. Tsai also needs to appease pro-independence factions in her own party who dislike her official stance which seeks to maintain the cross-strait "status quo".

How will China respond?

Beijing said the vote results showed "the strong will of the public in Taiwan in sharing the benefits of the peaceful development across the Taiwan Strait" in quotes attributed to Ma Xiaoguang, spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, by state news agency Xinhua. Analysts believe Beijing may see the result as proof of the success of its carrot-and-stick approach, which has offered economic incentives to Taiwanese entrepreneurs and businesses and perks to cities and counties that support the notion Taiwan is part of "one China". Huang Kwei-bo, political analyst at National Chengchi University, said China would likely see the KMT triumph "as its propaganda tactics being very effective", and predicted Chinese sabre-rattling could ease.

Dirty tricks campaign?

Accusations of Beijing meddling dominated Tsai and the DPP's pre-election campaigning as they accused China of a "fake news" onslaught, which Beijing has denied. Taiwan's Investigation Bureau is probing Chinese influence on the elections through campaign funding of candidates. "Chinese influence in Taiwanese elections reached a new level of intrusiveness," said Nottingham's Sullivan, adding that interference would be a factor to watch going into the 2020 leadership vote.

What about the US?

Relations with the United States, Taiwan's most powerful unofficial ally and major arms supplier, have warmed under Tsai, another sore point for Beijing. Analysts said the US would not be worried about the outcome of the elections, as issues of reunification or independence had not played a major role. However, National Chengchi University's Huang said Washington may flag the issue of possible China interference in future after the US-based chairman of America's de facto embassy in Taiwan warned of "attempts by external powers" to influence debate and spread false information. —AFP

Protest at arrest of Afghan Hazara commander turns violent

KABUL: Hundreds of demonstrators in Shiite areas of Kabul and Bamyan province in Afghanistan protested yesterday against the arrest of an ethnic Hazara militia commander. A senior security official said Alipur, a militia leader known as "Commander Sword" accused of serious human rights abuses, was arrested in a Hazara area of western Kabul, where a spate of suicide attacks by the radical Sunni Islamic State group has fed anger at perceived government indifference to violence against Hazaras. Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid said at least 23 police had been injured in the demonstrations, three having been hit by bullets fired by supporters of Alipur. There were unconfirmed reports from people at the protest that some demonstrators had also been hurt.

While the conflict in Afghanistan kills thousands of people from all ethnic groups every year, Hazaras, have felt especially targeted and there has been growing resentment among many Hazaras against Sunni Pashtuns, traditionally Afghanistan's dominant ethnic group. Mujahid said around 1,000 people gathered in western Kabul, burning a security checkpoint as the demonstration turned violent. "The protesters are using whatever they have in their hands against police, there are armed men among protesters," he said. A statement from the interior ministry said peaceful gatherings were legitimate but Sunday's protests had not been agreed with authorities beforehand. Despite the accusations against him, Alipur has enjoyed the support of powerful Hazara leaders. He also remains popular with many in the mainly Shiite Hazara community who see him as a Robin Hood-style figure who defends his people while the government stands by. In the central province of Bamyan, which is also home to many Hazaras, around 1,500 residents gathered to march towards the governor's compound and UN offices in a peaceful demonstration, Abdul Rahman Ahmadi, spokesman for Bamyan provincial governor said. —Reuters

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'Green fuel': Bananas to help wean Angola off oil

Boxes of still-green bananas were shifted one-by-one from a towering stack of crates into a refrigerated shipping container. Stamped "From Angola, with love", the fruit is shipped to consumers 6,000 km away and are part of Luanda's drive to diversify its economy and wean itself from its dependence on oil. Novagrolider, a privately-owned company, produces several dozen tonnes of bananas every week to be shipped to Portugal.

The firm, founded 10 years ago with Portuguese investment, has become a poster child for the economic transformation that the Angolan government is seeking. At Novagrolider's Caxito 600-hectare plantation 60 km northwest of Luanda, the banana plants, protected with blue plastic bags, bend under the weight of their fruit. In a nearby hangar with a corrugated iron roof, two staff delicately dip the freshly-picked bunches into vast washing pools.

The bananas are meticulously sorted after being washed and weighed with as many as 4,000 boxes prepared daily. The best-looking fruit is earmarked for dispatch to foreign markets with the rest kept for sale locally. "We have two grades - domestic and export," said supervisor Edwin Andres Luis Campos as he watches the production line closely. "Domestic will be sold here in Angolan supermarkets in about four or five days. Export will be shipped to Europe in refrigerated containers that will arrive in Europe in between 20 and 25 days."

Novagrolider's output has grown exponentially in recent years and its parent company, Grupolider, which has interests in transport and property as well, employs 3,500 people. It grows mangoes, pineapples and watermelons as well as bananas on its four fruit farms in Angola. After a cautious start, company boss Joao Macedo's appetite and ambition grew rapidly. "Two years ago we started exporting to the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo - but that wasn't viable because of the state of the roads," said Macedo in his air-conditioned office in Luanda.

Bananas, our 'green fuel'

"Despite competition from South America, the quality of our products nonetheless allows us to sell in Portugal and Spain. And that's not all." Macedo hopes to double production to 170,000 tonnes annually and establish a foot-hold in the lucrative South African market. Back in Caxito, the province's top agriculture official shares Macedo's enthusiasm. "We're financially encouraging small-scale farmers to increase the size of the areas they cultivate," said Eliseo Mateos. "Until now they've mostly used their production for subsistence, but now we want them to grow more so they can sell their crops at market. "Bananas are our 'green fuel' - here we have one possible way of diversifying the economy."

In the decade that followed the bloody 27-year civil war that ended in 2002, Angola enjoyed strong double-digit growth fuelled by oil, which accounts for 90 percent of Angola's exports and 70 percent of government revenues. But the slump in the price of crude in 2014 shook the economic model of the country, which is one of the poorest in Africa, locking it into a vicious cycle of economic contraction. Unbridled inflation, recession, soaring debt and mass unemployment all followed.

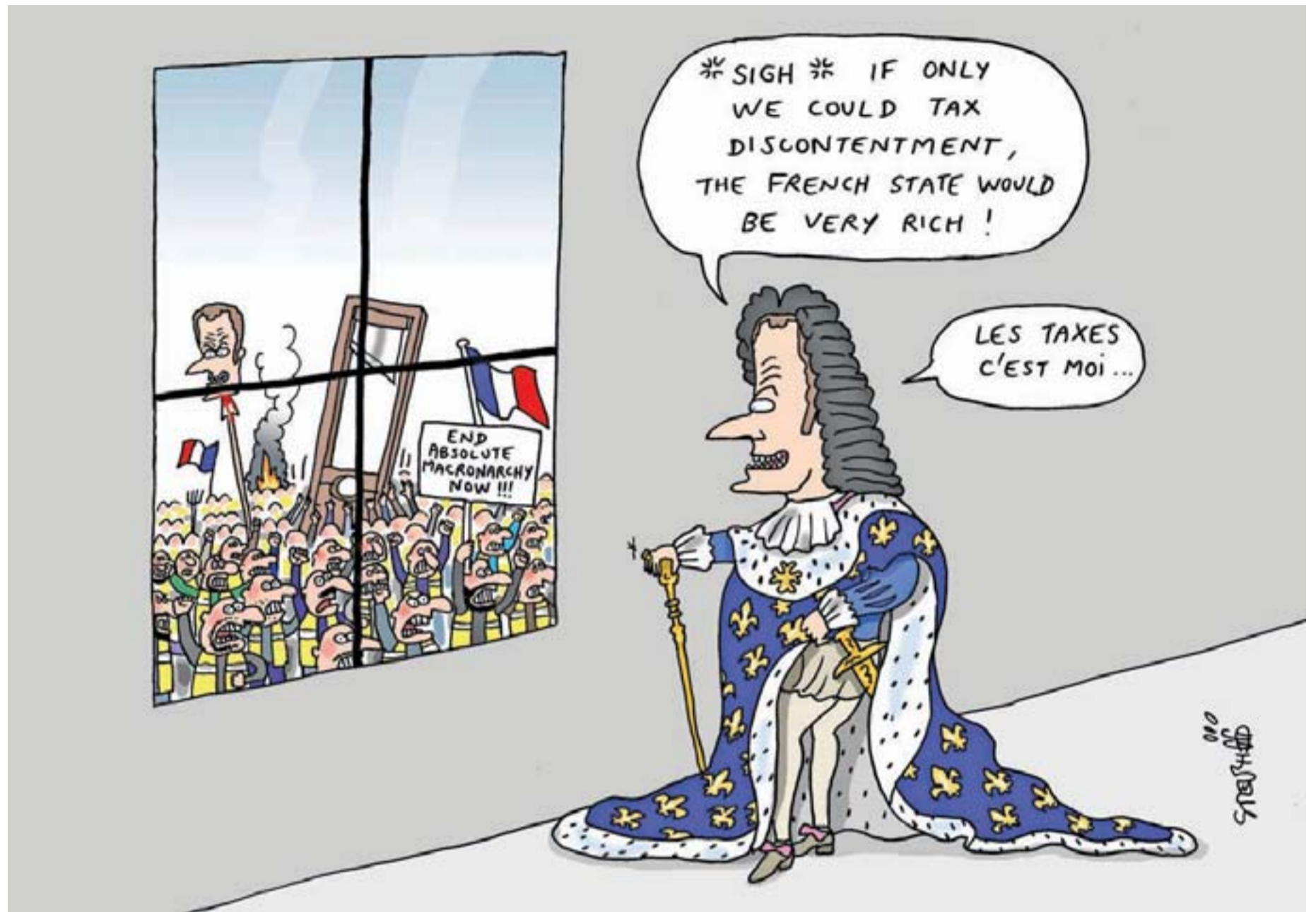
'Persuade Angolans themselves'

President Joao Lourenco vowed to revive the economy when he took power one year ago. Lourenco targeted expanding the agricultural sector, which could provide many Angolans with employment. While oil had brought in revenue for the government, it did not create many jobs or widespread wealth. And by producing more at home, the country would need to use less foreign currency to import food products.

Legislation to lure foreign investors has won plaudits from observers including Carlos Rosado de Carvalho, the editor of the leading Expansao economic magazine. But he warned the road to prosperity will be long and winding. "We need foreign assistance because we lack the capital, technology and a trained workforce," said Rosado de Carvalho. "They also have to persuade Angolans themselves to invest in their agriculture. And for that, they'll absolutely have to sort out the problem of property ownership." — AFP



Edwin Campos, packing state supervisor, talks at a banana farm run by Angolan agro-livestock group Novagrolider, close to the town of Caxito on Nov 14, 2018 in Bengo province. — AFP



End of a loveless 46-year marriage

The divorce deal approved by Britain and the European Union yesterday sets the stage for the end of a nearly 46-year marriage of convenience, built on prudence rather than shared dreams. "It's been a utilitarian relationship since 1973 and the emphasis was always on the economic dimension, not on the political one," said Pauline Schnapper, professor of contemporary British history at the Sorbonne University in Paris. "The sentimental dimension is near non-existent."

Britain was against joining the European project when it was conceived after the Second World War in a spirit of reconciliation. "We didn't feel vulnerable enough to join," said Anand Menon, a professor of European politics at King's College London. Instead, Britain preferred to focus on its special relationship with the United States and the remains of its empire.

London nevertheless supported the push for closer integration on the European continent and wartime prime minister Winston Churchill memorably called for the creation of a "United States of Europe" in a 1946 Zurich speech. But in the early 1960s, Britain's fortunes changed for the worse. Its economic growth started lagging behind that of France and Germany, making the European single market on its doorstep seem an appealing option.

'I want my money back'

"The UK's leaders came to realize that the UK could not be outside what, by the 1960s, was fast becoming

western Europe's leading organization for economics, politics and non-traditional security matters," said Tim Oliver, lecturer at London's Loughborough University. "The UK had to be inside it to shape it." But joining the European project was not an easy task. France's then-president Charles de Gaulle vetoed Britain's first application in 1961, seeing it as a "Trojan Horse" for the United States and doubting Britain's European spirit.

Another French veto followed in 1967 and the UK was only finally welcomed into the then European Economic Community (EEC) on January 1, 1973. Unfortunately for Britain, the first oil crisis struck the same year and the much-hoped-for economic boost failed to materialize. Nevertheless, 67 percent of the British people voted to remain in the EEC in a 1975 referendum. But the result did little to temper euroscepticism in Britain, with politicians of all stripes reluctant to defend the project and the first crisis was not long in coming.

London refused in 1979 to participate in the European monetary system, defending its national and fiscal sovereignty. It then resisted initiatives to deepen political integration, reinforcing the criticism that Britain had "one foot in, one foot out" of the project. Britain notably refused in 1985 to participate in the Schengen agreement for free movement, and in 1993 to join the euro. Its anti-federalist approach was spelled out by prime minister Margaret Thatcher during a 1988 speech at the College of Europe in Bruges. In it, she rejected the idea of a "European

super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels". The Conservative leader had four years earlier finally won a rebate on Britain's contribution to the European budget, making the infamous demand: "I want my money back".

'Illusionary' freedom

With deeper European political union in the 1990s, Britain's defiance towards Brussels accelerated, leading to the creation of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which campaigned for the country's exit from the EU. The party's success, particularly in the 2014 European Parliament elections when it topped the polls, pushed the Conservative-led government to harden its rhetoric. The eurozone crisis, large-scale immigration from the EU and the refugee crisis of the past few years stoked the discontent, pushing prime minister David Cameron to call the June 2016 referendum.

For pro-Brexit supporters, the vote to leave the EU will mean Britain finally "taking back control" of its borders, laws and finances. "They had a rather dreamlike situation since they were in the union, yet had opt-outs on a number of things," noted Pascale Joannin, executive director of the Robert Schuman Foundation, named after the French politician considered to be one of the "founding fathers" of the European Union. "But now they will be outside the union's institutions without a voice, and they will have to adhere to a number of European regulations", he added. — AFP

Dodging traffic, and death, on Manila rail carts

As soon as the train rumbles past, the men heave their home-made pushcarts back onto the tracks and passengers hop aboard - cheating death and beating Manila's notorious traffic. Scores of commuters in the city of about 12 million are propelled to their destinations daily by so-called "trolley boys" pushing metal carts that ply a few segments of the sprawling capital's railroads. Passengers save time and money - paying just 10 pesos (20 US cents) a trip - but must face the constant risk of being crushed by a passing locomotive if they or the trolley boys don't move fast enough.

"Our job here is very dangerous, you need to know what time the train will pass by," said 57-year-old Rene Vargas Almeria, who has been at it for nearly 20 years. Commuter trains travel nearly two dozen times a day along this 1.2-km stretch of rail in the Santa Mesa district, where authorities grudgingly tolerate the carts due to their popularity. The trolley boys also ply a few other stretches of Manila's battered rail system, that carries an average of 45,000 passengers a day.

Incredibly, casualties are relatively rare. Police do not keep statistics, but said they couldn't remember the last time a fatality occurred. The same cannot be said of close calls - anyone who spends time pushing or riding the carts seems to have a hair-raising story to share. Rodolfo Maurello's scariest near-miss in almost two decades as a trolley boy came when he failed to notice the train behind him as he was pushing a cart packed with passengers.

"The train was just metres away," the 60-year-old said, recalling how he turned around with only seconds to spare and waved it to a stop. "The

sound of its brakes screeching was very loud."

'I trust them'

Almeria has a similar tale, which happened one day when his mind wandered and his sole passenger was looking the other way. "I swung my head around and saw the train coming and yanked my trolley off the tracks," he added. "It was really close." On a good day the trolley boys can make up to \$10, ferrying passengers seeking to escape Manila's infamous gridlock - a collision of poor infrastructure, weak public transit and an increasing number of cars.

Even as Manila's population grew 50 percent from 1995-2015, investment in the city's creaking transport system has not kept up, opening a gap for informal options like the pushcarts to fill. Most journeys lack life-or-death drama, with workers in office attire and students clutching their lunch bags and pecking at their smartphones, a tattered beach umbrella providing the only protection from the burning sun or frequent downpours. "There is no traffic," 46-year-old Noemi Nieves told AFP. "It is convenient for us and the fare is just right for our budget."

Despite the risks and minimal comforts, commuters say the trolley carts offer a welcome shortcut to spending hours in traffic only to travel a few kilometres. Danica Lorraine, 25, shaves nearly an hour off her daily commute, spared from having to take two additional buses each way. "You just need to be cautious - very, very, very cautious," she said. Kerleen Bongalon, a teacher, has - for the most part - gotten over her unease at riding the carts.

One stretch of her journey passes over the Pasig river - with a 15-m plunge between the rail tracks and the water below. "At first it was scary," she said. "I don't know how to swim so if something happens while we are on the bridge I really don't know what would happen." "But nothing will happen because the trolley boys know the time the train will pass by", she added. "I trust them". — AFP



This picture taken on Oct 18, 2018 shows a "trolley boy" pushing a homemade cart along a train track in Manila. — AFP photos



'Trolley boys' push passengers along a train track as a train passes by in Manila.

Business

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Workers sort out raw rubber sheets at a factory in Rayong Province. They work in the pre-dawn gloom tapping trees for the "white gold" that has made their country the world's top rubber producer — but as prices plunge due to the US-China trade war, Thai farmers are giving up the sap. —AFP

US-China trade war hits Thai rubber farms

Farmers give up the sap as rubber prices plunge

BANGKOK: They work in the pre-dawn gloom tapping trees for the "white gold" that has made their country the world's top rubber producer—but as prices plunge due to the US-China trade war, Thai farmers are giving up the sap.

Thai latex makes everything from tires and condoms to baby pacifiers and surgical gloves, the fruit of the rubber trees cultivated across endless acres of the country. But the rubber trade is at a crossroads as a bitter dispute between the world's two biggest economies ricochets across Southeast Asia with unexpected consequences. Countries like Vietnam are benefiting as manufacturers migrate from China to avoid punishing tariffs on exports to the US. But in Thailand, the price of rubber has slumped twenty percent since June, as those same tariffs bite hard on demand from factories in China—the market for more than half its latex exports.

Some of Thailand's rubber workers are being forced to abandon their plantation jobs for factory work.

"I couldn't feed my children anymore," said Annita, who used to work 10 hours a day harvesting latex in Chiang Rai, northern Thailand, making just \$7 a day, less than the minimum wage and half the going rate several years ago. So she has taken a job at a packing plant earning around \$9 daily. "Nobody wanted to stay. The plantation owner can't find workers anymore—the work is too difficult for the wages," she told AFP.

While the plight of US soybean farmers hit by the tariffs has grabbed the headlines—they face a 25 percent levy to access China, the world's biggest soybean market—other troubles are quietly brewing across the world. The bottom has fallen out of the once-booming industry as Thai rubber prices plummet to about \$1.21 a kilogram—they were five times that in 2011.

Too much rubber

Around one third of all the rubber in the world comes from Thailand's forests, where latex is harvested at night or before dawn by tappers who make an inci-

sion and collect the sap as it bleeds out. The country currently produces about 4.6 million tons of rubber a year and the sudden drop in Chinese demand has compounded a longer term global oversupply crisis to push prices off a cliff.

"A climate of uncertainty" pervades the industry after US tariffs hit nearly half of all Chinese imports, according to Karako Kittipol, marketing manager at Thai Hua Rubber. "Chinese companies don't want to have too much rubber in stock," he said. The value of the yuan against the US dollar has also dipped, making rubber more expensive for Chinese manufacturers to buy. Thailand is a bystander in the trade war between the world's two largest economies. But the ruling junta is trying to address the supply-side issues and is aiming to reduce the area under cultivation for rubber by more than 60,000 hectares per year over the next five years.

'Not the right solution'

At the same time rubber remains an intensely politi-

cal issue in Thailand. Farmers and tappers—the majority of who come from the junta-aligned south—are notoriously quick to protest when times get tough.

So the government last week stumped up an initial handout—capped at roughly \$700 per plantation—to ease their immediate pain. But farmers remain unconvinced. "(It is) not the right solution," said Apichit Duangdee, who felled a third of the trees on his small plantation earlier this year. "Very few countries can produce natural rubber. It is a rare product and the Thai government should promote it better," he said. If it fails to, the knock-on effects could be massive. Tyre giant Michelin buys 40 percent of its natural rubber from Thailand, keeping vehicles on the road all over the world. "If prices continue to fall, many farmers and processors will lose interest in latex and quality could fall," Lionel Dantiacq, Michelin's president for Asia and Oceania, said. "If prices go too high, the tyre industry will suffer... with repercussions for the consumer." —AFP

Italy premier 'confident' Rome can avoid EU sanctions

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said he was "confident" Rome could avoid unprecedented EU sanctions over its big-spending budget, rejected by Brussels, following talks with European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker.

Rome's coalition government insists its 2019 budget will help kickstart growth in the eurozone's third largest economy and reduce debt, but the EU says the country risks "sleepwalking into instability" and increasing its already massive debt burden.

