



5 22 girls suffer from AC gas inhalation at Ahmadi school



11 Fitch affirms Gulf Bank rating at 'A+' with 'stable' outlook



20 Pakistan's Mithi: An oasis of Muslim-Hindu tolerance



25 Nurmagedov returns to hero's welcome, blasts 'dimwit' McGregor



Plans to only allow expats with 'good' GPA to work in Kuwait

Mol: Medical checkups must for returning maids • MP: Pay Kuwaiti housewives KD 300

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and B Izzak

KUWAIT: The manpower authority is planning to ban issuing permits to expats with university degrees entering Kuwait to work in the private sector unless they have a minimum of 'good' GPA, according to informed government sources. The government is currently taking several steps towards resolving Kuwait's demographic imbalance and restructuring the local labor market, including plans to endorse and accredit expats' degrees as a precondition to renewing their residency visas.

The sources said this step will help adjust demographic problems and make sure that only highly specialized and skilled people work in Kuwait. The sources said organizational decisions will be issued in the coming months to fight visa trafficking and prevent unqualified labor from coming to Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the interior ministry yesterday called on sponsors of maids from 41 Asian and African countries to make them undergo fresh medical tests any time they return from a visit to their home countries. The ministry said the regulations are based on new orders by the health ministry and urged all sponsors to take their maids for fresh medical tests after they return from vacations to their home countries. The new regulations apply to domestic helpers from India, Bangladesh, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and other nations. According to the latest statistics, around 650,000 domestic helpers, who mainly hail from the Indian Subcontinent, the Philippines and several African nations, work in Kuwait.

Separately, the National Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee insisted yesterday that the early retirement law which was rejected by the govern-

ment is in line with the constitution and will be sent to the Assembly for a second approval. The law was overwhelmingly passed by the Assembly in May despite government reservations, but the government rejected it and sent it back to the Assembly.

The Assembly can override the government rejection by passing the law again but with a two-thirds majority, which was not available in the previous term. However, under the Kuwait constitution, the Assembly can pass the same law with a simple majority if voting takes place in the next term. During the committee meetings to discuss the rejected law, Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf told the panel that the law, which allows Kuwaiti male and female employees to seek early retirement, breached the constitution.

MP Majed Al-Mutairi yesterday submitted a proposal calling on the government to provide Kuwaiti

housewives who do not work with a monthly assistance of KD 300. He said the assistance should be treated like the assistance paid to Kuwaitis who work in the private sector. This is not the first time that a Kuwaiti MP has made such a proposal. All previous suggestions never materialized.

Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said yesterday the Assembly has committed a legal violation while approving a KD 6.2 billion supplementary bill for defense purchases. He said the Assembly approved KD 3.2 billion to be included in the budget over the next 10 years, while the remaining KD 3 billion will be withdrawn from the state reserves, also over the next 10 years. Adasani said the two amounts should have been included in the budget for 10 years and no direct withdrawals should have been made from the state reserve fund.

Haley resigns as UN envoy; probe urged on her travel

WASHINGTON: Nikki Haley resigned yesterday as the US ambassador to the United Nations, in the latest departure from President Donald Trump's national security team. Meeting Haley in the Oval Office, Trump said that Haley had done a "fantastic job" and would leave at the end of the year. "She told me probably six months ago," Trump told reporters, that "I want to take a little time off." A successor will be named "in the next two or three weeks," he said.

Haley was coy on her reasons for quitting, saying only that it was "important to understand when it's time to stand aside" after a string of challenging jobs. Responding to media speculation, she insisted that she was not planning to run for president against Trump in 2020, when she might be seen as a more moderate Republican alternative. "No I'm not running," she said emphatically.

Later yesterday, it emerged an anti-corruption group had urged an investigation into Haley's accept-

ance of private airplanes and free basketball tickets a day before she resigned. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington had urged the State Department's inspector general to probe seven flights that Haley and her husband took last year on the luxury aircraft of businessmen from South Carolina, where she was formerly governor.

Haley, on a filing required of government employees, disclosed the flights from New York to South Carolina and Washington and estimated the highest value at \$1,066, based on the cost of commercial first-class tickets. But the pressure group said that the value was more likely in the tens of thousands of dollars. It said in its letter that Haley's disclosure form was "insufficient to resolve concerns about her frequent acceptance of expensive gifts."

Walter Shaub, who headed the Office of Government Ethics under president Barack Obama, tweeted about the flights hours before Haley announced her resignation: "She undervalued them and it's not entirely clear if individuals or their companies bore the costs." Haley also acknowledged receiving four tickets to a New York Knicks game worth a total of \$19,588 courtesy of Vivek Garipalli, a healthcare entrepreneur she described in the disclosure form as a longtime friend. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington

Continued on Page 24



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Nikki Haley, US Ambassador to the United Nations, in the Oval office of the White House yesterday. — AFP

Riyadh allows Turkey to search Saudi consulate

ANKARA: Saudi Arabia has agreed to let Turkish authorities search the kingdom's Istanbul consulate after prominent journalist and Riyadh critic Jamal Khashoggi went missing last week, the Turkish foreign ministry said yesterday. "Saudi authorities said they were open to cooperation and that a search can be conducted at the consulate building," the ministry

spokesman Hami Aksoy said in a statement. The search will take place as part of the official investigation, which was being conducted "in an intense manner", he said without giving any date.

Khashoggi, a Washington Post contributor who wrote for Arab and Western media, vanished last Tuesday after visiting the consulate to obtain official documents. Turkish police were looking into two private aircraft which landed at Istanbul's Ataturk airport last Tuesday at different times carrying 15 people of interest in the case, as well as the possibility that Khashoggi was kidnapped and taken aboard one of the planes, local media reported.

Previously Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told Bloomberg that Riyadh would be ready to

welcome Turkish officials to search the premises. Ankara sought permission Sunday to carry out a search after the foreign ministry summoned the Saudi ambassador for a second time, Turkish television reported. Riyadh's envoy in Ankara was first called to the ministry on Wednesday. Khashoggi, a former Saudi government adviser, had been living in self-imposed exile in the United States since last year fearing possible arrest. He has been critical of some policies of the crown prince and Riyadh's intervention in the war in Yemen.

While Riyadh claimed he had left the consulate after his visit, Turkish police said Khashoggi did not emerge from the building. Government sources said police believe the journalist was killed inside the consulate.

Continued on Page 24

Better late than never for expat Pak cricketer from Kuwait

DUBAI: Ten years ago Bilal Asif had almost quit cricket by joining his father in Kuwait to work as an electrician, but a change of heart brought about by ex-Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik has paid dividends. Yesterday, Asif became the latest spinning bete noire for Australia, snatching 6-36 in the first Test in Dubai to trigger a spectacular collapse for the Baggy Greens, who lost 10 wickets for 60 runs as they slumped from a solid 142-0 to 202 all out. That gave Asif third best innings figures on Test debut for a Pakistani bowler behind Mohammad Asif (7-64) and Mohammad Nazir (7-99).



Bilal Asif

Continued on Page 24

Legendary poet Antara rises as comic superhero

SHARJAH: In a red cape, dark hair blowing in the wind, he crosses the dunes under a blazing sun: Antara, the famed 6th century Arab poet born a slave, is now a superhero. A pre-Islamic poet, Antara is celebrated in the collective memory of Arabs as well as in pop culture - a child born to a tribal leader and his Abyssinian slave who rose as a warrior-poet to free himself and demand his father recognize him as his son, and a free man.

Now, he stars in his own comic strip, reimagined as a shield-wielding, cape-wearing superhero by Egyptian writer Mumen Hilmi and renowned Indian illustrator Ashraf Ghuri. The story of Antara breaks across the class and race lines that frequently dominate society, the "perfect example of what it means to be a superhero," writer Hilmi says. "Arabs like the exaggerated personality traits of heroes, and we thought why not transform Antara into a superhero like those you see in the US, Europe, Japan."

"Antara" is the first comic strip to be published by Kalimat, a publishing house based in the UAE emirate of Sharjah which specializes in Arabic translations of Japanese manga and US cartoonist Nick Seluk's series, "The Awkward Yeti" and "Heart and Brain". The story



SHARJAH: Comic artist Mumen Hilmi poses in his office with his illustrated comic book "Antara" in this Gulf emirate on September 18, 2018. — AFP

weaves a tale of bravery, slavery, freedom, loyalty and love - and co-stars his beloved Abla, daughter of a tribal sheikh and object of Antara's undying affection.

Antara casts off the shackles of his early life to rise as a warrior and claim his rightful place as the son of Shaddad, leader of the Banu Abs tribe. But the facts of Antara's life remain unclear: One tale holds that Antara ibn Shaddad Al-Absi was born to an Ethiopian

Continued on Page 24

Alphabet to shut Google+ after user data exposed

SAN FRANCISCO: Alphabet Inc's Google will shut down the consumer version of its failed social network Google+ and tighten its data sharing policies after announcing on Monday that private profile data of at least 500,000 users may have been exposed to hundreds of external developers. The issue was discovered and patched in March as part of a review of how Google shares data with other applications, Google said in a blog post. No developer exploited the vulnerability or misused data, the review found.

Shares of its parent company Alphabet closed down 1 percent at \$1155.92 following the latest in a run of privacy issues to hit big US tech companies. Google has also faced increasing tensions over a reported search engine which would be acceptable to Chinese censors, and over its work for the US military. Yesterday, Google confirmed it is dropping out of the bidding for a huge Pentagon cloud

Continued on Page 24



NEW YORK: Rick Osterloh, Google's senior vice president of hardware, stands in front of images of the Pixel Slate and other new products including the Pixel 3 phone and Home Hub at a press conference yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amir receives newly-appointed diplomats



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the credentials of Canada's Ambassador to Kuwait Louis Pierre Emond.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the credentials of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ambassador Sanjin Halimovic.



Kuwait's newly-appointed consul general in New York Hamad Al-Hazeem.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. HH separately received the Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. HH also received the credentials of Canada's Ambassador to Kuwait Louis Pierre Emond, Russia's Ambassador Nikolai Makarov, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ambassador Sanjin Halimovic and Croatia's Ambassador Amir Muharemi.

HH the Amir also received the Acting Prime Minister

and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah who was escorting the newly-appointed Kuwaiti diplomats. The envoys are as follows: Ambassador Hassan Zaman (Japan); Ambassador Ebdah Al-Dousari (consul general in Basra, Iraq); Salah Al-Seif (consul general in Hong Kong and Macau, China); Mohammad Al-Mutairi (Ambassador to Mongolia); Abdullah Al-Yehaya (Ambassador to Argentina); Khalifa Al-Kharafi (consul general in Guangzhou, China) and Hamad Al-Hazeem (consul general in New York, USA).

HH wished them all success in their new posts and

urged them to attend to the safety and well-being of Kuwaitis abroad, strengthen Kuwait's bilateral ties with those countries and to represent the great nation of Kuwait in the best way possible. On their part, the newly-appointed diplomats expressed their gratitude to His Highness's guidance and wise instructions.

HH the Amir had also sent a cable of congratulations to President of the Republic of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni on the occasion of his country's National Day. HH expressed his best wishes and prosperity to the leader and to the people of Uganda. His

Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

In related news, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah who was escorting the newly-appointed Kuwaiti diplomats yesterday at Bayan Palace. —KUNA

Kuwait's policy for peace the basis of its political doctrine: Al-Ghanem

ANKARA: Kuwait National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem yesterday affirmed that the stance by Kuwait, namely His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for helping neighboring countries and establishing regional security and peace constitutes the basis of the Kuwaiti political doctrine.

The parliament speaker Al-Ghanem, addressing the third meeting of Eurasia countries, held in southern Turkish city of Antalya, expressed utter rejection of "all forms of economic wars and starvation policies." Warning that deprivation leads to upheavals, the National Assembly Speaker expressed opposition to policies by powers aimed at starving sections of the populace, saying in an indicative tone, "Who wants to live near the deprived, it is like a volcano that may erupt at any moment."

Speaker Al-Ghanem indicated that HH the Amir had

been asked by some foreign visitors about his reasoning for backing Iraq, a country that had invaded Kuwait. HH had answered that Kuwait believes that helping its neighbors attains prosperity and creates a regional atmosphere of stability, security and peace which serves the interests of all (in the Gulf). This is the political doctrine we advocate in Kuwait.

Regarding Turkey's financial crisis, speaker of the Kuwaiti parliament said plots designed to cause "financial collapse" in Turkey are doomed to fail. "Turkey is not a banana republic; it is rather a state of vast history and rich traditions. It is home to a number of creative people that aspire to live like any other people," he said, expressing confidence that the Turkish people and its leadership would succeed in overcoming any economic challenges.

Al-Ghanem affirmed Kuwait's open policy with the other Asian nations, saying in part, "We are meeting here today because unemployment, inflation and overpopulation are negatively affecting both Asia and Europe." Listing other reasons for the inter-continental gathering - Al-Ghanem mentioned commercial issues, environmental problems specifically "green house" emissions, labor drain in rural regions, educational affairs, diseases and emerging epidemics. —KUNA



ANTALYA: Kuwait National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem addressing the third meeting of Eurasia countries. —KUNA

Kuwait's UN rep takes part in UNSC's DRC trip



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi participating in the UN Security Council delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). —KUNA

UNRWA: Gulf countries helped in overcoming financial shortfalls

BRUSSELS: The Commissioner-General for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Pierre Krahenbuhl, heaped praise yesterday on Gulf countries for their contribution to help the UN agency to overcome its financial difficulties following the US cut of financial allocations to UNRWA.

"In addition to the EU and its member states, Gulf countries played a very crucial role in the current positive dynamic. The four major Gulf countries - Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait have contributed USD 50 million each. We have also received pledges of USD 200 million from Gulf countries for our core activities. This is unprecedented and outstanding," he told a news conference yesterday.

Referring specifically to Kuwait, he said the Kuwaiti Deputy (currently Acting) Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah who was present at the special meeting on UNRWA on the sidelines of the UN General in New York ten days ago, announced an additional USD 42 million which added to the USD 8 million that Kuwait has already contributed.

"This is very important support that comes from the Gulf. We have never had those levels for our core funding. This is remarkable," stressed the UNRWA chief. Krahenbuhl, however, said that UNRWA continues to have an unprecedented difficult year in financial terms noting that the US in January decided to cut its contributions from USD 364 million in 2017 to only USD 60 million.

Unprecedented shortfall

The US confirmed in August that there will be not any further US funding for UNRWA, he said. "We deeply regret this decision because it was a political decision and not based on UNRWA's performance or any other humanitarian reason". He said UNRWA was facing an unprecedented shortfall of USD 446 million since the beginning of the year. The UN agency launched a campaign called



BRUSSELS: UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl speaking at the press conference. —KUNA

"Dignity is Priceless" and since January it has brought the shortfall down from USD 446 million to USD 66 million.

He stressed on the role of the European Union saying it has had a historically strong partnership since 1971 with the UNRWA. The EU contributes 42 percent or 664 million euro (USD 760 million) to UNRWA's total budget. He said a major achievement of UNRWA this year was that it was able to open the school year for 526,000 boys and girls in the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and Jordan in "this very delicate environment on time." "There was a strong concern among the host governments and authorities that the delay in the UNRWA school year would create further instability in the Middle East," he said.

The Jordanian King have been standing with us every step of the way, he said noting that 126,000

Palestinian boys and girls go to schools in Jordan. "We will now look into how we can stabilize these achievements in financial terms because 2019 will also be a big challenge for us," he added.

He warned that the absence of political horizons to resolve the Palestine question deeply affects the Palestinian community present throughout the Middle East. UNRWA was established by the UN General Assembly Resolution 302 on 8 December 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programs for Palestine refugees. In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate - most recently extending it until 30 June 2020. When the Agency began operations in 1950, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. Today, some 5 million Palestine refugees are eligible for UNRWA services. —KUNA

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi was part of a UN Security Council delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) set up to oversee the December presidential parliamentary elections. In a press statement, the Kuwaiti permanent mission to the UN said yesterday that the visit, which took place on October 5 and lasted for five days, came to ensure a peaceful transfer of power, address political challenges and attain stability throughout the country.

Ambassador Al-Otaibi participated in numerous political meetings with several key leaders, including DRC's President Joseph Kabila, Prime Minister Bruno Tshibala and Minister of Interior and Security Henri Mova Sakanyi. Al-Otaibi contributed in the meetings of Security Council with the Independent National Electoral Commission, many female candidates and other international officials. Kuwait heads the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the DRC and is overseeing the sanctions measures imposed by the Security Council. —KUNA

Kuwait's Civil Aviation launches 42 flights at new terminal

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced on Monday that all flights to and from Arab countries will start operating from the new terminal (T4) today. The Director of Operations at DGCA Engineer Saleh Al-Fadaghi said in a press statement that Kuwait Airways will operate up to new 42 trips a day from T4. For its part, Kuwait Airways said as of next Wednesday all flights departing to and arriving from Cairo, Alexandria, Sharm El-Sheikh, Beirut, Amman and Najaf will be operated in T4, noting that all passengers departing on these flights must head directly to the new terminal. The daily flights to and from the Gulf States will continue from the new terminal. Kuwait Airways was established in 1953 as a private company under the name of Kuwait National Airlines Limited. The Government of Kuwait acquired 100 percent of its ownership in 1962 and it has 40 destinations around the world. —KUNA

Local

Zain strategic partner of seventh Youth Empowerment Symposium

Under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of the Youth Empowerment Symposium for the seventh consecutive year. The event, which comes under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, will be held this year at Four Seasons Hotel. Zain's strategic partnership of the Youth Empowerment Symposium since its inception seven years ago comes in line with the company's long term strategy of providing the necessary support to national initiatives aimed at uplifting the capabilities and skills of Kuwaiti youth.

Waleed Al Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer, said during the press conference: "Today, Zain is proud to announce its strategic partnership of the Youth Empowerment Symposium for the seventh consecutive year. Zain has always been a main supporter of this national and academic initiative since its inception, and this is our responsibility towards this vibrant segment of the community".

Al Khashti added: "The Youth Empowerment Symposium is considered one of the biggest academic programs that cater to the youth in Kuwait and even the GCC region. Every year, the symposium excels at inviting local and international experts, professionals,

and pioneers in the fields of business, information technology, economics, and social media from all around the world to share their personal and professional experiences with the Kuwaiti youth who anxiously look forward to learning from them every year".

Al Khashti concluded: "There is no doubt that Zain's support of this national initiative stands as an indication of the company's strong belief in the youth and the importance of their development across all fields of activity".

The Youth Empowerment Symposium, to be held 5-6 November, provides local youth with an ideal opportunity to gain valuable insights from a number of internationally and locally renowned industry pioneers, academics, and experts. This year's speakers include Mitch Lowe, CEO of Movie Pass, former co-founding executive of Netflix and former President of Redbox, Jason Wheeler former Vice President of Finance at Google and former Chief Financial Officer of Tesla Motors.

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



Waleed Al Khashti during the press conference

Mabrook Co to join Horeca Kuwait 2019 as diamond sponsor

KUWAIT: Preparations for the Horeca Kuwait 2019 exhibition are steadily progressing and attracting companies to take part in it. The event is providing a golden opportunity to scientifically exchange expertise that would match the local market needs and future expansion plans. The exhibition is due to be organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Co at Mishref International Fair Ground in the period of January 14-16, 2019.

A statement issued by Leaders Group stressed that Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co (Mabrook's) Diamond Sponsorship has become a fixed element in achieving Horeca's success, especially in view of the previous works it had done in preparing major projects both in Kuwait and other GCC states. It has based this trust on a 60 year long career in the business during which it became the agent of many international commercial brands.

On his part, Mabrook's board chairman Ali Farhat said that taking part in previous Horeca versions proved the significance of effective participation in Horeca Kuwait as a unique specialized phenomenal gathering of all hospitality manufacturers including hotels and restaurants.

"Horeca Kuwait has major economic impact in view of the constant development in hospitality, building new hotels and restaurants to cover the urban expan-

sion Kuwait is currently witnessing", Farhat expressed his appreciation for leaders Group efforts to develop the hospitality sector in view of the increase in restaurants in Kuwait. "Estimates show that there is a 15 per cent growth in the business and that annual spending has grown to KD 700 million", Farhat explained noting that Horeca Kuwait has actually become an annual forum for those interested in hospitality be that through displaying the latest equipment, agencies, technologies and related services or bringing manufacturers, suppliers, experts, officials and clients closer together under one roof.



Ali Farhat

General: Egypt's Oct war victory for Arabs

KUWAIT: Head of the Kuwaiti National Military Services Authority Major General Mohammad Al-Khudher on Monday called the victory of Egypt's October Sixth against Israel as a triumph for the Arab nations. This came in a statement by Al-Khudher during a reception marking the Egyptian Armed Forces' participation with the Kuwaiti Forces in that battle. Al-Khudher added that the blood of the Kuwaitis and Egyptians blended together during the war, as Kuwait offered martyrs in defense of the Arab world and the lands of Egypt. The Arab support was not only in the October Sixth War but also during the War of Attrition, said the Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni. Al-Qouni added that the Kuwaiti Forces were amongst the first Arab nations to send ground troops, financial support, and oil supplies in the war that remains one of the most important military campaigns of this era. — KUNA



Major General Mohammad Al-Khudher

Kuwait central bank workshop tackles liquidity management

KUWAIT: Kuwait's central bank is collaborating with the International Islamic financial market for a workshop scheduled today over liquidity management and sukuk which is the Islamic equivalent to a bond. The endeavor is an effort on the part of the central bank to ensure financial stability in the country, its governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel said in a statement yesterday. He said that the workshop revolves around the concept of liquidity management, which deals with the appropriate administration of an entity's cash and other assets to be able to meet its current liabilities. Another topic to be addressed is the latest developments in the global sukuk market, an industry that has grown significantly in recent years, in addition to the challenges facing the Islamic capital market. Al-Hashel went on to say that such workshops are productive activities that help push Kuwait's central bank closer to its ultimate goal of achieving financial stability. — KUNA



Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel



The honoring ceremony of the graduation

Kuwaiti Deputy FM patronizes API course's graduation

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday patronized the graduation of participants in "Preparing and analyzing economic reports" training course in which a total of 22 employees from the Foreign Ministry and along with another group of citizens from similar governmental institutions took part. In a speech Al-Jarallah gave at the honoring ceremony of the graduation, he praised the role of Arab Planning Institute (API) which organized this training course and successfully enhanced

the joint Arab work.

He also endorsed the efforts exerted by the Institute in developing and boosting national and Arab humanitarian capacity, as well as organizing the training of the Foreign Ministry and other governmental bodies' employees. He hailed the Foreign Ministry's keenness on developing and refining the diplomatic skills of the Ministry workers, and enrolling them in specialized training courses in the field. API General Director Dr Bader Mallah accompanied Al-Jarallah in an exploratory tour to be briefed on the nature of the work in various sections of the institute. The ceremony was attended by senior officials at the Foreign Ministry. — KUNA



Khaled Al-Jarallah

Kuwait takes leaps in social services: Minister Al-Sabeeh

CAIRO: Kuwait has taken strides on the path toward various social services' sectors, affirmed the country's visiting Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh yesterday. Al-Sabeeh, who also serves as Minister of State for Economic Affairs, made the remarks to KUNA on sidelines of the 72nd session of the executive committee of the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers.

Kuwait has established a chain of care houses for the elderly and the orphans and has made headways in action against domestic violence, namely targeting women and children, she said. And at the legislative level, Kuwait has enacted laws for protecting human and children rights. The ministry itself runs centers for social development, caring for youth, acting against narcotics and domestic violence. As to the just-concluded meeting, the minister said the conferees drafted recommendations that would be submitted to the 38th ministerial session — essentially focusing on human empowerment. Kuwait, during the meeting, has proposed holding "the orphans' contest," due to be revised in the next meeting. Minister Al-Sabeeh indicated that there would be a call for a consultative ministerial meeting in early December.

KPA affirms boost to GCC maritime transportation ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait Port Authority (KPA) yesterday stressed on the necessity of cooperation and exchange of information among GCC countries in the field of maritime transportation to boost their individual economies. On sidelines of the 26th meeting of the Gulf ports and maritime authorities' officials, which was held yesterday and will continue today, KPA General Manager Sheikh Yousef Abdullah Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah said that there must be a representative of the Gulf States in the International Maritime Organization (IMO). He adds that it is necessary to establish cooperation for drafting ports' regulations, issuing joint GCC licenses and holding ports committees meetings for the exchange of infor-

mation on sea transportation. The meeting is a preparation for the 22nd meeting of ministers and agents in the GCC transport and communication ministries, due in Kuwait in November.

In other news, Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-Rashidi has inked a contract, worth KD 9 million (USD 29 million), for importing original spare parts for the Al-Zor power station. A ministry statement released yesterday said the purchased parts would be fitted to the burners and pumps for seawaters, shifted for desalination, and distillation units. The contract works are projected to last for 36 months as of the date of inking the deal. — KUNA



Sheikh Yousef Abdullah Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah

Kuwait provides proper housing units for citizens: Official

CAIRO: Kuwait is exerting efforts to provide proper housing units for citizens, an official said Monday on the fringes of an Arab League committee meeting on housing in Cairo. Mohammad Snaideh, Deputy Director General of Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) for planning and design, said Kuwait's government has distributed 28,500 houses in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Area. He was speaking to KUNA on sidelines of a meeting of the technical committee of the Arab Housing Ministers' Council.

Snaideh said more than 80,000 housing units would be offered in South Saad Al-Abdullah and Al-Khairan Areas. Meanwhile, the committee members would be discussing diverse means of helping Arab countries facing armed conflicts and natural disasters. The committee members will also discuss following up the implementation of resolutions of Arab Economic Summits over housing.

Disability a 'major' social issue

In related news, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh yesterday said Kuwait perceives the problem of disability as a "major" social issue. Al-Sabeeh, who also serves as Minister of State for Economic Affairs, made the remarks in a speech she gave during the 72nd session of the executive committee of the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers.

She said that the talks revolve around the council's contributions towards Kuwait's development plan for the year 2030, ahead of a high-level Arab summit in Tunisia. The Kuwaiti minister went on to explain that the social issue of disability is included in the session's agenda, saying she was hopeful that the talks would yield positive results. In addition to Al-Sabeeh, the Kuwaiti delegation to the meeting includes a number of officials. — KUNA



Mohammad Snaideh



Hind Al-Sabeeh

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Evening at Souq Al-Mubarakiya. — KUNA

Burgan Bank concludes successful 'Decision Making Skills' workshop

Providing employees with new business development skills

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently participated in the 'Decision Mojo' workshop by leading knowledge transfer platform, Knowledge Club, as part of its long-term commitment to employee development and strengthening of skills and methods to make the right decisions in their respective fields. Attended by bank's staff from different departments in coordination with the Learning and Development Center of the Human Resources Department, the workshop shed light on the essential components that enable consistency in making high-quality decisions to ensure seamless business operations.

Held from 7-8 October 2018, the two-day workshop, one of the most important crucial workshops within the comprehensive program of a wide variety of seminars and conferences, the workshop had received a notable turnout and appreciation by the bank's staff. They were pleased to have benefited from various resourceful educational tools that have developed their practical skills and which will now be reflected on their work performance. Globally renowned speakers, authors and trainers conduct the workshops, as part of Burgan Bank's one-year sponsorship agreement with the Founder of Knowledge Club - Vigor Events.

Recognized as one of the foremost learning experi-

ences, Decision Mojo workshop outlined key organizational and personal decision-making challenges, anticipatory situations, and emerging decision-making models. Any situation that is challenging and demands organizational or personal decision-making skills offers vast learning experiences and insures them from future problems. Each employee through the workshop's application of eight disciples of decision acumen will now be adept at designing protective, highly proficient, proactive decision-making strategies to apply effectively in the most fitting situations.

The 'Decision Mojo' workshop was conducted by James Van Der Westhuizen, a trusted adviser to many prominent companies and leading executives, who is also a managing member of Know House - a globally respected organizational development and change consultancy active in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Burgan Bank has long been advocating the importance of employee development through the adoption of international best practices and unique training opportunities. Striving to be a sought-after career destination, the bank continues to invest in its staff by retaining, cultivating and developing leadership capabilities to achieve long-term sustainable growth.



KIPCO sponsors 7th Youth Empowerment Symposium

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company - has announced that it will be a Strategic Sponsor of the 7th Youth Empowerment Symposium (Tmkeen). The event will be held under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah on November 5-6. This is the fourth year that KIPCO supports the symposium. KIPCO and its Group companies support a number of Tmkeen activities throughout the year. This includes hosting the 'Tmkeeners Program', a series of closed-door sessions where entrepreneurs can interact on a personal level with business leaders.

KIPCO and its Group companies also collaborate with Tmkeen on the KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs, in its fourth edition this year. The award aims to shed light on the growing young business community, and support them through US\$ 100,000 in services provided by KIPCO Group in addition to US\$ 30,000 in cash prizes awarded to the top three winners. The 'Startup Battle' between the final-

ists will take place during the Tmkeen symposium before a live audience and the winner will be announced at the closing of the event.

Speaking at the press conference announcing the upcoming symposium, Ms Eman Al Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director said: "The diversification of Kuwait's economy is the responsibility of both the public and private sectors. At KIPCO, we believe in the great opportunities that await the young and ambitious young people of Kuwait in the growing SME sector. As such, we are proud of our partnership with Tmkeen, which allows us to shed light on the talents of our entrepreneurial community and to encourage our innovative young people to set up their own sustainable businesses."

Scientific lectures held at Dasman Diabetes Institute

KUWAIT: The Research Division at the Dasman Diabetes Institute, which was founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) recently hosted two guest speakers to present lectures titled "Biology and Structure of Integrin" delivered by Professor Amin Arnaout from Harvard University and the other lecture titled "Rescuing Mutants of TP53" delivered

by Sir Alan Roy Fersht from the University of Cambridge. The two presentations were well attended by the Institute's researchers, scientists, doctors, laboratory staff and others. Organizing these scientific activities stem from the Institute's mission to promote awareness and share up-to-date knowledge and findings related to diabetes and its chronic conditions.



Local

22 girls suffer from AC gas inhalation at Ahmadi school

School building, premises now clear of high level gas residues

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) said yesterday a gas leak from an air-conditioning set at an Al-Ahmadi girl school led to the suffocation of 22 students. After evacuating the premises, they were treated by emergency medical services' personnel. KFSD stated in a press release that the department had received an emergency call about the accident. Precautionary evacuation of the school building was done after the arrival of the KFSD personnel. Mubarak Al-Kabeer fire department's team did a final toxic gas scan. It was later determined that the school building and premises were clear of high level gas residues.

Fahaheel fire

Firemen fought a fire in a Fahaheel building. The fire was in an annex of two rooms and a kitchen. The house was evacuated and the fire was extinguished without injuries.



Bedoon detained for having forged Bahraini passport

KUWAIT: A bedoon was referred to the forgery department for attempting to leave the country with a forged Bahraini passport. He said he paid a citizen KD 15,000 for the passport. When the forger was contacted on the mobile number provided by the suspect, he was found already arrested and in central prison for other felonies. The bedoon had given the forged passport to officers at the land border exit, but they did not find any entry data for the passport, so he was sent for investigations and confessed. The passport is forged.

'Silent killer drug'

Criminal detectives discovered yet another drug called "kinja", which is highly potent and can be described as the "silent killer drug". Two Bangladeshi suspects are refusing to reveal the source of the drug and where it is made after 295 gm of the drug was confiscated. The drug and the two suspects along with KD 100 in marked notes were sent to the drugs prosecution. A security source said detectives received tips about a Bangladeshi trading in drugs and learned about the new drug, so an undercover agent made contacts with the suspect and agreed to buy 5 gm of "kinja" for KD 100.

The suspect was arrested when the exchange was completed. The source handed the drug and the suspect returned the marked notes. The suspect then led detectives to the house of the second suspect, where four plastic bags containing nearly 295 gm of kinja, shabu and Tramadol were found. Both confessed to trading in drugs but remained silent when asked about the source. —Al-Rai/Al-Anbaa

GCC affirms keenness to protect nationals from hazards

ROME: The GCC yesterday affirmed keenness to enhance its civil protection system to the highest international levels via linking it with the most advanced systems in Italy and EU countries. Out of their keenness to insure the safety of Gulf citizens and security of their homelands, GCC leaders decided to establish the GCC Emergency Management Centre in December 2013. Retired Lt General Fahad Al-Sharqawi, GCC EMC's President, stated to KUNA.

Al-Sharqawi made his remarks on the sidelines of his official visit to Italy, alongside administrative and technical teams, to prepare for the link project between the GCC systems and the European systems, slated for early 2019. The GCC EMC was formed in light of the events that took place in the Middle East region at the time, including the activation of illegal nuclear facilities, political instability, and the overall tension found in some neighboring countries that have posed a great danger to the safety of Gulf citizens and properties, he added.

The GCC EMC delegation visited the Civil Protection Department in Rome and the European Joint Research Center in Milan as part of a program aimed to boost GCC-EU prospects. Al-Sharqawi noted. The visits were an important step in line with the Center's 2016-2020 strategy, which was made under the supervision of the GCC Secretariat General, he added. The five-year strategic plan aims to propel the GCC EMC to the fullest operational capacities through well-trained Gulf cadres. Al-Sharqawi said, noting the Center's headquarters in Kuwait is equipped with the latest state of the art technology and enhanced operation rooms.



ROME: Kuwait's Ambassador in Rome Sheikh Ali Al-Khaleel Al-Sabah with Retired Lt General Fahad Al-Sharqawi. — KUNA

The Center aims to obtain an international recognition as an international hub and resource for managing regional disasters, he said, it is, thus, cooperating with a number of international organizations such as the EU, International Atomic Energy Agency, and US Federal Emergency Management Agency to build Gulf capacities through joint trainings, workshops, and projects.

The GCC EMC has determined three strategic goals from the GCC-EU link project: boosting the capability of managing regional hazards through enhancing and exchanging information, backing regional events response through coordination and resources management, bolstering regional integration through forming joint systems and unified standards for response operations, Al-Sharqawi said.

The GCC-EU link project falls within the core of the Center's strategic plans, he said, adding it would attain vital information exchange between GCC states. The project also includes a simulator program to identify the severity and effect of a situation, Al-Sharqawi noted, adding that such function would assist in determining necessary logistic supplies, and provide recommendations on ways to handle the incident. —KUNA

N Gulf region affected by Indian monsoon

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Astronomer Adel Al-Marzouq said Kuwait and the northern regions of the Gulf are currently affected by the Indian monsoon trough forming over the Indian Ocean, and this would lead to westerly winds, which is forecast to lead to cloudy skies in the period of Oct 18-22 with light to moderate chances of rain. Temperatures are expected to remain high (37-42 C) with humid winds.

Fingerprint system for teachers

MoE acting undersecretary Yousif Al-Najjar announced the fatwa and legislation department approved the decision to impose the fingerprint system on teachers and that the project was accordingly referred to CTC and the Audit Bureau pending implementation. Najjar added the project's budget is KD 1 million, but stressed that he is unable to decide when the system will be applied in schools until formal proceedings are over.

KNPC meeting

Well-informed oil sources said the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) will hold a preliminary meeting today with the companies qualified for the Debdebah solar power project. The sources added that the project's budget is KD 520 million and is expected to generate 1.5 gigawatts of electricity. Four to six companies out of 28 qualified companies and consortiums have so far purchased the project's conditions handbook.

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Evacuation drill at Farwaniya hospital

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: MOH medical emergencies department recently held an evacuation drill at Farwaniya hospital, said MOH assistant undersecretary for supporting medical services affairs, Dr Fawwaz Al-Refa'e noting that the drill is part of a comprehensive plan to train various medical and administrative staff members in government hospitals on dealing with various contingencies. The exercise was carried out at Farwaniya Hospital, involving "faulty" wiring, causing smoke to fill the ward. Al-Refa'e added that the drill simulated the spread of smoke resulting from a short electrical circuit and that six patients were evacuated in six ambulances to a backup hospital.

In other news, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah yesterday issued a directive urging all ministry employees in various positions to disclose if any of them has another job outside the ministry or if he, his minor children, wife or those he provides for own part of any company or facility that has contracts signed with MoH, said informed sources, noting that employees were given a deadline to submit such disclosures.

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ROUTE MAP



Interpol saga hurts
China's bid to lead
global bodies

Page 7

Page 9

Syria's Idlib: From 'bloodbath' fears to buffer deal



WASHINGTON: A teleprompter shows the speech being delivered by US President Trump during the swearing-in ceremony of Brett Kavanaugh as Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court at the White House. — AFP

Kavanaugh swings US Supreme Court to the right

Trump says America owes Kavanaugh an apology

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court is supposed to be a sacred institution impervious to partisan politics but the newly confirmed justice Brett Kavanaugh gives the court its staunchest conservative majority in decades. As he was sworn in Monday night at the White House, after an ugly, contentious Senate confirmation process in which he battled allegations of sexually assaulting women, Kavanaugh, 53, vowed to serve the country—not one political party or another. “The Supreme Court is an institution of law. It is not a partisan or political institution,” said Kavanaugh, who took up his seat on the nine-member bench yesterday.

But Steven Schwinn, a professor at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, insisted the court has always been both a judicial institution and a political one. “This didn’t start with Justice Kavanaugh’s nomination, and it won’t end here,” he said. Under the US constitution, it is the president who nominates people to the court but it is up to the Senate to confirm or reject them. Judges are named for life, so they can leave their mark for a long time after they first join the court.

Over time, it has wavered from right to left. In the early 19th century it defended slavery. In the 1960s, it was key in ending racial segregation. But now “the court has not been this conservative since back to the 30s” when it opposed the New Deal that President Franklin D Roosevelt pushed to lift the country out of the Great Depression, said Carl

Tobias, a professor of law at the University of Richmond. With the arrival of Kavanaugh the court comprises four liberals appointed by Democratic presidents and five conservatives picked by Republicans.

It is not the first time there is a Republican-picked majority, but until now some of these held swing votes-



**Justice sworn
after ugly
confirmation
process**

they voted right or left, depending on the issue at stake. Such was the case with justice Anthony Kennedy, whose retirement paved the way for Kavanaugh to replace him. Kennedy was right-leaning on voting rights issues but a progressive on same sex marriage and access to abortion. “I’m not sure anyone expects Justice Kavanaugh to play this same kind of role on the court.

Instead, most predict he will be more reliably con-

servative,” said Schwinn. He said Kavanaugh left “a lengthy paper trail” of judicial opinions and law review articles, among other writings, that is as copious as anyone appointed to the court in recent memory. Kavanaugh, who worked in the administration of George W Bush, was also endorsed by two conservative think tanks, the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation.

No army, no money

President Donald Trump politicized the nomination process by promising his supporters to nominate someone who opposed abortion and backed gun rights, two highly divisive issues that the Supreme Court has to rule on regularly. Trump already managed to get conservative Neil Gorsuch onto the court in 2017 and might have other opportunities ahead: liberal judges Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer are 85 and 80, respectively.

In the meantime, the court will tend toward the right both in its decisions and the issues it decides to address, said Tobias. It faces 8,000 cases a year and picks only a hundred or so. If its rulings are seen as biased the court could lose credibility. A Gallup poll released in early July said only 53 percent of those questioned said they approved of the court’s rulings. There were sharp divisions along party lines: 78 percent approval among Republicans but 38 percent with Democrats.

America owes apology

Meanwhile, Trump said Monday he was apologizing on behalf of the whole country to his new conservative Supreme Court justice after one of the most contentious confirmation processes in US history. At a White House swearing-in ceremony, Trump stood next to Justice Brett Kavanaugh and said he’d been “proven innocent” of the sexual assault allegations that threatened to derail him in a Senate confirmation process revealing the depth of the left-right split tearing through American politics.

“On behalf of our nation, I want to apologize to Brett and the entire Kavanaugh family for the terrible pain and suffering you have been forced to endure,” he said at the ceremony in the ornate White House East Room. Trump showed he still considers the nomination row a political battle. Before the ceremony, he’d described opposition Democrats as “evil” and the sexual assault claims as a “hoax.” But after being sworn in, Kavanaugh struck a markedly more conciliatory tone. He told an audience that included the entire Supreme Court and a Who’s Who of Republican movers and shakers that he had “no bitterness” and would never bring politics into the top court. “The Supreme Court is a team of nine. And I will always be a team player on the team of nine.... The Senate confirmation process was contentious and emotional. That process is over,” he said. — Agencies

Baby clothes as bait

The arrested suspects are being identified only as Juan Carlos “N” and his wife, Patricia “N,” in accordance with Mexican law. He has “a mental disturbance consistent with psychosis and a personality disorder,” while she has been “mentally disabled since birth, and also has acquired induced delirium,” said Gomez. He cited a psychiatric exam presented by prosecutors at the man’s initial court appearance Sunday. “But both can distinguish between right and wrong,” Gomez added. The couple were living with their three children, including a baby.

When authorities searched their two houses, they found human remains in cement-filled buckets and wrapped in plastic bags inside a refrigerator, as well as articles of clothing apparently belonging to some of their victims. The man told investigators that he and his wife lured their victims, many of whom were young mothers, with offers of discount clothing for their babies. “They were single mothers... and they needed someone who could help them find inexpensive baby clothes,” said Gomez. Investigators tracked down the couple by tracing cell phone calls the missing women had placed to them, he said.

The case has triggered shock in Mexico, even by the standards of a country plagued by a surge in violent crime. Hundreds of people protested in Ecatepec on Sunday, carrying candles and white flowers to demand action by the authorities to deal with an explosion of violence against women and girls. Seven women and girls are killed in Mexico every day, according to UN Women. — AFP

‘Unforgivable’ more than 440 homeless died in UK in a year

LONDON: Research showing that 449 homeless people died in Britain last year, many while sleeping rough, exposed a “horrifying” and “unforgivable” housing crisis, charities said yesterday. A former soldier, a quantum physicist and a travelling musician were among the dead, aged between 18 and 94, who lost their lives on the streets, in temporary housing and hospitals, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ). “Rising levels of homelessness are a national disgrace, but it is utterly unforgivable that so many homeless people are dying unnoticed and unaccounted for,” Polly Neate, chief executive of housing charity Shelter, said in emailed comments.

“This important investigation lays bare the true brutality of our housing crisis,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Homelessness charity Crisis estimates there are 236,000 people sleeping rough or in temporary accommodation in Britain, with numbers

increasing since 2010 amid a decline in housebuilding and rising property prices. Britain does not publish numbers on homeless people’s deaths, though the Office for National Statistics announced it is collecting experimental data for release later this year.

The government pledged this year to end rough sleeping in England by 2027, with a 100 million pound (\$128 million) package including funding for housing, mental health treatment and staff training. “Every death of someone sleeping rough on our streets is one too many and we take this matter extremely seriously,” a housing ministry spokesman said in emailed comments. The BIJ, which worked with local journalists, coroners’ reports, soup kitchens and families to gather the data, found the average age at death was 49 for men and 53 for women, with causes ranging from drug overdoses to starvation.

More than half died on the streets, among cases where the location of death was known, the BIJ found, warning that the true number of deaths was “likely to be much higher”. “This is a wake-up call to see homelessness as a national emergency,” said Jon Sparkes, head of Crisis, which says rough sleepers are 17 times more likely to be victims of violence and nine times more likely to commit suicide than the wider public. “To think of just one person dying due to the consequences of poverty and homelessness is appalling, but to learn of the sheer scale of those who’ve lost their lives in the past year is nothing short of horrifying.” — Reuters

Mexican serial murder couple claim 20 killings

MEXICO CITY: A couple detained in Mexico while transporting human body parts in a baby carriage has admitted killing 20 people, twice the number originally suspected, the chief investigator on the case said Monday. The man also admitted raping some of his women victims and selling some of their body parts, said state prosecutor Alejandro Gomez of Mexico state. The man and woman were arrested Thursday in Ecatepec, a violence-hit suburb northeast of Mexico City, on suspicion of killing 10 women. The man gave detailed accounts of those 10 murders, and told investigators that he and his wife had killed 10 other people as well, according to Gomez.

Prosecutors are now trying to establish whether that is true, or the boast of a “psychopath” and “serial killer,” he said. “He described it in a completely natural way... I would say he actually seemed happy to have done this,” Gomez said in an interview with Mexican radio network Formula. “He wants people to see his picture, to know his name... I would obviously classify this person as a murderer, a serial killer.” The couple also admitted to selling the two-month-old baby of one of their victims to another couple, who was also arrested, according to the newspaper El Universal.

International

Qatari fuel enters Gaza amid fears of flare-up with Israel

Power plant delivery bypasses Palestinian leader Abbas

GAZA: A truck brought fuel across Israel's border into the Gaza Strip yesterday in what sources said was a Qatari- and UN-backed drive to ease conditions in the enclave and stem any escalation in Palestinian-Israeli violence. The shipment was a potential slap to the Western-backed administration of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, which opposed the foreign relief plan. Gaza is controlled by Abbas's rival, the Islamist Hamas group and the Palestinian president has been using economic pressure in order to wrest back control.

Under a blockade by Israel and Egypt designed to isolate Hamas, Gaza has plunged into poverty. Over the last half year it has seen weekly, often violent Palestinian border protests and lethal counter-fire by the Israeli military. The truck that entered Gaza brought the first delivery out of a \$60 million fuel donation by Qatar meant to provide the power plant with enough fuel to operate for six months, local sources said. The cash-starved plant has been providing Gazans with only around four hours of electricity daily. A spokesman for the Abbas-appointed Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, who is based in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, voiced disapproval of the fuel delivery.

"Any international financial aid to the Gaza Strip should be through, or with the coordination of, the Palestinian government," he said, in order "to preserve Palestinian unity" and to stop any plans to separate Gaza from the West Bank. A Qatari official, speaking to Reuters on Sunday, said Doha planned to help with Gaza's power crisis "at the request of donor states in the United Nations, to prevent an escalation of the existing humanitarian disaster". UN officials could not immediately be reached for comment. Israel's energy minister, Yuval Steinitz, told Reuters on Monday that Qatar "was trying to help" prevent a Gaza flare-up.

Steinitz accused Abbas, who has restricted PA funding

for Gaza, of "seeking to make gains on two counts: by encouraging a conflict in which Israel will clobber Hamas and over which he will then be able to clobber Israel on the world stage". Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008. Months of Egyptian-mediated reconciliation



Qatar seeks to prevent escalation of violence

talks between Hamas and Abbas have been held up by power-sharing disputes. "Abbas believes that if he keeps the Gaza closure tight, it will make Hamas accept his reconciliation plan, which would give the Abbas government full control - or the people in Gaza will launch a revolution against Hamas," said Palestinian political analyst Hani al-Masri.

"This is making it easy for others to bypass the Palestinian Authority ... They are trying to give them (Gazans) a sedative, sometimes through Egypt, and this time through Israel." Palestinians launched the border protests on March 30 to demand an easing of the Gaza blockade and the right of return to lands that Palestinian families fled or were driven from on Israel's founding in 1948. Israeli forces have killed at least 195 Palestinians since. Israel has lost a soldier to a Gaza sniper and tracts of forest and farmland to fires set in cross-border incendiary attacks. — Reuters



GAZA: Palestinians ride a donkey cart near the Gaza power plant in Nuseirat, in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. — AFP

Syria issues pardon for army deserters and draft dodgers

DAMASCUS: Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad issued a general amnesty yesterday for army deserters and those who have avoided compulsory military service during the country's seven-year civil war, state media said. Tens of thousands of Syrian soldiers have deserted since the start of the war in 2011, some of them joining rebel factions and others either hiding at home or escaping abroad. A similar number is estimated to have avoided completing compulsory military service.

The fear of being sent to the front line has kept many male Syrian refugees from returning to their home country. Yesterday, Assad declared "a general amnesty from any penalties for military deserters inside and outside the country," SANA said. Those who had been charged with deserting but who were on the run inside the country would have to hand themselves in within four months to Syrian authorities. Charged deserters who fled outside Syria would have six months to present themselves to authorities, SANA said.

It did not specify whether defectors who then went on to fight the Syrian army were included in the pardon. While it mentions being exempt from "penalties", yesterday's decree did not specify if defectors or draft dodgers would ultimately be sent to serve. The decree includes "a general amnesty from any penalties for crimes under Law 30 for Military Service", which governs the country's conscription. Before Syria's conflict erupted in 2011, men aged 18 and older had to serve up to two years in the army, after which they became reserves available for call-up in times of crisis. In the past seven years, fatalities, injuries and defections are estimated to have halved the once 300,000-strong army. — AFP

Australia seeking to settle migrants outside major cities

SYDNEY: Australia is drawing up plans to require migrants to temporarily settle in regional and rural areas to ease congestion in major cities, the government announced yesterday. While much of the vast continent is sparsely populated, Australia is growing at an annual rate of 1.6 percent—one of the highest among OECD countries. Sydney, Melbourne and southeast Queensland are among the fastest-growing urban areas in the world thanks in part to overseas migration, said population minister Alan Tudge. The resulting strain on infrastructure in Australia's eastern cities cost the economy Aus\$15 billion (US\$10.6 billion) last year, with annual forecast losses of Aus\$40 billion by 2030 if left unchecked, Tudge told an audience at the Menzies Research Centre think-tank in Melbourne.

"This (congestion) is a serious challenge for families and a serious economic challenge for the nation," he said. "We are working on measures to have more new arrivals go to the smaller states and regions and require them to be there for at least a few years." Other parts of the country "have barely grown and (are) crying out for more people", he added. Tudge did not outline how new immigrants would be forced to remain in regional areas, saying this was still to be determined by the government. He flagged a number of other schemes to ease population pressure, including a bigger infrastructure spend and moving public servants out of the big cities.

Critics such as former Australian Border Force chief Roman Quaedvlieg said requiring migrants to live in regional areas could be difficult to enforce. "Migrants will gravitate to opportunities and amenities in cities," he tweeted yesterday. "It's not possible to police the condition without substantial resources, both identifying breaches & sanctioning them." — AFP

Syria's Idlib: From 'bloodbath' fears to buffer deal

BEIRUT: A horseshoe-shaped zone around Syria's opposition stronghold of Idlib is expected to avert a massive government assault on the area, which would have put several million people at risk. The U-shaped buffer, agreed by regime ally Russia and rebel-backer Turkey, will separate opposition and government forces and is meant to be free of both heavy weapons and jihadists by October 15.

'Bloodbath'

In May, UN envoy Staffan de Mistura warned that a regime assault on Idlib would be "six times" more destructive than the battle to recapture Eastern Ghouta, a rebel stronghold near Damascus. Ghouta was retaken by President Bashar al-Assad's forces in April after an offensive in which more than 1,700 civilians were killed, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Assad, backed by Russian air strikes, then set his sights on Idlib, the largest piece of territory still held by Syria's beleaguered rebels.

For weeks, regime forces massed on the edges of the province, stepping up bombardment since early September and dropping leaflets calling on residents to surrender. That prompted a chorus of international warnings against an offensive. US President Donald Trump cautioned that "the world is watching," as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he feared a "bloodbath". On September 10, the United Nations warned that an assault could create the century's "worst humanitarian catastrophe". A day later its Secretary General Antonio Guterres urged that Idlib "must not be transformed into a bloodbath".

Russia-Turkey accord

On September 17, Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin, meeting in Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi, agreed to create a 15-20 kilometer buffer zone ringing Idlib. According to the deal, the zone would separate rebel and regime zones under the supervision of the two sponsor countries. The buffer would include parts of Idlib province and the neighboring regions of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia. All factions in the planned demilitarized area must hand over their heavy weapons by October 10, and radical groups must withdraw by October 15, according to the agreement.

Rebel disharmony

On September 23, the National Liberation Front (NLF), a powerful Turkish-backed rebel alliance in Idlib, cautiously welcomed the deal. But it later said it was opposed to the deployment of Russian forces in the buffer, and said Ankara promised them that patrols by Moscow would be dropped. On September 29, a formerly US-backed Syrian rebel group, Jaysh al-Izza, active in northern Hama province, became the first rebel faction to reject the deal. It said the buffer zone should be carved out equally from both rebel-held territory and nearby zones controlled by forces loyal to Assad. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which along with other jihadists controls nearly 70 percent of the planned demilitarized zone, has not yet commented. — AFP



IDLIB: A Syrian rebel-fighter from the National Liberation Front (NLF) secures a tank, part of heavy weapons and equipment withdrawn yesterday from a planned buffer zone around Idlib. — AFP

8 killed as suicide bomber targets Afghan candidate

KANDAHAR: A suicide bomber targeting an Afghan election candidate yesterday killed at least eight people, officials said, days ahead of a parliamentary vote that militants have vowed to disrupt. Another 10 people were wounded

when the attacker blew himself up inside Saleh Mohammad Asikzai's campaign office in the southern city of Lashkar Gah, Helmand provincial governor spokesman Omar Zhwak said.

Asikzai was among the injured, Zhwak added. Provincial police spokesman Salam Afghan confirmed the attack. "We are investigating," he said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but Helmand is a Taliban stronghold. It is not clear how many people were inside the room at the time of the blast, which comes a day after the Taliban warned candidates to pull out of the "bogus" election scheduled for October 20. — AFP

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International

Espionage scandals show Russia army's growing clout, influence

West accuses GRU of global hacking campaign

MOSCOW: Russia's military spies are being mocked abroad as bunglers but the army's influence over Kremlin foreign policy is growing and there is little likelihood it will halt its "black operations". The GRU military intelligence agency is blamed by the West for several botched attacks this year, including attempting to kill former spy Sergei Skripal with a nerve agent in the English city of Salisbury and trying to hack the global chemical weapons watchdog in the Netherlands.

Russia's denials of wrongdoing have at times caused incredulous laughter in the West and some of the world's media have cast the GRU, which helped annex the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014, as blundering amateurs. But Western intelligence experts and Russian sources familiar with policy-making in the Kremlin say the West must stay on its guard. "It's easy to laugh at some of the GRU's poor tradecraft and their ability but we should not underestimate them nor indeed the dangerous and reckless use of nerve agent on our streets," British Security Minister Ben Wallace told a security conference in Britain yesterday.

Intelligence experts say the GRU has stepped up its activities including black operations - covert missions that are not attributable to the organization carrying it out - as tensions mount between Russia and the West, which has imposed sanctions on Moscow over the annexation of Crimea. "What Russia is doing is operating by wartime rules which means particularly that the GRU has been let off the leash," said Mark Galeotti, a fellow at the European University Institute in Florence.

"As the East-West confrontation worsens that empowers these combative agencies and the GRU is being much more active," he said, adding that the GRU

at times had freedom to choose how best to carry out orders from higher up. If the West hopes public shaming will prompt President Vladimir Putin to muzzle the GRU, whose official emblem features a bat hovering above the globe, it is likely to be disappointed. A source close to the Defense Ministry, who declined to be named, said the GRU would continue its work. "We are under attack," said the source. "We need to be robust."

Asked on Monday if there would be a shake-up at the defense ministry, Dmitry Peskov, Putin's spokesman, said the low quality of the allegations leveled at GRU did not justify such changes. "Russia believes there's no point in reducing the GRU's activities because that would be a unilateral concession that would not yield anything and probably be seen as a sign of weakness," said Tatyana Stanovaya, who is well connected to the political elite and runs political analysis firm R Politik. "I think that malicious operations could even be conducted more often than in the past," she said.

The Kremlin is dismayed by fraying informal communications channels between Western and Russian intelligence agencies, she said, and sees the espionage world as a realm without rules. Putin, a former intelligence officer himself, sounds defiant. He said last week espionage was one of the world's most important professions and dismissed Skripal as a traitor. Despite Western media allegations about the

GRU's alleged incompetence, there has been pride in some quarters in Moscow. "If anyone had doubts that our employees work everywhere they shouldn't have any now," Konstantin Zatulyn, a lawmaker, told state TV, while declining to confirm the allegations.

'Few embarrassing news cycles'

The attacks on the Organization for the Protection of Chemical Weapons in the Netherlands and on Skripal, in which the former spy and his daughter were poisoned with the nerve agent Novichok but survived, are not the only signs the West sees of the GRU's increased activity. The United States has indicted seven suspected spies and the West has united to accuse the GRU of a global hacking campaign.

Britain produced CCTV footage of the two suspects it says tried to kill Skripal and investigative website Bellingcat on Monday named the second suspect as a GRU military doctor after earlier naming the first man. The Netherlands has named the four suspected GRU agents it says tried to hack the OPCW. But there are no signs the Kremlin is more than momentarily embarrassed by the GRU's public woes, Galeotti said.

"I suspect that the Russian calculation is that if it's just a few embarrassing news cycles, some tough words, and a bit of embarrassment we can just ride

this out," he said. From a Russian perspective, Vladimir Frolov, a former senior Russian diplomat, said the GRU's blunders were not a disaster. "What was shown was nothing more than working hitches in extraordinarily risky but effective operations which achieved their main aims," Frolov wrote in Russia's Republic magazine. The GRU has become much more active since the annexation of Crimea because of a broader foreign policy.

Before 2014, Moscow mainly confined itself to the former Soviet Union. But since then, Russia has become more active in the Middle East and Africa, while the United States and European countries have accused Moscow of interference in their affairs. There are other signs of the army's rising influence besides the uptick in the GRU's activity. Particularly vocal on Syria, where Russia helped turn the tide of war in President Bashar al-Assad's favor, the Defense Ministry was out of the traps even before the Kremlin when Syrian forces accidentally shot down a Russian military plane last month, accusing a "hostile" Israel of causing the incident.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu was also one of only two companions Putin took with him when he went hiking this summer, the other being the head of the FSB security service. Shoigu, 63, is not involved in party politics but opinion polls often put him among the most popular presidential possibilities. In another sign of the military's and his own growing influence, Shoigu has ordered a giant cathedral dedicated to the armed forces to be erected in Moscow and only last week spoke of the need to create a second capital city in Siberia. —Reuters



Media mock spies' alleged incompetence

according to their report. A popular uprising in Ukraine ousted the Moscow-backed Yanukovich, who fled the country in February 2014, and Russia annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea a month later. The investigative group has previously identified GRU colonel Anatoly Chepiga as the other suspect behind the March poisoning attack and said that he too had received Russia's highest award the same year in a secret ceremony in the Kremlin.

The two men are accused by British authorities of attempting to murder Skripal and his daughter Yulia with the Soviet-made nerve agent Novichok in the city of Salisbury in southwest England.

"The findings of this investigation by Bellingcat add possibly material context to the mission of the two GRU officers to Salisbury," the report concluded. "The inclusion of a trained military doctor on the team implies that the purpose of the mission has been different than information gathering or other routine espionage activities."

Using open-source records such as leaked residential, telephone and vehicle databases, the Bellingcat probe found Mishkin was born in the remote village of Loyga in northern Russia in 1979. He graduated in 2003 or 2004 from the Russian military's medical academy in St Petersburg, where he specialized in "deep underwater physiology". —AFP



SALISBURY: A handout picture taken on Fisherton Road in Salisbury shows Alexander Petrov (left) and Ruslan Boshirov, who are wanted by British police in connection with the nerve agent attack on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia. —AFP

Skripal suspect 'decorated' by Russian leader

LONDON: One of the two suspects behind the poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Britain was an intelligence operative who was personally decorated as a hero by President Vladimir Putin in 2014, investigative group Bellingcat said yesterday. The site said on Monday that the man, who used the alias "Alexander Petrov", was in fact Alexander Mishkin, a trained military doctor employed by Moscow's GRU military intelligence service.

Bellingcat founder Eliot Higgins and researcher Christo Grozev told reporters at an event in the British parliament Tuesday that they discovered Mishkin had taken part in undercover operations in Ukraine and the breakaway republic of Transnistria. Higgins and Grozev said that Mishkin was made a Hero of the Russian Federation by Putin in the autumn of 2014.