After dinner on Saturday in Brussels with Juncker, Conte told Italian television: "I am confident that dialogue can avoid an infringement procedure." The EU's rejection of the budget on Wednesday was widely expected after it had sent it back to Rome for reconsideration in a historic first for the bloc.

Italy refused to back down, setting the stage for

Wednesday's final opinion that deplored "a marked backtracking" on past reforms. Conte, who was accompanied for the working dinner by Finance Minister Giovanni Tria, said: "It was not a conclusive meeting but a meeting which reaffirmed, with mutual respect, the opening of a dialogue that we must preserve in everyone's interests."

He insisted that his government—made up of Matteo Salvini's League and Luigi Di Maio's anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S)—does not intend to reverse course on the budget.

He said earlier this week: "If it is in the interest of Italians, we are not willing to give up anything."

The EU says the budget, which includes a basic monthly income for the unemployed and a pension boost, will not deliver the growth promised while increased spending will only increase Italy's debt.

Italy wants to run a public deficit of 2.4 percent of gross domestic product in 2019 — three times the target of the government's centre-left predecessor—and one of 2.1 percent in 2020.

Brussels forecasts Italy's deficit will hit 2.9 percent of GDP in 2019 and 3.1 percent in 2020 — breaching the EU's 3.0 percent limit. EU member states now have to decide whether to allow the commission to trigger the excessive deficit procedure, a lengthy process that could lead to fines.

Ultimately, Brussels can inflict a sanction of up to 0.2 percent of Italy's GDP under the EDP regime. —AFP



BRUSSELS: Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte (left) chats with European Council President Donald Tusk before a special meeting of the European Council yesterday. — AFP

Fishing rights still 'priority' for EU after Brexit

BRUSSELS: Doubts over fishing rights, a topic that endangered the Brexit talks, will have to be resolved well before the end of the post-divorce transition period, European leaders said yesterday.

The statement came after several EU member states voiced 11th-hour concerns about the draft deal that was approved yesterday, particularly about their boats' access to British waters after March. "A fisheries agreement is a priority issue, and should be based on the principles of reciprocal access and existing quotas," a statement said. A future fisheries agreement "must be concluded well before the end of the transition period" after Brexit, which should last until the end of 2020 but may be extended for up to two years, the statement said.

"For us access to British waters is a priority," said a source close to French President Emmanuel Macron. The divorce agreement approved by EU leaders yesterday assures that European fishermen will retain access to British territorial waters during the transition period. During the transition, Britain will continue to apply EU rules and contribute to its budget, but without participating in its decision-making. — AFP

Business

Global concludes successful exit from Emirates Retakaful

Acquired by a subsidiary of AXA

KUWAIT: Global Investment House (Global), a regional asset management and investment banking firm headquartered in Kuwait, announced yesterday that its alternative asset management arm, Global Capital Management ("GCM"), has concluded a successful exit of its 20 percent stake in Emirates Retakaful.

Global and other shareholders representing a total ownership of 75 percent of Emirates Retakaful, have worked together during the past months to successfully conclude the exit transaction and transfer the ownership to the acquirer AXA Liabilities Managers, an AXA Group company specializing in non-life (re)insurance legacy business acquisition and management. The transaction was concluded at book value which is higher than the average multiples in the insurance sector in the GCC.

Sulaiman Mohammed Al-Rubaie, CEO of Global

Investment House and Managing Partner of GCM commented on this exit: "We are extremely delighted to have completed this exit and provide our investors with liquidity in such challenging geopolitical and economic environment and the challenges the Retakaful has faced including regulatory changes in the regional markets and the down term in the international market in the last decade due to the overcapacity in the reinsurance market."

GMFA acquired a significant minority stake in Emirates Retakaful (previously known as Al-Fajer Re) in 2009. Established in 2007, Al-Fajer Re was the first re-takaful company in Kuwait with a license to operate reinsurance business for all kinds of takaful insurance. Affected by numerous challenges faced by the company in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, significant restructuring efforts were undertaken by the members of the board representing GCM, which

resulted in relocation of Al-Fajer Re operations to Dubai under the name of Emirate Re.

Al-Rubaie added: "We are proud to have successfully attracted international players into the regional re-insurance sector, thanks to the reinsurance international practices the company follows. We are confident that the commitment, track record and expertise of the acquirer will provide Emirates Retakaful with the required support and guidance".

It is worth noting that since the new management of the private equity team took over in 2010, the team has successfully restructured the portfolio companies, put them on the growth path and enhanced their value. Till date, the team has also concluded 34 exits, the highest among all private equity firms in the region, and distributed more than \$375 million to its clients, raising the total distributions since inception to more than \$595 million.



Sulaiman M Al-Shaheen Al-Rubaie

Ex-IMF chief Rato in dock again in major Bankia trial

MADRID: A mega-trial harking back to the dark years of Spain's economic crisis kicks off today over the alleged fraudulent 2011 listing of financial giant Bankia, with former IMF leader Rodrigo Rato in the dock. The Spanish state was forced to step in to prevent the bank's collapse and then to borrow 41 billion euros from the EU to keep Spain's banking sector afloat.

The 69-year-old Rato, head of the bank at the time, is accused of falsifying the books and fraud to the detriment of investors. The trial is expected to last at least seven months, until the end of June.

A total of 35 people and companies including Bankia, its parent company BFA and Deloitte consultants are on trial. Prosecutors are seeking a five-year jail sentence for Rato, who is already serving four-and-a-half years in prison for misusing funds when he was the boss of Caja Madrid, another bank, and of Bankia between 2010 and 2012.

'Delusions of grandeur'

The image of a smiling Rato ringing the bell and sipping champagne on July

20, 2011 to mark the start of Bankia's listing has since become a symbol of the scandal. More than 300,000 small shareholders had bought share packages for a minimum of 1,000 euros (\$1,100), attracted by a major advertising campaign and the profits boasted by the bank. But in 2012, after a disastrous year that saw its share value drop, the bank admitted that the year it listed it had actually made a loss of close to three billion euros.

That forced the state to nationalize the bank to save it from bankruptcy by injecting more than 22 billion euros into Bankia. That in turn prompted an EU rescue plan for Spain's banking sector.

The results presented to investors had been "completely false," investigating magistrate Fernando Andreu wrote in a court document. He said the moment when the bank recognized it was in difficulty brought to an end "the dreams and delusions of grandeur of the entity", born in 2010 through the fusion of struggling savings banks.

For its part, Bankia said it had handed back 1.9 billion euros to more than 220,000 small shareholders since 2016. "For us, that doesn't settle the incredibly serious fraud that was committed," said Fernando Herrero, secretary general of the Adicac association of bank users, a plaintiff at the trial.

The state, which still owns 61 percent of Bankia and should in theory privatise the bank again, has recognized several times that it won't be able to recover much of the money it disbursed.



MADRID: In this file photo, Bankia's Chairman Rodrigo Rato gives the thumb up after launching the trading of Spanish bank Bankia at Madrid's stock exchange. —AFP

Series of scandals

"The listing of Bankia was a kamikaze operation," said Ernesto Ekaizer, a journalist who wrote a book on the affair. He says regulation authorities such as the central bank are also responsible, accusing them of ignoring the whiffs of financial crisis that were coming their way.

Generally speaking, Bankia has become the symbol of financial excess at a time when Spain was in deep recession after a housing bubble maintained by multiple bank credits burst.

In the first scandal to go to trial, Rato

and dozens of other former executives and board members were found guilty of having paid for personal expenses with credit cards put at their disposal by both Caja Madrid and Bankia. They were accused of misusing 12 million euros between 2003 and 2012, spending on fuel for their cars, supermarket shopping, price holidays, luxury bags, and parties in nightclubs.

Rato was sentenced to four and a half years in jail for embezzlement. The former economy minister is also accused of tax fraud in a separate case. —AFP

Campaigners dig in against Ghana bauxite mining plans

KYEBI: Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo smiles and waves from fading billboards in his hometown of Kyebi, in the Akyem Abuakwa area of the country's Eastern Region.

Nearby is another sign for the Atewa Range Forest Reserve, whose steep slopes and cloud-topped peaks rise from the fields of cassava and trees of ripening bananas and cocoa pods below.

"Save Atewa Forest Now!" it reads in a message to the president and his government in the capital Accra, 90 kilometres (60 miles) away. The upland evergreen forest, with its waterfalls and cliffs, deep caves and valleys, has been described as one of the richest places for biodiversity on the planet.

Its thick vegetation is home to endangered primates and pangolins, rare frogs, birds and butterflies.

But the ground also contains large deposits of bauxite, which gives the earth its distinctive red hue and is the essential component in aluminum production. In a scenario familiar across Africa, China has promised Ghana billions of dollars' worth of infrastructure projects in exchange for access to mine the rock. Environmentalists fear for the forest. Locals, though, are swayed by the prospects of jobs and money.

Akufo-Addo's government is pushing a policy of "trade not aid" and rural development. All eyes are now on the president to see if that comes at the expense of the environment he has vowed to protect.

'Big, big trouble'

A team of forest rangers and volunteers carrying machetes to hack through the undergrowth currently polices the forest against poachers and illegal loggers.

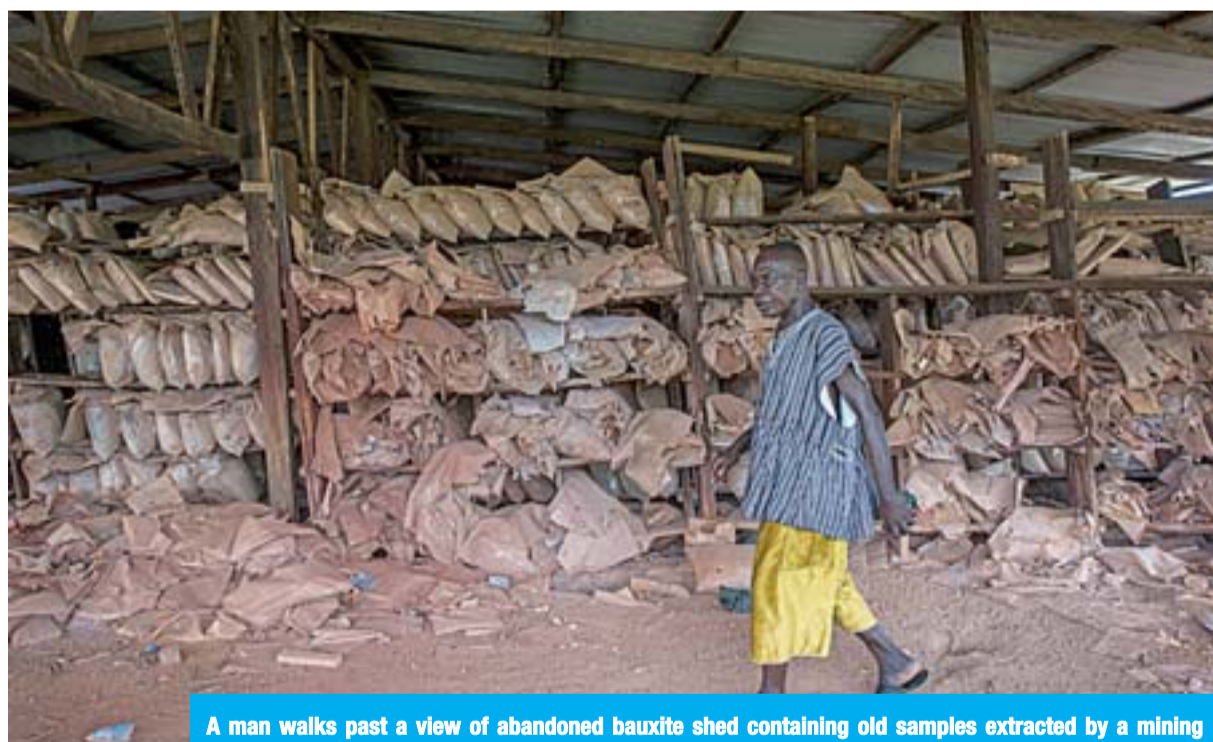
The surrounding landscape bears scars of gold-mining activities that Akufo-Addo halted by introducing measures against illegal operations. Campaigners, however, say mining bauxite is an even greater risk, as swathes of trees would have to be cut down and soil removed in the forest's upper reaches.

Daryl Bosu, deputy national director of the environmental group A Rocha Ghana, said that could cause "big, big trouble". "The way bauxite mining is done is not like gold, where you can take out the sand, put it somewhere and fill it back," he said. "You are actually taking away the whole soil and with it you have to clear the forest to be able to get to that."

Deforestation raises the risk of landslides and pollution in the sources of three rivers providing water for communities downstream, including the five million people in Greater Accra.

With fewer trees, rainfall would be affected, with a knock-on effect on agricultural yields.

Signs by the road warn about endangered primates in the



A man walks past a view of abandoned bauxite shed containing old samples extracted by a mining company from the Kyebi Forest Reserve to analyze the quality of its soil. —AFP

forest, which is also home to the world's only kaleidoscope of Atewa dotted border butterflies and a rare colony of Togo Slippery Frogs.

"If the forest goes, all these animals lose their habitat," said Emmanuel Akom, project manager for A Rocha in Kyebi.

Jobs and money

Mining bauxite reserves has been talked about for at least a decade and the evidence is in Asikam village, one of the 50 or so communities found around the forest.

In 2008, Prince Amankwa said he helped US aluminum giant Alcoa and the state-owned Volta Aluminum Company Ltd (Valco) drill for samples in the hills. Ten years on, those samples lie in dusty plastic bags in a shed in Asikam. Locals say the project was likely abandoned because it would have been too controversial.

Amankwa said government mining officials and a Chinese team had recently been in the area.

He says he is in favor of the mining project, as is the village chief Bafour Kyere Koranteng, although he conceded that if the wider community thought otherwise, he would support that position. "My opinion is that it (mining) is a very good thing because the youths are not getting jobs," he added. It's not hard to see why there would be support. There may be tarmac roads and mobile phone masts in Kyebi, but there are also mud-brick homes and many adverts for quick cash loans.

Most people are subsistence or small-scale farmers. Mining could be more lucrative.

Mounting opposition

Ghana's parliament is moving ahead with the legal framework to allow bauxite mining to take place in the Atewa forest. But as it does so, there is increasing opposition at home and abroad.

Concern has been voiced about the impact of the China deal on Ghana's debt profile. International petitions have been launched to urge the government to think again.

There are also fears that the traditional council, headed by the Okyenene, or king, of Akyem Abuakwa, has backtracked on its initial position opposing mining. Earlier this year, hundreds of people trekked from Kyebi to hand in a petition at the president's official residence, Jubilee House, in Accra, to urge him to think again. "He's very much aware of the issue," said local assembly member Emmanuel Tabi, who is from Akufo-Addo's ruling New Patriotic Party. "He has uncles, cousins, a sister here in Kyebi."

Tabi remains unconvinced about the potential employment and economic benefits of mining. Instead he wants the forest designated a national park to give it greater protection.

Developing tourism would be better and more sustainable, he argued, but acknowledged Akufo-Addo's supporters locally were looking to him to bring in jobs and money.

That could make preventing the diggers from moving in more difficult, he said.

"We're not actually against bauxite mining, but we are against the destruction of this forest," he added. —AFP

Deputies pass budget as Ukraine seeks to unlock IMF billions

KIEV: Ukrainian lawmakers passed the 2019 budget early on Friday, a crucial step towards securing the first tranche of a new \$3.9 billion IMF aid program and providing financial stability ahead of elections next year. Finance Minister Oksana Markarova said the government would submit the budget to the International Monetary Fund for assessment as quickly as possible but declined to comment on the tranche size.

Exact details of the budget's final version are not yet public but Markarova said it was in line with the IMF's demand for a budget deficit of around 2.3 percent.

The IMF did not immediately comment on the budget vote. "We have begun many processes, reforms and transformations," Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman told lawmakers before the vote, held after parliament had worked through the night. "The country's budget is a key tool for the implementation of these tasks," he said. "In 2019, in the year of turbulence, we must ensure stability."

Groysman had told Reuters last week he hoped to secure an IMF tranche as early as December once the budget passed, which would also pave the way for similar disbursements from the European Union and the World Bank. Markarova said the government expected 500 million euros from Brussels this year and a loan guarantee from the World Bank that will allow Ukraine to borrow about \$800 million.

The government cannot directly use the IMF money, which must be used to boost the central bank's reserves. But the deal gives the markets confidence, which has allowed Ukraine to issue eurobonds since the latest deal was struck.

The European Union and the World Bank will only lend to Ukraine once the IMF has.

Ukraine has tapped the IMF and other international bodies for money to guarantee its stability, as it faces a rising debt burden over the next two years and closely-fought parliamentary and presidential elections in 2019. However, the IMF loans may come at a political cost. The government was required to raise household gas prices by nearly a quarter as a precondition for them, a move criticized by some opposition lawmakers during Thursday's parliamentary debates. —Reuters

Egypt on track to achieve its financial targets

CAIRO: Egypt's state revenues grew by 35.5 percent in the first quarter of this fiscal year, putting the government on track to achieve its targeted primary budget surplus of 2 percent, the finance minister said on Friday.

Government investment rose 85 percent while tax collection increased by 39.8 percent, Finance Minister Mohamed Maait said in a statement. "These positive results for the first quarter of the current fiscal year affirm Egypt's ability to achieve its financial targets for the budget for the current fiscal year," the minister said.

Primary budget figures do not factor in interest payments on government debt. Maait attributed the positive results to Egypt's economic reforms program, part of an IMF loan deal signed in 2016. Under the IMF deal Egypt devalued its currency and has been gradually cutting fuel subsidies, putting the finances of tens of millions of Egyptians under strain. Egypt is pushing ahead with the economic reforms which it sees as essential in attracting foreign investment.

The budget deficit in the first quarter of the current fiscal year was down slightly to 1.9 percent from 2 percent last year, the minister previously said. Egypt's economy was hit hard in the turbulent years that followed a 2011 popular uprising which toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak. The political unrest scared away many tourists and foreign investors, but recently the economy has showed signs of recovery. — Reuters

Business

The Business Year renews partnership with KDIPA for 4th consecutive year

In build-up to publication of The Business Year: Kuwait 2019

X-Cite super sale is back with up to 70% off!

KUWAIT: It is that time of the year again; hurry up and get the super buy year-end deals as X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer, announces the return of its massive sale and the only sale that matters of up to 70 percent discount on various products including computers, tablets, smartphones, home entertainment, appliances, and more.

Holiday seasons and New Year's Eve are almost there; don't miss the chance to shop at X-cite, where it will continue to provide you with its amazing deals, giving you the opportunity to be ready and fully prepared to celebrate the upcoming holidays in an incredible way where this is the only sale that matters. Whether you are shopping for a new TV, laptop, digital camera, or any other electronic device, drop by any of X-cite's showrooms across Kuwait between November 21st and December 31st, and benefit from their Super Sale with amazing discounts. Some of the major brands with huge savings include Wansa, EQ, Microsoft, Panasonic, Philips, Sony, Apple, Samsung, HP, Daewoo, Toshiba, Nikon, La Germania, Acer and Huawei. Customers can take advantage of unprecedented prices on a wide range of electronics in addition to the daily and weekly exclusive offers launched on selected products.

Besides the best deals that X-cite is offering until the end of the year, X-cite also offers the "Blue Friday" exclusive deals between November 21st - November 27th, where it will cover a wide variety of products, and it will be available online and in stores as well.

Purchasing through our easy credit program with instant credit discounts couldn't get any easier. With easy credit, customers can buy electronics from X-cite and pay for purchases through easy and flexible monthly installments during the Super Sale.

It is an additional service we provide to our customers. They will be able to increase the ability to buy more products that will allow them to purchase higher ticket items with more features, and therefore, they will be able to save more money during the Super Sale. Consider the low prices we will offer to our customers with our tremendous offers and programs that include student, family, and retiree segments.

Through its customer-centric concept, X-cite offers customer's competitive quality and prices to serve every segment, providing them with the highest level of service, engaging with them, and earning their trust through supporting services and offerings. X-cite also enable customers to shop from the comfort of their homes through its free mobile app and shopping website at www.xcite.com.

X-cite has established itself as a leading brand in providing the latest products to customers as it continues to build strong relations with international brands in the electronics sector. Continuously seeking to satisfy the needs of its customers, X-cite provides them with diverse services that enable customers to experience products and interact with them, and the service of buy online and pick the product in store, whether in their 26 showrooms or through the website, designed to make online shopping a fast and easy experience.

X-cite also offers premium maintenance and purchase services at most of its major showrooms throughout Kuwait and other services such as free delivery and X-care packages.

Al-Tijari announces winner of Al-Najma prize program

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced the winner of the weekly draw as follows :-

Weekly draw prize KD 5,000 - Oqlah Mohammad Al-Hamad.