People familiar with his family believed it was awarded for activities "either in Crimea or in relation to (former Ukrainian president Viktor) Yanukovich",

Explosions spark fire at Ukraine arms depot

ZAUDAIIKA: More than 12,000 people were evacuated after ammunition stored at an arms depot in northern Ukraine began exploding yesterday and set off a huge fire, authorities said. Security services said they were investigating "possible sabotage" in the incident at a defense ministry depot near the village of Druzhba, around 135 kilometers northeast of Kiev.

Emergency services said they had no information on any deaths, and regional authorities said more than 60 people required medical help for smoke inhalation. Grey and white smoke rose up from the horizon yesterday morning, an AFP photographer saw, while explosions were going off every one to two minutes. A defense ministry official said the fire was raging in five storage areas, covering about 10 percent of the total of about 700 hectares.

The fire and explosions began around 3:30am local time at the Number Six depot,

the emergency services said. Four explosions went off in different parts of the depot before a fire broke out, the deputy head of Ukraine's General Staff, Rodion Tymoshenko, said, suggesting this meant the incident could be "sabotage," a thinly veiled jab at Russia. Kiev forces have been fighting pro-Russian separatists in the east of the country since 2014 in a conflict that has killed more than 10,000 people. More than 12,000 people were evacuated from the area at risk, the emergency services said.

'Possible sabotage'

President Petro Poroshenko called a meeting of the heads of security forces and promised to give residents all the necessary help, his spokesman wrote on Facebook. Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman travelled to the scene and chaired a meeting of emergency services officials. "The main thing is to preserve people's lives. Whatever's destroyed, we will rebuild," he wrote on Facebook. Authorities closed the airspace in a 30-kilometre radius around the site, as well as rail and road traffic. More than a hundred firefighters worked at the scene, while the defense ministry sent in a firefighting tank.

The defense ministry said the intensity of



UKRAINE: A fire ball is seen in the sky from the village Zaudaika, some 8 km from the epicenter of a series of explosions at an ammunition depot in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region yesterday. —AFP

the explosions had lessened in the morning and that the current explosions were from rifle ammunition, not shells. Tymoshenko denied a

claim by the emergency service that the depot contained 88,000 tons of ammunition, while saying the real total was a secret. —AFP

Evacuations ordered as Florida braces for Hurricane Michael

MIAMI: Residents of northwest Florida had until today to leave their homes ahead of Hurricane Michael, forecast to crash ashore midweek as a major Category 3 storm with "life-threatening" flash flooding possible. Governor Rick Scott's office said mandatory evacuation orders were in place for parts of Bay County, which includes the popular Panama City beach resort, and areas in nearby Gulf and Franklin counties. "EVERY FAMILY must be prepared. We can rebuild your home, but we cannot rebuild your life," Scott said. The alert came after the tropical storm system strengthened to a Category 1 hurricane, packing maximum sustained winds late Monday of 85 miles per hour, the Miami-based National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

By 0001 GMT, Michael was off the western tip of Cuba's Pinar del Rio province, churning to the north at 12 miles per hour, across from Mexico's Yucatan peninsula. Michael was forecast to push through warm, relatively shallow Gulf of Mexico waters before moving inland over the northern Gulf

coast of Florida. Michael was forecast to have the power to uproot trees, block roads and knock out power for days by the time it hits Florida on Wednesday. Then it is forecast to lash the southeastern United States through Thursday. "Steady to rapid strengthening is forecast during the next day or so, and Michael is forecast to become a major hurricane by tonight," the NHC said. Earlier it said Michael could produce three life-threatening hazards along portions of the northeastern Gulf Coast: storm surge, heavy rainfall, and hurricane-force winds, with storm surge and hurricane watches in effect. The first rains from Michael already started to soak the Florida Keys on Monday. Up to four inches (10 centimeters) were expected to fall through today. Late Monday, residents of far western Cuba were forecast to get up to eight inches of rain. "This rainfall could lead to life-threatening flash floods and mudslides," the NHC warned.

'Another big one'

President Donald Trump, who was in Orlando delivering an address to a global association of police chiefs, said the federal government was ready and urged residents to be prepared for the worst. "Can you believe it? It looks like another big one," he said. Scott declared a state of emergency for 35 counties, activating 1,250 National Guard troops in preparation for the storm. "We are running out of time," the Republican governor said on Twitter. "TODAY is the day to



FLORIDA: People line up for gasoline as Hurricane Michael bears down on the northern Gulf coast of Florida outside Tallahassee, Florida. —AFP

get a plan, because tomorrow could be too late." "This storm will bring torrential rain, heavy winds and dangerous storm surges to many areas of our state," he tweeted. Florida State University announced it was closing for the week yesterday, along with schools in Leon County, home to the state capital Tallahassee. Tallahassee's Democratic Mayor Andrew Gillum, who is campaigning to succeed Scott as governor in next month's elections, suspended his campaign and returned to the state capital to oversee storm preparations. —AFP

News in brief

Duterte tests 'negative'

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday that recent cancer tests came back negative, just days after sparking speculation when he revealed doctors were checking him for the disease. Duterte, 73, has regularly prompted theorizing about his health by skipping events or discussing his ailments in public since taking power in 2016. "It's negative. They (doctors) had a suspicion so they had this specimen taken out from both the oesophageal tube and here," he said, pointing to his butt. "They just wanted a retake. Nothing serious actually," he told reporters. The most recent speculation started after he said in a speech late Thursday that he was undergoing tests on his doctor's orders, adding "if it's cancer, it's cancer." Duterte is the oldest person ever to be elected president of the country and questions about his health began to swirl in Philippine media after he missed an October 3 cabinet meeting and another public event. —AFP

Singapore activist convicted

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean activist and an opposition politician were yesterday found guilty of contempt of court for separate Facebook posts criticizing the country's judiciary. Social worker and human rights activist Jolovan Wham wrote a Facebook post in April saying that judges in neighboring Malaysia were more independent than their counterparts in Singapore on cases with political implications. He had made the observation as he commented on a legal challenge filed by a Malaysian online news portal against that country's law against fake news. Singapore's Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) initiated contempt of court proceedings against Wham for scandalizing the judiciary. John Tan, a politician with the opposition Singapore Democratic Party, was also charged with contempt after he wrote a Facebook post saying that the AGC's actions against Wham proved that his comments were true. —AFP

Journalist's visa denial

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader yesterday refused to say why the city had denied a visa to a leading Financial Times journalist, despite escalating demands for an explanation of the unprecedented challenge to freedom of the press. Victor Mallet, the FT's Asia news editor and a British national, angered authorities in Beijing and Hong Kong by hosting a speech at the city's press club by Andy Chan, the leader of a tiny pro-independence political party, in August. Chan's party was later banned as Beijing cracks down on any pro-independence sentiment in the semi-autonomous city. An application to renew Mallet's work visa was refused and on Sunday he was given seven days to leave Hong Kong. Facing questions for the first time since the visa denial emerged last week, Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who is appointed by a pro-Beijing committee, said the decision had been handed down by immigration authorities. —AFP

France-Italy tensions

LYON: French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe urged far-right Italian leader Matteo Salvini on Monday to drop his "posturing" on immigration and help find a European response to the issue. Salvini, Italy's powerful interior minister and deputy premier, has singled out French President Emmanuel Macron for criticism in recent weeks, as well as other EU leaders he considers too soft on immigration. Philippe promised to be "direct" in his conversation with the 45-year-old Italian, head of the far-right League party, over dinner on Monday night in the French city of Lyon where the two men, along with ministers from Britain, Germany, Spain, Poland and Morocco, met for talks on immigration. "I rarely use the same words or the same vocabulary (as Salvini) but that doesn't stop me being direct as well. I hope we'll have a frank and direct exchange," Philippe said. —AFP

International

Interpol saga hurts China's bid to lead global bodies

Beijing's international image takes a self-inflicted bruising

BEIJING: Beijing's international image took a self-inflicted bruising with a secretive investigation into the former Chinese head of Interpol, highlighting its ruthless tactics even as it seeks global goodwill in a trade spat with the United States, analysts said. The election of Meng Hongwei as head of Interpol in 2016 was a triumph for President Xi Jinping's bid to burnish China's international profile through leadership posts in prestigious global organizations.

But midway through his four-year term, Meng vanished after travelling to China from France, where Interpol is based. After days of silence, authorities accused him of taking bribes and he resigned. The Chinese vice public security minister's abrupt disappearance late last month caught Interpol off-guard, an embarrassing situation for an organization whose mission is international police cooperation. It was also a stark reminder to the world of the Communist Party's harsh investigative tactics, which contrast with the due process and open court system afforded to suspects in democratic countries.

China has said that Meng's fall from grace is evidence that no one is above the law. But critics who see Xi's six-year anti-corruption campaign as a tool to root out his political enemies are sceptical. "This will have a detrimental impact on China's soft power," said Willy Lam, politics professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "It plays into the Americans' hands, adding more

fodder to US attacks against China and the lack of rule of law," he said, referring to Vice President Mike Pence's searing speech last week assailing China's human rights record, foreign policies and trade practices.

Seemingly kept in the dark by China, French police opened an investigation into his disappearance and Interpol asked for a "clarification" from Beijing on Saturday. But it was not until Monday that Chinese authorities revealed that Meng was being investigated for taking bribes, without providing details about the charges or his whereabouts.

In one ominous sign, several posts on meetings and activities Meng participated in over recent years disappeared from the public security ministry's website Monday as an AFP reporter viewed them—effectively erasing him from the agency's history. Adding to the intrigue, his wife Grace Meng spoke with her face hidden from cameras in Lyon on Sunday, telling reporters she did not know what had happened to her husband and showing his last text message to her: a knife emoji signaling danger.

No one is above the law: Beijing



LYON: Grace, the wife of the missing Interpol president Meng Hongwei, talks to journalists in Lyon during a press conference. —AFP

up with endemic corruption. But some analysts say it also enables the Chinese president to eliminate rivals. One of the most powerful to fall was former security ministry chief Zhou Yongkang, who promoted Meng more than a decade ago and was sentenced to life in prison in 2014.

The public security ministry said Meng's case shows "that no one is above the law" and underscores the need to "thoroughly eliminate the pernicious influence of Zhou Yongkang". The state-run Global Times cited Tuesday a professor from a Communist Party school as saying that Meng's crimes might not be just related to corruption but that he could also have "jeopardized national securi-

ty". Lam speculated that the anti-graft agency may have discovered something that sowed doubts about Meng's allegiances, and "Xi needs absolute loyalty".

Beijing's handling of the case will make it harder for Chinese to take prominent spots at global bodies in the future, Lam said. Bonnie Glaser, senior Asia adviser at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies, said international organizations "should think twice going forward before considering a Chinese candidate to be its head." "Unless Interpol presses for an open investigation and due process for Meng Hongwei, it is definitely going to be criticized. How can the world's police organization simply do nothing?" —AFP

North Korea wants Pope to visit, South Korea to tell Vatican

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has invited Pope Francis to visit, saying he would be "ardently welcomed", South Korea's presidency said yesterday, adding it would pass on Pyongyang's message to the Vatican. South Korean President Moon Jae-in will have an audience with the Pope during a visit to the Vatican from October 17 to 18.

"During the meeting with Pope Francis, he (Moon) will relay the message from chairman Kim Jong Un that he would ardently welcome the pope if he visits Pyongyang," Moon's spokesman, Kim Eui-kyeom, told reporters. Moon is embarking on a nine day tour of Europe from October 13 to 21 that will include stops in France, Italy and Denmark on top of the Vatican. The doveish Moon has pushed rapprochement with Kim, meeting him three times in the last year. During the most recent face to face - a visit to Pyongyang last month - Moon was accompanied by South Korean Archbishop Hyginus Kim Hee-joong.

During a conversation with the visiting



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis leaves after he delivered his blessing to the faithful during The Angelus Prayer, at Saint Peter Square. —AFP

archbishop, Kim urged him to let the Vatican know his intention to build peace, according to Moon's spokesman. The young leader of the isolated, impoverished but nuclear-armed North has taken a series of reconciliatory gestures since early this year, including a land summit with US President Donald Trump in June. During last month's summit, Kim also reaffirmed efforts to ease military tension on the flashpoint peninsula but remained vague on measures on how to dismantle his widely-feared atomic arsenal.

Religious freedom is enshrined in the

North's constitution, but all religious activity is subject to extremely tight restrictions and completely banned outside of state-sanctioned institutions. In the early 20th century before the division of the peninsula, Pyongyang was a regional missionary hub with scores of churches and a thriving Christian community that earned it the title of "Jerusalem of the East". But Kim Il Sung, the North's late founding leader and the current ruler's grandfather, viewed Christianity as a threat to his authoritarian rule and eradicated it through executions and labour camps. —AFP

India on alert as zika virus hits tourism hotspot of Jaipur

NEW DELHI: India has sent experts to try to contain an outbreak of the zika virus in the popular tourist destination of Jaipur, capital of the northern state of Rajasthan, with a close watch on pregnant women. Twenty-two people in the city have tested positive, the health ministry said. There is no vaccine to the virus which can cause severe birth defects in unborn children.

Pregnant women in the area are being monitored by the National Health Mission, a body set up by the government to improve healthcare across the country. "The situation continues to be monitored regularly," the ministry said in a statement late on Monday. The Toronto-based International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers said it was advising pregnant travellers

to postpone trips to the area, part of India's tourist "golden triangle" of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, home to the Taj Mahal.

First discovered in 1947, the zika virus reached epidemic proportions in Brazil in 2015, when thousands of babies were born with microcephaly, a brain defect affecting speech and motor function. It is the third such outbreak in India, with the first in the western city of Ahmedabad in January 2017 and the second in the southern state of Tamil Nadu in July 2017. Both outbreaks were "successfully contained", the government said.

The latest cases - in the middle of the country's festival season where many Indians travel, increasing the risk of transmission - come amid a spike in other mosquito-borne diseases, that kill thousands across India each year, according to the World Health Organization. The capital Delhi has reported a rise in cases of dengue fever, with 169 reported in the first week of October and taking the total for the year to 650, according to NDTV, citing figures from the South Delhi Municipal Corporation that tracks mosquito-borne diseases. —Reuters

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Why US sanctions won't change Iran foreign policy

The messages from Tehran are stark. On Oct 1, Iranian forces fired six missiles at Islamic State positions in eastern Syria. The weapons landed within three miles of US troops in the country; one missile shown on Iranian state television carried the slogan: Death to America, "Death to Israel, Death to al Saud." A statement by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), said the missile strike was retaliation for a Sept 22 shooting attack on a military parade in Ahvaz, southwest Iran, that killed at least 25 people.

The missile attack, however, was clearly intended to deliver a message beyond the militant holdouts of Islamic State. It was an unequivocal signal to the Trump administration and its allies in the Middle East that Iran will not change its foreign policy in spite of Washington's escalation of sanctions - the next round is due in November - after President Donald Trump withdrew from the multilateral 2015 Iran nuclear deal in May.

Tehran got a boost for its approach on Oct 3, when the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered the United States to ensure that sanctions against Iran do not affect humanitarian aid or the safety of civil aviation. Although unenforceable and rejected by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the decision by the United Nations court will likely encourage the Iranian leadership to stay its defiant course. The ruling "proved once again that the Islamic Republic is right and the US sanctions against people and citizens of our country are illegal and cruel," Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement shortly afterward.

Iran's shift to a more "offensive" foreign policy following Trump's decision to leave the nuclear accord five months ago is at least partly due to the empowerment of hardliners in Iranian decision-making circles, including hawkish elements within the Revolutionary Guards. The IRGC's missile strikes against Islamic State positions in eastern Syria came less than a month after its September 8 missile strike on several Kurdish opposition bases in Iraqi Kurdistan killed at least 11 and wounded many more. In a similar vein, Reuters reported in August that Iran had transferred ballistic missiles to its Shi'ite proxies in Iraq to develop a missile production capacity there as a deterrent against attacks on Iran.

Perhaps a more telling development is the French government's Oct 2 accusation that Iran's intelligence ministry was, "without any doubt," behind a foiled June plot to attack an annual gathering of the exiled Iranian opposition group Mujaheddin-e Khalq (MeK) near Paris. While the Iranian foreign ministry has denied Tehran's involvement, the planned assault on European soil could reflect a sign of increased recklessness by Iranian hardliners willing to act without government approval.

This is not to argue that US sanctions have not taken their toll on Iran. Trump's fiery attack on the country at last month's UN General Assembly sent the rial plunging to a record low of 190,000 to the dollar, down from around 65,000 shortly before the United States withdrew from the nuclear agreement. (Notably, Iranian rial traded at around 43,000 to the US dollar in late 2017.)

The currency has since recovered slightly - a result of measures like authorities selling US dollars and the Iranian parliament's approval on Sunday of new measures against money laundering and terrorism funding - but that will do little to ease the concerns of Iranians who've seen the value of their savings plummet.

The general deterioration in Iran's economy, reflected in rising inflation, growing unemployment and excess liquidity, has led to the moderate President Hassan Rouhani being summoned to parliament for the first time to answer questions on Iran's economic troubles and to face calls for his impeachment from some of the critics of his centrist government. Earlier, the lawmakers had fired Masoud Karbasian, economy and finance minister, and before him Ali Rabieci, minister of labor and social welfare.

Internal pressures, however, have not compelled Tehran to modify its assertive regional policies. Part of the reason is that Iranian moderates, trying to remain politically relevant, have responded to a surge of nationalist sentiment by drawing closer to the hardliners and pushing state politics to the right. Even without this shift, Iran's resistance to US pressure was predictable. It is rooted in an established belief among Iranian leaders - former revolutionaries who saw the 1979 overthrow of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi regime first-hand and later survived an eight-year war with neighboring Iraq (1980-1988) - that retreat may beget further retreat and acquiescence to foreign demands can invite more demands.

Evidence of this view was reinforced last Thursday, the day after the ICJ decision, when Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told a meeting of IRGC-affiliated Basij militia members that Iranians who advocated submission to the United States were "perpetrating the greatest treason to the state and the nation."

For Tehran, Washington's offer of new negotiations under "maximum pressure" is seen as humiliating. Leaders who believe that diplomatic talks with a hawkish US administration bent on regime change will weaken their domestic support base and damage their international status are unlikely to negotiate with the administration unless the White House can come up with a face-saving way to get them started - and convince them that any new deal will not merely go the way of the nuclear accord. — Reuters



Intimidation new normal for Pak journos

Pakistan's media was widely seen as among the region's most vibrant after military rule ended in 2008, but a dozen newspaper and TV journalists say the industry is now in disarray because of intimidation and army pressure. In separate interviews with Reuters, they said a media crackdown that began in the run-up to the July election of new Prime Minister Imran Khan had morphed into widespread self-censorship by journalists fearful of repercussions if they criticize Khan, the military or courts.

A number of political commentators and opposition politicians say Khan is backed by the establishment, a term used in Pakistan to mean the military and intelligence top brass, along with some senior civil servants and judges. His main rival, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, was at loggerheads with the military. Adding to the atmosphere of fear is a treason case filed against a prominent newspaper columnist, Cyril Almeida, following an interview he conducted with Sharif that mentioned the role of Pakistani militants in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

"There is a culture of silence. People are reluctant to talk about who is behind this," Islamabad bureau chief of independent Capital TV Murtaza Solangi told Reuters. "Self-censorship has hit new highs." The Pakistani military's public relations wing, the Inter Services Public Relations agency (ISPR), denied intimidating the media and said it doesn't pressure journalists to alter coverage. "Our media is independent. ISPR has no role in controlling media expression," the military agency said in a written response to several questions from Reuters on what the journalists described as intimidation and harassment by security forces. The agency declined to elaborate further.

Khan's office did not respond to a request for comment, but during the election campaign he dismissed reports of press intimidation. Pakistan's information minister Fawad

Chaudhry told Reuters no media outlet has brought any complaints to his office. "I think Pakistani media freedom can be compared to any first world country," Chaudhry said. "There is more of a talk than substance ... I have not received a single application or request or evidence of such censorship."

A report released by the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) last month alleged that Pakistan's military was using fear and intimidation to stifle the media and undermine press freedom. "The military has quietly, but effectively, set restrictions on reporting: from barring access to regions ... to encouraging self-censorship through direct and indirect methods of intimidation, including ... allegedly instigating violence against reporters," the CPJ said in the report, written after interviews with journalists, editors and media groups in five Pakistani cities in February this year. The military has not responded to requests for comment on the CPJ report.

Influence judgment

"There are debates within organizations about what can lead the organization into a problem and these discussions essentially influence your editorial judgment," Talat Hussain, a journalist with Geo TV, Pakistan's leading television news channel, told Reuters. "The problem can range from ... the channel getting shut down, to the business getting hurt by ad flow slowing down." The accusation of treason against the columnist Almeida is based on a May interview he conducted with Sharif in which the former prime minister indirectly suggested that Pakistan allowed militants based on its soil to carry out the 2008 militant attacks in the Indian city of Mumbai that killed 166 people.

Pakistan has long denied any state involvement but the incident has been at the center of deteriorating ties with India. Sharif and Almeida both appeared before a court on

Monday that will decide whether to formally charge them. Neither entered any plea and the case was adjourned until Oct 22. A representative for Sharif did not respond to request for comment on this story. Almeida and senior editors at the Dawn newspaper he works for declined to be interviewed, saying they had been advised by lawyers to avoid comment on an ongoing case.

Disappearances

While journalists have rarely been jailed in Pakistan, several instances of abductions of reporters have created a culture of self-censorship, journalists interviewed said. "In general the media is being very careful in what not to report or discuss. If they do, they can face disruptions to circulation or to the placement of their channel on cable or at times a ... blackout," said Omar R Quraishi, former web editor at Samaa TV. In June, Pakistani commentator, activist and frequent military critic Gul Bukhari was abducted by gunmen as she was on her way to a TV interview. A driver reported to the TV channel that men in military uniform stood by while plainclothes men took her away.

Bukhari, a dual Pakistani-British citizen, was returned home the next day after a social media and international media outcry. She declined to go into details of her ordeal, but told Reuters her abduction could be "viewed within that context" of intimidation ahead of the general election. The military denied playing any role in her abduction. In January, Taha Siddiqui, a journalist known for critical reporting on the military, told reporters he narrowly avoided abduction after his taxi was stopped by armed men. He said he shouted for help when a military vehicle passed by but one of the armed men gestured to the vehicle to move on. Siddiqui also filed a police complaint about the incident. The military denied it was involved. — Reuters

10,000,000% inflation? Look at Venezuela

What does it look like to have inflation of 10 million percent? When something that cost \$1 now costs \$100,000, is there even a way to calculate the impact? After seeing prices surge an already-unthinkable 1,000 percent last year, hyperinflation in Venezuela's imploding economy is set to hit nearly 1.4 million percent this year, the International Monetary Fund forecast in its World Economic Outlook released Monday. But in 2019 that hyperinflation is expected to leave earth's orbit, hitting 10 million percent, a figure so large and improbable, readers of the report had to count the zeroes to make sure they had the correct number.

It is so bad that Venezuela was left out of the inflation calculations for the region and for all emerging markets since it would throw off the average. After years of economic mismanagement, and with the vital oil industry nearly at a standstill, Venezuela has seen tens of thousands of people flee the country daily, increasingly desperate to find food and medicines, flooding into neighboring Colombia and Brazil. The Venezuelan economy contracted 14 percent last year and is expected to fall another 18 percent this year, but the good news - if it can be called good - is that with little room left to fall it is only forecast to shrink five percent in 2019, the report said.

GDP per capita is estimated to have declined by more than 35 percent over 2013-17 and is projected to decline by close to 60 percent between 2013 and 2023, the IMF said. With notable understatement, the IMF said "hyperinflation

is expected to worsen rapidly, fueled by monetary financing of large fiscal deficits and loss of confidence in the currency". Venezuela devalued its currency by nearly 100 percent on Aug 20. Excluding Venezuela, inflation in emerging and developing nations is expected to reach only five percent this year, the IMF said.

Downgraded growth

While the news is not nearly so bleak elsewhere, the IMF cut its forecast for world growth to 3.7 percent for this year and next, largely due to the expected slowdown in trade amid the trade war between the United States and China. It also downgraded its estimate of growth in emerging and developing countries compared to the July forecasts, to 4.7 percent for 2018 and 2019. And for Latin America and the Caribbean, the forecast was cut four-tenths to 1.2 percent for this year, and 2.2 percent next year, according to the WEO.

The IMF now expects Argentina's economy to contract by 2.6 percent this year, and 1.6 percent next year, with inflation of nearly 32 percent both years. Argentina, which has seen its economy roiled and currency weaken sharply, agreed late last month with the IMF on a revised reform program that will increase a loan approved in July by \$7 billion to \$57 billion over three years. The IMF board has yet to approve the updated loan.

Despite a 2,000 basis point increase in Argentina's interest rate the currency declined by 40 percent through September. Meanwhile, Brazil's economy is expected to grow only 1.4 percent this year, four-tenths slower than the July forecast, and 2.4 percent in 2019. The report cited the impact of a nationwide truck drivers' strike, as well as tightening financial conditions. Growth in Mexico was downgraded also, but only slightly, to 2.2 percent this year and 2.5 percent next year, buoyed by solid US growth, the IMF said. — AFP

Haley: From S Carolina state house to UN and now...?

Nikki Haley, who has resigned as President Donald Trump's ambassador to the United Nations, was a virtual unknown on the national and international stage when she joined the cabinet. After nearly two years as one of America's top voices on foreign policy, the 46-year-old South Carolina native will leave at year's end with a strong global profile - and a reputation for standing up to the mercurial Trump.

With speculation already building about her political future, she quickly denied any plans to challenge her boss in 2020, instead saying in the Oval Office on Tuesday it was "time to stand aside". "I don't have anything set on where I want to go," Haley said, with the president at her side. But wanting a break from the punishing Trump news cycle would surely be understandable.

During her time at the United Nations, Haley - a fellow Republican who previously served as South Carolina's governor - was unafraid to speak her mind, often in fairly undiplomatic language. She was the face of the White House to the world on everything from North Korean denuclearization to the war in Syria. And the daughter of Indian immigrants, who was raised as a Sikh but identifies as Christian, was the face of diversity in a cabinet criticized for being too white.

Outsider perspective

Haley was not exactly on the Trump train from the get-go - she endorsed Florida Senator Marco Rubio during the Republican primary race in 2016 before

backing Senator Ted Cruz. Indeed, she called the brash Manhattan property baron "everything a governor doesn't want in a president," and just weeks before the election, she admitted she was "not a fan" of the candidate. So understandably, eyebrows were raised when Trump chose Haley - who had little foreign policy experience - as Washington's voice at the United Nations.

But, as she said herself, she had a track record in shaking up staid, traditional government bodies - a quality that surely appealed to Trump. "Institutions always benefit from an outsider's perspective," she told the Council on Foreign Relations think tank last year. "In South Carolina, I was the first minority governor and - a real shock to the state - the first girl governor as well."

Born in 1972 in Bamberg, South Carolina, Nimrata "Nikki" Randhawa rose quickly in the southern state's politics, serving in its House of Representatives from 2005 to 2011 when she was elected governor. She was reportedly considered as a possible vice presidential pick by 2012 Republican candidate Mitt Romney. Her conservative views and plainspoken but warm style were popular in her home state.

She then won national attention in 2015 by supporting the removal of the Confederate flag from the state house after a white gunman opened fire at a black church, killing nine parishioners. Haley is married to Michael Haley, an officer in the South Carolina National Guard and has two children.

At the United Nations, she found her voice, quickly outshining the secretary of state at the time, Rex Tillerson. She was a fierce defender of Israel, and also a ferocious critic of Russia - even more so than her boss. And when a White House aide suggested in April this year that "confusion" had led her to mistakenly announce fresh sanctions on Russia, she quickly fired back. "With all due respect, I don't get confused," Haley said. — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018

12 Fed hikes rates amid robust data; eurozone's growth weakens**13** NBK-Saudi officially launches Al-Watani Wealth Management**14** Comcast faces continued doubts over wisdom of Sky purchase

NUSA DUA: This photo released by the IMF yesterday shows International Monetary Fund Economic Counselor Maurice Obstfeld (center), deputy director Gian Maria Milesi-Ferretti (left) and communications officer Wafa Amr (right) answering questions during the World Economic Outlook press conference in Nusa Dua. — AFP

US-China trade war will hobble growth: IMF

Global finance chiefs meet in Bali amid threats of protectionism

BALI: The US-China trade war will hobble global growth, the International Monetary Fund warned yesterday, cutting its forecast for this year and next and predicting that "everyone is going to suffer" from a clash between the world's two biggest economies.

At a meeting on the Indonesian island of Bali, the IMF painted a cautious picture for the near future, saying trade tensions and rising debt levels could dent China and the US—and leave developing economies especially vulnerable to sudden stresses.

"There is no denying that the susceptibility to large global shocks has risen," the IMF's top economist Maurice Obstfeld told reporters after the fund cut its outlook for global GDP growth by 0.2 percentage points to 3.7 percent for 2018 and 2019.

It is the first time the fund has cut its forecast in more than two years. Tensions have soared in recent months with Donald Trump's administration rolling out billions of dollars in tariffs against China in a bid to tackle its trade deficit and rein in what Washington views as unacceptable trade practices by the Asian giant.

China has responded in kind with its own barrage of levies, rattling nerves especially among other Asian economies and already vulnerable countries like Argentina, Turkey and Brazil.

"Trade policy reflects politics and politics remains unsettled in several countries, posing further risks," Obstfeld said. The dominant US economy has been shielded so far from the ill effects of the trade war, thanks to stimulus through tax cuts and spending policies, but that will wear off by 2020, the IMF said.

When the world's two biggest economies are "at odds", Obstfeld said, that is going to create "a situation where everyone is going to suffer".