The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Latifa Al-Jean.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000 and monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the grand prize (the biggest prize in the world) of KD 1,500,000 for which the draw will be held in January 2019. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

Now CBK existing customers can open Al-Najma Account through Al-Tijari Online and enter all draws without visiting the Bank's branch. However, CBK non-customers can submit an account opening application via the Bank's website where the Bank's Sales Unit will call them to arrange a visit to the customers to complete the account opening formalities.

KUWAIT: The Business Year has renewed its partnership with the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) in the build-up to the publication of The Business Year: Kuwait 2019.

At an MoU signing ceremony, Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), and The Business Year representatives Ioana Popa, Kuwait Country Manager, and Peggy Rosiak, Managing Director of The Business Year Events, put pen to paper to confirm the continued partnership between the two organizations, now in its fourth year.

Sheikh Dr. Meshaal stated that KDIPA continues to "support research that aims to shed light on Kuwait's dynamic business climate and the latest developments as well as opportunities happening in Kuwait by reputable international specialized publications such as The Business Year who is planning to produce another report on Kuwait this year."

The Business Year conveyed its excitement to be back in Kuwait, and its representatives provided details on an upcoming

London-based event that the two organizations will hold in the coming year.

"Kuwait is increasingly attractive to investors across the world, which is why it is highly important for us to promote, throughout our upcoming 2019 edition, all the great opportunities this country has to offer," Popa commented. Rosiak added, "We sincerely hope that our event in London will increase the visibility of Kuwait and I am sure that, in partnership with KDIPA, we will convey the right message to the global investor community."

KDIPA is hard at work to attract higher levels of FDI to Kuwait and, for this year's edition, TBY will showcase the increasing role of private companies in the Kuwaiti economy, as well as the implementation of a very unique model for PPPs. Education, health, and the growing presence of new technologies in the banking sector will also be among the main topics The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 will analyze, all with the help of KDIPA and leaders from other significant private and public institutions around the country.



Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Ioana Popa sign the MoU.

VIVA launches KD 10 plan for postpaid customers

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched a special offer for its postpaid customers, celebrating 10 years of operation in the Kuwaiti telecom market since 2008, for KD 10.

Making this occasion distinctive, VIVA is pleased to commemorate its customers with a postpaid plan that allows them to enjoy unlimited VIVA to VIVA calls, 2000 local minutes and 50 GB internet.

On this occasion, Abdulrazzak Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA said: "We are glad to celebrate VIVA's first decade with our cus-

tomers who share with us success since VIVA's inception. This offer is part of different surprises that we will announce about them successively to reward all our customers."

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things 'More' for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established a pioneer position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions: a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation "4G LTE" network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability, and has been recognized as "Speedtest Award Winner 2017 - Kuwait's



Fastest Mobile Network", based on Ookla's analysis of Speedtest Intelligence data in Q2-Q3 2017.

OnCost Cash and Carry acquires Gulfmart

KUWAIT: OnCost Cash and Carry, the first wholesale membership retail store in Kuwait, announced last week that it had acquired Gulfmart, the well-known supermarket chain that has been operating in Kuwait since 1999.

Announcing the change in ownership, the Chief Executive Officer of OnCost Cash and Carry, Saleh Al-Tunaib, said that once the transfer of shares process has been completed, Gulfmart and OnCost would merge and begin operating as a single entity within the span of the next six months.

"Once the take-over process and merger of both companies are completed, OnCost would have a total of 20 branches spread across the country. Over the next five years, we plan on increasing the number of branches we own to 35, and look forward to entering the Saudi and the UAE markets through strategic partnerships with professional retail groups in those countries," said Al-Tunaib. He also pointed out that with the acquisition of Gulfmart, the total market share of OnCost in the local food market would reach 4 percent, which he aims to increase further in the future.

OnCost, with its distinctive strategy of selling products to customers at wholesale prices in a household focused retail environment, has a pricing policy that focuses on competitive and wholesale prices. Elaborating on the pricing policy, the CEO said, "We have a good, better and best pricing strategy that makes our product assortment to everyone. In addition, our free membership program, which now has over 80,000 members, provides cash rewards of up to 4 percent of purchase value to sub-



Remesh Ananda Das

Saleh Al-Tunaib

scribers. In addition to the weekly offers throughout the year that provide great discounts, we also launched our website in 2017 where customers can place their orders and expect free delivery anywhere in Kuwait within three hours."

Detailing the genesis of the company and its unique business model, Al-Tunaib said, "OnCost was established in 2010 as Kuwait's first professional membership based wholesale center. It was a natural development that leveraged our strength in owning slaughter houses and operating Kuwait's Central Vegetables and Fruits Market in Sulaibiya. We opened our first branch in Alforda Market and became the first central market to provide everything and anything from fresh vegetables, fruits, meat and fish, to household cleaning and washing products to customers at wholesale prices all under one roof.

"What makes us stand out from other central markets in Kuwait is our focus on wholesale shopping in a household focused retail environment for an efficient assortment, while providing those selected products at the best, fair and competitive prices in the market. For instance, while others might provide 8 to 12 different types of bottled

water, we offer only 3 or 4, but at prices that range from low to high. Our focus on wholesale purchases attracts different sections of customers, including companies, families, and even individual shoppers. Moreover, we also serve the HORECA sector and are affiliated with around 500 companies to whom we provide imported or local food and other products.

"In addition to our brick-and-mortar stores, we also have a 'Baqal' service that receives and delivers online orders from customers exclusively through the Talabat or Baqal mobile app. This service, which has nearly 30 delivery vehicles, promises to deliver orders within a maximum of 30 minutes of placing the order."

Clarifying the rationale behind acquiring the Gulfmart brand, with which OnCost is reported to have been negotiating for almost two years, Al-Tunaib said: "There are very few suitable real estate locations for central markets in Kuwait, and this was a hurdle to our expansion plans. By buying Gulfmart, we are able to immediately expand our presence in 16 new locations. Moreover, the Gulfmart brand is well established in the market and, having been operating here for 19 years, they also have a good customer-base."

Explaining the future merger plans for the two brands, Remesh Ananda Das, the Chief Operating Officer said, "We expect the full merger of the two brands to take about six months, until then we will operate as single entity under the same management and policies, so that Gulfmart customers will not discern any sudden change to their shopping patterns and habits after the merger. We value the culture and history behind the people and Gulfmart brand, and will strive to preserve it.

Speaking about the success of OnCost, the COO said, "Today, we have over 30,000 square meters of retail space and employ more than 1,000 people. The success of our business model can be ascertained from the fact that within two years of our establishment we were able to not only develop a strong customer-base but also become a very profitable operation."

Ex-Nissan chief Ghosn denies allegations

TOKYO: Nissan's former chairman Carlos Ghosn has denied allegations of financial misconduct, claiming he had no intention of making false reports, Japanese media said yesterday. The Brazil-born tycoon, who has not spoken publicly since he was arrested last Monday, told prosecutors he did not intend to understate his income on financial reports, public broadcaster NHK said.

Without exercising his right to remain silent, Ghosn advocated his view to prosecutors, NHK said, quoting unnamed sources. Ghosn was sacked as Nissan chairman Thursday, a spectacular fall from grace for the once-revered boss whose arrest and ouster have stunned the business world.

Prosecutors accuse Ghosn and fellow executive Greg Kelly of under-reporting the former chairman's income by around five billion yen (\$44 million).

Kelly also denied the allegations, saying Ghosn's salaries were paid appropriately, news reports said.

Local media reported that Nissan had formed a "secret" team earlier this year to probe the alleged financial misconduct. A small team involving Nissan's board members carried out its internal probe confidentially on concerns about possible destruction of evi-

dence by Ghosn, Japan's Kyodo News reported, quoting unnamed sources. The company speeded up the probe to oust Ghosn swiftly as Nissan officials were increasingly worried about his plan to review the Renault-Nissan capital tie-up, it said. Ghosn reportedly planned their full-fledged merger although Nissan officials opposed the move due to concerns over Renault's level of control despite the Japanese company becoming the dominant player in the alliance. Ghosn is being held custody in a Tokyo detention centre.

On Wednesday, prosecutors successfully applied to extend his custody for an additional 10 days as they stepped up their questioning.

Separately, Nissan is considering filing a civil damages suit against Ghosn over his expenses, Kyodo said. The Yokohama-based company plans to sue him if controversial expenses such as costs of providing luxury residences to him in Lebanon are confirmed improper, it said. Ghosn's ouster is an astonishing turnaround for a titan of the auto sector who revived the Japanese brand and forged an alliance with France's Renault as well as domestic rival Mitsubishi Motors.

Top executives of the three companies plan to hold a meeting this week, their first gathering since his arrest, local media said. The meeting will be held in the Netherlands with a video conference available for executives who cannot attend, the Yomiuri Shimbun said. It had been scheduled before his arrest but executives may discuss the fate of the alliance, Tokyo Broadcasting System said. Meanwhile, Mitsubishi is to hold a board meeting to discuss his future, as news reports said the firm plans to fire Ghosn as chairman. — AFP

Burgan Bank announces Yawmi account draw winners

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Ahmed Hasan Reda Dashti
2. Shahid Javeed Mohibi
3. Hazzaa Marzouq Hazzaa Alotaibi
4. Majid Hilal Abdulhussein Altameemi

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Health & Science

No doctors, nurses or painkillers: Surviving pregnancy in Venezuela

Venezuelan women forced to give birth in the street

CIUDAD GUAYANA, Venezuela: Yoli Cabeza was sent from one hospital to another before finally giving birth to her daughter Yasmari in the corridor of a maternity ward because her contractions came quicker than medical help. The 37-year-old was diagnosed with a high-risk pregnancy but that didn't spare her from Venezuela's medical "roulette"—the practice of referring patients from hospital to hospital due to a lack of personnel, supplies or sanitary conditions.

Cabeza said she "did the tour of every hospital in" Ciudad Guayana, the biggest town in the state of Bolivar, before returning to the place she started at, the Negra Hipolita maternity unit where "they took me in." Incredibly, her case isn't rare in a country where many women are forced to give birth in the street because they can't get into a state medical facility. At the beginning of November, a woman was filmed giving birth to her son squatting by a tree in front of the biggest hospital in Bolivar.

Venezuela is in the midst of an economic meltdown triggered by mismanagement and a slump in oil prices followed by US sanctions. The United Nations says some 2.3 million people have fled Venezuela since 2015 and amongst them have been many doctors.

Bring your own supplies

According to a study by a dozen non-profit

its, some 22,000 doctors, more than half the former total, emigrated between 2012 and 2017. Added to that, more than 6,000 nurses (74 percent of that industry's workforce) and 6,600 lab technicians have left while there's a shortage of 90 percent of necessary medicines and supplies. Often, patients are turned away "because there are no surgical materials, no anesthesiologists. They don't even have chlorine to clean the cubicles," said Silvia Bolivar, a nurse at Concepcion Palacios, the biggest maternity unit in the capital Caracas.

Pregnant women are sometimes expected to bring their own disinfectant and garbage bags. Venezuela has been suffering from four years of recession in which poverty is on the rise as food has become short in supply. A caesarean section kit costs the equivalent of \$100 at the black market rate while the minimum wage is 1,800 bolivars a month. Inflation, which the International Monetary Fund predicts will reach 1.35 million percent this year has crippled the currency as United States sanctions saw foreign investment dry up.

Surging infant mortality

The effect on pregnant women has been devastating. Yasmari Vargas, 24, was suffering from preeclampsia, a condition marked by high blood pressure that can develop into a more serious one that puts both the mother and baby's lives at risk. When she arrived at

the maternity unit, it was closed. The hours passed, the contractions became stronger and her baby ended up on the floor, welcomed into the world with a bump to its head.

"When he fell, they didn't even help me pick him up, there was nothing to cut the umbilical cord. It was a mess," she said. Carolina Rojas, 22, almost lost her daughter after her caesarian section was postponed several times. "One day there was no specialist, the next the pediatrician or the anesthesiologist didn't turn up," said Rojas. Her daughter swallowed amniotic fluid and spent eight days in hospital after she was born.

Infant mortality rose 30 percent in 2016, with the deaths of 11,466 babies up to a year old, according to the latest Health Ministry figures. Despite refusing to acknowledge the country's public health problems, President Nicolas Maduro launched a program to reduce the number of caesarian section births, but a year later he admitted it hadn't provided the expected results.

Terrible year

Suffering from post-natal pain, 32-year-old Yohanni Guarayote forced her way into the Negra Hipolita maternity unit, which locks its doors at night due to crime in the area. She was only able to have two prenatal check-ups because she couldn't pay for a private clinic as her husband is unemployed. "Some days



CARACAS: A relative checks on a patient at a room of the University Hospital in Caracas. — AFP

the doctor didn't turn up, others there was no water, and so on," she said. Her arms are so thin they look like a child's.

During the pregnancy, she barely reached 43 kilograms, eating mostly sardines, yucca and squash. "Now, I'm like a stick," she said,

reclining in a sweltering room with six beds but no sheets. She receives government subsidies but with another three children to feed, she says it's "not enough." "This year has been terrible for pregnant women. They need to show more love to motherhood." — AFP

Swiss poised to reject bid to save cow horns

GENEVA: Swiss voters yesterday appeared set to reject a proposed constitutional amendment to preserve cow horns while approving a law that gives insurance companies broad leeway to spy on suspected welfare cheats. The third measure on the ballot, a rightwing proposal that would have given Swiss judges supremacy over world courts, was also headed for defeat, according to provisional results released by the GFS Bern polling and research firm.

The poll is part of Switzerland's famous direct democracy system, in which voters cast ballots on national issues four times a year. The cow horn initiative was launched by livestock farmer Armin Capaul, who captured widespread media attention after he secured the more than 100,000 signatures needed to force a vote in an upstart campaign that began with few resources and no political support.

The proposal did not call for a ban on dehorning but sought a constitutional amendment that would have created incentives for farmers to let horns grow. Capaul said his campaign was inspired by conversations with his herd in his home of Perrefitte, a municipality in the heart of the Jura mountain range.

Environmental and animal rights groups ultimately joined Capaul's effort but it was opposed by the government, which argued farmers had to remain free to manage their livestock as they saw fit. Provisional results from GFS Bern said the proposal was likely to be rejected, with 54 percent voting against.

Insurance company spies

Voters were, however, poised to approve a measure in which the government sought consent for legal revisions passed in March that outline the type surveillance insurance companies can use to expose potential fraudsters. Insurers in the wealthy Alpine nation had long spied on customers they suspected of making false



SWITZERLAND: In this photograph a cow grazes ahead of the nationwide vote of his initiative to offer monetary assistance to owners who don't dehorn their livestock, near Perrefitte, northern Switzerland. — AFP

claims, but that came to a stop following a 2016 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, which said unregulated spying amounted to a violation of privacy.

The government insists that surveillance is necessary to curb insurance fraud and in turn keep costs low for all. Sixty-seven percent of voters supported the revised law, according to GFS Bern's provisional results. "What the Swiss wanted to show was that the social safety net is important, but that (for it to work) we all have to be absolutely responsible," Benjamin Roduit of the centre-right Christian Democratic Party told public broadcaster RTS.

Critics argued that the measures were hastily written under pressure from the insurance company lobby and do not explicitly prohibit serious, unjustified invasions of privacy. Legal analysts have noted that the law does not prohibit insurers, or the detectives they hire, from recording or filming someone who is on their private

balcony or in their garden, provided those areas are visible from a public space.

Supreme Law

Voters also looked set to overwhelmingly reject the initiative dubbed "Swiss Law First," which called for domestic law to be placed above international law. The rightwing, anti-migrant Swiss People's Party (SVP) sought to portray the measure as essential for safeguarding national sovereignty. But the government and business groups were staunchly opposed, warning that hundreds of trade deals vital to the Swiss economy as well as the country's reputation would have been threatened by a formal repudiation of international courts. "It is a huge defeat," SVP vice president Celine Amaudruz told RTS after just 33 percent of voters supported the proposal, according to provisional results. — AFP

Congo approves clinical trials for Ebola treatments

KINSHASA: Congolese authorities have authorized clinical trials for four experimental Ebola treatments, which will allow researchers to collect valuable data about their effectiveness, the health ministry said on Saturday. Health workers have already administered therapeutic treatments to more than 150 Ebola patients since August in an effort to contain the worst of Democratic Republic of Congo's 10 outbreaks of the hemorrhagic fever since 1976.

But until now doctors have decided which treatment to use on a case-by-case basis. In the clinical trial, the choice of treatment will now be randomized. Treatment will still be free of charge, the ministry added in a statement. "Precious information about the effectiveness of the treatments obtained during the clinical trial will allow for the development of these treatments on a wider scale to save more lives," the ministry said.

The four treatments are mAb114, which was developed by the US government; ZMapp, an intravenous treatment made by Mapp Biopharmaceutical; Remdesivir, made by Gilead Sciences; and Regeneron's REGN-EB3. As of last weekend, 151 patients had received one of the four drugs. Of those, 76 had recovered, 44 had died and 31 were still hospitalized—a mortality rate of 37 percent. By contrast, among those who had not received treatment, the mortality rate was close to 80 percent.

The ministry said that the data from the current outbreak would probably not be sufficient to make definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the treatments and that the trials could continue during future outbreaks. Despite the use of the treatments as well as an experimental vaccine manufactured by Merck, authorities have struggled to contain the outbreak due to widespread militia violence in eastern Congo and community resistance to health workers. At least 228 people are believed to have died, and the World Health Organization said last week that it expects the outbreak to last at least another six months.—Reuters

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What's On

LOYAC honors volunteers; concludes 2018 activities



LOYAC's deputy board chairperson, Fadiya Al-Marzouq expressed her pride and gratitude to the volunteers who had contributed to achieving LOYAC's goals through its purposeful programs. Speaking on a special ceremony held to honor LOYAC's distinguished volunteers and concluding the 2018 activities held at the Elevation Burger restaurant, Al-Marzouq stressed that volunteers had donated much of their time and effort adding that volunteers were increasing in each program.

Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait celebrates Armed Forces Day



On the occasion of 47th Anniversary of "Armed Forces Day" of Bangladesh, the Ambassador of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh S M Abul Kalam, Major General Bader Ahmed Al Awady, Assistant Chief of Staff (administration and Manpower) of Kuwait Armed Forces and Defense Attache Brigadier General Shah Sagirul Islam, ndc, afwc, psc, lauded very highly the relationship between Kuwait and Bangladesh Armed Forces as historic and outstanding. They had been speaking on the occasion of the reception hosted by the Defense Wing, Embassy of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh at JW Marriott, Kuwait City. Major General Bader Ahmed Al Awady of Kuwait Armed Forces attended as the chief guest.

The ambassador expressed great honor and respect towards the contribution of Father of the Nation Bangubandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, valiant soldiers, men and women in the war of Independence of Bangladesh. He also mentioned about the contribution of the member of

Bangladesh Armed Forces who sacrificed their lives for the liberation and reconstruction of Kuwait, UN Peace Keeping Missions as well as for the sovereignty of Bangladesh. Major General Awady also lauded and praised the contribution made by Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel in liberating Kuwait and supporting them thereafter.

On this special occasion, Honorable President, Prime Minister and Defense Minister and respected chiefs of three services of Bangladesh sent their greetings and special messages highlighting the great contribution of Bangladesh Armed Forces in the national and international arena. Many diplomats, defense attaches of different embassies, officers of the Kuwait Armed Forces, local elites, other dignitaries, officers of Bangladesh Military Contingents, media personnel and members of the Bangladesh community attended the event. Bangladesh Military Contingent in Kuwait also organized a day long program in their headquarters at Sobhan Military Area to observe the day.

Lulu Hypermarket felicitates winners of 'Live for Free' promotion



Lulu hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, held a prize-distribution ceremony on November 22, 2018, at its Al Rai outlet for winners of its 'Live For Free' promotion. The felicitation ceremony was attended by a gathering of top management from Lulu hypermarket Kuwait, officials and well-wishers. A total of 25 winners of the Live for Free promotion were declared after their names were picked out in a raffle draw.

During the promotion, which was organized from October 24 to November 3, 2018, shoppers were entitled to one raffle coupon for every KD 5 worth of purchase at any Lulu Hypermarket outlet that then made them eligible to enter the raffle draw. The first-prize winner was awarded KD600-worth of gift vouchers, while the remaining 24 prize winners each received KD 200-worth of gift vouchers. The gift vouchers could be redeemed only for supermarket items at Lulu Hypermarket.



The 'Live For Free' promotion was part of the hypermarket's ongoing endeavor to strengthen its relationship with customers by rewarding brand loyalty. Lulu Hypermarket is well-known for its diverse and extensive product offering, in addition to providing high-quality

products at competitive prices. The hypermarket's value-back promotions are a big factor in maintaining customer loyalty, with shoppers feeling they are getting the best possible value from their purchases, in addition to opening new avenues for them to be winners.

NBK joins 'clean up the world' global campaign

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) joined the cleanup campaign "#yistahil_w6any" to clean Kuwait beaches. This participation comes as a part of the bank's support to the Kuwaiti Community Group "MW6INY" in its membership in the "Clean up the World" global campaign. NBK provided Environmental tools to the participants in addition to recycled items to raise awareness. More than 20 NBK employees participated in this campaign that covered the free zone in Shuwaikh.

NBK's Public Relations Team Leader,



Yaqoub Al-Baqer, said "NBK is always keen to adopt initiatives that promote sustainability. NBK is the first friendly environment bank in Kuwait and is proud to pioneer awareness practices and initiatives to protect the environment." Al Baqer added: "Today we are moving towards new prospects in protecting the environment through sustainable initiatives, which is one of the most important practices driving the Bank's social responsibility objectives for the coming years."

Al Baqer noted that the importance of being a member in this "Clean up the World" global campaign lays in the values added to the environmental work locally. The initiative facilitates the work of participants and develops their capacities to carry out their own environmental campaigns, especially that it will maintain constant contact with its members around the world to provide them with new ways to protect Environment and tools to implement and pro-

mote "save the environment" initiatives.

This environmental campaign aims to inspire and empower Kuwaiti individuals and community clean up, fix up and conserve the environment. It aims to make Kuwait more beautiful through community activities targeting the environment. "MW6INY" is a Kuwaiti community group that aims to raise awareness amongst the citizens of Kuwait. MW6INY believes in clean energy, a healthy environment, peace and prosperity, and accountability and hard work. It aims to make Kuwait more beautiful through community activities targeting the environment.



Yaqoub Al Baqer

GUST hosts TEDx event on campus

Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST) hosted its first ever TEDx event on its campus last week - TEDxGUST. The theme for TEDxGUST was 'Make Your Mark, Mark Your Making'. It was curated to ignite discussions on the deep-rooted, but often overlooked, links between art and design and their impact on one's community. This unique relationship is given the term "social design", and the theme was explored by means of six locally and internationally renowned speakers who have used art and design to empower and uplift their communities.

Through the multi-disciplinary speakers and projects featured during TEDxGUST 2018, the audience was exposed to a range

of community driven examples that feature design thinking as the primary driver for the betterment of society. TEDxGUST started with two prerecorded TED talks, one on how the November movement started, and the second on how online activism sparked the Arab Spring in Egypt.

This was followed by the evening's first speaker, Mohammad Abuhakmeh aka Mostarr, Kuwait's most prominent graffiti artist. Mostarr is an ambassador for Amaphiko Academy in South Africa where he works with poverty marginalized children. Many speakers such as Lynn Berry, a fiber artist from Australia, Wakim Zeidan, co-founder and general director of Nuqat, Lubna Saif Abbas is a well-known local artisan, jeweler, and caretaker of the Yadawi Studio spoke at the event. The TEDxGUST event ended with Richard Camacho, an architect with offices in Portugal, Kuwait and the USA, and a professor at Kuwait University and Northeastern University.

Antonia Jolic, instructor at the GUST Mass Communication and Media



Department and main organizer of the TEDxGUST event, said: "It's so great to bring together so many talented individuals who have made such a long-lasting impact on their communities through the power of art and design. We have so much potential here in Kuwait, and I hope that through this event, we will inspire people not only to unlock their buried talents, but to use that talent to make their lives and the lives of those around them better."

The TEDx event was the first to be held at the university, and was open to the public. The university often hosts high profile

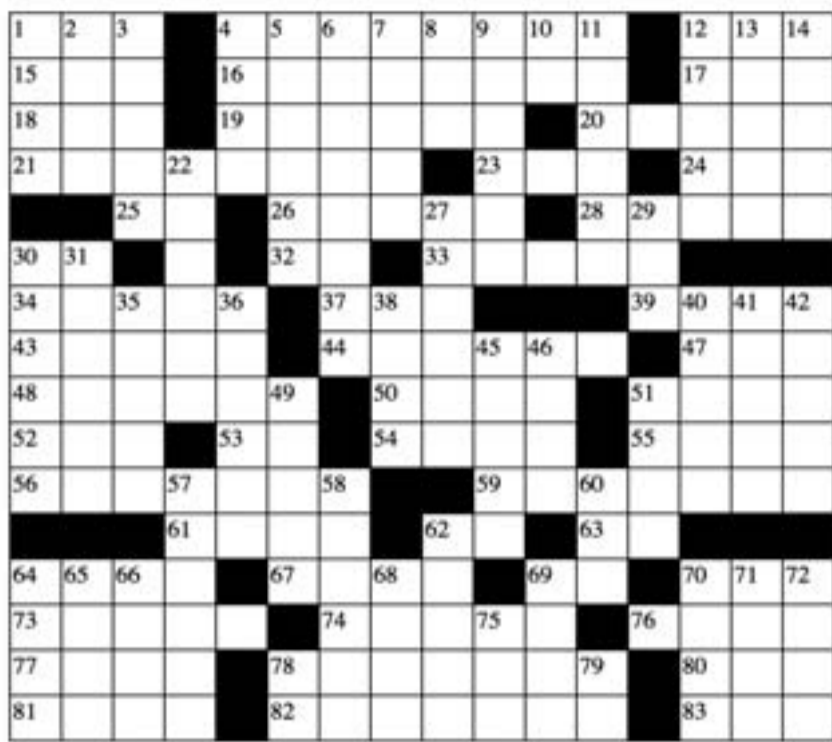


events, such as the recently held International Federation for Information Processing Conference, the Kuwait Computer Programming Competition, and

The Seen 2 Conference, a four-day creative industry conference which celebrated local visual communicators. The university is set to host more events in the near future.

Stars

CROSSWORD 2068



ACROSS

1. Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc.
4. Increase in extent or intensity.
12. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
15. Grass mowed and cured for use as fodder.
16. Inflammation of the eyelid.
17. (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.
18. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
19. Separate or cut with a tool, such as a sharp instrument.
20. Botswana statesman who was the first president of Botswana (1921-1980).
21. A native or resident of Wales.
23. Being two more than fifty.
24. Ratio of the adjacent side to the hypotenuse.
25. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
26. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in Missouri in the valleys of the Missouri and Osage rivers.
28. United States neoclassical architect (1847-1909).
30. A chronic progressive nervous disorder involving loss of myelin sheath around certain nerve fibers.
32. A state in New England.
33. A city in southern Finland.
34. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
37. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
39. Any of various aromatic resinous substances used for healing and soothing.
43. Soviet chief of secret police under Joseph Stalin.
44. (Jewish) Roasted fowl intestines with a seasoned filling of matzo meal and suet.
47. Chiefly perennial grasses of cool temperate regions.
48. A bowl-shaped opening at the top of a volcano.
50. Title for the former hereditary monarch of Iran.
52. Black tropical American cuckoo.
53. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
54. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
55. An article deposited as security.
56. A member of the majority people of Punjab in northwestern India.
59. Genus of shrubs of southwestern United States and Mexico.
61. A slight rounded elevation where the malleus attaches to the eardrum.
63. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
64. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
67. A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
73. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
74. The table in Christian churches where communion is given.
76. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
77. Exhibiting or restored to vigorous good health.
80. The syllable naming the first (tonic) note of any major scale in solmization.
81. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
82. Someone who has red hair.
83. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.

DOWN

1. A wad of something chewable as tobacco.
2. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
3. City in Sudan.
4. Make an etching of.
5. Any of various large food and game fishes of northern waters.
6. Evergreen mat-forming shrub of North America and northern Eurasia having small white flowers and red berries.
7. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
8. Being four more than fifty.
9. Spider monkeys.
10. A light strong gray lustrous corrosion-resistant metallic element used in strong light-weight alloys (as for airplane parts).
11. A member of a people inhabiting the Arctic (northern Canada or Greenland or Alaska or eastern Siberia).
12. Having the wind against the forward side of the sails.
13. A river in southeastern Australia that flows generally northwest to join the Darling River.
14. A painful and involuntary muscular contraction.
22. (archaic) Strict and severe.
27. A Japanese woman trained to entertain men with conversation and singing and dancing.
29. Nut of any of several trees of the genus Corylus.
31. A genus of Sterninae.
35. Public transport provided by a line of railway cars coupled together and drawn by a locomotive.
36. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
38. A database containing an ordered array of items (names or topics).
40. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
41. United States pharmacologist (born in Germany) who was the first to show that acetylcholine is produced at the junction between a parasympathetic nerve and a muscle (1873-1961).
42. Hardened sugary exudation of various trees.
45. Australian shrubs and small trees with evergreen usually spiny leaves and dense clusters of showy flowers.
46. An inn in some Eastern countries with a large courtyard that provides accommodation for caravans.
49. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation.
51. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
57. The southern part of the ancient Palestine succeeding the kingdom of Judah.
58. Add ions to.
60. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
62. All the loaves of bread baked at the same time.
65. Dearly loved.
66. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
68. Wearing or provided with clothing.
69. An elaborate song for solo voice.
70. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
71. Little known Kamarupan languages.
72. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
75. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
78. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
79. Being one hundred more than three hundred.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A big test of your patience will come in the form of a rather demanding person today. But don't worry -- the universe has loaded you up with an extra supply of tolerance, so you will be prepared for whatever comes your way. None of your feathers can get ruffled right now, so it might be the perfect time to have that conversation you've been putting off with a relative. Your criticism shields are nearly impenetrable, so a long lecture is something you'll be able to tolerate easily today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your practical side is in total control today, so this is a good time to confront temptation. No matter what it is, you'll be able to handle it. Give that diet one more try today, and you could discover that you have a hidden stash of self-discipline that has just been waiting to be set free! Frivolous parties, gossipy small talk and other sorts of trivial interests are not going to hold any allure. You're all about substance and utilitarianism.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

No matter what you do today, do it with conviction. Now is not the time to be wishy-washy, or to drop something once it starts to get boring. Today you have to commit. Save the flighty behavior for another time, when no one is counting on you and you have the freedom to flit from one thing to another. If you are too unpredictable now, you run the risk of confusing people who need to have confidence in you. Even if you have to fake your conviction, do it.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

If you haven't made time to socialize with your friends recently, make that your number-one priority today. Schedule a date with your closest friend -- or, better yet, plan a day trip to your favorite shopping or sporting destination. Doing something active is better than sitting in a movie theater. Don't worry about creating quality time; just have fun. Right now, quantity does mean more than quality, no matter what the relationship experts on TV tell you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It can be very easy to confuse stubborn behavior with determination. Make sure you're not giving a negative label to someone who is merely doing what he or she thinks is right. Resist making any judgments about the questionable behavior of the people around you today -- they have more power over you than you might think. Plus, they may have no choice. Adopt a 'live and let live' attitude, and you will avoid a great deal of stress and unwanted scrutiny.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Shaping your personal philosophy is not a luxury. The longer you put off making the tough decisions, the harder finding internal strength when you need it will be. You already have most of your concepts about living formed, but they haven't solidified yet -- they're still somewhat malleable. Large personalities could influence you, so be careful that you don't let someone else's views about life change who you want to be.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Kindness will play a major role in your day. You are meant to find a new understanding of reciprocity. Give to others what you want to get from them, and everything will work out the way you need it to. If you've been feeling alienated by anyone lately, today is the day to reach out and try for a soft, sweet connection. Be honest and compassionate about how you feel, and remember that thinking about others' feelings is a wise way to proceed in life.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have been enjoying a powerful phase of life, and your potency is not about to weaken any time soon. But you should beware of forces beyond your control today. Unexpected wrinkles in your plan could cause you some frustration if you don't take the initiative and meet every challenge head-on. Do not try to do everything by yourself. You know whom you need on your team, so get the word out and rally the troops around your cause.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The heady thrill of excessive behavior will tempt you today, but it is time to take a more conservative stance. Watch your money, avoid going shopping and don't overeat. Cutting back where you tend to go overboard will not be as difficult as it may have been in the past, partially because you've recently learned some lessons the hard way. Food is not going to give you any comfort today, so ignore your sweet tooth.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Unenthusiastic people might test your endurance, but today your creativity is at an all-time high, and you are up for the challenge! You can make this day a blast, even if you're stuck in a boring situation with a bunch of folks who think talking about the weather is a scintillating conversation. Use your imagination -- it's your ticket out of boredom every time. Toss a life-line to other bored folks and suggest alternative places for your minds to wander.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You have always had a gift for being tactful, but lately, you may have been feeling that people who use a sledgehammer approach with their foes are getting further than you ever have with well-chosen words. This is not true. In reality, you keep the upper hand by using the subtle approach. So if you feel a need for persuasion today, have confidence that you can be forceful without losing your dignity -- and get exactly what you want.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Communication could be tough today -- there are assumptions being made, and they're causing people to put up their defenses and resist listening to logic. It's not up to you to change their minds, so don't even try. Just don't back down from what you believe, and don't back down from sharing your beliefs as you see fit. Emails, phone calls and other forms of communication are all fair game to everyone. Feel free to use them to get your point across.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Moods & Emotions 1

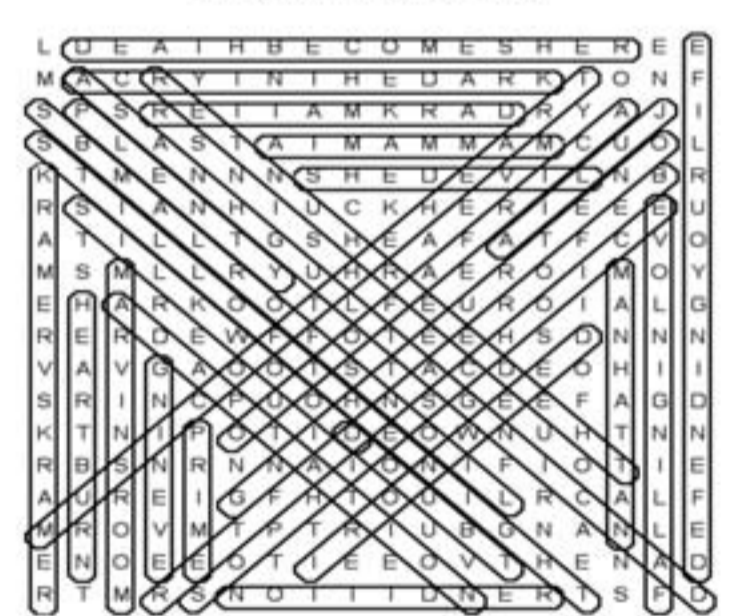
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 12 letters spell an additional word.



- | | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|----------|
| AFRAID | ELATION | JADED | PEACEFUL |
| AGITATED | FURIOUS | JOVIAL | PLEASED |
| ANGUISH | GENIAL | LONELY | REMORSE |
| BLUE | GLOOMY | LOVE | SOMBER |
| BORED | GROUCHY | MELLOW | SUNNY |
| CHEERY | HELPLESS | MERRY | SYMPATHY |
| DARK | HOPEFUL | MISERY | UNEASY |
| DOWN | HUMILIATED | OFFENDED | UPBEAT |
| DREAD | HURT | ORNERY | WEARY |
| EDGY | IRKED | PANIC | |

Yesterday's Solution

Meryl Streep Movies



- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| A CRY IN THE DARK | HEARTBURN | OUT OF AFRICA |
| ADAPTATION | IRONWEED | PLENTY |
| BEFORE AND AFTER | JULIA | PRIME |
| DANCING AT LUGHNASA | KRAMER VS. KRAMER | RENDITION |
| 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 | |

The hidden movie is: LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



medium

Yesterday's Solution



easy

Lifestyle

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2018



An Indian resident looks out of her window next to wall art created by Manuel M de Las Heras from Spain and members of the House Of Berserk as part of the Dhal-Ni-Pol heritage festival in Ahmedabad. — AFP

Hand in hand, Koreas seek to end UNESCO wrestling

North and South Korea have long grappled over their joint symbols at the United Nations culture organization UNESCO, but they could share the honors this week when twin applications for traditional Korean wrestling come up for consideration. The two Koreas are still technically at war after the 1950-53 conflict ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty, sealing the division of the peninsula with an impenetrable border.

But despite their vast differences, the democratic South and the communist North share the same language, culture and traditions dating back thousands of years, resulting in subtle rivalry for UNESCO inscriptions in recent years. South Korea added its tradition of making kimchi—a fermented cabbage dish widely enjoyed across the peninsula—to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2013, prompting the North to seek the same status for its own version, granted in 2015.

The Korean folk song "Arirang" has a similar story—the South's was recognized in 2012, followed by the North's two years later. "The South and North are registered as different countries at the UNESCO so we have been working separately," said the South's Cultural Heritage Administration, which handles UNESCO applications.

But for traditional Korean wrestling, ssireum, the South applied in 2016, a year after the North—which uses a different system to render Korean into English and transliterates it as ssirum. The rival applications will come up for consideration at a UNESCO meeting in Mauritius this week. But propelled by a rapid diplomatic thaw on the peninsula, there is speculation of a first joint inscription. In a meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in Paris last month, UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay suggested the requests be combined.

Moon has long backed engagement with the



Ssireum wrestlers compete in the Korea Open Ssireum Festival in Andong. — AFP photos

nuclear-armed North to bring it to the negotiating table, and Seoul welcomed the idea. "It would create new opportunities for further inter-Korean cooperation on cultural heritage," the Cultural Heritage Administration said in a statement to AFP. Pyongyang has yet to make an official comment.

'Single identity'

Ssireum is among the oldest surviving sports in Korea, with fourth century murals from the Goguryeo dynasty depicting men grappling with each other in the traditional game. A ssireum match has some similarities to Japanese sumo but begins with two wrestlers facing each other on their knees in a sandpit ring, holding onto a cloth sash tied around the waist and using their strength and technique to knock the opponent to the ground. The sport has been part of village festivals for centuries

and nationwide competitions are still held every Chuseok—the Korean harvest festival—on either side of the border. "A joint inscription would establish a sense of homogeneity or a single identity between the South and North," said Kim Dong-sun, a professor of sports science at Kyonggi University.

In the North, ssirum's development was a priority for late founder Kim Il Sung, who personally set up a special department dedicated to the sport in 1946, according to documents submitted to UNESCO by Pyongyang. South Korea spends more than \$1 million annually for its preservation, despite dwindling popularity. Ssireum thrived in the mid-1980s under authoritarian president Chun Doo-hwan, who sought to stabilize political unrest by diverting public attention with sports.

Major televised matches captured more than half the viewing audience. But profession-



Ssireum wrestlers weigh-in during the Korea Open Ssireum Festival in Andong.

al teams—sponsored by major conglomerates such as Samsung—have since disbanded, and last week a national ssireum competition saw only a handful of spectators scattered in a gymnasium in Andong.

Pushover win

Chung In-ki, director general of the South's Korea Ssireum Association, said a joint inscription would facilitate exchanges with Pyongyang, which would be a "boon" for ongoing efforts to revitalize the little-watched sport. There has been only one inter-Korean ssireum competition, on the South's Jeju island in 2003 under the liberal Roh Moo-hyun government. An agreement to make it a regular event fell through after conservative administrations were elected in the South with a tougher stance against the North.

Chung revealed plans to invite North

Korean wrestlers to Seoul next month. But the Koreans' decades-long division has seen some differences emerge in their rules and styles. In the South, the wrestlers are topless and only wear tight shorts, while in the North they don sleeveless jackets. Southern matches are held on sand while the North uses a round mattress. The logistics can be adjusted simply but the Southerners would win easily, said Kim Tae-woo, a coach who attended the 2003 joint event, given the "considerable difference" between them. "At that time their skill level was that of a very good high school wrestler in the South," he said at the event in Andong, some 190 kilometers (118 miles) south of Seoul. South Korean competitors welcomed the prospect. "It's a national sport so it would be appropriate for North and South to do it together," said Kim Hyang-sik, 31. "But I do think we will win for sure." — AFP



Ssireum wrestlers compete during the 80kg qualifying round of the Korea Open Ssireum Festival in Andong.



Ssireum wrestlers compete during the Korea Open Ssireum Festival.



Ssireum wrestlers prepare to compete during the Korea Open Ssireum Festival.



Ssireum wrestlers prepare to compete during the Korea Open Ssireum Festival.



Recipient of the Best Female Central Africa artist Cameroonian singer Daphne accepts her award onstage during the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) at the Accra Conference Centre. — AFP photos



Recipient of the the Best Female Central Africa artist Cameroonian singer Daphne performs onstage.



Congoese artist Fally Ipupa performs on stage.

Nigeria's Davido wins AFRIMA artist of the year



Recipient of the Best Female artist from Eastern Africa, Female Artist Revelation of the Year and Best Album of the Year, Ethiopian singer Betty G speaks onstage.