Growth estimates for the euro area and Britain were also revised down with the report warning that growth "may have peaked in some major economies".

Rising protectionism

Finance ministers and central bankers from many of the IMF's 189 member nations are meeting in Bali this week with talk of rising protectionism taking center-

stage. The IMF report said "protectionist rhetoric" was being "increasingly turned into action", warning such uncertainty "could lead firms to postpone or forgo capital spending and hence slow down growth in investment and demand."

Global trade is projected to expand by 4.2 percent this year — 0.6 percent less than expected in July—dropping to four percent next year.

Obstfeld, who retires from the Fund later this year, said there were bright spots with some Latin American and African nations getting growth forecast upgrades.

The fund urged governments to focus on policies that can share the benefits of growth more widely, helping counter the growing mistrust of institutions, and to avoid "protectionist reactions to structural change." And it stressed "cooperative solutions" to help boost continued growth in trade "remain essential to preserve and extend the global expansion".

'Inflation surprise'

With US GDP growth expected to drop from 2.9

percent this year to 1.8 percent by 2020, the IMF also warned about the potential risk of an "inflation surprise", fuelled by the same tax cuts and rising spending used to cushion the impact from the trade war.

That could result in higher-than-expected interest rates from the Federal Reserve and stock market uncertainty. Fed rate hikes are already increasing pressure on emerging market economies by fuelling an outflow of capital as investors seek higher returns.

US stimulus also adds to the "already-unsustainable" debt and deficit that will undercut future growth, the report warned.

In export-heavy China, which is less able to mitigate the fallout from tariffs, the trade war is already having an impact, the IMF said.

Growth is projected to slow to 6.6 percent this year and 6.2 percent in 2019, a downgrade of 0.2 percentage points. Further out, China's economic growth is expected to slow gradually to 5.6 percent as the government shifts to "a more sustainable growth path" and addresses financial risks, the IMF said. —AFP

IMF reverses Iran growth, lifts Saudi forecast

DUBAI: The International Monetary Fund yesterday predicted Iran's economy will sink deep in the red due to renewed US sanctions but forecast increased Saudi growth on the back of higher oil production.

In its World Economic Outlook, the IMF said the oil-dependent economy of the Islamic republic is expected to shrink by 1.5 percent this year and by 3.6 percent in 2019. In May, before US President Donald Trump announced reinstating sanctions against Tehran, the IMF had projected Iran's economy would grow by 4.0 percent in 2018 and again next year.

The IMF said the Iranian economy was now expected to contract over the next two years "on account of reduced oil production, before returning to modest positive growth in 2020-23".

Trump withdrew the United States from the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in May, and his administration reimposed a round of sanctions on the Islamic republic in August.

Iranian crude exports, which reach some 2.5 million barrels per day normally, have plunged by over half a million bpd and are expected to dive further when expanded sanctions on oil take effect next month, depriving Tehran of its main source of income.



NUSA DUA: International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde (left) listens as Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati speaks during a forum entitled "Empowering Women in the Workplace" in Nusa Dua yesterday. — AFP

The IMF also sharply slashed growth forecasts for the whole Middle East and North Africa region due to the slump in the Iranian economy and increased energy costs. It now projects the MENA region to grow by 2.0 percent this year and 2.5 percent in 2019, 1.2 percent and 1.1 percent lower, respectively, than it forecast in April.

"The downward revisions reflect to an important extent the worsening of growth prospects for Iran, following the reimposition of US sanctions," it said. The IMF, however, lifted its projections for economic growth in Saudi Arabia, the region's biggest economy, and its oil-rich neighbors in the Gulf. —AFP

Fitch Ratings affirms Gulf Bank rating at 'A+' with 'stable' outlook

KUWAIT: Fitch Ratings has affirmed Gulf Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A+' with a 'Stable' Outlook. Fitch has also affirmed the Bank's Viability Rating at 'bb+'. According to the recently published Fitch Ratings commentary, Gulf Bank enjoys an adequate franchise, well managed liquidity, good delivery on strategic objectives, adequate asset quality and adequate capitalization, as well as a fairly stable operating environment in Kuwait. Fitch Ratings referred to Gulf Bank's competent management team, which is highly experienced in local and regional banking, with an improving record of strategy implementation in Kuwait.

Commenting on Fitch's credit rating announcement, Dalal Al-Dousari, Gulf Bank's Head of Investor Relations said: "We are very

pleased to conclude the annual credit rating reviews for the year 2018 with the Fitch Ratings affirmation of Gulf Bank's rating at 'A+' and a 'Stable' outlook." "This is an international acknowledgement of the Bank's sustained improvement in asset quality and profitability, solid capital and sound liquidity position," added Al-Dousari.

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized internationally with 'A' ratings by all four leading credit rating agencies in terms of its credit worthiness and financial strength. In addition to Fitch Rating recent affirmation, Moody's Investor Services has revised their outlook on the Bank to "Positive" from "Stable" and affirmed its issuer credit rating at "A3" in May 2018. Similarly, S&P Global Ratings has affirmed Gulf Bank's credit rating at "A-" with a "Stable" Outlook in June 2018. Capital Intelligence on the other hand recently upgraded the Bank's rating to "A-" from "BBB+" with a "Stable" outlook.



Dalal Al-Dousari

Business

NBK-Saudi officially launches Al-Watani Wealth Management

Al-Sager: Opportunities are promising in Saudi market

KUWAIT: Al-Watani Wealth Management Company, a subsidiary of NBK Group, has officially launched its operations in the Saudi market, offering investment funds management, discretionary portfolios management, deal arranging, advisory services, and custody arrangements. Last year, Al-Watani Wealth Management received necessary approvals from the Capital Market Authority of Saudi Arabia (CMA) to operate in the local securities sector after it has successfully fulfilled all regulatory requirements.

Isam Jassim Al-Sager, NBK Group Chief Executive Officer, said: "Al-Watani Wealth Management Company embarks on its journey in the Saudi market with great potential to serve our clients as it draws from a deep well of expertise and professionalism, building on our experienced and dedicated team of professionals, as well as our unique technical and financial capabilities that enable us to source lucrative wealth management deals including: fund management, discretionary portfolios, and a wide array of investment activities regulat-

ed through our CMA license.

Al-Sager added: "Saudi Arabia is a key growth market for NBK Group. We have always seen great opportunities in the Saudi market in line with our regional and international expansion strategies. Our wealth management services in KSA is an integral part of NBK Group's strategic objectives to expand its operations in the Saudi market and increase its network to three branches in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam."

Meanwhile, Tariq bin Mutlaq Al-Mutlaq, Chairman of Al-Watani Wealth Management, said: "We are proud to launch Al-Watani Wealth Management Company's activities in the Saudi market as a new welcomed addition to the investment and banking sector offering unique innovative financial products and services".

He added that the company seeks to fulfill all the various investment needs of its wide client base including individual investors, corporate and High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI). "I am very confident that the company will provide added value to the Saudi market, backed

with its solid future outlook that is strategies aligned with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030," Al-Mutlaq said.

Al-Mutlaq also pointed out that Al-Watani Wealth Management seeks to build a strong and prominent presence in the Saudi market, while CMA is revising and amending the requirements and conditions for issuing licenses as part of an innovative plan aimed to regulate and develop the financial market, venture capital investments and private equity, in addition to supporting the Saudi asset management sector in line with Saudi Vision 2030. Furthermore, the plan supports Capital Market Authority's program 'Financial Leadership 2020', aimed at stimulating investments, raising the attractiveness and efficiency of the financial market, and enhancing the market's regional and global competitiveness.

The long, deep-rooted expertise of NBK Group, the leading financial institution in the region, firmly stands behind the outstanding presence of Al-Watani Wealth Management Company in both the local and regional



Isam Jassim Al-Sager

Tariq bin Mutlaq Al-Mutlaq

markets. The Company's solid structure and systematic investment methodology enable it to develop value added solutions that constantly deliver fully fledged services to its customers.

Former Fed Chair Greenspan survives Twitter hoax

WASHINGTON: Famed former US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan is alive and well despite a brief Twitter hoax in which a Nobel-prize winning economist appeared to announce his death, Greenspan's company said yesterday.

The Twitter account which had announced the news quickly claimed the misinformation was in fact the work of famed Italian hoax artist Tommaso Debenedetti, who frequently makes premature announcements of celebrity deaths. The social media network briefly lit up early in the day when an unverified account in the name of Yale University economist William Nordhaus announced that Greenspan, 92, had died. Nordhaus, who was awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize in economics on Monday, was not immediately available for comment.

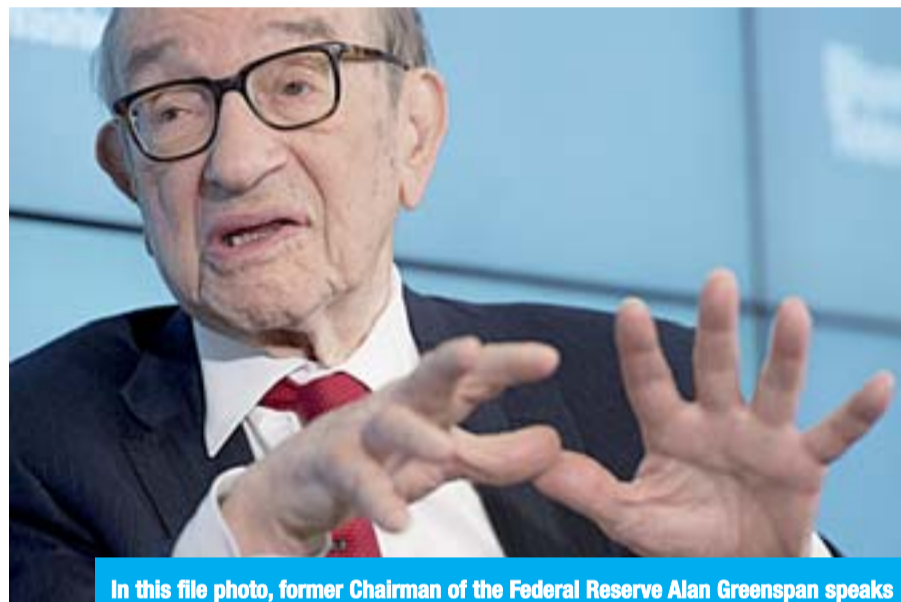
However Greenspan & Associates, the former Fed chairman's Washington consultancy, told AFP the report was untrue. Greenspan's wife, NBC News Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent Andrea Mitchell, also took to Twitter to put the kibosh on all the loose talk.

"By now you know the rumors are a hoax," she wrote. "Alan's doing great. In fact, he has a book out next week!"

Debenedetti is reportedly behind serial false reports of the deaths of world figures such as former communist leaders Fidel Castro and Mikhail Gorbachev as well as Pope Benedict XVI, Syria's Bashar al-Assad and British author JK Rowling.

"Death works well on Twitter," a person identifying himself as Debenedetti, a school teacher in Rome, told AFP in 2013. He said he aimed to "show that Twitter has become a news agency—the least reliable in the world."

Meanwhile, yesterday was not the first time Greenspan—who in 19 years as Fed chairman oversaw a period of economic boom and stepped down just before the United States headed into the



In this file photo, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan speaks about "Brexit" and the state of the European and US economies during a discussion with Bloomberg Government at their offices in Washington, DC. —AFP

Great Recession—had been the subject of exaggerated reports of his demise.

US stocks tumbled in June of 2000

after the Federal Reserve hesitated before denying a rumor that Greenspan

had been killed in a car crash. —AFP

Weak German trade suggests meager growth in Q3

BERLIN: German exports unexpectedly fell in August, data showed yesterday, in a fresh sign that manufacturers in Europe's largest economy shifted into a lower gear over the summer months.

The Federal Statistics Office said seasonally adjusted exports edged down by 0.1 percent on the month, missing a Reuters forecast of a 0.3 percent rise. Imports dropped by 2.7 percent, undershooting a predicted 0.2 percent fall. ING economist Carsten Brzeski blamed the low trade volumes over the summer months on a general weakening of global manufacturing activity and a temporary blip in domestic demand.

"The traditional German growth engine is stuttering once again," Brzeski said, in reference to exports.

"Luckily, the German economy is no longer running on one or two cylinders but still has solid domestic demand to lean on. At least for now." Household spending has become an important growth driver in Germany as consumers are reaping the benefits of record employment levels, rising real wages, increased job security and cheap credit due to the euro zone's expansive monetary policy.

The seasonally adjusted trade surplus widened to 18.3 billion euros (\$21.0 billion) in August from 15.9 billion in the previous month, the data showed. Germany's wider current account surplus, which measures the flow of goods, services and investments, rose to 15.3 billion euros from 15.1 billion euros in July, unadjusted data showed. The trade figures chimed with data released on Monday that showed industrial output edging down unexpectedly in August, suggesting the German economy lost steam in the third quarter.

Volker Treier from the DIHK chambers of industry and commerce said the weak data meant that he would probably have to cut his forecast for 5 percent export growth this year.

"Exports are stagnating. And the worst is probably yet to come. In particular, the trade conflict between China and the United States will leave its mark in the coming 12 months," he said. "German companies are too interconnected in the global economy, especially with these two countries, to be free from it." Economists are taking an increasingly pessimistic view of the German economy, with the top German institutes last month revising down their 2018 growth forecast and warning that an escalation of trade friction involving the United States could cause a major recession in Germany and Europe.

A source has also told Reuters that the government will revise down its growth forecasts for this year and next. The government is expected to announce its updated growth projections tomorrow.

Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said last month the economy would grow by around 2.0 percent this year, plus or minus 0.1 percent. Last year, Germany's gross domestic product expanded by a calendar-adjusted 2.5 percent, the strongest rate since 2011. —Reuters

IMF says Pakistan has not approached fund for deal

BALI: The International Monetary Fund said yesterday Pakistan has not approached the body to begin negotiations for a possible bailout to stem a balance of payments crisis, hours after Islamabad announced it will enter talks. Former cricketer Imran Khan's new administration took office in August vowing to weigh up whether to seek an IMF bailout to stabilize its economy as it sought other avenues of financing.

For weeks analysts have warned that a new current account crisis could undermine Pakistan's currency and its ability to repay billions in debts or purchase imports. Late Monday the country's finance ministry announced that it would begin bailout talks with the IMF.

"We have not been formally approached yet," said Maurice Obstfeld, the IMF's top economist, during the fund's annual meeting in Bali yesterday.

The IMF's comments added to the appearance of confusion around the abruptly announced decision.

Pakistan's finance minister Asad Umar told the daily Dawn newspaper as late as Saturday that the government had not yet decided whether it would go to the IMF, and had not sketched out a formal proposal to the fund ahead of the Bali summit. "We will be listening very, very attentively when and if they come to us," said Obstfeld.

"Pakistan is suffering from a number of imbalances: A very large fiscal imbalance. A large current account imbalance. They also have a low level of reserves and a currency that is too rigid and overvalued," he added.

Austerity

Khan came to power on an anti-corruption agenda, vowing to build an Islamic welfare state. He has sought loans from friendly countries, promised to recover funds stolen by corrupt officials, and embarked on a series of populist austerity measures such as auctioning buffalo and luxury cars owned by the prime minister's house, and crowdfunding to build a dam in the coun-



ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani dealer counts US dollars at a currency exchange shop in Islamabad yesterday. —AFP

try's north. But economists' warnings have grown increasingly urgent, and the uncertainty saw the country's stock exchange lose 3.4 percent of its value on Monday. The announcement hours later that Islamabad would begin IMF talks sparked a devaluation of the rupee, with the currency trading at 134 for a dollar at the official rate on Tuesday, against 124 the day before.

The drop in the currency's value shows the government is willing to take tough measures, said Mohammed Sohail, chief executive of the Topline Securities, a Pakistani brokerage house.

Pakistan has gone to the IMF multiple times since the late 1980s. The last time was in 2013, when Islamabad got a \$6.6 billion loan to tackle a similar crisis.

Analysts say Pakistan needs a loan of around \$12 billion to turn the corner, but a diplomat told AFP in August that Islamabad is betting on a loan of at least \$6.5 billion to get it through the crisis.

However the US, one of the IMF's biggest donors, has raised fears Pakistan could use any bailout money to repay mounting loans from China, sparking criticism from Islamabad.

That has also increased fears that the terms of any IMF program could be more restrictive than in the past, undercutting Khan's welfare drive. The IMF has also warned the new government that growth would likely slow and inflation rise further if it does not act fast. —AFP

Work stalls in small factories in Gujarat after attacks on migrants

AHMEDABAD/MUMBAI: Mukesh Patel's factory making decorative lights sits eerily silent during what should be one of its busiest times of the year. Work at the plant in Ahmedabad, the largest city in India's western state of Gujarat, has come to a standstill just ahead of India's crucial festival shopping season as dozens of his workers have fled the state.

Their departure in recent days followed news of violence in Gujarat against migrant workers from the central states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Tens of thousands of them have fled in recent days, and many of the small factories and businesses they work in have come to a standstill in one of India's most industrialized of its 29 states. No one knows if or when the workers will come back. "There aren't enough people, so how will we continue?" said Patel, sitting in the reception area of his office opposite his factory building.

In addition to businesses, many of Ahmedabad's street food stalls are closed because they were mostly run by people from the three states to the east of Gujarat.

The exodus began after the rape of a 14-month-old girl last month, allegedly by a man from the state of Bihar, sparked anger among locals, who threatened, and in some cases physically attacked, migrant workers from the three states. No one was killed and injuries were relatively minor, but the threats caused panic. Local media reports said a speech by an opposition party politician, who vowed to take revenge for the crime if police did not act, may have stoked some of the violence.

Police arrested the man accused of the rape, but messages and videos of the threats spread quickly both via vigilante mobs and social media. Authorities have tried to defuse the crisis — police say nearly 500 people have so far been arrested and charged with rioting, assault and cybercrime, in relation to more than 50 reported offences. But the workers are fleeing back to their villages despite assurances from business owners and protection from the police.

"For more than a week, migrant workers have been leaving the state in jam-packed trains and vans everyday," said Shyam Singh Thakur, who heads an association representing migrants.

He estimated more than 70,000 workers had fled Gujarat since the beginning of the month but said it was difficult to provide any concrete data.

On Monday, an express train bound for Uttar Pradesh from Ahmedabad was full of people going back home because of the violence and the threats.

Among them was Trilokinath Chauhan, a welder, headed back to his village in the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh, after working for nearly five years in Gujarat. He said a mob of about one hundred people threatened him and his friends on Saturday night, asking them to take "the first train out of Gujarat or face the consequences."

Chauhan and two of his friends decided to leave. "We're all very sacred," he told Reuters on Monday morning, sitting in a crowded compartment in the Ahmedabad-Lucknow Express. "I don't know what to do now. I will have to look for a job in the village or work in the fields," he said as the train started pulling out of the station.

Atmosphere of fear

The exodus could badly hurt small- and medium-sized businesses in Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which he ran for 13 years and pitched as a model for industrialization and growth. The state continues to be governed by his Bharatiya Janata Party.

In the last two years, many of these businesses had already been stung by a slowdown due to two of the Modi government's biggest reforms — demonetization and the introduction of a nationwide Goods and Services Tax (GST). "This will delay production and businesses will miss delivery deadlines," said Atulbhai Kapasi, president of the Gujarat State Small Industries Federation, adding that sectors such as textiles, engineering, chemicals and pharmaceuticals will suffer the most. "This will hurt their profits." —Reuters

Health & Science

Ooredoo participates in Electronic Declaration of Judicial Papers

Electronic Declaration to save time; minimize errors, delays

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait: Ooredoo Kuwait participated with the Ministry of Justice in inaugurating Phase 3 of the Electronic Declaration of Judicial Papers, which took place last week at the Ministry of Justice headquarters. The event was held under the auspices of Kuwait's Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Fahad Al Afasi.

Ooredoo's participation in this initiative comes to further solidify the leading telecom service provider's position as a leading partner for public-private partnerships. The Electronic Declaration of Judicial Papers, launched by the Ministry of Justice, aims to digitalize, simplify, and streamline processes, sending court notifications to participating private sector entities electronically to save time, ensure efficiency, and contribute to minimizing errors and delays.

Commenting on the company's contribution to this initiative, Ooredoo Kuwait's Chief Corporate Legal and Regulatory Affairs Officer Dr. Yousef Al-Sellili said: "We at Ooredoo Kuwait are proud to be among the early adopters of the latest technologies, as part of our ongoing efforts to embrace digitalization across the organization. We are also very happy to join the Ministry of Justice in this ambitious initiative. Our participation stems from our deep-rooted belief in caring, connecting, and challenging, and is in alignment with our mission to enrich people's lives through digitalization." "We look forward to further

collaborations with other government entities to have an active role in propelling Kuwait towards embracing the internet of the future," he added. By adopting the new system, Ooredoo Kuwait's legal department will be able

“Enrich people's lives through digitalization”

to handle and track legal and judicial cases with speed and efficacy. Additionally, the speed of the new system allows the company to categorize legal proceedings and identify any flaws to prevent them in the future, which is considered an initial stage on applying the Electronic Court system.



Canon raises funds to support two educational programs

KUWAIT: Canon, a provider of imaging technologies and services, raised AED 250,000 to support two educational programs, one in the Middle East and a second in Africa. The funds were raised through sponsors, and the general public who participated in the Canon Day of Giving fundraising event which was recently held at Zabeel Park in partnership with Dubai Cares.

Canon Day of Giving, which was entirely manpowered by Canon employees, attracted 1200 visitors from across the UAE who supported the fundraising by purchasing coupon booklets to participate in the event's activities which included a Talent Show, gaming tents with prizes, a kids' play area, Canon's own Creative Park arts and crafts station, as well as a Canon Academy Workshop. The event also held raffle draws for a variety of valuable prizes granted by the event's sponsors and partners.

Mai Youssef, Corporate Communications and Marketing Services Director, Canon Middle East and Canon Central and North Africa, said: "We set a target and we achieved it together. I am grateful for all the visitors and families who came to participate to support this initiative: their kindness is immeasurable. At Canon we believe in the philosophy of 'Kyosei,' which means living and working together for the common good, and this was duly demonstrated by the community during the event."

"Supporting education and personal development initiatives is at the core of Canon's work in the communities in which we operate. Our aim through this initiative in partnership with Dubai Cares, is to give as many children as possible the opportunity to exercise their right to receive quality education at an early age and to nurture their love of learning through to adulthood. Canon will continue to promote educational initiatives in the region to support the growth and development of the next generation of professionals, educators, leaders, scientists, engineers, artists, and more," added Youssef.

Speaking about the success of the Canon Giving Day,



His Excellency Tariq Al Gurg, Chief Executive Officer at Dubai Cares said: "We are grateful for Canon and members of the UAE community for their generous contribution aimed at supporting Dubai Cares' mission. We hope that this joint initiative will be a step towards improving access to and quality of education for thousands of children in the Middle East and Africa. We look forward to building on our mutual ambition to support underprivileged children and young people to realize their full potential and shape the development of their communities."

In the Middle East, the funds raised will support a two-year Early Childhood Development program in Jordan aimed at Syrian refugees. Jordan currently hosts the second largest number of Syrian refugees in the world, and the access to education is limited, especially in the age group 5-6 years old. The Early Childhood Development program will provide children aged 5-6 access to safe, early years education that is supported by education technology through mobile applications which can be

accessed by the parents to supplement the learning at home. In Africa, the funds raised will support an Enhanced Early Years Pre-Service Teacher Training program in Ghana for the duration of three years. The demand for qualified teachers is increasing across Ghana as enrolment rises, and teachers represent a vital link to improving the quality of education provided to children. The program will upgrade existing kindergarten classrooms through training and learning resources to support the teachers deliver higher quality, fact-based learning in the classroom.

Canon was honored to have several sponsors and partners as a part of this important initiative to support quality education for children. The Canon Day of Giving Gold sponsors were National Store, Mitsumi and Jamaica Trading Company, Dubai Internet City, Art Plus and Digital Color Print. Lovin Dubai was the media sponsor while Mashreq Bank was the event's bank partner. Canon Day of Giving was organized and powered by Max Events Dubai.

Mimecast to showcase importance of human firewall at GITEX

DUBAI: Mimecast Limited (NASDAQ: MIME), a leading email and data security company, will showcase its new cybersecurity awareness capabilities at GITEX Technology Week 2018. Following the acquisition of Ataata in July, the company will use the region's largest technology show to introduce IT decision makers to its newest offering, MimecastSM Awareness Training. The service is designed to offer memorable training content, risk scoring and real-world simulation attack scenarios.



Jeff Ogden

According to Mimecast's State of Email Security 2018 Report, 90 percent of organizations have seen phishing attacks increase or stay the same over the last year, yet only 11 percent of respondents continuously train employees on how to spot cyberattacks. At GITEX, Mimecast will focus on why building an effective human firewall is a vital component of any cyber resilience strategy.

MimecastSM Awareness Training is designed to reduce human error in the workplace and help enable organizations to become more secure by changing the security culture of their employees. At GITEX, visitors will learn how they can improve their defenses by measuring cyber risk training effectiveness and converting behavior observations into actionable risk metrics. The addition of security awareness training, risk scoring and analysis to Mimecast's portfolio, strengthens the company's cyber resilience for email capabilities.

"Human error is involved in the vast majority of security breaches, yet ineffective security awareness training remains an issue across the Middle East region. Securely operating a business in the cloud requires new levels of IT preparedness and educating employees to be cyber-aware is key to an effective cyber resilience strategy," says Jeff Ogden, general manager Mimecast Middle East. "At GITEX we hope to educate visitors about how awareness training shouldn't simply be a check box action but entrenched in an organization's culture, so it changes employee behavior."

Additionally, Kirsty Kelly, threat intelligence analyst at Mimecast will address delegates of the Vertical Days conference about cyber resilience for email in the banking and finance sector. In addition to discussing the role of effective training and risk scoring can play in improving an organization's defenses, Kelly will explain the importance of embracing a cyber resilience strategy meaning holistically protecting a business with comprehensive security controls before, continuity during, and automated recovery after a cyberattack.

Mimecast experts will also perform a series of live hacks that demonstrate the importance of user awareness and show why organizations need to implement adequate protection against advanced cyberattacks, like spear-phishing and impersonation fraud.

"In addition to the conference speaking slot and the daily live hacks, Mimecast security experts will be available to discuss the evolving threat landscape and explain why organizations in all sectors need to rethink their approach to cybersecurity," added Ogden.

Mimecast is exhibiting at Sheikh Rashid Hall, Stand E-10 and on the stands of key channel partners in the region, Redington Gulf, Bulwark Technologies and IxTel Technologies. Live hacks will take place daily on Mimecast and channel partner stands and on the X-Labs stage.

GOSH introduces superhope league

LONDON: United by hope and fuelled by their passion to help others, AJ-Force, DarkGadget, SaMagic, ButterFly, Flowergirl and ReFroze have teamed up to form the mighty GOSH Superhope league; marking a new era for the world of superheroes. With AJ-Force's tremendous energy, ButterFly's ability to soar the skies, DarkGadget's indestructible shield technology, Flowergirl's awesome flower power, SaMagic's amazing wizardry and ReFroze's cool ice magic; together, they form the most incredible force for good our planet has ever known. With their unique powers and inspiring positive mental attitude, they offer a new hope to children from across the world.

Speaking about bringing Superhope to life and the friendships made during the campaign, Emma Hedges, Hematology and Oncology Trainee Advanced Nurse Practitioner specializing in pediatric cancer, said: "Aysha, Latifa and Retaj are my three musketeers! They are all being treated for very similar conditions, although Latifa and Retaj needed further treatment. The three of them have bought the staff so much joy with their individual personalities, that I thought this could be something for them to focus on away from their hospital visits and treatment."

"It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be involved in the care of these two delightful girls, Retaj and Latifa. Their families have shown such dedication in bringing them to the UK and supporting them through their treatment at GOSH. We are all thrilled that they are doing well on treatment and will be returning to Kuwait soon for ongoing surveillance," said Dr Antony Mickalski, Consultant Pediatric Oncologist at GOSH.

Meet Latifa, aka ButterFly Born to fly

Latifa is a bright and bubbly 12-year-old from Kuwait who has always yearned to fly. Latifa came to Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London with her grandmother in 2010. Ever since, Latifa has spent the past eight years at the hospital receiving treatment for her condition. Latifa and her grandmother hope to return home in December at the end of many years of successful treatment.

With a love for butterflies, she hoped one day she could follow them and fly high. At first, during her time at GOSH, Latifa was shy but over the years, her confidence grew and Latifa metamorphosed into a tenacious, strong and optimistic young girl. This is where Latifa's alter-ego 'ButterFly' came to life. As well as being able to soar through the skies, ButterFly is able to command a flutter of butterflies with just one single clap. With the help of her butterfly friends, ButterFly is able to spread happiness and encouragement to other children with similar conditions.

"Superhope has had a positive effect on Latifa and her family," explains Latifa's grandmother adding, "Latifa needs something to encourage herself and I can feel this event make her so happy. In the photo, she is like a butterfly queen, very beautiful! Thank you so much for organizing this event."

Meet Retaj, aka ReFroze The coolest superhero yet

Ever since Retaj was born in Kuwait almost eight years ago, she has blessed the world with her smiles and laughter. The magical twinkle in Retaj's eyes still continues to glisten, despite first coming to GOSH in 2012 and returning again in 2017 for treatment for neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), a genetic condition that caused a tumor to grow near her optic nerve. She is courageous and brave, with a strong compassion for people.

Whilst at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London, Retaj spoke of her love for superpowers and all



things enchanted. Although being at hospital is far from a fairy-tale for any child, Retaj still manages to keep her enthusiasm for life and imagination alive with the help of her family and GOSH nurses and doctors. This is where Retaj's unique ice power came to life and her ice princess alter-ego 'ReFroze' was born.

ReFroze has the warmest of hearts, yet her power is as cool as can be. Even during the darkest and snowiest of days in London, Retaj can still see the true beauty of ice by creating the most mesmerizing ice sculptures. Whether she's in London or Kuwait, ReFroze thrills and dazzles her friends with her magical ability to trans-

form her surroundings into a winter wonderland that all can enjoy.