Nigeria's Davido took home the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) trophy for artist of the year, leading a strong showing for the West African powerhouse famous for its roster of Afrobeats stars. Musicians from across the continent came to the Accra International Conference Centre in Ghana's capital on Saturday to walk the red carpet and celebrate a year of big hits. Betty G from Ethiopia took home album of the year, while best African DJ went to Afrotronix, who has roots in Chad.

Nigerian rapper Falz took home the award for best African rapper after courting controversy this year when he released "This is Nigeria", a cover of the Childish Gambino hit that skewered modern Nigeria. "Akwaaba", an infectious collaboration between GuiltyBeatz, Mr Eazi, Patapaa and Pappy Kojo won song of the year and best African collaboration. Nigeria's 2Baba won the award for best African pop. Ghana's Stonebwoy for best reggae, and South Africa's Sibusiso Mashiloane for best jazz. Kuami Eugene, a Ghanaian crooner, was named the "most promising" artist in Africa. AFRIMA has carved out a space as a platform to showcase the innovative and prolific African music industry that has exploded in the past decade. —AFP



Recipient of the Best Male artist from Eastern Africa Ugandan singer Bebe Cool speaks onstage.



Ethiopian singer Betty G performs onstage.



Recipient of the Best Female artist from Northern Africa Algerian singer Lyna Mahyem accepts her award onstage.



Recipient of the Best DJ artist Chadian DJ Afrotronix accepts his award onstage.



Recipient of the Best Female artist from Southern Africa, South African singer Shekhinah, reacts as she receives her award.



Ghanaian dancers perform onstage.

Lifestyle Awards

AFRIMA winner list:

REGIONAL CATEGORY

Best Female Artiste in Central Africa

- Daphne / Cameroon / Jusqu'a La Gare

Best Male Artiste in Central Africa

- Fally Ipupa / DRC / Mannequin Ft Keback & Naz

Best Female Artiste in Eastern Africa

- Betty G / Ethiopia / Mengedegna

Best Male Artiste in Eastern Africa

- Bebe Cool / Uganda / Freedom

Best Female Artiste in Northern Africa

- Lyna Mahyem ft Medi Meyz / Algeria / Bye Bye

Best Male Artiste in Northern Africa

- Hamza El Fadly / Morocco / Ya Mraya

Best Female Artiste in Southern Africa

- Shekhinah / South Africa / Please Mr

Best Male Artiste in Southern Africa

- Nasty C / South Africa / Jungle

Best Female Artiste in Western Africa

- Tiwa Savage / Nigeria / Ma Lo Ft. Wizkid & Spellz

Best Male Artiste in Western Africa

- Davido / Nigeria / Fia

CONTINENTAL CATEGORY

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- Betty G / Ethiopia / Wegegta

ARTISTE OF THE YEAR

- Davido / Nigeria / FIA

BEST AFRICAN VIDEO

- Sesan / Gringo (Shatta Wale) / Nigeria

BEST AFRICAN ACT IN DIASPORA

- Hazel Mak / Malawi / Jaiva Ft. Roberto & Tay Grin

BEST AFRICAN COLLABORATION

- GuiltyBeatz, Mr. Eazi, Patapaa & Pappy Kojo / Ghana-Nigeria / Akwaaba

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN CONTEMPORARY

- Kidi / Ghana / Odo Remix Ft. Mayorkun & Davido

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN DANCE OR CHOREOGRAPHY

- Mr P. / Nigeria / Ebeano

BEST AFRICAN DJ

- Afrotronix / Chad / OyO

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN ELECTRO

- Master KG / South Africa / Skeleton Move Ft. Zanda Zakuza

BEST AFRICAN DUO, GROUP OR BAND

- Toofan / Togo / Money

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN HIP HOP

- M.ANIFEST FT KING PROMISE / Ghana / ME NE WOA

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN JAZZ

- Sibusiso Mashiloane / South Africa / Niza

BEST AFRICAN RAPPER OR LYRICIST

- Falz / Nigeria / La Fite

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN POP

- 2Baba / Nigeria / Amaka Ft. Peruzzi

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN RAGGA, REGGAE & DANCEHALL

- Stonebwoy / Ghana / Hero

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN R 'N' B & SOUL

- Praiz / Nigeria / Champagne and Flowers

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN ROCK

- Maryam Saleh, Maurice Louca, Tamer Abu Ghazaleh / Egypt / Ekaa Maksour

BEST ARTISTE, DUO OR GROUP IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL

- Irene Namatovu / Uganda / Nsambila Nyuma Nga Janzi

BEST FEMALE ARTISTE IN AFRICAN INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC

- Sandra Nankoma / Uganda / Kaddugala

BEST MALE ARTISTE IN AFRICAN INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC

- Sarkodie / Ghana / Glory Ft. Yung

MOST PROMISING ARTISTE IN AFRICA

- Kuami Eugene / Ghana / Confusion

PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

- Fresh VDM / Togo / Fia

REVELATION OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

- Betty G / Ethiopia / Ere Manew

SONG OF THE YEAR

- GuiltyBeatz, Mr. Eazi, Patapaa & Pappy Kojo / Akwaaba / Ghana

SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

- Shekhinah Donell, Amon Taulo Chibiya II / South Africa / Different Ft. Mariechan

AFRICAN FANS' FAVOURITE

- Nedy Music / Tanzania / One and Only Ft. Ruby-dailyng



Recipient of the Best artist in African electro South African Musician Master KG speaks onstage.



Hostesses pay attention to the last instructions before the awards ceremony of the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) at the Accra International Conference Centre in Accra.



Recipient of the Best Female artist in African Inspirational Music Ugandan singer Sandra Nankoma speaks onstage.



Togolese band Toofan performs onstage.



Nigerian musician Mr Real performs onstage.



Recipient of the Best Male artist from Northern Africa, Moroccan singer Hamza el Fadly accepts his award onstage.



Ghanaian musician Patapaa performs onstage.



Solomon "Sol" Amarfo (center) of Afrobeat band Osibisa receives the Legend Award in recognition of the band's career.



Ghanaian Afro pop singer-songwriter Wiyaala performs on stage.



South African songwriter Yvonne Chaka Chaka performs on stage.



Ghanaian singer Wiyala



Ghanaian rapper Stonebwoy speaks during the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA).



South African singer Shekhinah

Lifestyle | Features



A view of the wig department at the Opera Bastille in Paris.— AFP photos



Brazilian academician Tulio Morais (right) listens his tutor Anne-Marie Legrand.

Back stage, Paris Opera keeps venerable crafts alive

At the Paris Opera, people often say that for the curtain to rise on its stars, the talents of 100 different trades are needed behind the scenes. Thanks to an academy, founded in 2015, to preserve some of those specialized crafts, Brazilian Tulio Morais will finally realize his dream of learning to make ballet tutus. Every year, around 40 students like Morais train in skills such as costume making, wig design and tapestry, as well as lyrical singing and music, at the heart of the opera company, which celebrates its 350th anniversary next year.

While other opera houses have workshops in singing and sewing, Paris Opera, the largest in Europe, is the "only one in the world that teaches such a large number of arts", Myriam Mazouzi, the academy director, told AFP. The concept is to pass on the knowledge of these crafts at risk of disappearing to already experienced professionals who can safeguard the know-how. "In some sectors it was a real struggle to recruit people," the director said.

In the female costume department at the opera's historic Palais Garnier site in central Paris, tutor and workshop head Anne-Marie Legrand promises Morais that he will soon put together his first tutu for "Swan Lake" in January. She runs him through the process, from costume design to fitting and adjusting the volumes. "I always dreamed of making timeless clothes," says Morais, who is discovering new stitching and finishing techniques. With ready-to-wear collections, "it lasts six months, a costume on stage, it's for life".

Bygone hairstyles

Nearby, dozens of white tutus are hanging up in a historic room known as "central". "There are very few people in the world who know" how to make this emblematic ballet skirt, which was first created at Paris Opera in the 19th century, Legrand said. "There is no real school for this," she added. According to the director, fashion designer Christian Lacroix said that the Paris Opera was the only place in the world that really knows how to work with tulle fabric. Legrand said that when she joined the Paris Opera 36 years ago, tutu making was a jealously guarded secret, transmitted from seamstress to seamstress. "Someone needs to guide you" in gathering the pleats and layers of the tutu, she said.

In another workshop, a tutor runs through the intricacies of wig making and student Camille Laurent learns to distinguish styles from 1830 and 1850. "When I tell people I am a wig maker, they say to me: 'You're a what?'" she laughs. Her teacher, Clothilde Loosveldt, shows how to implant hair, strand by strand, with a hook and create the long wigs of rigid tight curls popular among men in the 18th century. One wig can take 10 days to make. "If the volume is not good, if the bun is not the right height, then we can easily slip from one era to another," said the wigmaker who has worked at the Paris Opera for 20 years.

'Codes and habits'

At the Paris Opera's Bastille site, violinist Marin Lamacque, 24, rehearses a difficult score of music from Verdi's opera "Simon Boccanegra".

His tutor Thibault Vieux urges him to play with more emphasis. As well as working directly on a production, the school also "passes on the codes, the habits" that belong just to the Paris Opera, Vieux said. "We play Tosca like this, and Carmen like that," he said. "Often the teachers of our teachers worked together with the composers."

As an example, he quoted the three-act opera "Dialogues des Carmelites" (Dialogues of the Carmelites) created at the Paris Opera by Francis Poulenc in 1956. Students, selected by resume for the crafts, and by audition for the musicians and singers, are in residence for up to three years. The academy's annual budget of 3.4 million euros (\$3.9 million) is financed mostly through philanthropy, in particular from the Paris-based Bettencourt-Schueller Foundation.

The students from the class of 2018 came from across the world. For the American mezzo-soprano Jeanne Ireland, the experience surpassed all expectations, allowing her the chance to sing in one of the opera's own productions, which only a handful of the academy's students get to do. She said her time at the academy had enabled her to become the artist she had long hoped to be.

"Everybody here is cultivating our talent... and that coupled with the performance opportunities that the academy offers, it really is a fast-track to growth," said the singer, who has seen some of her idols at the Paris Opera. "Seeing them rehearse casually, it was one of those moments where I thought 'you have to pinch me'." — AFP



Academy pupil in wigmaking Camille Laurent poses at the Opera Bastille in Paris.



A wigmaker works at the Opera Bastille in Paris.



Headdresses in the costume department at the Opera Garnier in Paris.

In Beirut play, audience relives stories of rape survivors

As a child, Riham would wake up at night to her half-brother molesting her. Now she is one of seven women recounting their suffering in a play about sexual violence in Lebanon. Recordings of the women's voices ring out as the audience moves from room to room in a house in Beirut. Women's rights group ABAAD put on the play entitled "Shame on who?" this weekend.

In one room, a girl in white tries to stand up but keeps falling. In another, a woman talks to her mother but gets no response. "I chose the idea of a house because most of these incidents happen from someone very close to the (victims)," said Sahar Assaf, who conceived and directed the play. "Supposedly, the safest place for a woman should be her house."

Riham, 35, recalls how she told her mother that her half-brother had abused her for 20 years since she was eight. "She said that I was a liar and that I should never speak of such a thing," ABAAD head Ghida Anani said the play sought to empower survivors and encourage victims to report assaults.

The audience relives Ward's story from the husband's perspective as an actor paces in a bedroom. "We got married...but she started getting bothered because I used to like sleeping with her by force, from behind," he says. "Once I gave her sleeping pills and tied her up...She couldn't do anything."

Lebanon passed a long-awaited law in 2014 against domestic violence. But rights groups were outraged that authorities watered it down so much it fell short of criminalizing marital rape. Child marriage also remains legal. The United Nations says a third of women worldwide have suffered sexual or physical violence.

A 2017 national ABAAD study found that one in four women have been raped in Lebanon. Less than a quarter of those who faced sexual assault reported it, the survey said. "I felt that he was an animal eating my flesh," Hoda, whose neighbor raped her at 14, recalls in a recording in the play. "If I could turn back time the first thing I would do is go to a forensic physician to get evidence," she says. "I would refuse to be the victim. He would pay for what he did." — Reuters

Dubai Design Week concludes its fourth edition, celebrating its largest and most extensive programme to date

The region's largest creative festival welcomed 75,000 visitors into Dubai Design District (d3) from the 12-17 November and saw over 250 events by 130 participating companies, reflecting the city's position as a regional hub for design and creativity and as a key event in the global cultural calendar.

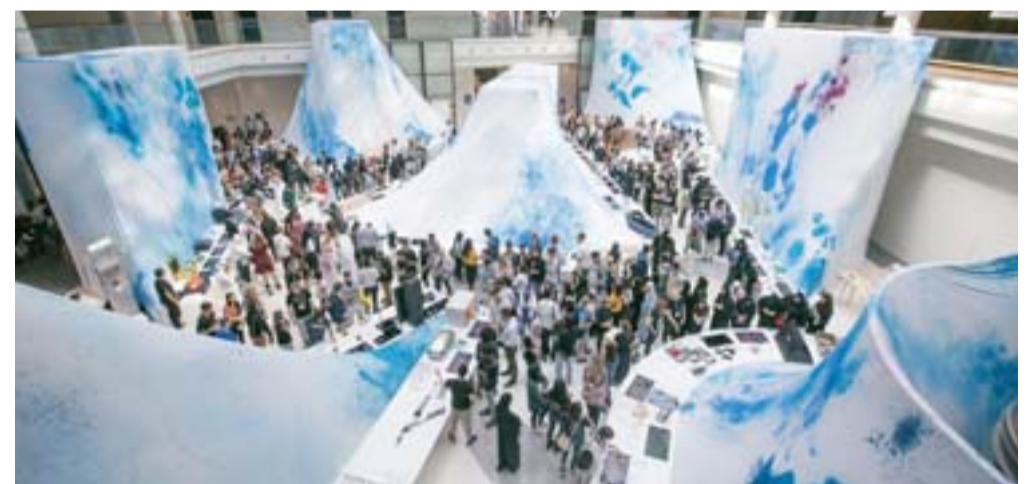
Illustrated in the growth of content in this year's Dubai Design Week, the annual festival fosters an environment that supports new ideas and welcomes the brightest minds from across the world, with a vast programme this year including the opening of the city's first contemporary arts institution, Jameel Arts Centre, and the inaugural Fikra Graphic Design Biennial, a wide-ranging exhibition and curatorial initiative dedicated to graphic design.

Saeed Al-Nabouda, Acting Director General of Dubai Culture & Arts Authority, said: "We are delighted to support Dubai Design Week, the largest creative festival in the Middle East, since its launch in 2015 as we deem it exemplary for encouraging and empowering local and international talents. This was reflected in our commissioning of the Emirati architect and designer, Abdalla Al Mulla, who showcased an inspirational design piece entitled 'Shak'l'. The event had a positive impact on Dubai's status and reputation, helping the Emirate become the first Middle Eastern city to be featured on UNESCO's 'Creative Cities Network' list, and contributing to strengthening Dubai's position as a leading design centre in the region. We are pleased to keep up with the community-based creative programmes of local talents and the presentations made by creators in Dubai to attract an increasing number of visitors, be they art enthusiasts or professionals, and help achieve Dubai Plan 2021 as a city for happy and creative individuals."

d3's Chief Executive Officer, Mohammad Saeed Al Shehhi, says: "It has been another great week here at Dubai Design District and I'm personally delighted with how well Dubai Design Week has been received. The district has again played host to a very high calibre of design installations, activations, talks and workshops which combined to bring some of the best design related content to Dubai. As a Design District, we are really cementing Dubai's role as a serious global destination for design and supporting the wide array of creativity on an international level. We already look forward to next year."

Rawan Kashkoush, Creative Director of Dubai Design Week, said: "By recognizing an undeniable hunger for Dubai to be a resource for ideas and change, the 6-day event is a mandatory tool in unveiling existing talent in the UAE and the region, and forging connections with the global community."

In line with the festival's focus on sustainability and design for the future, Dubai Design Week 2018 was supported by sustainability partner Bee'ah, whose materials were used in highlight projects and installations, including Abwab and Audi Innovation Hub. Among other partners the



Week also had the support of Abanos, Facebook, and Hills Advertising.

This year's edition of Downtown Design, the leading design fair in the Middle East, attracted 16,000 visitors and presented a wide range of established and emerging exhibitors, comprising 175 brands including 40 regional designers, the fair's strongest showcase of regional talent to date, and with 65 brands exhibiting at the fair for the first time. The inaugural section of the fair, Downtown Editions, showcased limited-edition and bespoke design from the Middle East and beyond, alongside installations and retail pop-ups.

Held in partnership with Investment Corporation of Dubai, the 2018 edition of Global Grad Show showcased 150 forward-thinking projects from universities across the world, each selected from 1000 submissions, double that of last year, and based on its power to accelerate, change and improve lives. New to this year's event was the 'Belief in AI' conference, looking at creativity in the age of Artificial Intelligence and automation and the Dubai Evolution Challenge, bringing international and UAE design students together to create the next evolution of a Dubai-inspired product or service.

The winning project of Global Grad Show's annual Progress Prize, 'Twenty' is a collection of dehydrated household products designed to reduce unnecessary emissions and waste, designed by Mirjam de Bruijn from Design Academy Eindhoven in The Netherlands. The coveted award celebrates the next generation of design talent and recognises the impact that socially and environmentally impactful design can have on the future of humankind.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Audi Innovation Awards 2018

Audi Middle East announced Lebanese designer Elias El Soueidi as the winner of the Audi Innovation Award 2018, responding to this year's theme 'Connections'. Selected from 65 submissions from across the Middle East, the winning project 'Ruin to Reality' is an app that aims to allow access to virtual 3D models of ruined historical buildings and will receive \$25,000 worth of investment in its concept. The

first of its kind in the region, the Audi Innovation Award seeks to empower local designers and inspire innovation by challenging creatives to submit entries. The 2019 theme will be announced in January.

Rado Star Prize UAE

Offering the next generation of design talent an opportunity to launch their career onto the international stage, Swiss watch makers Rado announced the first edition of the Rado Star Prize UAE during Dubai Design Week. Young designers will be able to submit their innovative proposals for a chance to be featured at Dubai Design Week 2019, focusing on the idea of design as something enduring, long-lasting and versatile. Finalists will be selected by a jury of design industry professionals and the winner will receive the prize of AED 20,000. Submissions are open until 15 May 2019.

Urban Commissions

Supported by Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (DCAA) and Dubai Design District (d3), Urban Commissions is an annual Dubai Design Week initiative that presents designers living in the UAE with an opportunity to produce an urban furniture product, unveiled during the Week and installed permanently at d3. The 2018 winning project 'Fayyd', which means overflow in Arabic, by Khalid Al-Tamimi, responded to the task of creating a water feature in order for city dwellers to maintain a connection to nature. Celebrating its fifth anniversary in 2019, Urban Commissions 5.0 will pay homage to the Deira Clocktower, one of the first monuments of the city of Dubai, with the theme 'Telling Time'.

Design 100

Part of Dubai Design District (d3)'s 'Design for Good' initiative, the winning project of Design 100, "The Reading Bench" by Sakina Kara-Sabur and Alicia Spoljar, was unveiled and on display within Downtown Editions, the inaugural fair section of Downtown Design. 100 pieces of the winning design have been produced and were available for purchase. All proceeds go to Dubai Cares.

Tissot Lady Heart Flower Powermatic 80

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Fashion is what you make of it, and the cool and contemporary Tissot Lady Heart changes its style every day to reflect the fashionable whim of its wearer. Women will love the alluring rainbow on the dial, which comes complete with a disk inside that takes seven days to turn, displaying a different hue every day of the week. Whatever her style, every woman will enjoy ensuring they can always perfectly match their outfit to the vivid shade they sport on their wrist.

Stylish details

Heritage is at the heart of this elegant piece, which unites Tissot's rich history with beautifully feminine detailing. In a stunning centerpiece, the window at twelve o'clock is represented by a flower symbolizing the Tissot family crest. This respect for tradition, together with the impressive Powermatic 80 movement at the heart which has an incredible 80 hours power reserve, shows just how highly Tissot values the strength and zest for life that defines women today.



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Kuwait Times

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Thousands of Hindu hardliners protest for controversial temple

AYODHYA, India: Tens of thousands of Hindu hardliners rallied yesterday for a temple to be built at a disputed Indian holy site, where an ancient mosque was razed in 1992 sparking deadly riots. Huge crowds of saffron-clad protesters, some waving swords and chanting "Praise Be to Ram", massed in Ayodhya in northern Uttar Pradesh state where right-wing Hindu groups want a grand temple to their god constructed. Organizers had expected 300,000 demonstrators to attend rallies in Ayodhya and two other Indian cities, with protesters arriving by bus and train throughout the day.

Security measures were beefed up, with some 5,000 additional police deployed to protest areas, especially in Ayodhya. Many Hindus believe a spot there marks the birthplace of Ram and that a medieval mosque that stood there for 460 years was only built after the destruction of an earlier temple. Hindu zealots reduced the Babri Mosque to rubble in 1992, kicking off riots across India that left thousands dead, most of them Muslims.