During Superhope, Retaj was an outpatient and had to visit the hospital for appointments at least once a week, sometimes more often, for many months. Superhope gave her the opportunity to focus on something exciting while she had to come to the hospital. "It is a beautiful event for us and Retaj was so excited and happy!" said Retaj's mom adding, "She felt so proud that she could be an ice princess and she kept talking about that for several days." "I loved the Superhope experience and I am very happy and excited! I want to do it again," Retaj said.

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
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Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

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

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- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

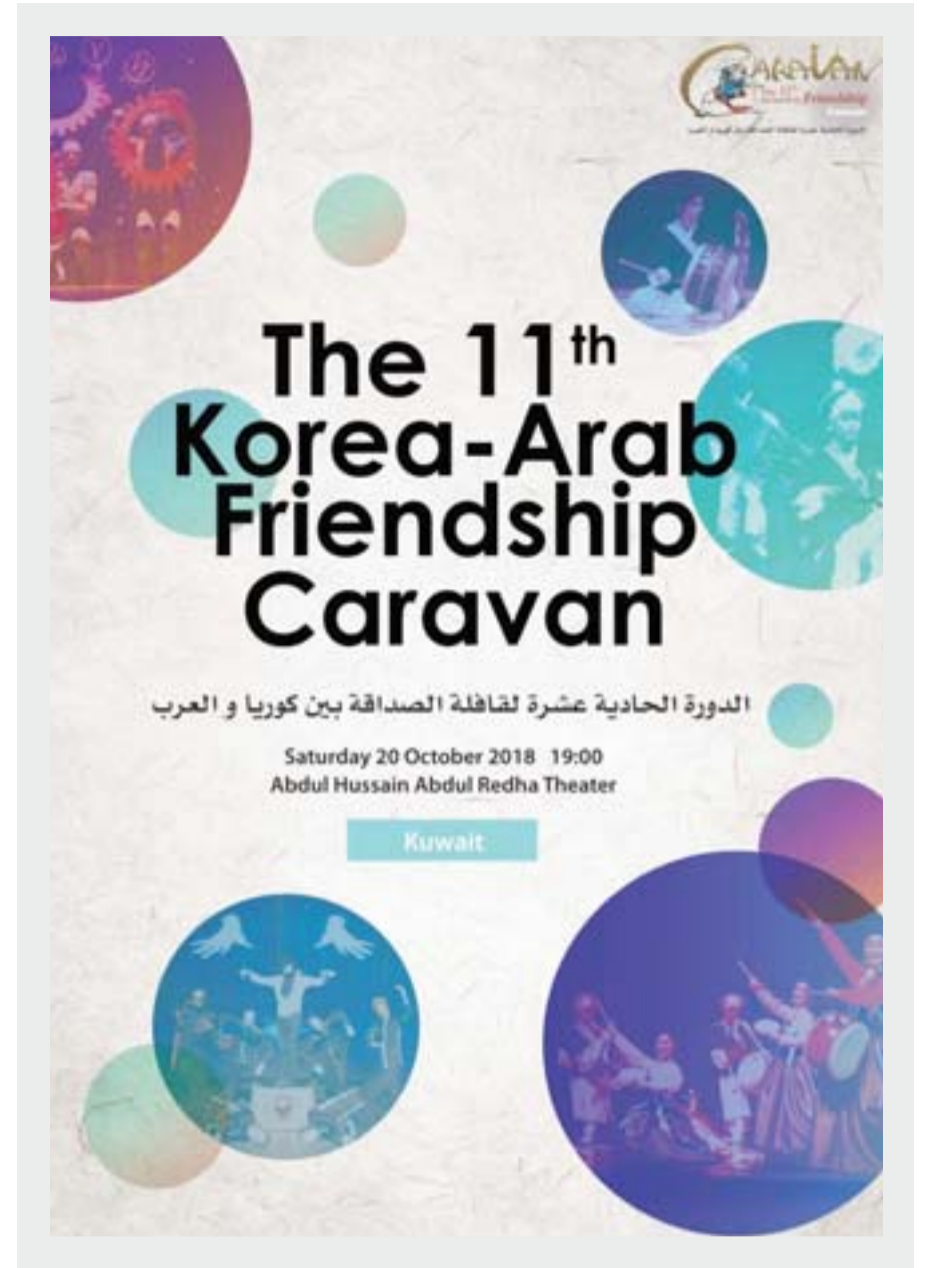
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What's On

Ahmadi governorate cooperates with MEW



Ahmadi governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khalid Al-Sabah spoke about the importance of awareness, in preserving non-renewable energy and expand in production of renewable one. The governor spoke during the reception of the Director of Energy Efficiency and Rationalization depart at MEW Eng. Iqbal Al-Tayyar, as both sides discussed means of cooperation between two sides.



CBK organizes blood donation campaign



Commercial Bank of Kuwait organized a blood donation campaign. Employees from all departments responded well. Assistant General Manager Institutional Communications sector Amani Al-Wara said the campaign was organized in cooperation with Kuwait Central blood bank out of its belief to increase the strategic stock at the bank.

IWG celebrates Swiss Cultural Day



— Photos by Joseph Shagra

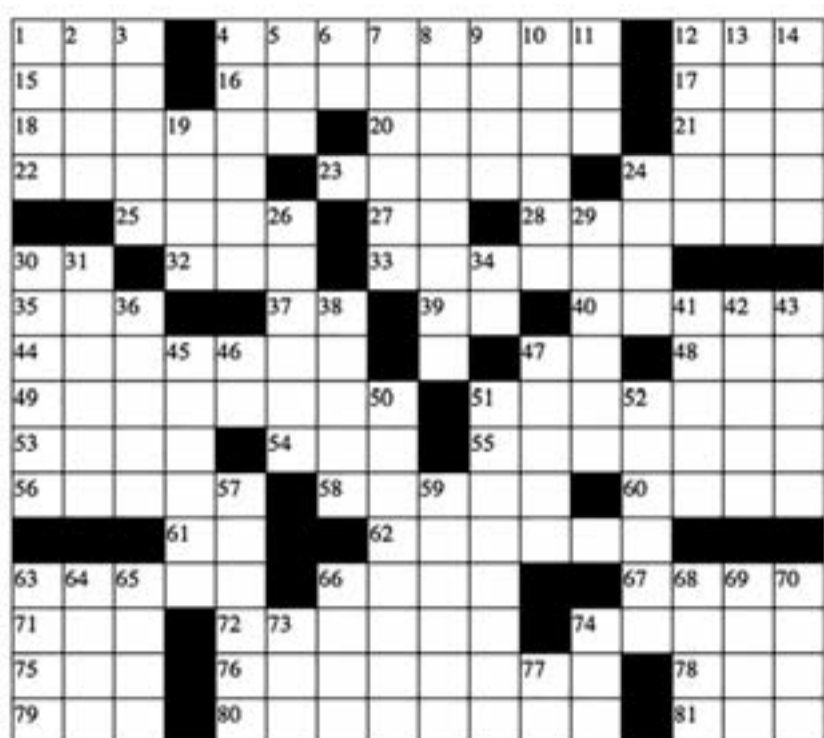
The International Women's Group (IWG) Kuwait celebrated the Swiss Cultural Day at the Crowne Plaza Hotel - Farwaniya. The Swiss cultural day was well attended by wives of ambassadors to the State of Kuwait and other members who have been a part of Kuwait's society and represent various coun-

tries around the world. The event was opened with a speech by the President of the group Clethe Gubler, wife of the Ambassador of the Confederation of Switzerland to Kuwait who welcomed members of the group and on behalf of IWG - Kuwait she welcomed the Swiss Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Benedict Gubler.

Dr. Gubler, presented Switzerland a country renowned for its traditions on high quality education, ultimate technologies, famous for the manufacture of medical drugs, designing and manufacturing watches and making cheeses and chocolates. He went on to describe Switzerland as having a privileged geographic

location in the heart of Europe and hosts the siege of many international organizations in Geneva. The Swiss cultural day program continued with a video clip about the famous landmarks in Switzerland. The group members then participated in many activities, concluding with a taste of some Swiss cuisine.

CROSSWORD 2030



ACROSS

1. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
4. Marked by great carelessness.
12. The cry made by sheep.
15. A strong emotion.
16. Hard outer covering or case of certain organisms such as arthropods and turtles.
17. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
18. East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.
20. The local environment.
21. Being two more than fifty.
22. A person of unquestioning obedience.
23. A West African language closely related to Fula.
25. A small cake leavened with yeast.
27. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
28. A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
30. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
32. Type genus of the family Mycidae.
33. A historical region in central and northern Yugoslavia.
35. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
37. A radioactive transuranic element.
39. A state in midwestern United States.
40. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
44. Fudge made with brown sugar and butter and milk and nuts.
48. A master's degree in fine arts.
49. Infringe on the rights of.
53. A cleansing agent made from the salts of vegetable or animal fats.
54. Roman goddess of night.
55. Type genus of the Oriolidae.
56. Razor clams.
58. Reconnaissance (by shortening).
60. A sails-shaped constellation in the southern hemisphere near Carina.
61. A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
62. Malevolent aspect of Devi.
63. Filled with a great quantity.
67. Earn on some commercial or business transaction.
71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
72. A constellation in the northern hemisphere near Ursa Major.
75. The 13th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
76. A dark gray volcanic rock.
78. The sign language used in the United States.
79. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
80. Devoid of physical sensation.
81. (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.

DOWN

1. Moderate in type or degree or effect or force.
2. Brightly colored and showy.
3. The brightest star in Cygnus.

4. Covered with scabs.
5. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
6. A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
7. Writing that provides information (especially information of an official nature).
8. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
9. Swift timid long-eared mammal larger than a rabbit having a divided upper lip and long hind legs.
10. A tax on various goods brought into a town.
11. A potent estrogen used in medicine and in feed for livestock and poultry.
12. A pale rose-colored variety of the ruby spinel.
13. A name that has been assumed temporarily.
14. A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
19. Joint consisting of a line formed by joining two pieces.
24. A small ball with a hole through the middle.
26. A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
29. A spirit believed by Muslims to inhabit the earth and influence mankind by appearing in the form of humans or animals.
31. French writer who generalized surrealism to literature (1897-1982).
34. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
36. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria and closely related to Hausa.
38. An act of gracious kindness.
41. The boy whose upbringing was described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
42. Especially of a ship's lines etc.
43. East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.
45. Perennial northern temperate plant with toothed leaves and heads of small purplish-white flowers.
46. Being one more than one hundred.
47. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
50. Put to death as punishment.
51. Soft leather shoe.
52. Of or relating to or characteristic of the former Soviet Union or its people.
57. In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.
59. A solid food prepared from the pressed curd of milk.
64. In bed.
65. Informal terms for a (young) woman.
66. A member of a pastoral people living in the Nilgiri hills of southern India.
68. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
69. Tear down so as to make flat with the ground.
70. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
73. Used of a single unit or thing.
74. An unabridged dictionary constructed on historical principles.
77. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.

Yesterday's Solution

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STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

All that is mysterious and taboo seem to draw you in. Curiosity may have killed the cat but that is a chance you are willing to take. You are craving excitement and long to experience something new. This is a great time of creativity for you. A change of scenery or a change of style are coming your way. You may be drawn to the unusual and avant garde. Out with the old and in with the new. Watch out world! Expect to turn some heads today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You desire intimacy. You desire control of all aspects of your life at this time. You could be feeling driven and determined to gain power. You may feel hungry for knowledge. You desire the answers of life's mysteries. You may feel as if you are in touch with everyone and everything around you. Taurus. Today may leave you feeling much love and support from those around you. Spend time with your special someone. Something as simple as opening up and sharing the details of your day may help you bond. The more open you are with those closest to you the more you will find they will share with you.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Leave the major decisions for later, frustration and other obstacles may seem to be in your way today. You seem to find yourself wanting to be more social. A desire to hit the town. You find pleasure in surrounding yourself with friends. Choose your company wisely as you could find yourself in conflict with someone close to you. You seem to know what to say and when to say it. Others are seeking your company, and this would be a great time to spend time with your siblings or neighbors. Today is a great day for an escape. Take in a movie or curl up with a book. This may just what you need to rest your mind and start tomorrow with a new outlook on life.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A time of major change in your life is upon you. It will be strange and unusual in many ways. Everything new, unusual, and revolutionary seems to appeal to you now. A more eccentric side of you emerges. Thinking outside of the box may lead to a very profitable and creative invention. Let your thoughts lead you. You may find those close to you may be a bit uncomfortable with this unusual side of you, Cancer. Don't worry. They will grow to love the new you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may feel a need for change is long overdue. You may want to break old habits and set out on a new path. You may find yourself drawn to a different lifestyle and find yourself going against the grain. You desire to be a part of a new and different crowd and feel as if something is pulling you in a direction beyond your comfort zone you have known. Today may find you lacking direction and this may lead to conflict in the work place as you appear lost with no focus. This is an internal conflict and there is no need to try to explain this to others close to you as it may cause frustration when your ideas are not met with acceptance by others.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are able to draw the attention of all who cross paths with you today. You are captivating and intriguing. Your imagination and creativity are in overdrive. Your mind is working faster than your hands can create or your mouth can speak. This is a very productive time for you if you can exercise patience. You may find yourself with a strong desire for power and control. Make sure you work to fulfill these desires in a healthy manner.

Wordsearch Puzzle

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

ALLOSAUROS ARTHROPODS BONES BRACHIOSAUROS CARNIVORE CLAWS CRAWLERS CREST DISCOVERY DOOM HEAD EGG ERUPTION EXTINCT FLYERS FOOTPRINT FOSSILS GEOLOGY GIANT GLIDERS HERBIVORE HERD HOPPERS HORN HUNT IGUANODON JURASSIC LIZARD MESOZOIC NEST PREDATOR PREHISTORIC PTERANOON PTEROACTYL REPTILE RIDGE ROAR ROCK SAUROPODS SCALES SKELETON SKULL SPENOSAURUS STEGOSAURUS STOMP TAIL CLUB TEETH TITANOSAURUS TRACKS TRECRATOPS TYRANNOSAURUS REX VOLCRAPTOR VOLCANO WING

Daily SuDoku

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



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A sense of curiosity is overwhelming today. If you have a tendency for addiction, you want to be aware of your use of the internet. The temptations offered by social media, games, and unhealthy sites can be as real as the lures of alcohol and drugs. You may want to take stock of the time you spend on your electronic devices. Be aware how this time affects your health and outlook. Does it contribute to your mental health? Does it make you feel better or worse? Is it constructive? Social media can be a good thing; but too much of a good thing can become a negative.



Scorpio (October 23-November 18)

It seems as if a need for nurturing is stronger than usual in your life. You feel a strong desire to not only care for others, but to have others care for you in return. You have a gift when it comes to sensing the needs of others. Finding someone who is the friend to you that you are to them is a deep desire for you. This is a time you may feel as if some changes need to be made in your world. Out with the old and in with the new seems very appealing to you. This is a time when you feel at your best when you are on the go.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel a need for change is long overdue. You may want to break old habits and set out on a new path. You may find yourself drawn to a different lifestyle and find yourself going against the grain. You desire to be a part of a new and different crowd and feel as if something is pulling you in a direction beyond your comfort zone you have known. Today may find you lacking direction and this may lead to conflict in the work place as you appear lost with no focus. This is an internal conflict and there is no need to try to explain this to others close to you as it may cause frustration when your ideas are not met with acceptance by others.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

If you have been debating on a new business approach, today is the day to make it happen. Much success will come your way. Make the pitch, present the proposal. Today is a day you will get the results you have been dreaming of. You are convincing and have a way with your words today. You will be able to make others see things your way. By the time you are through, those involved will see things your way and have the exact desires you do. Stay on top of news about money matters. This is a very profitable time for you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find yourself wanting to broaden your horizons. You know this is a big world and your life is contained in a tiny square of it. It may be time to take a step out of that box and find what the world has to offer you. You could find it difficult to communicate with others today because you find your mind is a million miles away. Curiosity has taken a hold on you and you can't seem to stay focused on the here and now. You may find this evening that a good book may be just what you need to find this escape you have been searching for. A good time for rest and relaxation is in order for you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are making a difference in the lives of more people than you realize. You could qualify as a CREEP. That's a good thing, a compliment. It is an acronym for Constantly Ready to Encourage Every Person. You tend to focus on the other person, not on yourself. You send the message "You are enough." Don't change the way you relate to people. Keep doing what you are doing. You don't have to work at it. It comes naturally for you. Lifting others up lifts your spirits in return.

Yesterday's Solution

Deserts of the World

ARABIAN ARCTIC ATACAMA ATLANTIC COASTAL BAYUDA BLACK ROCK BLUE CHALBI CHIHUAHUA COLORADO DANAKEL DEATH VALLEY DUBAIB EMPTY QUARTER BRITREAN COASTAL GIBSON GOBE GRAND BARRA GREAT BASIN GREATSANDY GREAT VICTORIA GUBAN INDUS VALLEY JALAPANO KALAHARI KARAKUM KARIKOI KHARAN KYZYLKUM LAGUASSA LIBYAN MARANGAS MONTIE NAGES NEFUS NEREV NORTH AMERICAN NORIAN NYIRI OGADEN QLESHYI ORDOS PATAGONIAN RAMLAT RANGISO RUSSIAN SACHSIA SECHURA SIMPSON SINAI SONCHAN TABERNAS TAYLAMAKAN TANAMI TENERE THOMPSON PLATEAU WAHIBA SANDS WHITE

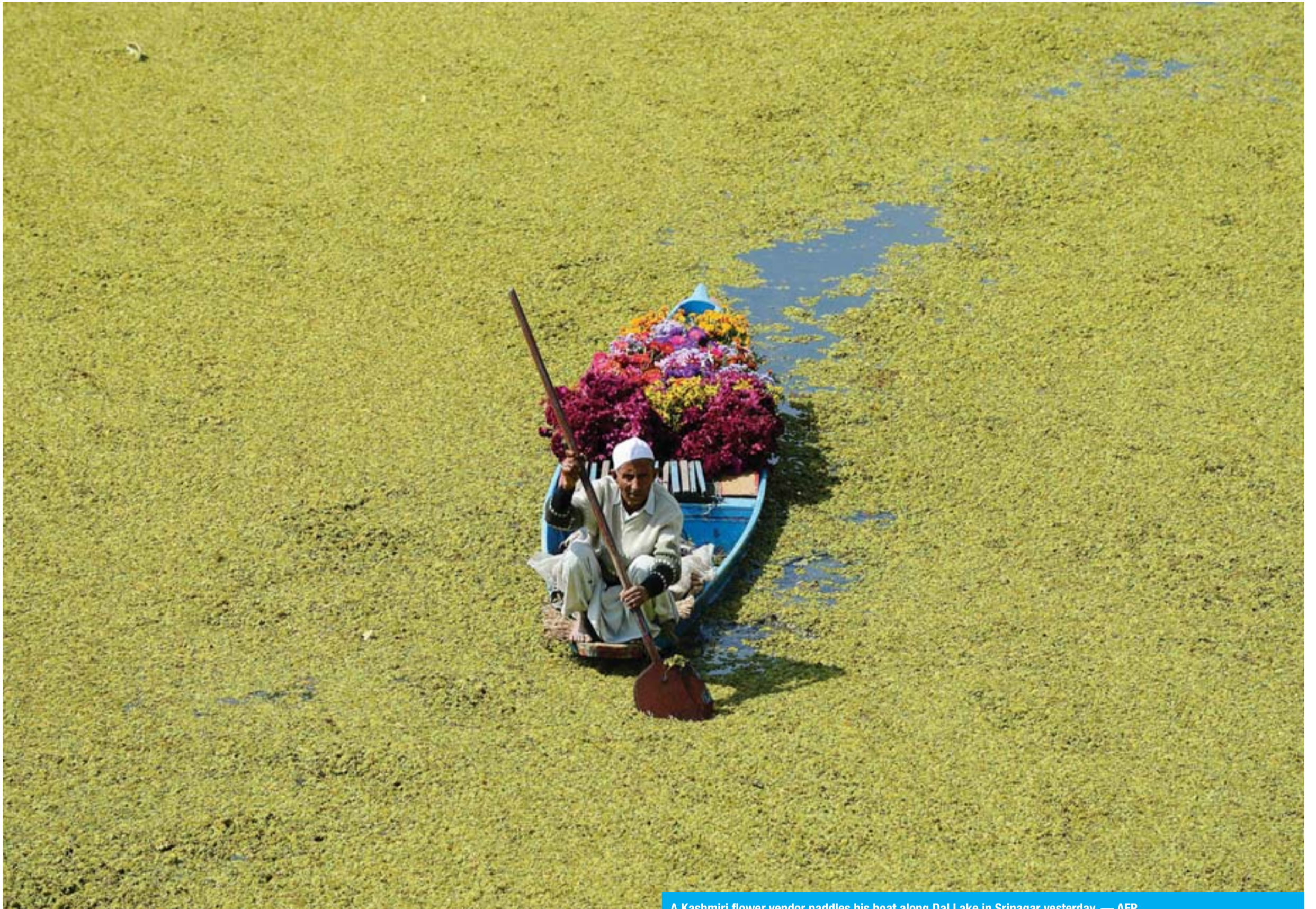
The hidden message is: ANTARCTICA IS THE LARGEST DESERT IN THE WORLD AND IS CLASSIFIED AS A POLAR DESERT.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018



A Kashmiri flower vendor paddles his boat along Dal Lake in Srinagar yesterday. — AFP



Stolen ancient artefact returns to Iran museum

A twice-stolen ancient Persian artefact is in Tehran's national museum after a New York court ordered it returned to Iran. "It now belongs to the people who made it in the first place, and who are now going to preserve it, and is part of their identity," Firouzeh Sepidnameh, director of the ancient history section of the National Museum told AFP yesterday. The limestone relief was handed over to Iran's representative at the United Nations last month and was personally brought back to Iran by President Hassan Rouhani, returning from the UN General Assembly.

The bas-relief, approximately 25 centuries old, depicts the head of a soldier from a line of Immortal Guards. It was discovered in an archaeological dig in the early 1930s at Persepolis, capital of the Achaemenid Empire near today's central Iranian city of Shiraz. The artefact was stolen four years after it was found, and ultimately ended up at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts where it was again stolen in 2011. It was seized by the Manhattan district attorney's office in 2017 when it resurfaced and was put on sale at an art fair. "The international community has evolved enough to realize every artefact must return to its point of origin," said Sepidnameh. — AFP

Tourists visit The National Museum of Iran in Tehran yesterday. — AFP photos



'Women are still invisible,' warns feminist icon Adichie

Women everywhere are sharing stories of sexual harassment and gender inequality but men still aren't really listening, Nigerian author and feminist icon Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie told the Frankfurt book fair yesterday, urging men to read books by women. "All over the world today women are speaking up. Their stories are still not really heard," Adichie said at the opening of the world's biggest publishing event. "Women are still invisible. Women's experiences are still invisible." A year after the #MeToo movement went viral and ignited a global discussion about sexual harassment, Adichie said there was much work left to be done.

"It is time for us to pay more than lip service to the fact that women's stories are for everyone," the celebrated author of "Americanah" and "Half of a Yellow Sun" said. "We know from studies that women read books by men and women. But men read books by men. It is time for men to read women." As well as being an award-winning novelist, Adichie shot to fame as a vocal advocate for women's rights after her essay "We Should All Be Feminists" became a TED talk hit in 2012. It has been viewed over five million times on YouTube.

In a thinly veiled reference to US judge Brett Kavanaugh's controversial confirmation to the Supreme Court despite accusa-

tions of sexual misconduct, Adichie slammed the tendency not to believe victims of such assaults. "We seem to live in a world where many people believe large numbers of women can simply wake up one day and make up stories about having been assaulted," Adichie said. "I know many women who want to be famous. I don't know one single woman who wants to be famous for having been assaulted."

'Call a lie a lie'

Adichie, who divides her time between the United States and Nigeria, said now was an "urgent" moment to stand up for what is right—particularly in President Donald Trump's America. "The world is shifting, it's changing. It's darkening," the 41-year-old said. "The most powerful country in the world today feels like a feudal court, full of intrigues feeding on mendacity, drowning in its own hubris. "We must know what is true. We must say what is true. And we must call a lie a lie." Adichie received the PEN Pinter prize in London later yesterday, which recognizes British and Commonwealth writers whose work takes an "unflinching, unswerving" look at the world.

Judges praised Adichie's "understanding of gender, race, and global inequality". Adichie's appearance at the Frankfurt fair, which runs until Sunday, kicked off what promises to be a politically charged edition of the annual literature extravaganza, with organizers shining a spotlight on human rights and freedom of expression. — AFP



Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reacts during the opening press conference at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2018 in Frankfurt am Main, central Germany. — AFP



A view of Hindu Shri Krishna Temple is pictured in Mithi. — AFP photos



A Pakistani policeman stands guard as Muslims offer Friday prayers in Mithi.

Pakistan's Mithi, an oasis of Muslim-Hindu tolerance

Cows roam freely in the Pakistani city of Mithi, as in neighboring India. Considered sacred animals among Hindus, they embody the religious tolerance of this community in conservative Muslim Pakistan, where minorities face heavy discrimination. Here, "Muslims respect the beliefs of Hindus," said Sham Das, a 72-year-old pensioner. "They do not kill cows, or only in remote places, but not in Hindu neighborhoods."

Unlike in the rest of Pakistan, cattle in Mithi live very well. They eat as they please, often from rubbish bins, and fall asleep on the roads. At times tuk-tuks and motorcycles navigate a weaving path around the animals. At others the traffic waits patiently for them to wake. Mithi is a

Karachi, some 300 kilometers (around 200 miles) away, which are under armed surveillance. Vijay Kumar Gir, a Hindu priest in Karachi, said that of the 360 temples in the city, merely a dozen are still functioning. "The rest of them have been shut down and their land is being encroached," he said.

It is a bleak situation that is far more representative of the stigmatization Hindus face across Pakistan, where they are often assumed to be "pro-India because of their religion", according to Marvi Sirmed, of the Pakistan Human Rights Commission (HRCPC). "So they are always looked at with suspicion to be anti-Pakistan," she added, referring to the tense relationship between the two countries, which have fought three wars since partition in 1947.

The HRCPC describes Pakistani Hindus as feeling "uneasy" in their country, saying in its annual report that "the migration of Hindus to India may soon turn into an exodus if the discrimination against them continues". According to the HRCPC, which cites religious leaders, the biggest problem facing the community is the "forced conversion" to Islam of women and girls, many of whom are abducted before being married off to Muslim men.

But none of this appears to affect Mithi, where Muslims and Hindus say they live together in harmony, even sending one another gifts and sweets to mark their religious holidays, residents say. "Since I was old enough to reason, I have witnessed fraternity, love and harmony between Hindus and Muslims," said Sunil Kumar, a 35-year-old businessman. "That has been going on for generations of our forefathers... it shall go on forever."

End of unity?

The origins of Mithi's peaceful existence are rooted in the geographical location of the city, which rose out of the sand dunes in the majestic Tharparkar desert that borders the Indian state of Rajasthan. Local researchers claim a group of peace-

“ Since I was old enough to reason, I have witnessed fraternity, love and harmony between Hindus and Muslims ”

loving Hindus founded the town in the early 16th century, as war and looting raged all around.

The soil was not fertile and it was difficult to access water, so the city attracted only those of little means who had few other options. "We are the descendants of the original residents of this region, as positive and peace-loving as they were," said Allah Jurio, a 53-year-old imam in Mithi, which is also renowned for its low crime rate. "Non-violence is inherently our second nature." But as religious extremism and hate speech flourish in Pakistan, and "faith-based violence in the name of religion continues unabated", according to the HRCPC, the fear that this oasis of tolerance may disappear is palpable.

Although Chandar Kumar, a 24-year-old Hindu computer scientist, sees no problems in the long-term among Mithi's residents, he said "there are elements from outside who aspire to spread discrimination", declining to elaborate. Extremist groups, such as the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, labeled a terrorist organization by the UN, are accused of being active in the area. "They want to end the unity," said Kumar. — AFP



Children gather outside the Hindu Shri Krishna Temple in Mithi.



Pakistani Hindus pray at the Shri Krishna Temple in Mithi.



Pakistani Hindus pray at the Shri Krishna Temple in Mithi.



Pakistani Hindus gather at the Shri Krishna Temple in Mithi, some 320 km from Karachi.



Pakistani Hindus pray at the Shri Krishna Temple in Mithi.

mostly Hindu city of 60,000 people, a rarity in a country where some 95 percent of the population is Muslim. As they enter Shri Krishna temple, the Hindu faithful ring a bell, the sound of which mingles with the azan, the call to prayer for Muslims sounded just a few streets away.

A relaxed group of young Hindus talk outside the colorful, intricately carved exterior, where not a single guard is employed. It is a sharp contrast to the Hindu neighborhoods in the megacity of



Indonesian children attend a trauma healing program at a shelter in Palu.



Indonesian children attend a trauma healing program at a shelter in Palu.

Winnie the Pooh brings laughter to Indonesian quake kids

Shrieking with delight, Indonesian kids in disaster-struck Palu rush to cuddle a giant Winnie the Pooh, his horseplay and goofy smiles drawing big smiles in a park surrounded with rubble. Volunteers are cheering up children across Palu with songs and games as the youngsters come to grips with a city hollowed out and twisted by nature. An earthquake and tsunami on September 28 has killed close to 2,000 on Sulawesi island and the carnage is still raw, with thousands more believed buried underneath the rubble. The confronting scene is especially grim for the estimated 180,000 youngsters affected by the disaster.

Erna wanted to offer a distraction from the misery. She threw a Winnie the Pooh costume and other props in a car, gathered some friends and drove three hours to Palu. There, a volunteer sweated in the tropical heat inside the red and yellow suit as kids giggled and embraced the loveable bear. "I felt sorry for the children, and I didn't want them to be traumatized," Erna told AFP. Aid workers on the ground said many children were shocked and distressed by the scale of the disaster.

Many were orphaned or separated from family in the terrifying aftermath as buildings crumbled and a wall of water crashed over the city. Across Palu, efforts are being thrown into getting smiles back on kids' faces. Some volunteers have brought toys to replace those lost in the chaos. Others have organized badminton and football matches, or enraptured kids with fun stories.

Save the Children has teamed up with local charities to run safe spaces for kids to play while their parents



gather food and other desperately-needed supplies. "Play is an extremely important part of a child's psychological health and wellbeing," said David Bloomer, a child protection technical adviser with Save the Children. "It gives them a chance to regain a sense of normalcy in a world that has changed around them." — AFP

Indonesian children hug a Winnie the Pooh character as they attend a trauma healing program at a shelter in Palu, Indonesia's Central Sulawesi. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features



This photograph shows a general view of a waterside mansion on the Bosphorus River coast on the Asian side of Istanbul. — AFP photos

FOREIGNERS SNAP UP ISTANBUL'S ICONIC WATERFRONT MANSIONS

They are among Istanbul's most iconic sights—magnificent waterside mansions strung out along the Bosphorus as the waters of the strait dividing Europe and Asia lap almost at their front doors. Once the preserve of the Ottoman elite and affluent foreigners working in what was Constantinople, the mansions, known as yalis, were made famous in novels and more recently through modern Turkey's hugely successful TV soap operas. But dozens are now up for sale as Turkey enters a more troubled economic period and owners seek to cash in their luxury assets.

Prospective new owners can expect to pay up to \$100 million (87 million euros) for one of the premium properties—but have the chance of obtaining a Turkish passport thrown in. With such a hefty asking price—as well as the opportunity of becoming a Turkish national—buyers are likely to be foreigners, heralding a drastic shake-up in the mansions' ownership.

'Dominated by Qatar'

Real-estate brokers in Istanbul, contacted by AFP, said that out of around 600 waterside yalis along the Bosphorus, 60 were currently up for sale. The Turkish lira this summer plunged in value as markets reacted to a bitter spat with the United States and many buyers think now is the perfect time to snap up property assets while the currency is cheap. Sales have to be in Turkish lira—President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has banned the sale, rent or leasing of property being conducted in, or indexed to foreign currencies. Brokers say that in a major turnaround, prospective buyers are almost never Turkish and are likely to be from the Middle East, especially Ankara's closest Gulf ally, Qatar.

"With the lira losing value, Istanbul has become a paradise for people from the Gulf with higher purchasing power in their hands," Hamed Elhamian, sales director at

ANKA Invest, told AFP. "Investors from the Gulf believe that the lira will rise in value in the near future and their investments will appreciate in a very short time," he said. Ugur Ayhan, a luxury real-estate consultant, also said foreign buyers had been showing greater interest in Turkey over recent months. "Our potential clients are largely from Middle Eastern countries. We see people from Azerbaijan and Iran but we have a customer portfolio dominated by Qatar," he told AFP.

'\$250,000 not enough'

Along with the financial incentives, another attraction of buying a property is the possibility of gaining a Turkish passport, which offers eased or visa-free travel to key destinations. Under a decree issued last month, Turkey made it easier for foreigners to become Turkish



citizens by reducing the financial and investment criteria for citizenship. Foreigners now need to have \$500,000 deposited in Turkish banks—down from the previously required \$3 million—while fixed capital investment was cut from \$2 million to \$500,000.

And crucially, individuals owning property worth \$250,000 or more are now also entitled to become Turkish citizens, compared with the previous value necessary of \$1 million. Yet Ayhan said that, while the latest measures would ramp up demand for newly-built apartments in Istanbul, a yali was an ultra-luxury asset beyond the range of most buyers. "It is not possible to buy a luxury apartment, let alone a yali with \$250,000," he said.

'Signature of power'

Among the hundreds of mansions along the two sides of the Bosphorus, 360 of them are of historic value, according to real-estate broker Pinar Ayikcan Tuna. For the historic mansions, potential buyers need to receive permission from both the development directorate of the Bosphorus and the council of monuments for any renovations or to fortify a building's exterior facade. "Turkish laws require that historic buildings are renovated or

restored according to the original," Ayhan said.

Some of the mansions are still owned by members of the Turkish elite, including the two largest family conglomerates: Koc and Sabanci. However, said Elhamian: "The domestic interest in the real estate is very low." "Many local Turkish citizens and developers are looking to sell their real estate to foreigners who are looking to buy luxury properties worth more than the \$250,000 needed for citizenship."

Soap opera advertising

Turkish soap operas, often with dozens of episodes lasting two hours each, hold the Arab world in thrall and have also tempted potential buyers from the Middle East. Many of the soaps, which range from modern romances to historic dramas, have evocative settings in waterside



A fisherman watched by bystanders as he works beside waterside mansions on the Bosphorus River coast on the Asian side of Istanbul.



Indonesian islanders fight

developer with snorkels and homestays

Syahrial Hidayat's family has lived on the Indonesian island of Pulau Pari for four generations, fishing in its clear blue waters and selling seaweed to supplement their incomes. But their lives and livelihoods have come under threat in recent years as their customary land rights have been denied, and a developer claims ownership of much of the island off the northern coast near Jakarta. The 1,200-strong community is already contending with the existential threats of warmer temperatures, rising seas and worsening marine pollution. But the denial of land rights could strike the deadliest blow, said Hidayat. "We have adapted to smaller catches of fish and smaller volumes of seaweed, because of climate change and pollution," said Hidayat, who is leading the campaign to reclaim the community's land rights. "But how can we cope with losing our homes and land? Where will we go, what will we do?"

Indonesia, an archipelago of thousands of islands, has about 81,000 km (50,000 miles) of coastline, with millions of people dependent on the sea for their livelihood. Across the country, many have already been forced to move because of eroding coastlines. Others face pressure from developers keen to build hotels and apartment blocks on its acclaimed beaches, activists say. "The coastal communities have always had customary rights, but few have formal titles, and this is being used as a way to evict them," said Susan Herawati, secretary general of the People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice, KIARA. "We are an island nation, yet so many coastal communities are struggling without rights. They are forgotten even in the push for agrarian reform in the country," she said.

Seaweed and snorkels

President Joko Widodo last month signed a decree on agrarian reform, with an aim to issue titles and distribute land to peasants and indigenous people. Officials distributed more than five million land titles last year, and plan to issue seven million titles this year. But the effort is hampered by the government's insistence on providing titles only if ownership can be considered "clean and clear", which excludes areas where land is disputed, activists say.

That affects residents of Pulau Pari, who say that local officials promised a few years ago that they would receive land certificates after submitting the old papers that were informal records of the land they occupied. They handed over their documents, but never did get the certificates, said Hidayat. In 2014, signs went up on the island declaring that much of the land belonged to a private firm. "We were tricked into giving up the only proof of ownership we had, and were not informed of the plans to sell our land," Hidayat told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We paid taxes on the land, yet many of us were charged with trespassing, and some threatened with civil and criminal suits. Some were scared and left the island," he said.

The company Bumi Pari Asri did not respond to calls seeking comment. The 95-hectare island was uninhabited until the early 1900s, when dozens of people from the large island of Java decamped there to avoid forced labour under Dutch colonialists, according to historians. The first residents named it Pulau Pari for the pari, or rays swimming in its clear waters. Residents mostly made a living from fishing, then cultivated seaweed as warmer temperatures led to diminished catches. But the seaweed was affected by pollution from reclamation of land in Jakarta Bay, said Hidayat.

As residents discussed livelihood options, a few non-profits suggested they try eco-tourism. Nearly all households on the island have been involved in the effort since about 2010, offering homestays and activities such as snorkeling, canoeing and cycling for visitors. "Residents are able to be self-sufficient while also conserving the island's eco-system with their traditional knowledge," said KIARA's Herawati, who assisted the community in the project. "It was the best possible solution."

'New Balis'

Tourism is a major source of revenue for Indonesia, accounting for more than 10 percent of its annual gross domestic product. The country, famed for its beaches and volcanic craters, aims to draw 20 million visitors a year by 2019. Key to this goal is the creation of "10 new Balis", as the president has vowed, referring to the country's most popular tourist destination. Among the proposed new Balis are islands that will be spruced up with new airports, wider roads, resorts and other tourist facilities.

But officials risk damaging fragile eco-systems and excluding local communities from livelihood opportunities and access to their land, say analysts and activists. That is becoming a common complaint across the region. From Thailand to the Philippines, authorities have come under fire for allowing unchecked sprawl on islands and denying coastal communities their "right to island". "Instead of a resort that occupies the land of the residents and may damage the ecology without much benefit to the people, a community-led effort is a far better option," said Herawati. "Our thirst for fancy beach resorts must not come at the cost of the land and livelihoods of coastal people," she said. Following petitions by Pulau Pari residents to the Jakarta governor, an ombudsman conducted an inquiry.—Reuters

Lifestyle | Features

Protesters lose turf war in Sydney Opera House 'billboard' row

The Sydney Opera House was lit up with a controversial advertisement for a major horse race yesterday, despite days of fierce public backlash over the commercialization of the world-famous landmark. The Aus\$13 million (US\$10 million) Everest race, which boasts the world's biggest turf race prize, takes place in Sydney on Saturday and organizers persisted through tense debate to promote it on the white sails of the Opera House.

"Sydney is not Las Vegas, and our cultural icons should not be used to promote the racing industry, an industry which makes profit from problem gambling," prominent state MP Alex Greenwich told reporters ahead of the light show. The sails have been used previously to promote other major sporting events, including the Olympics, but Opera House management opposed much of the Everest promotion, claiming using the building as an advertising "billboard" threatened its heritage status.

The New South Wales government intervened, arguing the event provided the state with a huge tourism boon, forcing management to allow the race's trophy, colors and numbers to be beamed onto the structure. The move sparked a heated public debate, with politicians of all stripes weighing in. "This is one of the biggest events of the year. Why not put it on the biggest billboard Sydney has," said prime minister Scott Morrison, describing the promotion as a "no brainer".

Opposition Labour leader Bill Shorten said the Opera House showed the world Australia was capable of creating "great beauty". "I don't look at the Opera House and see a billboard, I see a remarkable Australian achievement." A petition against the Everest light show attracted close to 300,000 signatures prior to yesterday, while hundreds of protesters chanting "not for sale", armed with flashlights and mobile phones, attempted to disrupt it with light projections of

their own. "I think it is a disgrace," 42-year-old protester Tessa Boyd-Cane told AFP. "The Opera House is a national icon, it's a national treasure. It is not something that should be reflected in what is basically a promotion for gambling."

Race organizers had planned do a barrier draw alongside the evening light show, but held it in secret earlier in the day to "circumvent any security risks that may exist." They also temporarily suspended betting on the race until the barriers were publicly revealed during the Opera House display. — AFP



The Sydney Opera House is lit up with advertising for the upcoming Everest Cup horse race in Sydney yesterday. — AFP



Tom Hardy, Kelly Marcel attend the Premiere of Columbia Pictures' "Venom" at Regency Village Theatre.

Villain 'Venom' is North American box office hero

Superhero blockbuster "Venom" saved the day at the North American box office this weekend, pulling in more than \$80 million in ticket sales, industry data showed on Monday. The film, a Spider-Man spinoff marking the official launch of Sony's Marvel Universe, stars Tom Hardy as a journalist who becomes the host for an alien symbiote that gives him superpowers. The character is a villain in the "Spider-Man" comic book world. Industry tracker Exhibitor Relations said the film took in \$80.3 million. That was enough to break October's opening weekend record by more than \$20 million, said another industry tracker, Box Office Mojo.



Another new release took second place. Musical romance "A Star Is Born" earned \$42.9 million over the three-day weekend, Exhibitor Relations said. The third remake of the 1937 film of the same name, it marks Bradley Cooper's directing debut. He also stars as a musician who discovers and falls in love with a young singer played by pop superstar Lady Gaga.

Third place went to Warner Bros's "Smallfoot," with earnings of \$14.4 million in its second weekend. The comic family animation tells the story of a group of Yeti who come across a human, with voicing by Channing Tatum, LeBron James and Danny DeVito. Coming in fourth was last weekend's champion, Universal's "Night School," whose earnings dropped \$15 million to \$12.5 million this weekend. The raucous comedy stars Kevin Hart as one student in a class of misfits working toward high school diplomas under the firm tutelage of Tiffany Haddish.

Fifth place went to Universal's family-friendly offering "The House With a Clock in Its Walls," which slipped from third place last weekend with takings of \$7.3 million.

Rounding out this weekend's top 5 were:
"A Simple Favor" (\$3.4 million)
"The Nun" (\$2.7 million)
"Crazy Rich Asians" (\$2.2 million)
"Hell Fest" (\$2.1 million)
"The Predator" (\$947,000)—AFP

Tom Hardy attends the premiere of Columbia Pictures' "Venom" at Regency Village Theatre. — AFP photos



In this file photo Taylor Swift performs onstage during the Reputation Stadium Tour at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas. — AFP

Trump sour on Taylor Swift after Dem endorsement

US President Donald Trump said Monday he liked pop superstar Taylor Swift's music "about 25 percent less" after her endorsement of the Democrat in Tennessee's Senate race. The "Bad Blood" singer backed Phil Bredesen on Sunday for the upper house in her home state, and unleashed a fierce attack on his opponent, Republican Marsha Blackburn, who currently serves in the House. The president was asked for his reaction to the snub and told reporters at the White House he was "sure Taylor Swift doesn't know anything" about Blackburn. "Let's say that I like Taylor's music about 25 percent less now, okay?" Trump added, flashing what could best be described as a cheeky grin. Trump, it should be noted, has form going back years as something of a Swiftly.

"Glad to hear that @taylorswift13 will be co-hosting the Grammy nominations special on 12.5. Taylor is terrific!" he tweeted breathlessly in October 2012. In August of that year, addressing her directly, he swooned: "Thanks for the beautiful picture— you are fantastic!" The singer tends to stay above the political fray, but told her 112 million Instagram followers on Sunday she felt she needed to speak out ahead of the midterm elections in November. "As much as I have in the past and would like to continue voting for women in office, I cannot support Marsha Blackburn. Her voting record in Congress appalls and terrifies me," the 28-year-old said. "She voted against equal pay for women. She voted against the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which attempts to protect women from domestic violence, stalking, and date rape." Last year, Swift won a lawsuit against a former radio DJ she accused of groping her. — AFP

Supergirl, American Horror Story, Modern Family and more return with new episodes exclusively on OSN

OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, heads into October with a marvelous line-up of fresh and exclusive programming.

From exciting new comedy shows as Single Parents, and The Conners to the long-awaited return of your beloved favorites, gear up for a month of action-packed, award-winning entertainment only with OSN. OSN subscribers can also watch and catch up anytime, anywhere and on any device with OSN Play. OSN Series First HD

Empire, season 5

Season four of the hip-hop dynasty drama left fans asking "who's in the casket?" and was revealed as the show returned to OSN on Tuesday 2 October, 8pm (KSA).

This Is Us, season 3

Keep your hankies close as This Is Us, the ultimate in tear-jerker TV, came back to OSN on Monday 8 October, 9pm (KSA). The series, which centers on a unique set of triplets, their struggles and relationships, has scooped a glut of Emmys and Golden Globes, and all the Pearson clan are back for more family drama and high emotions.

Blindspot, season 4

Blindspot focuses on a mysterious tattooed woman who is found inside a travel bag in Times Square by the FBI, with no recollection of her own past or her own identity. They discover that her tattoos contain clues to crime they will have to solve. Season 4 premieres on Saturday 13 October, 9pm (KSA).

Supergirl, season 4

Premiering on Wednesday, 24 October, 7pm (KSA), Supergirl, flies back to screens across the region with more caped adventures and a new villain to face. Fans of the returning DC Comics series can get their fill of action heroes on OSN as they air back-to-back on Wednesday nights with The Flash S5 returning today, 8pm (KSA) and DC's Legends of Tomorrow S4, returning on Wednesday 24 October at 9pm (KSA).

OSN First Home of HBO

American Horror Story Season 8: Apocalypse Golden Globe and Emmy winning horror anthology series is back for its eighth season and was premiered on Tuesday 2 October, 10pm (KSA). This time the theme will center on the end of the world.

NEW: HBO documentaries

Factuals fans should clear their diaries for OSN's dedicated HBO documentaries slot every Saturday at 8pm (KSA). Each week OSN premieres a lineup of thought provoking and relevant documentaries including Jane Fonda in Five Acts; Who Shot Biggie & Tupac, Saturday 13 October; Disconnected, a look at the rise of isolation in a digitally connected world, premiering on Saturday 20 October, and finally, on Saturday 27 October, Stolen Daughters: Kidnapped by Boko Haram, a searing investigation into the 276 school girls who were kidnapped by terrorists in Chibok, Northern Nigeria.

The Sinner, season 2

Nominated for two golden globes and an Emmy, this crime drama anthology series examines how and why ordinary people commit brutal crimes. The second season which premieres on Sunday 14 October, 10pm (KSA), centers on the troubled detective Harry Ambrose (Bill Pullman), as he returns to his home town to investigate why a young boy would kill his parents.

OSN Series Comedy HD

NEW: Single Parents, season 1

A brand new comedy from the creator of New Girl, Single Parents follows a group of single parents who form their own support system as they raise their kids and struggle to start new relationships. Single Parents premiered on Wednesday 3 October, 8.30pm (KSA).

Modern Family, season 10

Returned on Wednesday 3 October 8pm (KSA) is ABC's longest-running comedy series. The show follows the lives of Jay Pritchett and his family, who live in suburban Los Angeles. An honest, often-hilarious perspective of a multicultural, traditional yet unconventional family life.

NEW: The Kids Are Alright, season 1

Starting on Saturday 20 October, 8pm (KSA), this brand new period-comedy is set in the 70s and follows a traditional Irish-Catholic couple Mike and Peggy, and their eight boisterous boys, as they navigate big and small changes during one of America's most turbulent decades. The series is inspired by the childhood of writer

and executive producer Tim Doyle.

NEW: The Conners, season 1

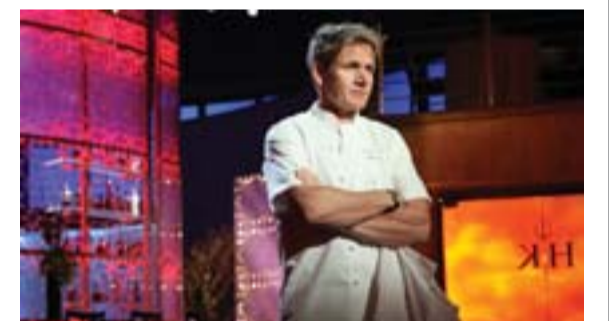
This spin-off from the comedy series 'Roseanne', centers on the family members of the matriarch. The Conners' stories demonstrate that families can always find common ground through conversation, laughter, and love. Premiering on Sunday 21 October, 8pm (KSA).

OSN Living HD

Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown (seasons 5-10) Premiered on Monday 1 October, 9pm (KSA), the travel and food show, hosted by the late chef Anthony Bourdain, is back on OSN Living HD with fresh episodes inspiring viewers with diverse and uncommon locations.

Hell's Kitchen, season 15

The heat gets turned up in the kitchen for season 15 of the explosive culinary cook-off. Back on screens on Sunday 7 October, 8pm (KSA) and hosted by celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay, notorious known for his fiery temper, watch each week as two teams of chefs compete for the ultimate prize: a job as head chef at a restaurant.



OSN Yahala Al-Oula HD

Our selection of Russian mini-series dubbed in Arabic continue in October with five new shows to discover. Einstein Al-Asheq, premiered on Monday 8 October, 7pm (KSA). A historical melodrama about the life of Albert Einstein, the great 20th-century physicist, and his life after the death of his wife. Also worth making a date with is Hob Assaf, beginning on Tuesday 30 October, 7pm (KSA) which charts the seemingly innocent summer affair between two young people, Lera and Artem, that turns into a series of bloody assassinations.

OSN Yahala Cinema HD

Kadia Rakam 23 (The Insult)

This highly acclaimed and Oscar-nominated movie premieres on Friday 12 October, 11pm (KSA). The story, set in Beirut, shows how an insult blown out of proportions finds Toni, a Lebanese Christian, and Yasser, a Palestinian refugee, in court.

Highlights other programing

Doctor Who, season 11

Coming to MENA screens at the same time as the UK, the new series of Doctor Who premiered on Sunday 7 October 9.45pm (KSA), exclusively on BBC First, introducing Jodie Whittaker as the most recent incarnation of the Doctor, an alien Time Lord who travels through time and space.

COMEDY CENTRAL PRESENTS:

Comedy Ala Alwaqef S3

Arab stand-up comedians from around the world perform in Arabic and English premiered on Sunday 7 October, 9.30pm (KSA) and 10.30pm (UAE), on Comedy Central HD. Each episode features three exciting performers giving a regional flavour to comedy.

NEW: X-Men Pop Up Channel,

19 October - 3 November

OSN is launching the first ever-dedicated X-Men movies up-up channel in the Middle East - OSN Pop Up HD X-Men, available on channel 7. All eight X-Men movies including the premiere of the latest X-Men offering - Logan, will be available to watch back-to-back, 24 hours a day over three weekends. The movies will also be available via OSN Play and On Demand.



Classifieds

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

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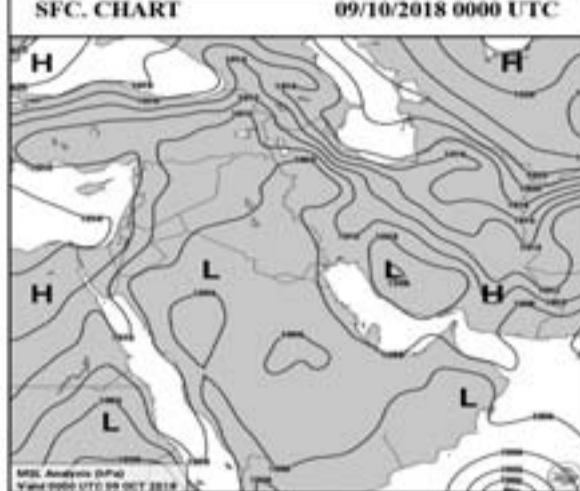
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Fair and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 09/10/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	39 °C	29 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	41 °C	24 °C		
ABDALY	42 °C	24 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	42 °C	26 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	37 °C	24 °C		
SALMIYAH	35 °C	30 °C		
AHMADI	36 °C	29 °C		
NUWASIB	39 °C	25 °C		
WAFRA	43 °C	23 °C		
SALMY	43 °C	24 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	10/10	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	42 °C	25 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Thursday	10/11	Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	39 °C	23 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Friday	10/12	Relatively hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming at night	38 °C	23 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Saturday	10/13	Relatively hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	38 °C	26 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:28
Sunrise	05:47
Zuhr	11:35
Asr	14:55
Sunset	17:24
Isha	18:40

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	39 °C
MIN. Temp.	26 °C
MAX. RH	87 %
MIN. RH	20 %
MAX. Wind	SE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
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Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

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



DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 10/10/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 10/10/2018				IAW				RBG				Al Najaf			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	AZG	566	Baku	00:05	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10	KAC	364	Dubai	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	ICV	675	Hong Kong	00:05	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30	KAC	618	Doha	13:55
KAC	102	London	00:50	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00	JZR	144	Doha	14:15	FDB	059	Dubai	14:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30	KAC	512	Mashhad	14:25
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	CLX	792	Cairo	14:30	MSR	2615	Tbilisi	14:50	KAC	286	Alexandria	14:25
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	MSR	072	Cairo	00:30	JZR	802	Taif	15:00	FDB	072	Bahrain	15:00	FEG	241	Jeddah	14:50
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	KNE	382	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:00	GFA	222	Dubai	15:00	KAC	788	Madinah	14:55
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	AZQ	4566	BAK	00:30	GFA	222	Dubai	15:00	KAC	539	Dubai	15:00	KNE	683	Mumbai	15:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	MSC	406	Sohag	01:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05	KAC	304	Abu Dhabi	15:05
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05	ETD	303	Bangkok	15:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	JZR	528	syut	01:45	JZR	188	Doha	15:10	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05	KAC	412	Jeddah	15:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	JZR	188	Doha	15:10	JZR	188	Doha	15:10	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15	KAC	562	Amman	15:20
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:50	FEG	342	Sohag	15:25	OMA	645	Jeddah	15:45	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	JZR	502	Luxor	01:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45	ABY	127	Madinah	15:50	KAC	127	Sharjah	15:35
JZR	651	Lahore	02:55	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	KNE	684	Riyadh	15:55	KAC	502	Jeddah	16:00	KAC	502	Beirut	15:35
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	677	Dubai	02:00	KAC	775	Jeddah	16:00	UAE	857	Jeddah	16:00	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:25	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00	SVA	504	Jeddah	16:00	SVA	504	Madinah	15:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	MSR	619	Alexandria	02:35	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00	KAC	118	Jeddah	16:00	KAC	118	New York	16:00
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00	SAW	705	Jeddah	16:00	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	JZR	606	Dammam	16:05	JZR	535	Jeddah	16:00	JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05	QTR	1072	Jeddah	16:00	QTR	1072	Dubai	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:10	FDB	051	Jeddah	16:15	FDB	051	Dubai	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JZR	142	Doha	03:20	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15	KAC	542	Cairo	17:00	KAC	542	Cairo	17:00
KAC	796	Madinah	03:45	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:15	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	RBG	216	Sohag	03:45	KAC	646	Abu Dhabi	16:20	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	OMA	646	Bahrain	16:20	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40	JZR	145	Doha	17:35	JZR	145	Doha	17:35
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	KAC	505	Madinah	16:55	JZR	177	Dubai	17:40	JZR	177	Dubai	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20
KAC	544	Cairo	05:20	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	902	Baku	05:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25	RJA	640	Amman	19:00	RJA	640	Amman	19:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	103	London	05:45	KAC	381	International, Delhi	17:45	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	786	Riyadh	06:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:25	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:25
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	RJA	649	Amman	07:00	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15	KAC	351	Kochi	21:00	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	356	Mashhad	07:15	KAC	351	Kochi	21:00	JZR	189	Dubai	19:40	JZR	189	Dubai	19:40
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:30	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:55	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20	KAC	104	London	20:00	KAC	104	London	20:00
KAC	358	Kochi	08:00	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:00	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:05	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:05
JZR	529	Asyut	08:10	BAW	156	London	08:20	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	165	Rome	08:25	RJA	641	Amman	20:00	KNE	381	Taif	20:10	KNE	381	Taif	20:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	054														

Minister accused in India's growing #MeToo movement

NEW DELHI: India's belated #MeToo movement snowballed yesterday after several female journalists accused a minister in Narendra Modi's government of sexual harassment and a producer alleged she was raped by a veteran Bollywood actor. Women journalists took to Twitter to allege how M J Akbar, a well-known former editor and now a junior foreign minister, conducted job interviews in fancy hotel rooms and made sexual advances when they were starting out in the media.

Priya Ramani, the first journalist to go public with the allegations, identified Akbar as the unnamed editor whose inappropriate behaviour she had written about in an article last year. Ramani said she was 23 when Akbar called her to a Mumbai hotel room for a job interview around 20 years ago. Akbar was "an expert on obscene phone calls, texts, inappropriate compliments and not taking no for an answer," she said in the article which she reposted on Twitter on Monday. "You know how to pinch, pat, rub, grab and assault. Speaking up against you still carries a heavy price that many young women cannot afford to pay."

India's foreign ministry was yet to respond to a request for comment from AFP and Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj ignored reporters when asked whether she would investigate the claims. Akbar - who has edited prominent Indian newspapers such as The Telegraph, Asian Age and The Sunday Guardian and is

also a member of parliament - was yet to comment.

Sexual overtures

Another journalist, who preferred to remain anonymous, said she declined a job offer after "the whole experience of an interview sitting on a bed in a hotel room followed by an invitation to come over for a drink". Journalist Purna Singh Bindra said Akbar "made life at work hell" when she refused his sexual overtures. Many women in India have in recent days taken to social media to out sexual predators, emboldening others to come out with their experiences.

Bollywood figures, stand-up comedians and other top journalists have all found themselves accused of abusing their positions to behave improperly towards women. The trigger appeared to be actress Tanushree Dutta, who has accused well-known Bollywood actor Nana Patekar of inappropriate behaviour on a film set 10 years ago. Late Monday, writer and producer Vinta Nanda published a Facebook post saying she had not only been raped but "brutalized and violated endlessly" by a popular actor 19 years ago.

She did not name him directly but gave enough hints which led others in the Hindi film industry to quickly identify him on Twitter as Alok Nath. "Neither I am denying this nor do I would agree with it," said Nath who is adored for his fatherly and genteel on-screen persona. "It (rape) must have happened, but someone

else would have done it," the 62-year-old actor was quoted by Indian news channel ABP as saying.

The Hindustan Times, one of India's major national papers, said that Prashant Jha, its political editor and chief of bureau, has been asked to step down from all his editorial roles pending an investigation. "This is a case of sexual harassment and an internal committee has been set up," said the media group's general counsel, Dinesh Mittal, in an announcement. Jha was accused by a former female colleague, Avantika Mehta, of sending inappropriate messages. Mehta made her complaint on Saturday in an article on the Firstpost news site and then on her own Twitter account. Jha did not answer calls or text messages seeking comment. He has not responded publicly to the allegations.

Some other media outlets also have launched inquiries. Among them The Wire, an online news portal, asked for specific complaints to be addressed to its Internal Complaints Committee after its co-founder, Sidharth Bhatia, was accused on Monday on Twitter of sending inappropriate messages to subordinates by a woman who claimed she worked with him. Another woman claimed on Twitter that he had made a vulgar comment about her. Bhatia denied wrongdoing in a statement and said he did not recall either of the women as employees. He said he was willing to face an independent inquiry.