The site remains a flashpoint between Hindus and India's sizeable Muslim minority and the show of force by hardliners comes two weeks before the 26th anniversary of the mosque's destruction. Huge banners bearing images of the mosque being torn down by sledgehammer-wielding radicals hung at the protest, where hardline leaders called for parliament to pass a law allowing for the temple's construction. Uttar Pradesh's chief minister Yogi Adityanath, a firebrand monk who has long campaigned for the temple, unveiled plans yesterday to build the world's largest statue in Ayodhya - a 221-metre bronze likeness of Ram.

The temple controversy has been tied up in courts for decades but some headline groups are applying pressure to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue ahead of general elections in the next six months. Modi, who is running for a second term, has faced some disquiet from his core supporters who feel that he has not done enough for the cause, despite his parliamentary majority.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) he rules is a Hindu nationalist outfit with ties to some of the hardline groups rallying in Ayodhya, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Shiv Sena.

"The emotions of Hindus should not be taken for granted," said Uddhav Thackeray, the head of Shiv Sena, as quoted by the Press Trust of India. VHP leader Champat Rai told demonstrators they would only accept "the entire area" for the Ram temple and would not consider sharing the site with Muslims. Riaz Ahmed, a 50-year-old businessman from Ayodhya, said it was understandable that religious leaders would lobby for a temple in the holy city. "But what's worrying is that all this is being given a political colour," he told AFP.

More than 2,000 died in widespread riots after the mosque was torn down in 1992. Ten years later, the murder of Hindu pilgrims returning by train from Ayodhya triggered revenge attacks on Muslims in Gujarat that left more than 700 dead by government estimates. The BJP was on the margins until the 1980s when it backed the movement for construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. The promise for a temple has prominently figured in several BJP campaigns, especially in the bellwether Uttar Pradesh state, which it rules with an absolute majority.

Both Hindu and Muslim groups have petitioned India's Supreme Court to resolve the issue. But the top court has sought more time and the heavily fortified site, which looks like a small garrison town, is under its control. Speakers criticized the Supreme Court for not delivering a quick verdict in the favor of the temple, while protesters chanted: "To hell with the Supreme Court".

The delay has disappointed India's majority Hindu community, which cannot wait endlessly for a verdict, said Sharad Sharma, spokesman for the VHP, or the World Hindu Council, which has close ties with the BJP. Both the BJP and VHP and their parent movement,



AYODHYA, India: Indians watch a model of the Ram temple during the 'Dharam Sabha' Hindu congregation held to call for the construction of the grand temple yesterday. — AFP

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have asked the government to issue an executive order to build a temple and by-pass the Supreme Court. Anti-Muslim chants rang out on roads leading to the gathering, while the streets of the towns of Ayodhya and Faizabad were deserted as local residents feared violence.

"Many people thought that the issue of the temple had died down but we must warn them that now we'll not sit idle until we see a temple of Lord Ram," Krishna Gopal of RSS said. Yesterday's gathering would be followed up with bigger protests in India's capital New Delhi, Sharma of the VHP said. — Agencies

Qatar row plays out in battle over UAE banks

DUBAI: A proxy war between the United Arab Emirates and Qatar is being played out at banks in the UAE which have Qatari shareholders, weighing on their business and raising questions about their future. Some banks and other businesses had been warned by the UAE government against entering into deals with Qatari companies, since the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt began a boycott of Qatar in June 2017, sources including a senior UAE banker and a UAE business official told Reuters.

As a result, some UAE companies and banks have shied away from business with United Arab Bank (UAB), Commercial Bank International and Al Khalij France, sources said. And while Doha denies allegations that it has supported terrorism, Qatari nationals face UAE travel restrictions, making it hard for them to manage their investments in the emirates. Since the boycott of Qatar, commercial ties have been scaled back and some UAE banks pulled deposits and loans from their Qatari counterparts, while Qatar's Doha Bank, is cutting its exposure to the UAE via asset

swaps with UAE banks.

But Qataris, previously big investors in UAE real estate and other industries, are still the largest shareholders in UAB, 40 percent owned by Commercial Bank, and CBI, 40 percent held by Qatar National Bank (QNB). UAB and CBI are the only banks of the 15 largest listed lenders in the UAE to experience a fall in assets, customer deposits and loans since the start of the crisis. "CBI and UAB both previously benefited from their respective ownership by Qatari banks, and now this benefit is far less obvious," Redmond Ramsdale at Fitch Ratings said.

Al Khalij France, which operates in France and UAE and is wholly owned by Qatar's Al Khalij Commercial Bank, has seen a drop off in demand among its Qatari clients and has not grown its balance sheet, a source familiar with the matter said. Unlisted Al Khalij France's latest full year financial disclosures shows its assets, customer deposits and loans and advances fell between 2016 and 2017.

UAB and CBI have been cleaning up their balance sheets since before the regional dispute began, after a buildup of bad debt, mainly from SME customers hit by a soft economy. "CBI has been reducing the unsecured lending portfolio in its retail banking business," a bank spokesperson said, adding that with lower funding needs it had also reduced its deposits. UAB, Al Khalij and the UAE Central Bank did not respond to requests for comment. — Reuters

tacts, particularly over Iran, which is the enemy both of Israel and Gulf states. Netanyahu said "there will be more such visits in Arab countries very soon", without providing details. Jordan and Egypt are the only two Arab nations with peace treaties with Israel.

Pressure from Muslim African nations, accentuated by the 1967 and 1973 wars between Israel and its neighbors, led a number of African states to drop their relations with Israel. But in recent years, Israel has held out the prospect of cooperation on a range of issues, from security to technology and agriculture, to improve ties on the continent. Diplomatic relations between Israel and Chad, a country of some 15 million people, were severed in 1972. Deby is one of Africa's longest-serving leaders. He took over the arid, impoverished nation in 1990 and won a disputed fifth term in April 2016.

The Netanyahu government has been investing in outreach to Africa, where some countries previously warm to Israel have kept their distance since its occupation of the Palestinian territories in the 1967 Middle East war. In July 2016, Deby hosted the then-director of Israel's Foreign Ministry, Dore Gold, for exploratory talks on improving bilateral relations. Gold told Israel Radio yesterday that his Chadian hosts told him that they had cut off ties 44 years prior under Libyan pressure, a factor removed with the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. — Agencies

instead been filed against the concerned minister.

The grilling was filed following widespread flooding in the country due to heavy rains and accuses the prime minister of being responsible for the government's failure to face the consequences of the rains. Dumaitheer also said there are some lawmakers who want the Assembly to be dissolved and that "we will not allow them to do so". It is not clear what will happen during the grilling, but it is possible that it might be sent to the legal committee for its opinion on the issue.

In another development, the constitutional court yesterday set Dec 19 to issue its verdict on a petition claiming that article 16 of the Assembly charter is unconstitutional. The article was used by the Assembly to retain the membership of opposition MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash, despite them being jailed by the court of cassation for storming the Assembly building in Nov 2011. If the court says the article is unconstitutional, it means that the two MPs will lose their seats in the Assembly.

Syria regime accuses rebels of gas attack

DAMASCUS: Syria's regime has accused armed groups of carrying out a "toxic gas" attack that left dozens of people struggling to breathe and prompted government ally Russia to launch retaliatory air strikes yesterday. Around 100 Syrians were hospitalized with breathing difficulties after the alleged chemical attack in the regime-held city of Aleppo on Saturday, state media and a monitor said. Russia accused militants of being behind the alleged chlorine attack, and carried out the first air raids in months on the outskirts of a major rebel bastion west of the city.

It was the latest accusation of a chemical attack in Syria's grinding seven-year civil war, which has killed more than 360,000 people and displaced millions. State news agency SANA reported "107 cases of breathing difficulties", after what health official Ziad Hajj Taha said was a "probable" chlorine attack on Aleppo city.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, said a total of 94 people were hospitalized, but most had been discharged, after "the smell of chlorine" was reported in the city. On Saturday, an AFP photographer saw dozens of civilians, including women and children, stream into an Aleppo hospital, some on stretchers or carried in by their relatives. The injured seemed to be dizzy and breathing with difficulty. Staff gave them oxygen masks, through which they breathed for 15-minute sessions, either sitting or lying down.

The regime controls Aleppo city, but rebels and militants are present to the west in the country's last major opposition bastion of Idlib. Yesterday, Russian air raids hit a planned buffer zone on the edges of that stronghold, the Observatory and Moscow said. They were the first air strikes to hit the expected demilitarized area since a September deal between Moscow and rebel

backer Ankara to protect Idlib from a massive regime assault.

Yesterday, Moscow accused Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), an alliance led by militants of Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, of carrying out the alleged toxic attack in Aleppo. Russian defense ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov yesterday said "terrorist groups" in an area of the planned buffer zone held by HTS fired shells filled with chlorine on a residential area of Aleppo. Official media accused "terrorists" of carrying out a "toxic gas" attack on Aleppo, using a term it uses to mean both rebels and militants.

A rebel coalition yesterday denied any involvement. "We at the National Liberation Front deny the criminal, lying regime's allegations that revolutionaries targeted the city of Aleppo with any missiles and especially not any containing chlorine gas," it said. Neither HTS nor the Al-Qaeda-linked Hurras al-Deen group, both of which are present near Aleppo, commented on the accusations.

The Russia-Turkey buffer zone deal on Sept 17 intended to prevent a major regime attack on Idlib, which is home to some three million people. But its implementation has stalled after militants refused to withdraw from the planned demilitarized zone on time, and sporadic shelling and clashes have rocked the area. Yesterday, Turkey's defense minister and his Russian counterpart spoke on the phone about the "latest provocations" in the Idlib region. Ankara reported, without providing more details. Syria's regime has insisted that the deal is temporary and that Idlib will eventually revert to government control.

After the alleged toxic attack, Nasr Al-Hariri, who heads Syria's mainstream opposition, accused Damascus of seeking a "pretext to launch a military offensive in northern Syria". Over the course of Syria's war, international human rights groups have repeatedly accused the regime of carrying out chemical attacks. Last year and in April, the allegations caused the United States to carry out punitive strikes in Syria. A joint commission of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has also accused the Islamic State group of using toxic gases. — AFP

Also, the visas do not provide a path to UAE citizenship, which would be a sensitive political issue in a country where well over two-thirds of the roughly 9.4 million residents are believed to be foreign. Nishit Lakhotia, head of research at financial company SICO in Bahrain, said the new visa system was positive but unlikely to have any immediate material impact. "There are much less stringent investment requirements in some of Eastern European countries or even Turkey to get citizenship, not just residency permits," he said. In another step to aid the real estate market, the UAE government approved in September a law allowing expatriates to stay in the country after retirement if they own a property valued at about \$545,000. — Reuters

But in London, eurosceptics in May's Conservative party and their Northern Irish allies argue the agreement keeps Britain too close to the EU and have vowed to oppose it. Media reports yesterday suggested some of May's own ministers were secretly working with EU diplomats on a "Plan B" in case parliament rejected it. In an open "letter to the nation" yesterday, May said the accord delivered on the 2016 referendum vote to leave, and was a "deal for a brighter future". Britain remains deeply divided over the decision, but the prime minister said that finally leaving could be "a moment of renewal and reconciliation". "To do that we need to get on with Brexit now by getting behind this deal," she said.

The summit risked being derailed by a late objection to the deal by Spain over the British territory of Gibraltar. The impasse was resolved when Britain promised to continue bilateral talks with Madrid after Brexit. There are concerns in EU capitals about fishing rights and commercial rules Britain must follow to maintain access to the bloc's markets. A diplomatic source said the minutes of yesterday's summit meeting of the 27 leaders would record those concerns. — AFP

Chad president makes first-ever...

Continued from Page 1

The two men were to hold further discussions over dinner. Deby also met Israeli President Reuven Rivlin yesterday evening.

Chadian security sources say the country has acquired Israeli equipment to help battle rebels in the country's north. Chad is also one of several African states engaged in Western-backed operations against Boko Haram and Islamic State militants in West Africa. Earlier this month, the United States donated military vehicles and boats worth \$1.3 million to Chad as part of the campaign against Islamist militancy in the country.

Netanyahu portrayed the visit as the result of long-won diplomatic efforts, referring to his three visits to Africa over the last couple years and his surprise trip to Oman in October. The visit to Oman, a major coup for Netanyahu, was an apparent sign of Israeli progress in improving ties with Gulf countries. Frozen peace efforts and Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territory have been obstacles to Israeli attempts to win official recognition from countries in the Gulf.

But there has long been talk of under-the-radar con-

Amir confident MPs will not 'misuse'...

Continued from Page 1

be sent to the Assembly's legal and legislative committee to study whether it is constitutional or not. Khalil Al-Saleh, another pro-government lawmaker, said he has asked several constitutional experts and all of them said the grilling is not in line with the constitution.

Ghanem said there was no time to inform every lawmaker of HH the Amir's message and therefore he decided to convey it through the media. Ghanem however did not say what he intends to do to implement HH the Amir's directives, but other MPs openly said that the PM's grilling is unconstitutional. Dumaitheer said the grilling should not have been filed against the prime minister because it deals with issues not related to him directly, and should have

Sports

Fiji beat 'pathetic' France to claim historic victory

'We beat Argentina and we think we're something special'

PARIS: Fiji humiliated France 21-14 on Saturday to claim an historic first victory over Les Bleus in more than 60 years less than a year before the World Cup. The teams have faced each other on 10 occasions in more than half a century and the Pacific Islanders finally claimed a memorable win in Paris despite being denied two debatable tries by referee Matthew Carley and his television match official.

Outside-half Benjamin Volavola scored his third penalty kick with the clock in the red which led to the Fijians on the field to fall to their knees in prayer thanking for an unforgettable evening in the French capital. Coach John McKee put the momentous feat into context at his post-match press conference. "It's a massive achievement. We told each other this week that if we beat France we would make it into the pantheon of Fijian rugby," the New Zealander said.

All of Fiji's points came from backs who play for French clubs as Bordeaux-Begles' Semi Radradra and Toulon's Josua Tuisova scored tries and Racing92's Benjamin Volavola added a conversion and three penalty goals.

France captain Guilhem Guirado crossed twice for the visitors. He was replaced by rookie Julien Marchand on 68 minutes and centre Mathieu Bastareaud took over the captaincy. Television microphones caught the angry post-match speech he addressed to his players.

Bastareaud said in colourful language: "Who do we think we are? We beat Argentina and we think we're something special. We have to start from scratch now and we're at rock bottom. Because we're pathetic, shameful, we have to be aware of that."

Coach Jacques Brunel claimed there were only negatives from his side's eighth defeat in 11 game this year. "It's a big disappointment. It's difficult for me to find anything positive from tonight," the 64-year-old said.

Les Bleus failed to apply any sort of fluidity in

attack which was surprising after an impressive display with ball in hand in last Saturday's 28-13 victory over Argentina. A trio of second-half penalties easily converted by Volavola claimed a momentous win for John McKee's side less than a year away from the Rugby World Cup in Japan.

Powerful three-quarter Radradra opened the scoring at a half-full Stade de France crossing after less than 20 minutes after crashing through four defenders before stretching to dot the ball down for the first try.

FLYING FIJIANS

The home side's captain Guirado brought the teams level to claim his third try in as many Test matches which came from a powerful rolling maul and the Toulon skipper gladly scored. Guirado's Toulon team-mate Tuisova re-claimed the advantage as he made the most of a clinical move from a scrum 40 metres out on the half hour mark.

The first controversial decision came after 36 minutes as Radradra was judged to be offside as he played the ball at ruck before passing the ball for Veriniki Goneva. Guirado added a second touchdown four minutes into first half injury time as he profited from another dominant rolling maul. Serin's conversion meant the home side led 14-12 at the break.

The visitors re-gained the advantaged six minutes into the second half as Volavola kicked a penalty goal. They were denied by the video referee for a second time as lock Tevita Cavubati was judged to have tackled Huguet late before Tuisova had managed to score.

Volavola added a second three-pointer after an hour as French forwards were penalised for not rolling away at a ruck. Brunel went looking for a comeback and called upon youngsters from his substitutes bench.

Uncapped front-rowers Demba Bamba and Marchand as well as 22-year-old Antoine Dupont were brought onto the field during the final 20 minutes. Les



PARIS: France's outside centre Mathieu Bastareaud (R) vies with Fiji's Henry Seniloli (C) during the international rugby union test match between France and Fiji at the Stade de France stadium in Saint-Denis, north of Paris on Saturday in Paris. — AFP

Bleus were camped in the Fijian 22 metres making easily-readable one-out passes to forwards, scrum-half Dupont attempting to add much-needed pace and dynamism to the attack.

Despite Brunel's efforts and Dupont's energy the Pacific Islanders' defence held strong. They cleared

their lines comfortably ending up in the French 22. Former Bordeaux-Begles outside-half Volavola added a third penalty kick with the clock in the red which led to the Fijians on the field to fall to their knees in prayer thanking for an unforgettable evening in the French capital. — AFP

Chen, French ice dance stars take gold in Grenoble

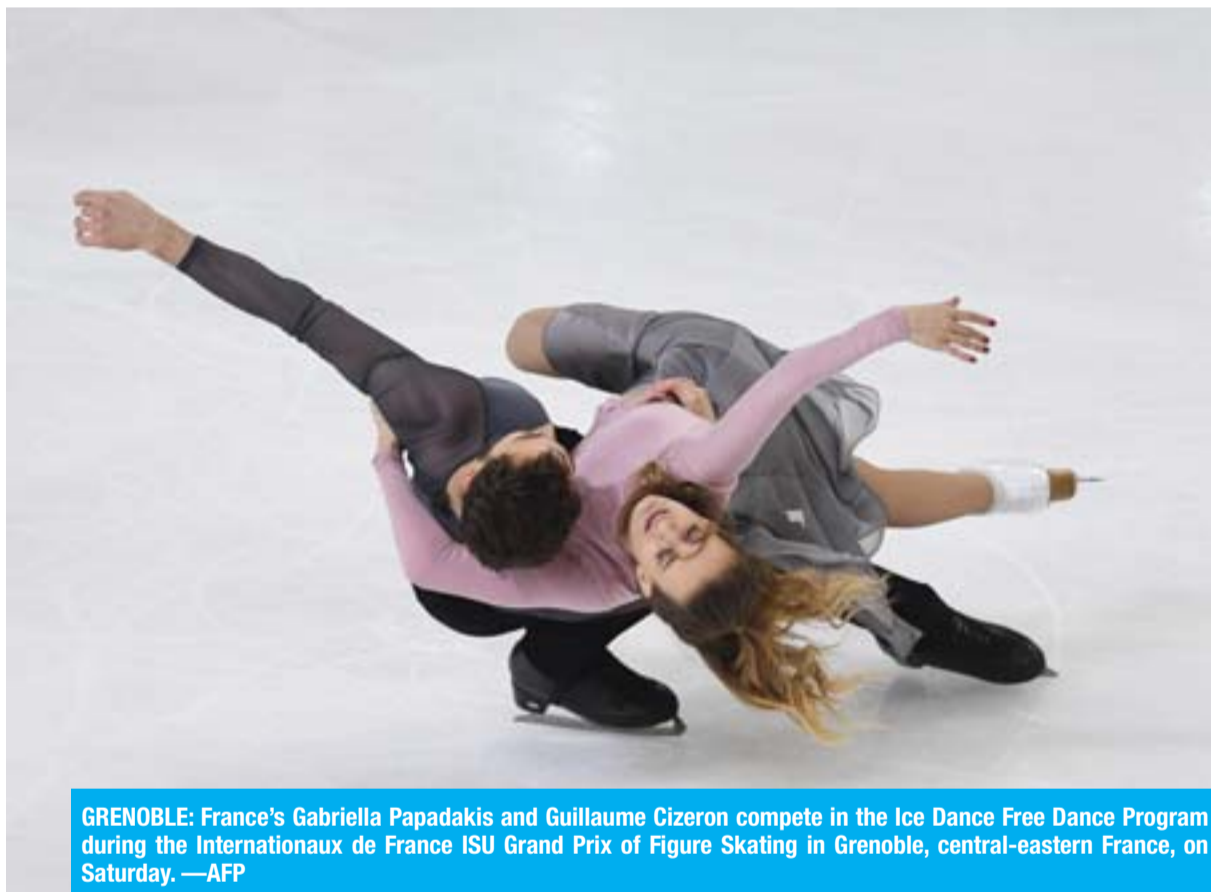
GRENOBLE: France's ice dance world champions Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron floated to gold at the Internationaux de France in Grenoble on Saturday, with American teenager Nathan Chen taking the men's title.

The 19-year-old Chen was lying 10 points off the lead after Friday's short routine, but a free programme that scored him 184.64 points saw him take gold. Chen included a quadruple flip, quadruple toe and a quad toe-triple toe combination in his programme to 'Land Of All' by Woodkid to total 271.58 points, beating US compatriot Jason Brown and Russia's Alexander Samarin.