Separately, India's biggest comedy group, All India

Bakhod (AIB), said its future was in doubt following a series of allegations about sexual harassment. Tanmay Bhat, the chief executive and co-founder of AIB, resigned after saying in a statement on Friday he made a "big mistake" by continuing to work with a stand-up comic even after Bhat knew of allegations of inappropriate behaviour by the performer.

The comic, Utsav Chakraborty, was accused last Thursday by Mahima Kulkreja, a fellow comic, of soliciting nude pictures from under-age girls online and sending her pictures of his genitals. She confirmed to Reuters that he sent her the pictures. Chakraborty denied asking for nude picture from underage girls. He has said in a statement that has since been removed from his Twitter account that any sexting he did he thought was consensual.

According to a statement from the comedy group, another AIB co-founder, Gursimran Khamba, was also placed on a temporary leave of absence by the collective after an anonymous woman on social media on Monday accused him of "emotional blackmail" and of trying to force himself on her. In a statement, Khamba denied any wrongdoing, saying there was no violation of consent. He said the two of them "hooked up consensually multiple times", and that the relationship later became toxic. The woman has also said the two of them were in a consensual sexual relationship, but that he also forced himself on her on two separate occasions. — Agencies

Legendary poet Antara rises as...

Continued from Page 1

princess; another more popular tale holds that he was born to a dark-skinned Abyssinian slave. Antara's father, a tribal chief from what is today western Saudi Arabia, refused to recognize his son, who was thus born a slave.

Antara rebelled against his status as a slave when, after valiantly defending his tribe, he was given only half the compensation granted to warriors. He went into self-imposed exile in the desert and refused to participate in the defense of his tribe - until he was one day called on to come to the aid of his people. Legend has it that that was how Antara earned his freedom. The comic strip narrates "the beginning of his life as a slave, mistreated by his tribe because of the color of his skin and the status of his mother, to become a hero on the frontline," Hilmi says.

Antara's strength is matched only by his poetry, which has two main themes: His wartime exploits, and his love for his cousin Abta, the daughter of a tribal sheikh. Whether Antara and Abta's love story had a happy ending, or ended in tragedy, no one knows. But Antara's famed poetry is still taught in curricula across

the Arab world, with his "Mu'allaqa" - part of the pre-Islamic canon of Arabic poetry - hung in the holy city of Makkah and still the source of many a catchphrase in popular culture. "Often I've defended/the women of Amir/ their legs slim/and tender as stalks/ from the onslaught of armed raiders," reads an English translation of Antara's "War Songs", published by NYU Press. "I won't be able to outrun Fate/when she comes. Cowards run. I stand/my ground."

Antara has served as the inspiration for artists and musicians around the world, with 19th century Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov dedicating a symphony in four movements to his story. The creators of the "Antara" comic strip believe the legend will resonate with modern audiences both within the Arab world and across the globe. "This story has universal appeal," said Hilmi, particularly as it deals with racism. "We incorporated illustrations of what we imagined to be Antara's childhood, when he first faced discrimination and mistreatment at the hands of his peers and his father."

The cause of Antara's death is also a matter of debate, with some saying the warrior died of natural causes and others pointing to evidence that he was killed by a poisoned arrow. The comic strip does not offer answers. While it leaves questions of Antara's life and demise hanging, the creators' focus is quite clear. In a face-off with his father, a bearded Antara clenches his fist and stands tall: "I want nothing but what every child wants of his father. 'Tell me, am I slave or son?' — AFP

Better late than never for expat...

Continued from Page 1

The 33-year-old made his international debut when he played three one-dayers for Pakistan in Zimbabwe in 2015, but had to wait another three years for a Test role. Asif, however, said it had been worth the wait, praising former skipper Malik for some timely advice. "It's an old story that I went to Kuwait to help my father, but Malik advised me to return and fight hard for a place in the Pakistan team," recalled Asif. "It was a worthy return."

The tall and energetic Asif haails from a small town of Allo Mahar Sharif, close to Sialkot in the northeast Punjab which has produced players like batting great Zaheer Abbas, Ijaz Ahmed, Malik and Haris Sohail. During his one-day stint in Zimbabwe his bowling

action was reported as illegal, but on assessment it was cleared - another tough phase of his career. Last year he was included in Pakistan's squad for the two-match series against Sri Lanka, but did not feature as team management thought he was still not ready. Asif's chance finally came as Pakistan deemed him useful against Australia's three left-handers in the top order in the Dubai Test.

Asif said his success was a reward for hard work and patience. "Being a professional cricketer, you have to be tough mentally. I always kept working hard. I didn't think whether I would get a chance or not," said Asif, who overshadowed his more illustrious spin partner Yasir Shah, who went wicketless in Australia's 202 all out. Pakistan, having gained a lead of 280 in the first innings, closed the third day at 45-3 in their second innings, an overall lead of 325 runs. "I was out of the team since 2015. I was at the National Cricket Academy camp where I worked with head coach Mushtaq Ahmed. I got the reward for that hard work," said Asif, who was dismissed for a duck after being sent in at number three to see out yesterday's play. — AFP

Riyadh allows Turkey to search...

Continued from Page 1

Police also said a team of 15 Saudis were sent to Istanbul and were in the building at the same time as Khashoggi. Turkish security officials were working to identify the 15 individuals, English-language state broadcaster TRT World reported, adding that Turkish officials believe the Saudis may have taken the consulate's CCTV footage with them when they returned to Saudi Arabia.

According to pro-government daily Sabah, the team arrived in Istanbul on two private planes, one which landed after 0300 (0000 GMT) on Tuesday while the second plane landed around 1700 (1400 GMT) after Khashoggi entered the consulate. The individuals checked into two hotels close to the consulate, the daily said. Both planes later returned to Riyadh with one stopping in Dubai and the other in Egypt. Sabah reported, adding the police were looking into the possibility that Khashoggi was kidnapped.

The planes belonged to a company based in Saudi Arabia which has links to the state. Istanbul police experts were analyzing vehicles which entered and left the consulate, some of which were then seen on camera last Tuesday at the consul-general's residence, 200

metres away, the daily said. The newspaper also claimed that Turkish employees at the residence were "hastily" told to take a holiday on the day Khashoggi went missing.

Britain urged the Saudi government to explain what happened. "Just met the Saudi ambassador to seek urgent answers over Jamal Khashoggi," foreign minister Jeremy Hunt said on Twitter. "Violence against journalists worldwide is going up and is a grave threat to freedom of expression. If media reports prove correct, we will treat the incident seriously - friendships depend on shared values," he wrote.

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he had not yet spoken to Saudi officials about the case. Speaking at the White House, he said he did not know anything about Khashoggi's disappearance and that he would speak with Saudi officials at some point. The United Nations human rights office urged both Turkey and Saudi Arabia to investigate what it called the "apparent enforced disappearance" and possible murder of Khashoggi.

"We call for cooperation between Turkey and Saudi Arabia to conduct a prompt and impartial investigation into the circumstances of Mr Khashoggi's disappearance and to make the findings public," UN human rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani told a Geneva news briefing. The two countries have such an obligation under both criminal law and international human rights law, she said. The European Union fully supports US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who called on Riyadh to investigate Khashoggi's disappearance, EU policy chief Federica Mogherini said. — Agencies

that his government had achieved more in two years than "almost any other administration in the history of our country."

The daughter of Indian immigrants, Haley had long been seen as a rising star in the Republican Party which has eagerly sought female and ethnic minorities to broaden the appeal beyond its traditional white demographic. Haley, whose given name was Nimratha Randhawa, was elected governor in 2010 of deeply Republican South Carolina and, during the 2016 campaign, had criticized Trump over his remarks on immigrants before their political reconciliation.

Haley's is the latest resignation in a turbulent White House, where Trump is already on his third national security adviser and second secretary of state before even the midterm elections. She insisted that she was going out on a high and would remain loyal to Trump. "Countries may not like what we do but they respect what we do," she said, echoing the president's oft-stated aim to make the US a more muscular presence on the international stage.

She listed hawkish policies to pressure Iran and the Palestinians, and the ground-breaking diplomatic outreach to communist North Korea. "All of those things have made a huge difference in the US standing, but I can tell you that the US is strong again. The US is strong in a way it should make all Americans proud," Haley said. — Agencies

Alphabet to shut Google+...

Continued from Page 1

computing contract that could be worth up to \$10 billion, saying the deal would be inconsistent with its principles.

The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that Google opted not to disclose the Google+ security issue due to fears of regulatory scrutiny, citing unnamed sources and a memo prepared by Google's legal and policy staff for senior executives. Google feared disclosure would invite comparison to Facebook Inc's leak of user information to data firm Cambridge Analytica, the Journal reported, adding that Chief Executive Sundar Pichai had been briefed on the issue. Google declined to comment beyond its blog post.

Google said on Monday none of the thresholds it requires to disclose a breach were met after reviewing the type of data involved, whether it could identify the users to inform, establish any evidence of misuse, and whether there were any actions a developer or user could take to protect themselves. Security and privacy experts and financial analysts questioned the decision. "Users have the right to be notified if their information could have been compromised," said Jacob Lehmann, managing director at consulting and accounting firm Friedman CyZen. "This is a direct result of the scrutiny that Facebook dealt with regarding the Cambridge Analytica scandal."

Google+ launched in 2011 as the advertising giant grew more concerned about competition from Facebook, which could pinpoint ads to users based on data they had shared about their friends, likes and online activity. Google+ copied Facebook with status updates and news feeds and let people organize their groups of friends into what it calls "circles". But Google+ and the company's other experiments with social media struggled to win over users because of complicated features and privacy mishaps.

Facebook introduced a feature that allowed users to connect their accounts with their profiles on dating, music and other apps. Google followed suit, letting outside developers access some Google+ data with users' permission. The bug disclosed on Monday, introduced in a software update, exposed private data including name, email address, occupation, gender and age, Google said. It could not definitely say how many users were affected because it said it keeps only two weeks of such records.

Google+ will remain an internal networking option for organizations that buy Google's G Suite, a bundle of apps for creating documents, spreadsheets and presentations. Google's plan to withdraw the free version of Google+, scheduled for August, could help strengthen its case to US policymakers and regulators that it is different from Facebook, which has faced political heat over allegations that data belonging to 87 million of its users was improperly shared with political consultancy Cambridge Analytica.

Google refused to send Pichai to a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on Sept 5, where Facebook's chief operating officer and Twitter Inc's

chief executive testified. An empty chair was left for Google after the committee rejected Google's top lawyer as a witness. Several policies Google introduced on Monday are designed to curb the data accessible to developers offering mobile apps on the Google Play store or add-on apps for sending and organizing Gmail messages.

Play Store apps will no longer be allowed to access text message and call logs unless they are the default calling or texting app on a user's device or have an exception from Google. Gmail add-ons available to consumers starting next year will be barred from selling user data and be subject to a third-party security assessment that will cost them about \$15,000 to \$75,000, Google said. Such moves could strengthen Google by making it harder for competing services to grow off its data, said Chris Messina, a designer who worked on Google+ before leaving in 2013. "In 2011, you wanted casual, scrappy developers creating apps, and now it is going to require a professional class that is serious. The walls are going up."

Meanwhile, Google yesterday launched a new version of its connected speaker, with a touchscreen display designed to be a hub for smart home devices, but left out a camera for privacy reasons. The Google Home Hub, competing against Amazon's Echo Show as a smart speaker powered by artificial intelligence, was unveiled at a New York media event where the tech giant also announced its upgraded Pixel 3 smartphone and a new tablet computer dubbed Pixel Slate.

The new speaker, to be sold for \$149, is powered by Google's smart digital assistant and is designed "to get the state of the entire home" by connecting to other smart devices, said Google vice president of product management Diya Jolly. Jolly said the Home Hub, with a seven-inch screen, will allow users to access a "dashboard" that can be used to control any of several thousand internet-connected devices or appliances. "You can turn down the temperature in the bedroom and turn up the music in your living room" using the screen, Jolly said.

But unlike the Echo Show and a new Portal chat device unveiled by Facebook, the Home Hub won't have a camera, Jolly added. "We consciously did not put a camera on the Hub so you can use it in private spaces like your bedroom," she said. Google also showed its new Pixel 3 and Pixel 3 XL smartphones, with upgrades including edge-to-edge screens that offer more display space without increasing the size of the handset. The 5.5 inch Pixel 3 will sell for \$799 and the 6.3 inch Pixel 3 XL for \$899.

Google's new Pixel Slate unveiled yesterday offers "the power and productivity of a desktop to a gorgeous tablet," according to senior vice president Rick Osterloh. Osterloh said the new devices were designed to take advantage of Google's development of artificial intelligence. "The big breakthroughs come at the intersection of AI, software and hardware, working together," he said. "This approach is what makes the Google hardware experience so unique, and it unlocks all kinds of helpful benefits."

While Google has been ramping up its hardware efforts, its smartphones have captured less than three percent of the global market, according to surveys. However, Google appears to be catching up with Amazon in the race for connected speakers. One survey showed the Google Mini to be the top-selling speaker in the second quarter of 2018.— Agencies

Haley resigns as UN envoy; probe...

Continued from Page 1

said that the flights could have value in the range of the tickets. There was no immediate reaction from Haley or indication that the study was connected to her resignation.

Haley took the diplomatic job with little experience in foreign policy, but quickly became the full-throated voice at the United Nations for the often unpopular Trump agenda. Haley has pressed for a hard line on Iran, justified US cuts to foreign assistance and earlier this year led the United States in bolting from the UN Human Rights Council, accusing it of bias against Washington and close ally Israel.

At the recent UN General Assembly session, Haley took the highly unusual step for a senior diplomat of joining street protesters against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, shouting from a megaphone that the leftist leader should leave office. However, there was embarrassment at the international diplomatic get-together when the audience in the hall burst into laughter during Trump's keynote speech, where he claimed

Sports

Nurmagomedov returns to hero's welcome, blasts 'dimwit' McGregor

'It took his unbeaten professional record to 27-0 and 11-0 in UFC bouts'

KASPIYSK: Russia's Khabib Nurmagomedov said he had "shut up that dimwit" Conor McGregor as he lapped up a hero's welcome on his return to his native Dagestan following the successful defence of his UFC lightweight crown against the Irishman.

"Khabib! Khabib!" a crowd of some 20,000 fans chanted to welcome the unbeaten champion in an arena in the town of Kaspiysk, 14 kilometres from Dagestan's main city of Makhachkala. Excited by Nurmagomedov's appearance, hundreds of his compatriots broke through lines of stewards and pushed their way onto the pitch, trying to get as close as possible to the champion.

"Thank you, brothers," replied Nurmagomedov, who showed off his champion's belt to the crowd. On Saturday Nurmagomedov defended his Ultimate Fighting Championship world title after putting McGregor in a brutal chokehold and forcing the Irish superstar to 'tap out' during a fourth round submission.

It took his unbeaten professional record to 27-0 and 11-0 in UFC bouts. "I'd prayed to the Almighty every day not to have injuries, for it all happen," Nurmagomedov said.

"I wanted to shut up that dimwit up to prove the difference between our people and his people. "Nobody can break us, our people have a great history," he boasted. "Hopefully, I've justified your expectations."

Although eventually awarded his championship belt, the Russian is still awaiting confirmation of whether he will receive 1.5 million dollars prize money following a post-fight fracas that saw him jump over the octagon and attack one of McGregor's training partners, Dillon Danis.

A dramatic free-for-all ensued, with members of

Nurmagomedov's entourage jumping into the octagon to attack McGregor as stunned officials battled to restore order.

It proved a dramatic climax to weeks of media posturing between the bitter rivals, during which the brash Irishman stoked the flames through a series of insults about Nurmagomedov's family and his Muslim religion.

As security tried to quell the chaos in the crowd, the exhausted McGregor eventually departed in a huddle of security personnel. Nurmagomedov was also hustled out surrounded by security officers as the pro-McGregor crowd jeered and threw drinks at him.

UFC chief Dana White refused to hand Nurmagomedov his belt, saying he feared it would further inflame the crowd. "If I put this belt on you, everyone's going to start throwing shit into the Octagon," he told Nurmagomedov.

The ring announcer declared Nurmagomedov the winner after both fighters had departed. Nurmagomedov told reporters that Russian President Vladimir Putin had called to congratulate him. He also criticized McGregor for trash-talking, saying: "This is a respect sport."

White said that the Nevada Athletic Commission, which oversees combat sports in the state, was withholding Nurmagomedov's purse pending an investigation. "It's a big deal," White said, adding that three members of the Russian's camp were briefly detained by police.

White said a suspension and "big money fines" could be looming for Nurmagomedov, who might also find himself facing difficulties obtaining a visa to fight in the United States in the future. McGregor was



LAS VEGAS: UFC lightweight champion Khabib Nurmagomedov (L) of Russia holds his champions belt next to his father Abdulmanap (C) during a ceremony upon the arrival at the Anzhi-arena stadium in Makhachkala yesterday. —AFP

returning to mixed martial arts for the first time since November 2016, having dethroned in 2017 to a cross-combat boxing bout against Floyd Mayweather which ended in defeat-but still earned McGregor some \$100 million.

His return sparked massive interest, with White pre-

dicting the bout would break the UFC record of 1.65 million pay-per-view buys. The crowd included a mass of chanting, flag-waving Irish fans as well as a sprinkling of celebrities including Hollywood stars Matt Damon and Mel Gibson and Northern Ireland golf star Rory McIlroy. —AFP

Sharma dreams of upset PGA Tour win

KUALA LUMPUR: India's Shubhankar Sharma said he was hoping to upset the odds at this week's CIMB Classic as he hunts the Asian merit crown along with his PGA Tour card. Sharma won February's Maybank Championship in Kuala Lumpur and he returns to the Malaysian capital on top of the Asian Tour prize money standings ahead of the dual-sanctioned event.

It kicks off a swing of three big tournaments in Asia for the 21-year-old, along with next week's CJ Cup in South Korea and the WGC-HSBC Champions in Shanghai. "My immediate goal is to win the Asian Tour order of merit. But this stretch for me, no doubt, is very, very important. Obviously all three events are big PGA Tour events. You have some of the best players in the world playing," said Sharma, who failed to secure his PGA Tour card last season.

"It helps that the events are in Asia and I am so much more comfortable in the conditions here. If I just play well in these three events, have consistent finishes, I feel like I'll get off to a very good start towards securing my PGA Tour card and it will obviously help my world ranking."

"We have a really good chance here and if I play well, in golf, anything is possible. I feel like I can win on a given day when I'm playing really well. I just want to get back to the same level that I was at the start of the year and then things will fall into place."

Two-time champion and former world number one Justin Thomas, and fellow Ryder Cup player Paul Casey, headline the \$7 million tournament along with defending title-holder Pat Perez. Thailand's Kiradech



NEW TAIPEI: This handout photo taken and received by the Asian Tour on October 4, 2018 shows Shubhankar Sharma of India hitting a shot during round one of the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship at the Linkou International Golf and Country Club in New Taipei City. — AFP

Aphibarnrat is another top challenger from Asia, after winning the 2013 Malaysian Open on the same TPC Kuala Lumpur course-and he now returns after earning a full PGA Tour card for the coming season.

"When I was a kid, my goal was to be a part of the PGA Tour. It's the biggest tour in the world," the 29-year-old said. "Twenty years later, I hold a Tour card. I

just can't explain how it feels, but it is such a good moment for me to play my first PGA Tour event as a member in Asia."

Sharma and Kiradech are bracketed in the same flight for the first two rounds of the tournament, starting Thursday, along with South Korea's Korea's Byeong Hun-an. —AFP

Afghan woman among nine new IOC members as Coe, Infantino miss out

Buenos Aires: Samira Asghari, a 24-year-old Afghan woman, was among nine new International Olympic Committee members elected yesterday, but there was still no place for either IAAF president Sebastian Coe or FIFA head Gianni Infantino.

"She's a lady who is doing a fantastic job to promote women's sports in Afghanistan," IOC president Thomas Bach said of Asghari, who made her name as captain of the Afghan women's basketball team before holding sev-

eral roles in sports administration.

"You know very well that this is not very easy for many reasons in this country." The two other women elected at the 133rd IOC meeting in the Argentinian capital were Daina Gudzinaviciute, president of the Lithuanian Olympic committee, and Felicite Rwemarika, first vice-president of the Rwandan Olympic committee.

Among other new members are Prince Jygyel Ugyen Wangchuck, president of the Bhutanese Olympic committee, Japan's Morinari Watanabe, head of the International Gymnastics federation, and Brazilian Andrew Parsons, president of the International Paralympic Committee.

Giovanni Malago, Camilo Perez Lopez Moreira and William Frederick Blick, respective presidents of the Italian, Paraguayan and Ugandan Olympic committees, were also elected. While predecessors Sepp Blatter and Lamine Diack were long-time IOC members, before both were caught up in corruption scandals, British track and field administrator Coe and world football chief Infantino again miss out. —AFP



Buenos Aires: Afghan Samira Asghari, elected member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), talks to journalists at the mix zone after the election of the new members, during a break of the 133th IOC sessions in Buenos Aires, yesterday. — AFP

Goosen out for two months, Toulon recruit Alainu'uese

Montpellier: Montpellier's South African playmaker Johan Goosen will be out of action for "at least two months" with a badly twisted ankle, the club announced yesterday.

Goosen sustained the injury early in Sunday's match against Toulon, which Montpellier won 29-17 to consolidate their fourth place in the Top 14. The Springbok's absence adds to coach Vern Cotter's woes ahead of their European Champions Cup match with Edinburgh on Saturday, with ex-All Black fly-half Aaron Cruden (call) out and Frans Steyn nursing a biceps injury.

Winger Timoci Nagusa suffered a thigh injury in the Toulon match, with fellow Fijian Nemani Nadolo and scrum-half Benoit Paillaugue also both out. Georgian prop Levan Chilachava, locks Jacques Du Plessis and Konstantine Mikautadze, and backrowers Julien Barty and Yacouba Camara, are all also sidelined.

Toulon, sitting a lowly 12th in the Top 14, have drafted in Kiwi lock Brian Alainu'uese from Glasgow on a one-year deal with one more as an option. He is the first of five recruits to be unveiled by Toulon president Mourad Boudjellal to boost a pack lacking the injured Corentin Vernet, Juandre Kruger, Florian Fresia, Facundo Isa and Charles Ollivon. — AFP

Tokyo Games savings at \$4.3bn, says CEO Muto

Buenos Aires: Several measures have cut the cost of staging the 2020 Tokyo Olympics by \$4.3 billion but organisers are determined to save more money in the next two years, Tokyo Games CEO Toshiro Muto said on Monday.

Muto told the International Olympic Committee (IOC) efforts were being made to reduce the budget further through a series of initiatives linked with the IOC's Agenda 2020 and New Norm reform projects.

The two IOC projects are aimed at dropping the cost of the Olympics to make the Games an attractive prospect for potential host cities in the future. "We have been able to save another \$2.1 billion," Muto said, presenting a progress report to the IOC session. "It has been \$4.3 billion dollars in savings in total."

"(The IOC's) Agenda 2020 and New Norm (cost-reducing measures) will allow Tokyo 2020 to suppress future budget increases," Muto said. "We have reached the phase of detailed preparations." The Games budget spiralled dangerously out of control a few years after Japan was awarded the event in 2013.

The escalating costs meant other cities hoping to stage future Olympics were discouraged from doing so, leading to Rome, Hamburg and Budapest pulling out of the race to host the 2024 Olympics. "What we want to avoid is over-deliver and under-consume," Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi told reporters.

"We have another year and a half and we will systematically look at solutions that do make sense from an experience and an economic standpoint."

WELCOME SAVINGS

Tokyo's overall budget, after several revisions, now stands at \$12.6 billion, of which \$5.6 billion is the organising committee's budget for staging the Games. The IOC contributes some \$1.7 billion in cash and services to the organising committee.

Muto said savings were being made by holding shorter test events, cutting lease periods and also in construction costs. "Construction has been reduced, lease periods have been reduced, test event savings and several other items which include energy, power, telecommunications, basic facility construction which was costly but through negotiations... the specifications have been readjusted," Muto said.

The IOC welcomed the savings, saying more should be done to make sure the Games budget is balanced or even profitable for organisers. "I know that you will continue to pursue savings right until the end of the closing ceremony," John Coates, who heads the IOC's coordination commission on Tokyo, said, "So the budget is balanced or with a surplus."

Muto said most of the test events for the Games had been planned, with the swimming test event dates still to be decided. "It is almost finalised," he said when asked about swimming.

Completion of the Olympic Aquatics Centre, which will host swimming and diving events, was recently pushed back by two months but organisers said it will be ready well in time for the Games in July 2020. —Reuters

Sports

Six-wicket Bilal Asif sparks spectacular Australian collapse

Third best figures for a Pakistani bowler on Test debut

DUBAI: Test debutant Bilal Asif snatched six wickets to spark a spectacular Australian collapse from 142-0 to 202 all out and put Pakistan in firm command of the first Test in Dubai yesterday. The 33-year-old off-spinner overshadowed his more experienced team-mate Yasir Shah by finishing with 6-36 as his efforts, the third best figures for a Pakistani bowler on Test debut, derailed Australia on a pitch which started to assist spinners on the third day.

Despite being jolted by spinner Jon Holland's two key wickets of Mohammad Hafeez (17) and Azhar Ali (four), Pakistan closed the day on 45-3, having an overall lead of 325 with seven second-innings wickets intact to force a win.

Opener Imam-ul-Haq was unbeaten on 23 while nightwatchman Asif was dismissed for nought, unable to guard Azhar from coming to bat in a crucial stage. But it was a day highlighted by Asif who triggered a memorable Australian collapse against spin in Asia to mark a long-awaited Test debut.

"I knew that my chance would come, so I waited and waited and thanks God I have done myself proud by getting six wickets on debut, it's a tremendous feeling," said Asif. "I was struggling a bit in the first session, but all my team-mates and coaches gave me confidence and that increased my energy which helped me get six wickets."

By lunch Australia were well-placed at 137 without loss with Usman Khawaja (85) and debutant Aaron Finch (62), but the slump followed shortly after as the Baggy Greens lost all 10 wickets for just 60 runs.

ASIF BRILLIANCE

Asif, who had previously played three one-day internationals in 2015, came into his own after pacer Mohammad Abbas removed Finch following an opening stand of 142. In a spell of 22 balls Asif took four wickets as Australia slumped to 180-5 by tea.

The second session belonged to Asif, who dismissed Khawaja, Shaun Marsh (seven), Travis Head (nought)



DUBAI: Pakistan cricketer Bilal Asif (C) bowls during the third day of play of the first Test cricket match in the series between Australia and Pakistan at the Dubai International Stadium in Dubai yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day of the first Test between Pakistan and Australia played at Dubai stadium yesterday:

Pakistan 1st innings 482 (Mohammad Hafeez 126, Haris Sohail 110, Asad Shafiq 80, Imam-ul-Haq 76; P. Siddle 3-58)

Australia 1st innings (Paine, 8-191 (Star), 9-202 (Siddle), 10-202 (Lyon))

Bowling: Abbas 19-9-29-4, Riaz 11-2-39-0, Yasir 28-6-80-0, Hafeez 3-1-2-0, Asif 21.3-7-36-6, Azhar 1-0-3-0

Usman Khawaja c Imam b Asif	85
A. Finch c Shafiq b Abbas	62
S. Marsh c Shafiq b Asif	7
M. Marsh lbw b Abbas	12
T. Head c Sohail b Asif	0
M. Labuschagne c Imam b Asif	0
T. Paine c Imam b Asif	7
M. Starc c Sarfraz b Abbas	0
P. Siddle b Abbas	10
N. Lyon c Azhar b Asif	6
J. Holland not out	0
Extras: (b 6, lb 7)	13
Total: (all out: 83.3 overs)	202
Fall of wickets: 1-142 (Finch), 2-160 (S. Marsh), 3-167 (Khawaja), 4-171 (Head), 5-171 (Labuschagne), 6-183 (M. Marsh), 7-183	

Pakistan 2nd innings

Imam-ul-Haq not out	23
Mohammad Hafeez c Labuschagne b Holland 17	
Bilal Asif c Head b Lyon	0
Azhar Ali lbw b Holland	4
Extras: (lb 1)	1
Total: (for three wickets: 16.2 overs)	45
Still to bat: Asad Shafiq, Haris Sohail, Babar Azam, Sarfraz Ahmed, Yasir Shah, Mohammad Abbas, Wahab Riaz	
Fall of wickets: 1-37 (Hafeez), 2-38 (Asif), 3-45 (Azhar)	
Bowling: Starc 3-1-9-0, Lyon 8-1-23-1, Siddle 2-1-3-0, Holland 3.2-1-9-2	

and Marnus Labuschagne (nought) in the space of 29 runs. Asif's feats on debut had only been bettered by fast bowler Mohammad Zahid (7-66 vs New Zealand in Rawalpindi in 1994) and spinner Mohammad Nazir (7-99 against New Zealand in Karachi in 1969).

Asif is the 11th Pakistani bowler to take five or more wickets in an innings on Test debut. Before Asif's brilliance Abbas had forced Finch to drive straight into the hands of Asad Shafiq at short mid-on.

Khawaja hit eight fours before miscuing a premeditated sweep and was caught at short leg while Finch had five boundaries and a six in his knock.

Leg-spinner Yasir was unlucky not to be amongst

wickets, having dropped Mitchell Marsh off his own bowling for two and wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed missing a stump in the first session with Khawaja on 17.

Yasir went wicketless after 28 probing overs. Earlier in the day Finch was more confident as he punched two boundaries and a six off Yasir before sweeping Asif for a boundary to reach his half-century.

Khawaja, the Pakistan-born batsman, improved upon his previous best score in Asia of 26, made against Sri Lanka at Galle in 2011, by reaching his 13th Test half-century. The second and final Test starts in Abu Dhabi from October 16. Both teams will also play three Twenty20 internationals after Tests. — AFP

England 'happy favourites' against Sri Lanka: Buttler

DAMBULLA: England are "very happy" being favourites for the one-day series in Sri Lanka but are aware that past tours have been "tricky", Jos Buttler said yesterday on the eve of the first match in Dambulla.

Sri Lanka's captain Dinesh Chandimal warned meanwhile that conditions were "very different" to England, with some "mystery spinners" who could pose problems for Eoin Morgan's batsmen. "Very happy being favourites. It shows we've been doing good stuff and I like being favourites," Buttler told reporters, saying the team were "very confident" and aiming to be "pushing the boundaries".

The batsman added however: "We're very aware of Sri Lanka's qualities in these conditions. They have some experienced players... It's been tricky in the past for England sides to come here." He added that being the number-one ranked one-day side ahead of next year's World Cup on home soil brought its own pressures.

"There is always pressure being number one. Once you get there, I think that's when the hard work really starts. You've got a bit of a target on your back. "It is down to you to keep improving and try to stay there. That's the challenge and it has its own pressures. I think in the dressing room we have a good understanding... and know that we need to keep improving and pushing the boundaries."

Buttler said the World Cup was in the back of everyone's mind, but they were taking every series one at a



DAMBULLA: England cricketers warm up during a practice session at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla yesterday. England play their first ODI against host Sri Lanka today. — AFP

time and hoped to build a core group of players for next year's championship. "It's about trending in the right way and being able to build a core group of players—a squad of 15, 16, 17 guys—who we can call upon hopefully for the World Cup," he said.

Underdogs Sri Lanka are still reeling from the axing of captain Angelo Mathews after a dismal run of 30 losses in their last 40 ODIs including defeats to Bangladesh and Afghanistan in last month's Asia Cup.

Chandimal, who missed the Asia Cup and the preceding ODI series against South Africa due to injury and suspension, cautioned that home pitches had "a lot

of spin". "Especially for the batters it's not easy to play... We have some mystery spinners as well.

"They got all the experience and talent and we have to compete with them. When the situation comes we have some game plans which we will have to execute."

Chandimal said he hoped to improve the team's fielding. "In the last few days, we worked really hard on our fielding individually and as a group," he said. "That's the biggest change we are trying to make in this series—give priority to our fielding and give it a lot of attention." The five-match one-day series is followed by three Tests in November. — AFP

Muguruza puts celebrations on hold to focus on rescuing season

HONG KONG: Former world number one Garbine Muguruza said she had put her birthday celebrations on hold as she battles to rescue a disappointing season by winning the WTA Hong Kong Open. Muguruza, who has slumped from top of the rankings in 2017 to world number 13, turned 25 Monday but said celebrations had been low key the night before her first round clash with fellow Spaniard Sara Sorribes Tormo.

"It was a very simple celebration, we went to dinner with the team, but honestly, if you're competing the next day it's very hard to think about something else," she said. "I'm sure I will have more time after here to do something more fun."

Muguruza cruised through 6-3, 6-1 but insisted the clash had not been plain sailing. "It's not easy to play a Spanish player—because I know her—but I'm happy I'm in the second round."

The former French Open and Wimbledon champion, who enjoys playing at the net, added: "(Sorribes Tormo) is very talented so she managed to put me in trouble and give me difficult balls, so I think it was very competitive."

Muguruza will be joined in the second round by top

seed Elina Svitolina, the world number five, who was relieved to get past big-serving Australian Priscilla Hon in straight sets in the late match.

The Ukrainian is still in the hunt for WTA Finals Singapore and admitted feeling the "pressure" as the tournament favourite. Earlier yesterday Chinese number one Wang Qiang, currently enjoying the hottest streak of her career, cruised to a straightforward 6-0, 6-2 victory over Hong Kong's Zhang Ling.

After her latest win Wang—who is even being touted as a potential successor to double Grand Slam champion and China tennis icon Li Na—said she was playing the best tennis of her career, adding she felt more "confidence" on court.

Japan's Nao Hibino, ranked 125 in the world, bundled out 2011 US Open champion Samantha Stosur in straight sets. The Australian, who is still ranked 69, went down 3-6, 3-6.

Meanwhile Australia's Daria Gavrilova backed Roger Federer after the Swiss great warned temperamental tennis star Nick Kyrgios he needed to work harder to realise his potential. The 20-time Grand Slam champion offered the tough love to Kyrgios after the 23-year-old made yet another contentious exit from the Shanghai Masters on Monday.

Federer described Kyrgios as "a great player" but added he needed to develop a work ethic to go with his talent. Gavrilova, the second-ranked Australian woman, said: "I'm pretty sure Roger is spot on."

She added: "(Kyrgios) is definitely one of the most talented players out there and I love watching him. "I don't know what happened in Shanghai but ... hopefully he can make a breakthrough and win a few slams."

The Russian-born Aussie, back at the Hong Kong



Garbine Muguruza

Open after losing last year's typhoon-delayed final, added of her compatriot: "He's different, he plays different and I guess when you come to watch him you never know what's going to happen."

Gavrilova, the world number 34 who is seeded seventh at the Hong Kong Open, booked her place in the second round after a fiery three-set victory over the Kazakh Zarina Diyas. The Australian queried a number of debatable line calls, at one point channelling her inner John McEnroe as she yelled at the chair umpire: "You can't be serious!" —AFP

Federer warns Kyrgios over work ethic after Shanghai strop

SHANGHAI: Roger Federer warned temperamental Australian Nick Kyrgios yesterday that he would never fulfil his potential without the work ethic to go with his talent. The 23-year-old Kyrgios made another contentious exit from the Shanghai Masters on Monday after a running argument with the chair umpire who suggested his efforts were "borderline".

The 38th-ranked Kyrgios was on the end of a surprise first-round loss to the American qualifier Bradley Klahn, the world number 104 winning 4-6, 6-4, 6-3. It is the third time in as many Shanghai appearances that Kyrgios has departed the Masters 1000 event under a cloud.

Speaking in Shanghai, where Federer is the top seed and reigning champion, the 37-year-old Swiss great called Kyrgios "a great player". But he also sounded a note of caution. "I think it's really up to him where he wants to go and what his potential really holds," said the 20-time Grand Slam winner.

"We don't really know and I don't think he really knows exactly what his potential is. "And only through understanding work ethic and scheduling and whatever it might be, creating the right team around himself, only then can you unlock the potential really."

Kyrgios, who this week lost his status as Australia's number one to 33rd-ranked Alex de Minaur, has a chequered history in Shanghai. Last year he was fined after he walked off mid-way through his first-round match, and in 2016 he was suspended and fined after being accused of giving away points in another defeat.

Federer, who admitted that the hard graft did not necessarily come naturally to him either, backed Kyrgios to "win bigger tournaments and do all these things". "But there is still a process in place that he needs to do like any other player needs to go through in order to be successful," he added.

Shanghai is not the only scene of a Kyrgios controversy. At the recent US Open, a disinterested Kyrgios was given a controversial mid-match pep talk by an umpire as he drifted towards a second-round defeat.

"I want to help you," chair umpire Mohamed Lahyani told Kyrgios, who went on to capture 19 of the next 25 games and set up a clash against Federer in New York. Australian doubles great Todd Woodbridge said the scheduling of Shanghai, a compulsory tournament at the tail-end of the season, seemed to be a problem for Kyrgios.

"Nick plays his best tennis when he's fresh, when he's enjoying himself and he's engaged," said Woodbridge, according to the Melbourne Age. "When he has to go somewhere and that isn't the case, we see him a little jaded and we see him play the way that he did... Scheduling is huge for him. He gets tired and then it's regrettable for him." —AFP

Sports

Astros, Dodgers win to advance in MLB playoffs, Red Sox roll

Springer smash two solo HRs in Houston's 11-3 romp over Cleveland

ATLANTA: Defending champion Houston and the Los Angeles Dodgers advanced in the Major League Baseball playoffs with lopsided road triumphs Monday while the Boston Red Sox routed the New York Yankees.

George Springer smashed two solo home runs in Houston's 11-3 romp over the Cleveland Indians, while Manny Machado belted a three-run homer and a run-scoring double to power the Dodgers over the Atlanta Braves by a score of 6-2.

And Boston's Brock Holt hit for the first playoff game cycle—a single, double, triple and homer—and drove in five runs as the Red Sox hammered out 18 hits in a 16-1 humbling of the host Yankees.

"It was a fun night," Holt said. "Offensively, we were clicking on all cylinders. Tonight is a night I will remember for a long time." Houston completed a sweep of Cleveland in the best-of-five American League division series, holding the Tribe to six runs on 13 hits over three games.

"It's awesome, a great day for us as a team," Springer said. "I'm happy to be heading home." The Astros will face either the Red Sox or Yankees in the best-of-seven American League Championship Series with the winner advancing to the World Series.

Andrew Benintendi smacked a three-run double to pace a seven-run fourth inning for the Red Sox, who led New York 2-1 and could advance by winning today. "This was a special group from day one," Holt said. "As tonight shows, we can do some special things."

The Astros outlasted the Dodgers in a seventh-game showdown to win last year's World Series for their first championship and could yet face a rematch with Los Angeles. The Dodgers eliminated the Braves in four games and will face the Milwaukee Brewers starting Friday in the National League Championship Series to

decide the other World Series berth.

"Doesn't get better than this," said Machado, acquired at mid-season from major league-worst Baltimore. "Just enjoying everything. I just try to enjoy the moment. Two good ball clubs facing off in the championship. It's going to be great."

Springer's solo homers in the fifth and eighth innings gave him eight homers in nine playoff games in a streak dating to last year's title run, matching a major league playoff record shared by Reggie Jackson, Jim Thome and Carlos Beltran, who did it most recently in 2004.

"Personal results don't mean anything now. It's all about how can I help us win," said Springer. "It's about having fun and doing whatever it takes for us to win."

A two-run double to left field by Marwin Gonzalez in the seventh put the Astros ahead 4-2 and Springer's solo blast began a six-run eighth inning for Houston, which also included a three-run homer by Carlos Correa.

BRAVES OUSTED

In Atlanta, the Dodgers took the lead in the first inning on Machado's run-scoring double. The Braves answered in the fourth on a two-run single to left field by pinch-hitter Kurt Suzuki. But Los Angeles reclaimed the lead at 3-2 in the sixth when pinch-hitter David Freese, the 2011 World Series Most Valuable Player with the champion St. Louis Cardinals, smacked a two-run single to center field.

Machado blasted his three-run homer in the seventh for a 6-2 lead and Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen baffled Atlanta batters for the final outs.

YANKEES HUMBLD

Boston jumped ahead 3-0 after three innings before breaking open the game in the fourth. Holt and Vazquez



ATLANTA: The Los Angeles Dodgers celebrate winning Game Four of the National League Division Series with a score of 6-2 over the Atlanta Braves at Turner Field on Monday in Atlanta, Georgia. The Dodgers won the series 3-1. — AFP

single and Jackie Bradley walked to load the bases, prompting New York to remove Luis Severino for relief pitcher Lance Lynn, who walked Mookie Betts to plate another Boston run.

Benintendi smacked his three-run double down the right-field line and scored on a Steve Pearce single that

set up Holt's two-run triple for a 10-0 Boston lead. No team has rallied from more than an eight-run deficit to win a playoff game in major league history and the Yankees never threatened to be the first. Holt doubled in a run and completed his cycle with a two-run homer in the ninth. — AFP

Mourinho has backing of Man United fans and club, says Moyes

LONDON: Former Manchester United manager David Moyes believes Jose Mourinho retains the full backing of the club and their supporters despite a poor start to the Premier League season. Mourinho reportedly faced the sack regardless of the outcome of Saturday's fixture with Newcastle but is still in position after the team roared back to win 3-2 after trailing 2-0.

Moyes, who succeeded Alex Ferguson in 2013, was dumped by United while in the first year of a six-year contract and his replacement, Louis van Gaal, was axed after winning the FA Cup.

But the former Everton boss said he believed United would give Mourinho time even though they are languishing in eighth spot in the Premier League. "I think the club are firmly behind the manager, and he's been a

winner, Jose, throughout his career, so I don't see why that should suddenly change," the Scot, 55, told Britain's Press Association.

"It was a great result—any team that comes from 2-0 down. But the one thing that happens at Old Trafford is the crowd gets right behind you, and is always supportive of the manager and the players."

Derby manager Frank Lampard, who recently masterminded a League Cup victory at Old Trafford and played under Mourinho at Chelsea, believes that after Saturday's comeback the onus should be on the players to raise their standards.

"Sometimes things are hard and you have to make difficult decisions, try and influence people around you, influence your players to try and get the best out of them," he said. "I think he's got all those attributes so I hope that it turns around for him."

Former United captain Wayne Rooney, who now plays in the United States, has also called on the players to stand up and be counted, saying Mourinho is an easy target. "The players, the manager, it has been a tough start to the season," the D.C. United player said in comments reported by Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper. "I know Jose is getting a load of stick but I said a few



Jose Mourinho

weeks ago, the players have to stand up. They have to be counted and they have to be better." — AFP

Saha backs Mourinho, chastises Pogba for 'attack' comments

LONDON: Former Manchester United striker Louis Saha yesterday criticised French midfielder Paul Pogba for speaking out and undermining manager Jose Mourinho with his recent "attack, attack, attack" comments.

Following United's 1-1 home draw with Wolverhampton Wanderers in the Premier League last month, Pogba said United should be more attacking at Old Trafford. Compatriot Saha, who played for the club between 2004-08, told Reuters the 25-year-old should keep his thoughts private.

"I think he (Pogba) has done it on purpose, and I don't think that is right," Saha, 40, said. "It's the wrong communication, it puts pressure on the manager... with those talks you should do it in the dressing room with your manager."

"You know that people will question about it, so don't do it. This is my opinion and I would have said that to him. I would say 'No, that's not something to say because you are not the manager.'"

Saha was speaking to Reuters at the Emirates Stadium on the sidelines of the launch of the Association Football Development Programme Global, a social enterprise set up by former FIFA vice president Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein of Jordan.

When asked if Pogba should instead do his talking on the pitch, Saha replied: "Exactly. You should be like 'I should score, score, score. I should pass, pass, pass'... So I don't think it was appropriate and I think (now) he understands that for sure. Whatever the situation, they have to sort it out because it's not good for the club, it's not good for themselves, it doesn't give them any space for mistakes so people are going to be on their backs."

Following Pogba's critique, media reports circulated that Mourinho was on borrowed time as United coach, especially after also being dumped out the League Cup by second-tier Derby County.

However, talk that he might be gone as early as last weekend were allayed after a late 3-2 comeback win over Newcastle United at home in the league. Saha said that Saturday's performance, the club's first win in five matches in all competitions, showed that Mourinho is still the right man to lead the team.

The Frenchman, who scored 42 goals across five seasons at United, also urged more understanding from supporters and player-turned-pundit Gary Neville, who has been critical of his former side since the beginning of the season.

"Yes (Mourinho can turn it around). He's a clever man, there is definitely support within the club, there is definitely support from the players, they showed that at the weekend. They showed desire to come back in a difficult game. They showed quality," said Saha, who won two league titles at United.

"So this is not a problem of only having big players, just having the right dedication and the right tools at the right moment. Sometimes we talk about philosophy, so many people say 'Attack, attack, attack' - I get that, because I was a forward. But some games are different nowadays... Football right now is not what it was before."

"However, Gary Neville or the fans will sometimes say (attack more) not knowing all the factors. They have to really understand that there has been a change." — Reuters

World Cup expectations a 'sufferance' for Messi

MADRID: Former Argentina coach Jorge Sampaoli said the 'Albiceleste' were saddled with excessive expectations at the World Cup, stifling the performances of his players, including Lionel Messi.

Argentina were tipped as possible winners of the tournament in Russia but were eliminated at the knockout phase following a tense 4-3 defeat to eventual champions France. Even before they squeezed into the second round, Argentina flattered to deceive, drawing 1-1 with Iceland, losing 3-0 to Croatia and squeezing past a plucky Nigeria 2-1 in the group stages. Sampaoli said expectations that Argentina would win the tournament emanating from the country's football federation stifled the creativity and success of Messi and his fellow players. "The best player in the world (Messi) was devoted" to the Argentina cause, Sampaoli said in comments to Spanish sports daily Marca.

"At his club (Barcelona) he has great stability. But when he comes to the national team a collective hysteria takes over and it's like we're expected to win. "This is not possible. If we don't win, it's him (Messi) who cops all the criticism. So you can't play, and you can't enjoy it."

He added: "The weight of expectation on this team was too heavy. We all felt pushed by the obligation to win, which meant it was difficult for us to express our talents. "It was difficult to work in those conditions because there was only one available option: to be world champions."

"Putting that kind of obligation ahead of the match itself made everything much more complicated." Although Sampaoli pledged to hang on to his job following their elimination, he soon resigned from his post. The Argentinian federation have appointed Lionel Scaloni, their former under-20 coach, as Argentina coach. Sampaoli, 58, offered him some advice: "We need to find a balance so that this obligation to win doesn't generate even more anxiety. "Every match (at the World Cup) was a sufferance." Messi's future with the national side has been in doubt since Argentina's elimination. According to reports, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner asked not to be considered for selection for a series of friendlies in September and October. — AFP



NEW YORK: Rourke Chartier #60 of the San Jose Sharks skates in his first NHL game against the New York Islanders at the Barclays Center on Monday in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. The Islanders shutout the Sharks 4-0. — AFP

Bergeron's hat trick powers Boston Bruins

BOSTON: Patrice Bergeron completed a hat trick in the third period and had an assist as the Boston Bruins won their home opener, defeating the Ottawa Senators 6-3 on Monday afternoon. Bergeron scored twice in the first period before netting his third goal on a backhander off an Ottawa defender at 4:38 of the third period for his fourth career hat trick.

David Pastrnak had two goals and two assists, and Chris Wagner, a native of Wellesley, Mass., scored his first goal for the Bruins. Charlie McAvoy and Brad Marchand each added three assists. Ryan Dzingel scored twice for the Senators. Dzingel was a game-time decision for the contest after sustaining an undisclosed injury in practice Sunday.

ISLANDERS 4, SHARKS 0

Robin Lehner recorded 35 saves in his first start for host New York, which cruised to a victory over San Jose. Lehner, who signed with the Islanders in July, recorded his ninth career shutout in his first start since undergoing alcohol rehab and being diagnosed with bipolar disorder following his final season with the Buffalo Sabres. Anders Lee, Scott Mayfield, Matt

Martin and Casey Cizikas all scored for the Islanders, who have opened the season with two wins in three games. New York recorded just two shutouts last season, when it allowed an NHL-high 293 goals.

SABRES 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2

Jack Eichel scored two goals and Carter Hutton had 35 saves to lead host Buffalo past Vegas. It was the second straight win for the Sabres, who also defeated the Golden Knights for the first time in franchise history after losing both meetings to the expansion franchise last season. Marco Scandella and Jason Pominville also scored goals for the Sabres, and Kyle Okposo added a pair of assists. Jonathan Marchessault had a goal and an assist, and Erik Haula, who scored the game-winner in a 2-1 shootout win at Minnesota on Saturday night, also scored a goal for Vegas.

DUCKS 3, RED WINGS 2 (SO)

Troy Terry scored the lone goal in the shootout, and goalie John Gibson made 20 saves through overtime and was perfect in the shootout as Anaheim beat Detroit in its home opener. The Ducks celebrated the 25th anniversary of their inaugural game by winning for the third time in as many outings to start the season. The Red Wings are winless through three games to start the season for the first time since 1991-92, although two of their losses were in extra time. Tyler Bertuzzi and Darren Helm scored for the Red Wings, and Hampus Lindholm and Jakob Silfverberg responded for the Ducks. Silfverberg's goal tied the game 2-2 at 8:29 of the third period. — Reuters

25 Nurmagedov returns to hero's welcome, blasts 'dimwit' McGregor



26 Six-wicket Bilal Asif sparks spectacular Australian collapse

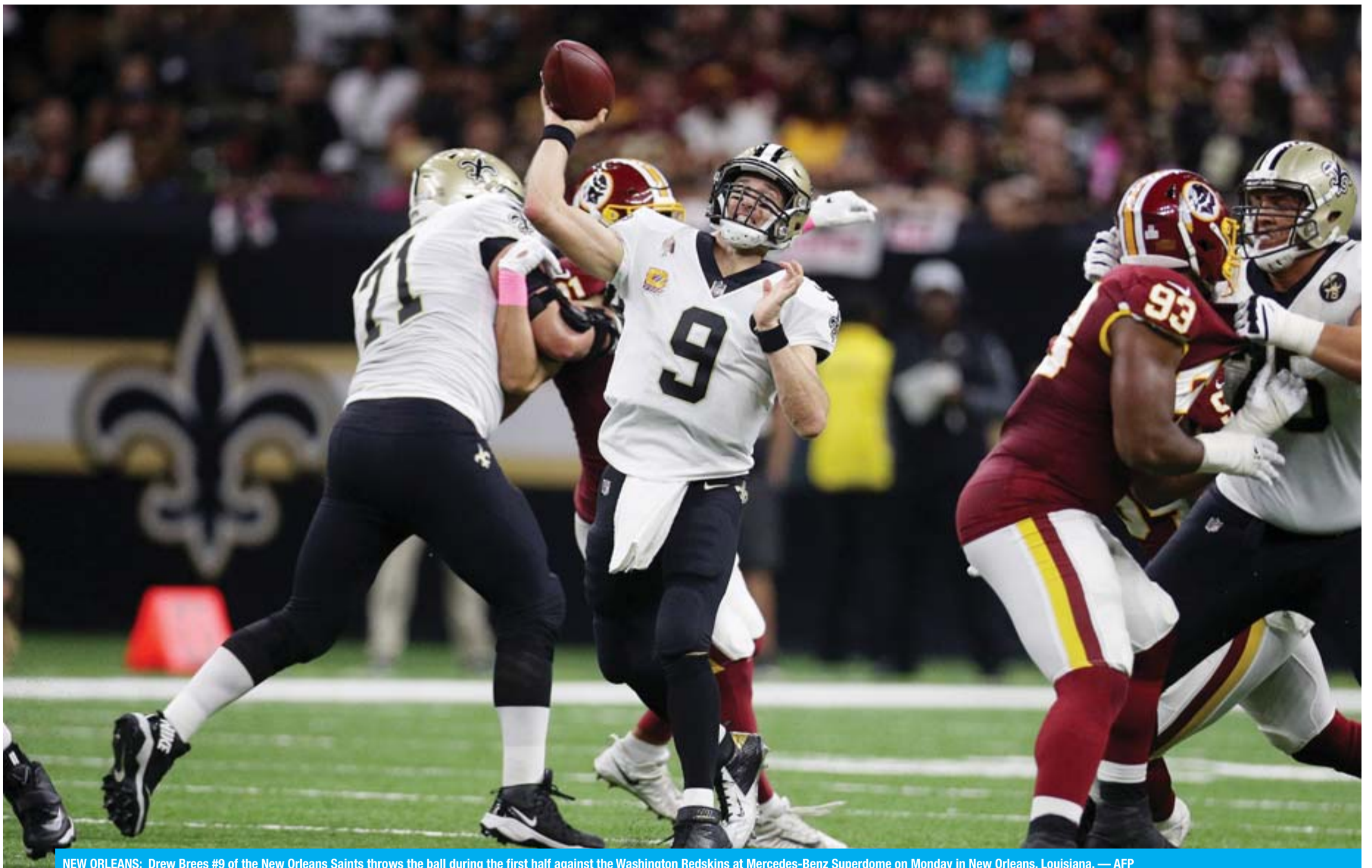


27 Astros, Dodgers win to advance in MLB playoffs, Red Sox roll



Brees breaks NFL record for yards passing

New Orleans Saints thrash Washington 43-19 in NFL action



NEW ORLEANS: Drew Brees #9 of the New Orleans Saints throws the ball during the first half against the Washington Redskins at Mercedes-Benz Superdome on Monday in New Orleans, Louisiana. — AFP

NEW ORLEANS: New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees set the NFL all-time passing yardage record on Monday, breaking Peyton Manning's old mark on a 62-yard touchdown pass in a 43-19 victory over Washington.

Brees completed 26-of-29 passes for 363 yards and three touchdowns to spark the Saints' victory, overtaking Manning for the career mark with a scoring toss to Tre'Quan Smith down the right sideline with 2:36 remaining in the second quarter.

"I will remember that one for a long time," Brees said. "It has truly been a dream come true. Truly proud and very grateful." Brees finished the game with 72,103 all-time passing yards after moving past Manning's 71,940 and Brett Favre's total of 71,838 in the second quarter.

"I don't know if that will ever sink in," Brees said of being the career yardage leader. "I just love playing

the game. I didn't set out on this journey to break these records. I just love to play this game." Brees said that his mother and grandfather, both deceased, were in his thoughts for the important roles they played in nurturing his NFL dreams.

"It's hard. There are just so many people that had a hand in it, that can share in it," Brees said. "There were a lot of people I wanted to make proud and prove right tonight, none more than them." The 39-year-old passer, in his 18th NFL campaign, now has 499 career touchdown passes, one shy of joining a select 500-touchdown NFL club whose only members are Manning, Favre and New England's Tom Brady, who reached the milestone last Thursday.

"I still feel like there's work to be done," Brees said. Cheering supporters roared in the Superdome as Smith ran into the end zone with the historic catch, which gave the Saints a 26-6 lead and pushed Brees to

71,968 yards at that point, 28 yards beyond Manning's old mark.

"All your hard work and dedication has paid off," Manning said in a pre-taped message. "Congratulations and I'm proud of you." Brees had moved to second on the all-time list earlier in the quarter, passing Favre on a 75-yard touchdown drive earlier in the quarter.

"Proud to be passed by a guy like you," Favre tweeted. After Brees connected on the record throw, he was mobbed by teammates and the game was briefly halted to acknowledge the moment. Brees hugged coach Sean Payton and his family on the sidelines.

BALL GOES TO HALL

Brees, who tapped his heart and pointed to the spectators in the sold-out stadium, handed the football

used on the play to a Hall of Fame official. Mark Ingram had run for touchdowns of one and two yards and Brees flipped a 1-yard touchdown pass to Josh Hill for other Saints scoring in the first half.

Brees set the NFL all-time completions record last month with number 6,301 to break Favre's career mark. Brees, who turns 40 in January, led the Saints to a 2010 Super Bowl victory, taking Most Valuable Player honors in a 31-17 triumph over Manning's Indianapolis Colts.

Dustin Hopkins kicked field goals of 37 and 53 yards for Washington, which also had a 4-yard touchdown run from Alex Smith to pull within 26-13 at half-time. Brees and Smith also combined on a 35-yard touchdown pass and Taysom Hill ran one yard for touchdowns in the third quarter while Will Lutz added a 44-yard field goal for a 43-13 New Orleans lead early in the fourth quarter. Kapri Bibbs added a 1-yard touchdown run for Washington for the final points. — AFP

Ronaldo among nominees for Ballon d'Or award

PARIS: Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo has been named among 30 nominees for the men's Ballon d'Or trophy awarded by France Football magazine to the best player in the world. The Portugal captain has won the award for the past two years and five times in all, a record he shares with Argentina's Lionel Messi who is also on the list announced on Monday.

Ronaldo's nomination comes after the 33-year-old last week denied rape allegations levelled against him by a woman who sued him in court in the United States.

Sportswear maker Nike Inc and video game maker Electronic Arts Inc, who both have worked with the five-times Champions League winner, said last Thursday they were concerned about the allegations.

European champions Real Madrid dominate the nominees with eight players, including Croatia midfielder Luka Modric and Wales forward Gareth Bale. Modric won the Golden Ball as the best player at this year's World Cup in Russia, where Croatia finished runners-up, and last month claimed FIFA's The Best men's player award.

Bale scored twice in the Champions League final win over Liverpool. France World Cup winners Paul Pogba, N'Golo Kante, Antoine Griezmann, Kylian Mbappe, Raphael Varane, one of the Real Madrid contingent, and captain Hugo Lloris have also been nominated.

A panel of journalists select the winner of the Ballon d'Or, which was first established in 1956 and will this year feature a women's award for the first time, to be

decided from a shortlist of 15 players.

The award merged with FIFA's World Player of the Year prize from 2010-15 to create the FIFA Ballon d'Or, but returned to France Football in 2016 while FIFA established The Best awards. The winners of the prestigious men's and women's awards will be announced at a ceremony in Paris on Dec 3.

Men's nominees:

Sergio Aguero (Manchester City, Argentina)
Alisson (Liverpool, Brazil)
Gareth Bale (Real Madrid, Wales)
Karim Benzema (Real Madrid, France)
Edinson Cavani (Paris Saint-Germain, Uruguay)
Thibaut Courtois (Real Madrid, Belgium)
Cristiano Ronaldo (Juventus, Portugal)
Kevin De Bruyne (Manchester City, Belgium)
Roberto Firmino (Liverpool, Brazil)
Diego Godin (Atletico Madrid, Uruguay)
Antoine Griezmann (Atletico Madrid, France)

Eden Hazard (Chelsea, Belgium)
Isco (Real Madrid, Spain)
Harry Kane (Tottenham Hotspur, England)
N'Golo Kante (Chelsea, France)
Hugo Lloris (Tottenham Hotspur, France)
Mario Mandzukic (Juventus, Croatia)
Sadio Mane (Liverpool, Senegal)
Marcelo (Real Madrid, Brazil)
Kylian Mbappe (Paris Saint-Germain, France)
Lionel Messi (Barcelona, Argentina)
Luka Modric (Real Madrid, Croatia)
Neymar (Paris Saint-Germain, Brazil)
Jan Oblak (Atletico Madrid, Slovenia)
Paul Pogba (Manchester United, France)
Ivan Rakitic (Barcelona, Croatia)
Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid, Spain)
Mohamed Salah (Liverpool, Egypt)
Luis Suarez (Barcelona, Uruguay)
Raphael Varane (Real Madrid, France). —Reuters