Chen also struggled in the short programme at the Pyeongchang Olympics, before a stunning free skate saw him finish fifth overall. He will next turn out in the Grand Prix Finals in Vancouver later this month where he will face double Olympic champion Yuzuru Hanyu as long as the Japanese star recovers from an injury he suffered in Moscow.

"I'm pretty happy with my performance of the long program, definitely more satisfied with the long than with the short," the Yale student said. "I'm looking forward to continuing to develop the program and develop the technical side of the program."

In the ice dance, Olympic silver medallists Papadakis and Cizeron were head and shoulders above their rivals, earning a season best 132.65 points for their free dance. That gave them a total of 216.78 points after Friday's short programme scored 84.13 points.



GRENOBLE: France's Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron compete in the Ice Dance Free Dance Program during the Internationaux de France ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating in Grenoble, central-eastern France, on Saturday. — AFP

They took gold 15 points clear of their nearest rivals Victoria Sinitsina and Nikita Katsalopov of Russia to cement their positions as favourites to claim a fourth world title in Minsk in January.

The all-conquering pair's manager Romain Haguenauer beamed: "By their event and total score

they've returned telling everyone they are the masters." They were performing in public for the first time their 2018/2019 free dance routine to the music of American guitarist Rachael Yamagata. "It's the start of a new cycle, with more maturity than in previous years," said Cizeron. — AFP

Bivol beats Pascal to retain WBA lightweight belt

LOS ANGELES: Russian Dmitry Bivol retained his WBA light heavyweight crown with a unanimous decision over Canada's Jean Pascal at the Hard Rock Hotel in Atlantic City on Saturday.

The 27-year-old Bivol cruised to victory in the third defense of his title as he won almost every round against the heavy underdog Pascal. Two judges scored it 119-109 and the other had it 117-111 in favor of Bivol.

Bivol landed a hard right hand in the fourth round to the side of Pascal's head which wobbled the challenger. Bivol kept up the attack throughout and landed a total of 217 punches to just 60 for Pascal.

He had Pascal backpedaling through most of the fight and the only thing he didn't do was get the knockout. "Every time you shoot for the knockout but sometimes you can't. But I showed my boxing skills," said Bivol who improved to 15-0 with 11 KOs.

The 36-year-old Pascal has been in the ring with some of the best in his 13-year boxing career. But he looked rusty in his first serious fight since losing a decision to Canelo Alvarez in June 2017. In his most recent fight in July he knocked out a former minor league hockey player, Steve Bosse, in the eighth round of a novelty bout. — AFP

Franz claims victory at Lake Louise downhill

MONTREAL: Austria's Max Franz swept to victory in the opening downhill of the World Cup season at Lake Louise on Saturday, powering home ahead of Italy's Christof Innerhofer and Dominik Paris.

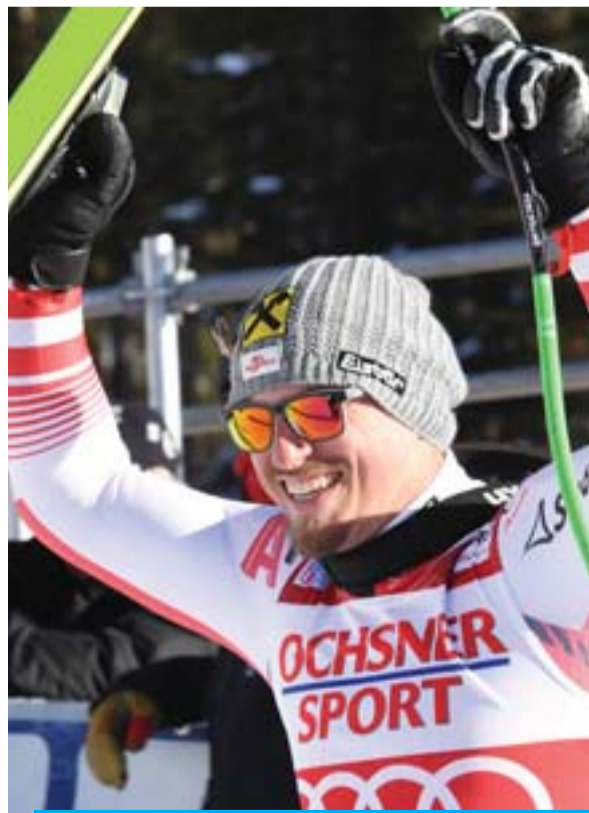
The 29-year-old from Klagenfurt came home in 1min 46.18sec to take only the second victory of his career on the World Cup circuit. Franz pipped Innerhofer by 0.28 sec while Paris finished in third spot, 0.54 off the pace. A delighted Franz said afterwards strong winds which buffeted the course had assisted his victory. "I had a little luck with the wind," Franz said, believing conditions had worsened for his rivals during the competition.

"I had a good run but I made some mistakes. I didn't think it would be enough to win, and I wasn't confident because my knee has been sore for two weeks. But the weather helped me."

Austria's Vincent Kriechmayr was fourth, 0.57 sec behind while France's Johan Clarey took fifth place. Switzerland's reigning World Cup downhill champion Beat Feuz finished in sixth, 0.67 adrift of Franz.

Thomas Dressen of Germany finished in seventh spot while 2018 Olympic downhill champion, Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal, had to be content with eighth place at a venue where he has won eight times before.

Svindal, who became the oldest Olympic gold medallist in alpine skiing earlier this year at the Pyeongchang games, has been struggling with an arm



ALBERTA: Max Franz of Austria celebrates after winning the Audi FIS Alpine Ski World Cup Men's 2019 Downhill race at the Lake Louise ski resort in Alberta, Canada on Saturday. — AFP

injury which required surgery last week. The Lake Louise meeting concluded yesterday. — AFP

Jones confident England heading in right direction

TWICKENHAM: England coach Eddie Jones was in buoyant mood as his side headed into a World Cup year on the back of a 37-18 victory over his native Australia.

Victory meant England had won three of their four November internationals, with the lone loss an agonising 16-15 defeat by world champions New Zealand. In January, Jones had his England contract extended until 2021 — two years after the 2019 World Cup in Japan. But the experienced coach had his position called into question by a run of five straight defeats that spanned the Six Nations and the start of England's tour of South Africa in June. England stopped the rot, however, with a 25-10 win over South Africa in the third and final Test, although the Springboks won the series 2-1. "I think we took steps forward in South Africa," said Jones.

"We'd had a tough Six Nations. We'd got some things wrong in planning, some things wrong in terms of where we were going as a team and we needed to regroup and we did that," he added after Saturday's win over the Wallabies at Twickenham. "This (November) series was a step forward and the 2019 Six Nations will be another step forward again."

England's next international will be the toughest assignment European rugby has to offer — a Six Nations opener away to defending Grand Slam champions Ireland, who this month succeeded where Jones' side failed by beating the All Blacks 16-9. Asked if he felt confident ahead of the Dublin clash on February 2, Jones replied: "Yeah, 100 percent." Jones, with England missing several injured players, was also enthused by the depth of talent at his disposal. "We've got great competition. Consider today, we played without Mako (Vunipola), (Ellis) Genge, (Joe) Launchbury, (George) Kruis, Billy (Vunipola), (Chris) Robshaw, (Anthony) Watson, (Jonathan) Joseph, (Jack) Nowell, (Chris) Ashton. That's for starters. "To be the best in the world you've got to push hard." England wing Jonny May opened the scoring with a try in just the second minute on Saturday.

But Australia fought back to level the match at 13-13 come half-time, with the Wallabies unfortunate not to be leading at the break after South Africa referee Jaco Peyper controversially awarded a penalty rather than a penalty try following a 'no-arms' challenge by England co-captain Owen Farrell on lock Izack Rodda. England, however, pulled clear in the second half by scoring 24 unanswered points, including converted tries from fullback Elliot Daly, wing Joe Cokanasiga and Farrell. Fly-half Farrell converted all four of England's tries and also kicked three penalties in a match haul of 22 points. This was just Cokanasiga's second Test and Jones jokingly said: "He's still got his training pants on. Wait until he gets proper pants. He'll be able to play a bit." Reflecting on England's improved showing after the interval, the coach added: "First half, we had opportunities to get a bit further ahead than we were, missed those and allowed them back into the game."

"Second half, we were able to regroup, play in a real English way and I was really pleased with that."

Saturday's result meant England had won all six of their Tests against Australia since Jones was appointed after the Wallabies condemned them to a first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup with a 33-13 victory at Twickenham. But Jones, in a week that marked the 15th anniversary of the Australia side he coached losing the 2003 World Cup final to England, was unconcerned. — AFP

Sports

S Lanka sack selectors as England cruise toward whitewash series win

S Lanka's Sports Minister summons panel and thanks them for their services

SCOREBOARD

Scorecard at stumps on third day of the 3rd Test between Sri Lanka and England in Colombo yesterday:

England 1st innings 336 (J. Bairstow 110; Sandakan 5-95)	
Sri Lanka 1st innings 240 (F. Karunaratne 83, D. de Silva 73; A. Rashid 5-49)	
England 2nd innings (overnight 3-0)	
R. Burns lbw b D. Perera	7
K. Jennings lbw b D. Perera	1
J. Bairstow c K. Silva (sub) b D. Perera	15
J. Root (c) c and b Pushpakumara	7
B. Stokes c Pushpakumara b D. Perera	42
J. Buttler st Dickwella b Sandakan	64
Moeen Ali c D. de Silva b Sandakan	22
B. Foakes not out	36
Adil Rashid c Dickwella b Pushpakumara	24
S. Broad c K. Mendis b Pushpakumara	1
J. Leach c Dickwella b D. Perera	0
Extras (b3, lb4, w1, nb3)	11
Total 230 (69.5 overs)	230
Fall of Wickets 3-1 (Jennings), 20-2 (Burns), 35-3 (Bairstow), 39-4 (Root), 128-5 (Stokes), 168-6 (Buttler), 171-7 (Moeen), 215-8 (Adil Rashid), 217-9 (Broad, 230-10 (Jack Leach)	
Bowling: Dilruwan Perera 29.5 3 88 5, Malinda Pushpakumara 12 2 28 3, Dhananjaya de Silva 9 1 24 0, Suranga Lakmal 3 1 7 0, Lakshan Sandakan 16 1 76 2.	

Sri Lanka 2nd innings	
D. Gunathilaka c Stokes b Moeen	6
D. Karunaratne b Moeen	23
D. de Silva lbw b Leach	0
K. Mendis not out	15
A. Mathews c Broad b Stokes	5
L. Sandakan not out	1
Extras (w3)	3
Total 4 (wks, 17 overs)	53
To bat: R. Silva, N. Dickwella, D. Perera, S. Lakmal (capt), M. Pushpakumara	
Fall of Wickets: 15-1 (Gunathilaka), 24-2 (de Silva), 34-3 (Karunaratne), 52-4 (Mathews)	
Bowling: Broad 4 0 11 0, Moeen Ali 7 1 16 2, Leach 3 0 12 1, Stokes 3 1 14 1.	

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka sacked their selectors yesterday as the national team headed toward a whitewash defeat in their Test series against England. The home side were reeling at 53-4 at the close of the third day of the third and final Test, chasing an unlikely 327 to avoid another crushing defeat.

The selection panel headed by former Test bowler Graeme Labrooy and also including Gamini Wickremasinghe, Eric Upashantha, Chandika Hathurusingha and Jeryl Woutersz were only appointed in June.

Sri Lanka's Sports Minister Faiszer Musthapa summoned the panel yesterday and "thanked them for their services", said a national cricket board statement. Sri Lanka Cricket said a four-member panel headed by former Test player Asantha de Mel, 59, will choose the squad to play two Tests, three one day internationals and a T20 game in New Zealand starting next month.

De Mel will be backed up by former players Brendon Kuruppu, Hemantha Wickramaratne and Chaminda Mendis. Sri Lanka will be lucky to get through the fourth day of the Colombo Test after letting England off the hook to take a dominant position.

Dilruwan Perera took Keaton Jennings lbw with the first ball of the day to shake England who at one stage looked in trouble on 39-4 after more failures by their top-order batsmen.

But after the scare, spinner Lakshan Sandakan made basic blunders that set the tone for England to score 230 and set their sights on a third straight win. The left-arm spinner had Ben Stokes caught at cover on 22, then at slip on 32, only for replays to show Sandakan had overstepped the bowling line on each occasion.

NO BALLS PILE UP

Stokes had to be called back from his march to the pavilion each time. He shook his head in disbelief as he walked off for lunch. Jos Buttler was given out lbw on 27 to part-time spinner Dhananjaya de Silva, but the decision was overturned by a review which deemed the ball was heading over the stumps.

The pair came back to complete an 89-run fifth wicket stand that rescued England and became the



COLOMBO: England's wicketkeeper Ben Foakes (R) celebrates after dismissing Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne (L) during the third day of the third Test match between Sri Lanka and England at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) international cricket stadium in Colombo yesterday. — AFP

centrepiece of the second innings total. Buttler made 64, Stokes 42 and Ben Foakes an unbeaten 36. England scored just 11 boundaries, with the lower order batsmen sweeping singles and doubles to build the score.

Buttler said it would be "fantastic" for England to get a rare whitewash triumph in an overseas series. "We have to turn up tomorrow with the same plans we have had all trip: stay patient. Hopefully we'll drive it home," added the run-scorer, and a renowned big hitter in the Indian Premier League and other T20 tournaments now making his name in Tests.

Buttler, who has signed again for the Rajasthan Royals in the IPL next year, said that Tests are now "a big driver" in his career. For Sri Lanka, spinner Perera

took a creditable 5-88 to pass 100 wickets in home Tests but their batting crumbled.

Moeen Ali opened the bowling for England and took openers Danushka Gunathilaka for six and Dimuth Karunaratne for 23 on the spin paradise pitch. Jack Leach claimed Dhananjaya de Silva, who failed to score, while Stuart Broad took a brilliant catch off Stokes to end Angelo Mathews' innings after nine balls which produced five runs.

India, whose position as number one Test nation is now at risk from England, whitewashed Sri Lanka in their three Test tour last year. Before that only Australia managed the feat in 2004. England scored 336 in their first innings and Sri Lanka 240. — AFP

Gardner stars as Australia crush England in World T20 final

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: All-rounder Ashleigh Gardner starred with bat and ball as Australia cruised to an eight-wicket victory over England in the final of the Women's World T20 in Antigua on Saturday. Gardner and teenage leg-spinner Georgia Wareham combined for five wickets to restrict the English to 105 all out off 19.4 overs after they had chosen to bat first at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. Gardner then featured in an unbroken third-wicket partnership of 62 with her captain Meg Lanning as the Aussies reached the target with almost five overs to spare to lift their fourth World T20 crown.

Given her significant contributions in both innings the 21-year-old was the obvious choice as "Player of the Match." The "Player of the Series" honour was also a predictable selection with opener and wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy taking the title although the final represented her least accomplished performance.

After winning three consecutive "Player of the Match" honours in Australia's group matches in Guyana, Healy dropped England topscorer Danielle Wyatt in the third over of the final off seamer Ellyse Perry. Wyatt contributed a breezy 43 off 37 balls to her team's effort but only England captain Heather Knight managed any other score of note in getting to 25 as wickets continued to tumble around her. Gardner dismissed both Wyatt and Knight with her off-spinners and added the scalp of tailender Anya Shrubsole to finish with the impressive figures of three for 22. She was ably supported by Wareham, the 19-year-old accounting for Lauren Winfield and Sophia Dunkley off successive deliveries and conceding just 11 runs through three excellent overs.

SHODDY OUTCRICKET

Wareham also made amends for some surprisingly shoddy Australian outcricket by running out England's "Player of the Match" from the semi-final against India, Amy Jones, with a direct hit to the non-striker's end.

Any chance of England defending such a modest total depended on removing Healy cheaply. She was bowled by Ecclestone for 22 - her lowest score of the tournament - and although opening partner Beth Mooney departed shortly after, caught at the wicket off Danielle Hazell, Gardner and Lanning ensured the result was never in doubt. Gardner finished unbeaten on 33 with Lanning not out on 28 as the captain sealed a successful campaign to reclaim the title they lost to the West Indies in Kolkata in 2016, taking a single off medium-pace Natalie Sciver at the start of the 16th over.

"We did not have our best day in the field but the bowlers did a good job," said Lanning after receiving the championship trophy from West Indies batting legend and former captain Sir Vivian Richards. "The last two World Cups really hurt and we had to change a few things and move it forward."

Apart from the disappointment of losing to the Caribbean side in the previous Women's World T20 event, Australia also failed to reach the final of the Women's World Cup last year in England, which was won by the host nation who defeated India in the final at Lord's. —AFP

King Kohli steers India to victory in final Australia T20

SYDNEY: Captain Virat Kohli smashed an unbeaten 61 to steer India to victory with two balls to spare in the third and final Twenty20 against Australia yesterday, ensuring the series ended all square.

The prolific batsmen lived up to his reputation, coming in when the two openers fell in quick succession after an entertaining 68-run partnership to prevent Australia earning bragging rights ahead of their four Test series starting next month.

The home team won a nail-biting and rain-affected first match in Brisbane by four runs, with the second in Melbourne abandoned due to persistent showers. "I thought overall skill-wise we were better today," said Kohli. "When out openers get into the zone they are difficult to stop. There were a few nervous moments in between, but (for me) it's always easy when the guys at the top do what they do."

After losing the toss and being told to bowl, India restricted Australia to 164-6, with all-rounder Krunal Pandya taking four wickets and D'Arcy Short top-scoring on 33. Despite losing, Australian captain Aaron

Finch said he was proud of the team.

"The way we fought was outstanding," he said. "Still fair bit of work to do but we're going in the right direction which is nice. Feeling good for the Tests." Australia were boosted by strike bowler Mitchell Starc being back for his first T20 international in two years, replacing Jason Behrendorff. He caused opening batsmen Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan trouble but they took apart Nathan Coulter-Nile at the other end, each cracking a huge six in plundering 29 runs off his first two overs.

Their confidence was soaring and the strokes were majestic as they hammered 22 off Marcus Stoinis' opening over. Finch brought Starc back in desperation and he delivered, trapping Dhawan lbw for a highly-entertaining 41 off 22 balls. Adam Zampa then bowled Sharma for 23, giving them a glimmer of hope. The spin combination of Zampa and Glenn Maxwell stymied the runs and it was game on when KL Rahul fell and Rishabh Pant went first ball, leaving India needing 56 off 36 deliveries. But Kohli was unstoppable, hitting two sixes and four fours as he guided his side home alongside Dinesh Karthik (not out 22).

IN TROUBLE

Australia's inconsistent batting has been a concern since the ball-tampering scandal in March. Finch had much to prove, having only managed a top score of 41 in 10 innings across all formats. He crunched a four off Khaleel Ahmed in his first over to signal an attacking intent. At

Sohail, Azam tons put Pakistan in commanding position

DUBAI: Pakistan's top-order batsmen Haris Sohail and Babar Azam struck contrasting centuries as they took control of the second test against New Zealand on day two in Dubai yesterday. Resuming on their overnight total of 207-4, Pakistan ground down the Kiwi attack, with Sohail scoring 147 and Azam 127 not out before they declared their first innings on 418-5.

New Zealand were 24 for no loss after nine overs at the close of play, with opening batsmen Jeet Raval (17) and Tom Latham (5) at the crease. The visitors are still 394 runs behind Pakistan but will fancy their chances of amassing a decent score on a Dubai International Cricket Stadium pitch that has progressively improved for batting.

Sohail, who had played patiently to reach 81 on Saturday, continued his innings in a similar manner to bring up only his second test century in 309 balls. The left-hander frustrated the Kiwi bowlers with his tight defence, combining with the more aggressive Azam to stitch together a 186-run stand for the fifth wicket.

Sohail fell shortly after the tea break, caught by wicketkeeper BJ Watling while chasing a delivery from pace bowler Trent Boult, to leave Pakistan at 360-5. Azam, who was on 99, reached his maiden test ton with a flick off his pads in the same over.

The highly-rated 24-year-old looked set to push on in the company of skipper Sarfraz Ahmed (30 not out)



DUBAI: Pakistani batsman Babar Azam (R) plays a shot as New Zealand wicketkeeper BJ Watling looks on during the second day of the second Test cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Dubai International Stadium in Dubai yesterday. — AFP

before Pakistan declared their innings abruptly. Ahmed then deployed five bowlers in nine overs in a bid to knock off a few Kiwi wickets, but bad light resulted in a premature end to the day. New Zealand won the opening test in Abu Dhabi by four runs to take a 1-0 lead in the series. The teams will return to the same venue for the final match from Dec 3-7. — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the second Test between Pakistan and New Zealand played at Dubai stadium yesterday:

Pakistan 1st innings (overnight 207-4)	
Imam-ul-Haq c Latham b de Grandhomme	9
Mohammad Hafeez c Latham b de Grandhomme	9
Azhar Ali run out	81
Haris Sohail c Watling b Boult	147
Asad Shafiq c Wagner b Patel	12
Babar Azam not out	127
Sarfraz Ahmed not out	30
Extras: (b2, nb 1)	3
Total: (for five wks: 167 overs)	418
Did not bat: Bilal Asif, Yasir Shah, Hasan Ali, Mohammad Abbas	
Fall of wickets: 1-18 (Hafeez), 2-25 (Imam), 3-151 (Azhar), 4-174 (Shafiq), 5-360 (Sohail)	
Bowling: Boult 34-7-106-1, Grandhomme 30-11-44-2, Wagner 37-12-63-0 (1nb), Patel 39-5-120-1, Sodhi 22-1-63-0, Williamson 5-0-20-0.	

New Zealand 1st innings	
J. Raval not out	17
T. Latham not out	5
Extras: (lb2)	2
Total: (for no loss: 9 overs)	24
Still to bat: K. Williamson, R. Taylor, H. Nicholls, B. Watling, C. de Grandhomme, I. Sodhi, N. Wagner, A. Patel, T. Boult	
Bowling: Abbas 2—0-8-0, Hasan 2-1-4-0, Hafeez 2-1-1-0, Yasir 2-0-9-0, Asif 1-1-0-0.	

Sports

Ronaldo, Mandzukic on target as Juventus ease past SPAL

Roma suffers setback ahead of tomorrow's Champions League game

ROME: Cristiano Ronaldo continued his hot form for Juventus on Saturday as he and Mario Mandzukic scored both goals in the second consecutive game to help the Serie A leaders open up a nine-point lead at the top of the table with a 2-0 win over struggling SPAL.

Ronaldo slotted home Miralem Pjanic's free-kick after 29 minutes in Turin to join Genoa's Krzysztof Piatek at the top of the Serie A scoring charts with nine goals, before Mandzukic sealed the three points on the hour mark in a simple warm up for tomorrow's crucial Champions League visit of Valencia.

The pair also scored both in Juventus' 2-0 win over AC Milan before the international break, and Ronaldo's strike was his seventh in eight games in all competitions for his new club, for a total of 10 goals this season.

"Cristiano does things that catch opponents off guard and that's exactly what we need," said coach Massimiliano Allegri. "Sometimes we play one pass too many and the moment is lost. "Cristiano moves and thinks so quickly, he saw Douglas Costa coming out the corner of his eye and pulled the pass back. We need to all improve in that sense, being able to think ahead to the next move."

SPAL, fighting relegation, were no match for Allegri's reigning champions who are nine points ahead of Inter Milan and Napoli, with Carlo Ancelotti's side gunning to close the gap when they play bottom club Chievo.

Bustling Ronaldo, 33, also played a role in Juve's second scored by Mandzukic, who was wearing the captain's armband for the first time. Ronaldo latched onto a long ball and pulled it back for Douglas Costa, whose shot was cleared into the path of the Croatian, who gobbled up the opportunity to win the match. "The opening goal changed the game and I was very angry that we were slow to react and allowed Ronaldo to go

clear," said SPAL coach Leonardo Semplici. "It's the first time I've seen Ronaldo up close and my forwards should learn from the attitude that a champion like this puts into every game. "We need to improve on the details if we want to avoid being put under pressure."

INTER 'FEAR NOBODY'

Third-placed Inter moved level with Napoli after Keita Balde scored twice in a comfortable 3-0 win over second-from-bottom Frosinone ahead of their Champions League trip to Tottenham on Wednesday.

Senegalese winger Balde stole the show in a rare start at the San Siro with regulars Mauro Icardi and Ivan Perisic starting on the bench ahead of the Wembley clash with Spurs.

The former Lazio and Monaco player opened the scoring after 10 minutes, set up Lautaro Martinez to head in the second shortly before the hour mark and added the third eight minutes from time.

It got Luciano Spalletti's side back on track after their seven-match winning streak ended with a heavy 4-1 defeat at Atalanta last time out.

"Tottenham will not be easy, they are a good team, but we go to Wembley with our heads held high," said Balde. "We must fear nobody."

Roma suffered a setback ahead of Tuesday's Champions League game against holders Real Madrid at the Stadio Olimpico, falling to a 1-0 defeat at Udinese.

Eusebio Di Francesco's side were sluggish against the hosts, who pulled away from the relegation zone thanks to Argentine Rodrigo De Paul's 54th-minute goal. "We lacked grit and determination," Di Francesco said after his side dropped to seventh, 18 points behind Juve. "We had chances but could not turn them into goals." — AFP



TURIN: (From L) Juventus' Croatian forward Mario Mandzukic, Juventus' Bosnian midfielder Miralem Pjanic, Juventus' Colombian midfielder Juan Cuadrado, Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo and Juventus' Italian defender Leonardo Bonucci acknowledge the public at the end of the Italian Serie A football match Juventus vs Spal. — AFP

Thailand, Philippines advance to Asean semis

HONG KONG: Thailand beat Singapore 3-0 yesterday to advance to next week's semi-finals of the Asean Football Federation Championship along with Sven-Goran Eriksson's Philippines.

Singapore needed to win against the defending champions to force their way into the top two in Group B of the regional championship yet their three-goal defeat means Thailand finish top of the standings while the Philippines take second after a 0-0 draw with Indonesia.

Thailand will face Malaysia in their semi-final, which will be played over two legs on Dec. 1 and 5, while Vietnam face off against the Philippines on Dec. 2 and

6. The Thais fielded a weakened side but still took the lead 12 minutes into the game against the four-times winners when Irfan Fandi put the ball in his own net.

Eleven minutes later, the back-to-back defending champions added a second when Supachai Jaidee beat Singapore goalkeeper Hassan Sunny low at his near post before Adisak Kraisorin claimed his side's third and his eighth goal so far in this year's competition with a minute remaining.

The win was Thailand's third in four games in the 2018 edition and means they top the group with 10 points, two ahead of the Philippines with Singapore finishing on six points to miss out on the last four.

Former England manager Eriksson's team had the better of the chances in their clash with already-eliminated Indonesia, with Stefan Schrock and Manny Ott spurning opportunities to give the Azkals the lead.

In the end, however, the point was enough to take the Philippines into the semi-finals for the fourth time in five tournaments as the Azkals seek to progress to the final of the biennial competition for the first time in their history. — Reuters

Warriors edge Kings in final seconds

OAKLAND: Klay Thompson capped a 31-point performance with a put-back of his own miss with 5.8 seconds remaining Saturday night to give the Golden State Warriors a 117-116 victory over the Sacramento Kings in Oakland, Calif. Kevin Durant poured in a game-high 44 points, including 17 in the fourth quarter, to help the Warriors outrace their Northern California rivals down the stretch en route to their second home win in two nights. Golden State snapped a four-game losing streak with a 125-97 triumph over Portland on Friday. Buddy Hield had a team-high 28 points for the Kings, and Marvin Bagley III added 20 points and 17 rebounds off the bench. With the Kings leading 116-115, Durant missed a jumper with about 20 seconds to go. Andre Iguodala got the offensive rebound, and Thompson's 6-foot jumper was blocked by the Kings' Willie Cauley-Stein, but Thompson got the ball back and made the layup.

BUCKS 135, SPURS 129

Giannis Antetokounmpo finished with 34 points, 18 rebounds and eight assists as host Milwaukee rallied past San Antonio. Milwaukee outscored San Antonio 40-27 in the fourth quarter for its fourth win in its past five games. Malcolm Brogdon had 23 points on 10-of-15 shooting, Khris Middleton chipped in 21 and Eric Bledsoe had 20 points and 10 assists as the Bucks' starting five combined for 107 points. DeMar DeRozan scored 34 points for the Spurs, who lost for the sixth time in their last eight games. Bryn Forbes had 18 points, Davis Bertans scored 17 and LaMarcus Aldridge added 15.

NUGGETS 105, THUNDER 98

Jamal Murray scored 22 points with eight rebounds and eight assists while Nikola Jokic and Trey Lyles added 16 points each as Denver got off to a hot start and held off host Oklahoma City. Juan Hernangomez had 15 points for the Nuggets, who have won three games in four days, having won at Minnesota on Wednesday and at home against Orlando on Friday. Paul George had 24 points with 11 rebounds, and Russell Westbrook finished with a triple-double — 16 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists-as the Thunder lost for just the second time in their last seven games.

MAVERICKS 113, CELTICS 104

J.J. Barea finished with 20 points, eight assists and a pair of steals in 26 minutes off the bench as host Dallas won for the seventh time in nine games, beating Boston. Barea scored seven points in the definitive opening seven minutes of the fourth quarter, including a 3-pointer with 5:44 to go putting Dallas ahead 103-90. The lead grew to 16 moments later, and struggling Boston was unable to recover. The win got the Mavericks to .500 for the first time this season, and Boston, playing without Gordon Hayward due to ankle soreness, fell back to a .500 record after 20 games. Jayson Tatum led five



OAKLAND: De'Aaron Fox #5 of the Sacramento Kings passes the ball against the Golden State Warriors on Saturday at ORACLE Arena in Oakland, California. — AFP

Celtics in double figure with 21 points.

CAVALIERS 117, ROCKETS 108

Rookie Collin Sexton scored a career-high 29 points in his eighth consecutive start, and Tristan Thompson recorded his third consecutive double-double as host Cleveland defeated Houston. Sexton, starting for the injured George Hill, shot 14-for-21 to lead a balanced Cleveland offense. Thompson finished with 16 points and 20 rebounds. Chris Paul had the night off for the Rockets. James Harden took over the point guard position, scoring 40 points with 13 assists.

WIZARDS 124, PELICANS 114

Otto Porter Jr. scored a season-high 29 points, John Wall added 22 points, seven rebounds and eight assists and host Washington defeated New Orleans. Austin Rivers scored 18 points off the bench, and Bradley Beal had 18 points and eight assists for the Wizards, who had lost three of their last four games. Porter made 12 of 15 field-goal attempts, including 3 of 4 from 3-point range. The Pelicans, playing without leading scorer Anthony Davis (right hip strain), completed an 0-3 road trip and fell to 2-9 away from home. Julius Randle, starting for Davis, led New Orleans with 29 points, 15 rebounds and seven assists. — Reuters



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Burnley FC v Newcastle United FC 23:00

beIN SPORTS

SPANISH LEAGUE

Real Sociedad v Celta de Vigo 23:00

beIN SPORTS HD 3

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Cagliari Calcio v Torino FC 22:30

beIN SPORTS HD

Henry gets first Monaco win as PSG tighten grip on Ligue 1

PARIS: Radamel Falcao secured Thierry Henry his first win as Monaco boss with a free-kick that would have made his manager proud as Paris Saint-Germain warmed up for Liverpool's visit by strengthening their hold on Ligue 1 with a routine win over Toulouse without Neymar and Kylian Mbappe.

The Colombian striker struck with a dipping set-piece nine minutes after the break, and Henry could be seen smiling on the touchline as his players celebrated Falcao's winner wildly.

"I'm happy for the team, all the fans, we needed that, even if it was not a match for the purists," said Monaco coach Henry afterwards. "Style is important, in general, but... we can think about style later." Falcao's fifth league goal of the campaign secured Monaco's first win in any competition since the opening day of the league season, a miserable run of form that has left them second-bottom in Ligue 1 despite Saturday's win.

The victory came seven games into Henry's reign at Monaco, where a host of injuries has further complicated an already difficult start to his tenure. "This is only the beginning, there are still a lot of matches and battles to come. I happy for the team, for the hard work they put in that for a while was not rewarded."

Earlier on Saturday Uruguay striker Edinson Cavani saved a disjointed performance from runaway leaders PSG to maintain their 100 percent start to the season ahead of the crunch Champions League clash with Liverpool on Wednesday.

Neymar and Mbappe were both injured during friendlies in the international break, and PSG are sweating on their recovery for the huge Group C clash with the Parisians just a point behind the Reds and Napoli and gunning to qualify from the competition's tightest group.

Shorn of their two stars, PSG dominated possession but struggled to create chances against 15th-placed Toulouse. However coach Thomas Tuchel said that he was "optimistic" that the pair could return for the match at the Parc des Princes. — AFP

Boca attack forces Copa Libertadores final postponement

BUENOS AIRES: Saturday's "superclasico" Copa Libertadores final second leg between Argentine arch rivals River Plate and Boca Juniors was postponed until Sunday following a "shameful" attack on the Boca team bus that left players affected by smoke inhalation and broken glass.

Alejandro Dominguez, the president of competition organizers Conmebol told FOX television that the two teams had agreed to the postponement and the game will now take place at River's Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires at 5pm (2000 GMT) on Sunday.

"I want to congratulate both club presidents because

there has been a gentleman's agreement between them," said Dominguez, head of South American football's governing body. "In these conditions the game was distorted. One team couldn't play and the other doesn't want to play against a rival that isn't in the right conditions."

Conmebol originally delayed the match more than two hours when Boca players were affected by tear gas and broken glass after their team bus was pelted with "pepper spray, sticks and stones" on the way to the stadium. "It's a very sad day, there are a few misfits at every club," said Boca president Daniel Angelici. "This should shame us as a society and I find it very sad that we have to reschedule such an important match."

His River counterpart, Rodolfo D'Onofrio added: "As an Argentine and as a football leader, I find this shameful." Despite the bus travelling through the streets of the upmarket Nunez neighborhood towards River's ground under police guard, it came under fire from projectiles thrown by a group of the home side's fans.

After the match was postponed, there were scuffles and several arrests outside the ground between as supporters clashed with police. — AFP

25 Fiji beat 'pathetic' France to claim historic victory



26 King Kohli steers India to victory in final Australia T20



27 Ronaldo, Mandzukic on target as Juventus ease past SPAL



Aubameyang goal gives Arsenal 2-1 win

Arsenal moved to within one point of the top four



BOURNEMOUTH: Arsenal's German goalkeeper Bernd Leno (CR) comes out to claim the ball ahead of Bournemouth's English striker Callum Wilson (CL) during the English Premier League football match between Bournemouth and Arsenal at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth, southern England yesterday. — AFP

BOURNEMOUTH: Arsenal extended their unbeaten run to 17 games in all competitions yesterday with a 2-1 victory at Bournemouth that moved them within a point of the Premier League's top four.

The home team's record signing Jefferson Lerma, who cost 25 million pounds (\$32 million) in August, scored a spectacular own goal to give Arsenal the lead but Norwegian international Josh King, back in the Bournemouth side after injury, equalised just before halftime. That meant Unai Emery's team have still never led at the halfway stage of a league game since he

joined in the close-season. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang slid in the Gunners' second goal in the 68th minute and their three-man back line held out, although Lerma hit a post. Arsenal can make up ground on their big local rivals Tottenham Hotspur, who are still three points ahead of them, by winning the north London derby next weekend. Bournemouth stayed eighth after a third successive defeat in a testing period, with fixtures against leaders Manchester City and second-placed Liverpool to come in the first eight days of December.

They felt unfortunate in having an early effort by David Brooks controversially disallowed for offside, but tended to cause their own problems by losing possession too easily.

Arsenal's Uruguayan midfielder Lucas Torreira took advantage following the Brooks incident and shot against a post. Soon afterwards, however, the ball was lost again and there was no reprieve as Lerma volleyed a cutback from Sead Kolasinac into his own net.

It was a turnaround of fortune for the Colombia international, who scored his first goal for the club in

the previous game at Newcastle United. Arsenal were denied a rare halftime lead when Callum Wilson and Brooks broke to feed King for a fine finish.

Another mistake by Lerma gave Aubameyang a good chance but he shot carelessly high, before scoring his eighth league goal of the season following a short free kick. Alex Iwobi fed Kolasinac for another assist from the left flank.

"We knew it would be a tough game," Aubameyang said. "We spoke at halftime and knew we had to come back with intensity and aggression." — Reuters

Inspired Cilic seals historic Davis Cup win for Croatia

LILLE: Marin Cilic clinched Croatia's second Davis Cup title by crushing France's Lucas Pouille 7-6(3) 6-3 6-3 to give his side a decisive 3-1 lead in an historic final at Lille's Stade Pierre Mauroy yesterday.

The powerful world number seven was relentless as he snuffed out any hope of a famous French fightback-giving Pouille little chance of extending the last final in the 118-year-old competition's current guise into a deciding fifth rubber.

Pouille, 24, did not have a single break point and despite pushing Cilic hard in the first set, he lost the last four points of the tiebreak and never threatened a comeback. Cilic wasted four set points when Pouille battled back from

0-40 down at 2-5 in the second set but with his own serve rock-solid he calmly moved into a two-set lead. The mainly French 22,000 crowd kept roaring their support for Pouille, but it was the Croatia contingent, decked out in their distinctive red and white, who would soon be celebrating.

Cilic broke for a 3-2 lead in the third set and then closed in for the kill when Pouille served at 3-5. The Frenchman saved two match points from 0-40 but Cilic would not be denied and finished it off with a delightful lob. Immediately the 30-year-old former U.S. Open champion was swamped by a swarm of his team mates as Croatia could begin the party after emulating their triumph of 2005. Croatia's sports-mad President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic was among the fans at court to savour a landmark title which offered a measure of consolation after France beat Croatia in this year's soccer World Cup final. "It's not every day that you become a world champion," Cilic, draped in a Croatian flag, said on court. "For us it's a dream come true, for this nation. You can see the fans are so passionate and they are here enjoying themselves. In Croatia it's going to be incredible too."

Whatever happens in the future Croatia's

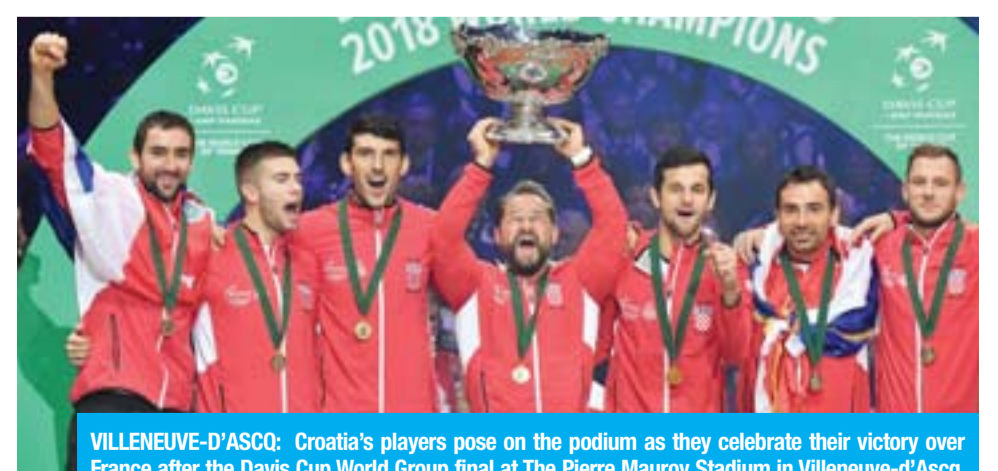
win will have a special place in the record books as this was the last 'one on one' final before the competition undergoes a major revamp. The 16-team World Group, established in 1981, will be scrapped next year in favour of an 18-nation World Cup-style finals week that will take place in Madrid.

Hosts and defending champions France had begun the day holding out hope of becoming the first team to overturn a 2-0 deficit in the final since Australia beat the U.S. in 1939.

But there was to be no fairytale ending for French captain Yannick Noah in his last match in charge of Les Bleus. Noah had surprisingly left Pouille, the highest-ranked player in his team, out of Friday's opening singles matches and the gamble backfired as Jeremy Chardy was hammered by Borna Coric and Cilic beat Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

After Nicolas Mahut and Pierre-Hugues Herbert won Saturday's doubles to keep the tie alive, Noah restored Pouille in a bid to take down Croatian talisman Cilic. He hung on grimly in the first set, saving a break point at 4-4 with a beautiful dropshot. Cilic twice held serve to stay in the opener and then struck in the tiebreak.

He opened a 5-3 lead then latched onto a



VILLENEUVE-D'ASCO: Croatia's players pose on the podium as they celebrate their victory over France after the Davis Cup World Group final at The Pierre Mauroy Stadium in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, northern France, yesterday. — AFP

Pouille serve to crush a forehand winner before converting his first set point with a dropshot of his own. An animated Noah was up and down out of his seat, firing up his man and the crowd. In contrast his opposite number Zeljko Krajan sat back and let Cilic go calmly about his business.

Cilic's weight of shot allowed him to break

decisively in the fifth game of the second set. He squandered a two-set lead in the fourth rubber of the final against Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro in 2016 — a defeat that cost Croatia the title. Yet he was never going to let Pouille off the hook and when he broke the Frenchman's serve at 2-2 in the third, any lingering belief Pouille had retained quickly ebbed away. — Reuters