

5 PM arrives in NY, praises UN peacekeeping efforts



11 Officials call for economic reforms, direct investment



15 Google tunes search for prescience and pictures



28 Modric ends Ronaldo-Messi era to be crowned world best



German court: Kuwait Airways can't be forced to carry Israelis

Financial compensation also denied • KAC hails ruling, says case politically motivated

Adasani files to grill minister over violations

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition lawmaker Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday carried out his threat and filed a grilling against Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Khorafi over allegations of flagrant violations and illegal appointments. Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said he received the grilling, which has been placed on the agenda of the first session of the National Assembly's next term on Oct 30. Adasani's grilling marks the start of what is expected to be a highly tense Assembly term after several MPs have already threatened to grill the prime minister and the ministers of commerce and industry, oil, social affairs and labor and others over a variety of issues.

Adasani alleged that Khorafi has committed constitutional violations, irresponsible practices and flagrant violations and wrongdoings, in addition to breaching the laws, and practiced what he called

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: MP Riyadh Al-Adasani files a grilling against Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Khorafi yesterday. — KUNA

FRANKFURT: A German appeals court yesterday ruled that it could not prevent Kuwait Airways from banning Israeli passengers, even though it believed the policy amounted to discrimination. The case was brought by an Israeli student living in Germany, who in 2016 bought a ticket online to travel from Frankfurt to Bangkok with Kuwait Airways. The state-owned airline cancelled the ticket soon after, saying Kuwaiti law prohibits all commercial relations with Israelis and Israeli companies.

The higher regional court in Frankfurt ruled that because the flight required a stopover in Kuwait City, which is under Kuwaiti jurisdiction, it was "factually impossible" for the airline to transport the passenger. The finding was similar to a ruling reached by a lower German court last year. In a statement, the court acknowledged that the outcome was "unsatisfying" for the plaintiff but said it had no choice but to dismiss his demand to be able to book a new journey to Bangkok with Kuwait Airways. A request for financial compensation was also denied. The judges nevertheless slammed Kuwait's Israel boycott as discriminatory and "incompatible with German values", but said changing it was a matter for politicians.

Kuwait Airways said it believed the lawsuit was a politically motivated campaign against it and that it had great respect for Germany's laws. "In both proceedings, the judges came to the same conclusion in their judgments, which were comprehensible to all sides, well balanced, well-founded and well-derived: Kuwait Airways



acted in accordance with the laws of Germany and its home country," it said in a statement.

The non-profit Lawfare project, which is representing the Israeli passenger, said it was considering a further appeal. "This is a tragic day for German law," said Lawfare's executive director Brooke Goldstein. "Rather than be held accountable before the law, the court has rewarded Kuwait Airways for its anti-Semitism." In 2015, Kuwait Airways opted to scrap all its flights between New York's JFK airport and London Heathrow after US authorities threatened legal action over its refusal to sell tickets to Israelis. — Agencies

Saudis launch high-speed train, to issue visas for special events

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman yesterday inaugurated a €6.7 billion (\$7.87 billion) high-speed rail linking the two holiest cities in Islam, part of efforts to boost tourism revenues as the country seeks to shed dependence on oil exports. The 450-km Haramain Railway connecting Makkah and Madinah with the Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah is one of the largest transport projects in the Middle East, targeting nearly 60 million passengers annually. Commercial operations are set to begin next week.

"The journey between the haramain (two holy mosques) is now shorter and easier than at any time

before," Transport Minister Nabil Al-Amoudi told dignitaries gathered at the Jeddah station. "The project highlights the kingdom's commitment to serving Islam and Muslims." Pilgrimage is the backbone of a plan to expand tourism under economic reforms announced two years ago by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to diversify the economy.

The hajj, a journey every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it must perform once in a lifetime, can be a profound experience. It is also big business for Saudi Arabia. The hajj and the year-round lesser pilgrimage, umrah, generate billions of dollars in revenues from worshippers' lodging, transport, gifts, food and fees. The new rail link was built by a Spanish-led consortium and financed by the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund. It halves travel time between Makkah, the spiritual heart of Islam, and Madinah, its second most sacred site.

Project manager Mohammed Fallatah said the train would offer fast and reliable transportation to pilgrims as well as Saudis and foreign residents. "The traveller will be comfortable.

Continued on Page 24



JEDDAH: Saudi King Salman inaugurates a high-speed railway linking Makkah and Madinah yesterday. — KUNA

Cosby handed 3-10 yrs in jail for sex assault

NORRISTOWN, Pennsylvania: Bill Cosby was sentenced to between three and 10 years in prison yesterday for sexually assaulting a woman, capping the once-beloved comedian's downfall from "America's Dad" to convicted felon. Cosby, 81, was found guilty in April of three counts of aggravated indecent assault for the drugging and sexual assault of his one-time friend Andrea Constand, a former Temple University administrator, at his Philadelphia home in 2004.

He was the first celebrity to be convicted for sexual abuse since the start of the #MeToo movement, the national reckoning with misconduct that has brought down dozens of powerful men in entertainment, politics and other fields. His lawyers have already vowed to appeal the conviction. Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas Judge Steven O'Neill also decided to designate Cosby a "sexually violent predator" under Pennsylvania law. Under that designation, Cosby will have to undergo monthly counseling and register as a sex offender with police for the rest of his life. Neighbors and schools will be notified of his address and crimes.

More than 50 other women also have



NORRISTOWN: Comedian Bill Cosby arrives for the second day of a sentencing hearing at the Montgomery County Courthouse yesterday. — AFP

accused Cosby of sexual abuse going back decades, with most complaints too old to prosecute. The Constand case was the only allegation that led to criminal charges. On the first day of the sentencing hearing on Monday, Constand said in a written statement submitted to the court that the attack had turned her into a woman who was "stuck in a holding pattern for most of her adult life, unable to heal fully or to move forward." "Bill Cosby took my beautiful, healthy young spirit and crushed it," she wrote.

Prosecutors had asked for the maximum prison sentence of between five and 10 years, citing the nature of Cosby's crime as well as his alleged history of misconduct. They had also asked the judge to levy a \$25,000 fine on Cosby and make him pay court costs. If ever he came up for parole, prosecutors wanted him to submit to a "psycho-sexual evaluation" that he had refused prior to sentencing. — Reuters

Trump blasts Iran, OPEC; Rouhani says US seeking regime overthrow

UNITED NATIONS: US President Donald Trump yesterday called for Iran's isolation while welcoming another former adversary, North Korea, in from the cold in an unabashedly boastful speech to the United Nations General Assembly which provoked laughter from fellow leaders. Trump also lashed out at the OPEC oil cartel, China's trade policies and the International Criminal Court, which he vowed the United States would never accept.

Hours before Iranian President Hassan Rouhani spoke from the same rostrum, Trump denounced the clerical regime in Tehran for sowing "chaos, death and destruction" as he defended his decision to ditch an internationally brokered nuclear deal four months ago. But after stunning the global body with his bellicose language on North Korea a year ago, including a threat to "totally destroy" Kim Jong Un's state, Trump instead praised his one-time arch enemy for his "courage" as he hailed progress in fragile peace efforts with Pyongyang.

Since Trump came to power, promising that the world's most powerful country would follow an "America First" foreign policy, there have been growing fears about the US commitment to multilateral institutions such as the United Nations.

In his speech at the opening of the assem-



NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump (left) and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (right) address the 73rd session of the General Assembly at the United Nations yesterday. — AFP



bly, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said trust in the rules-based global order and among states was "at a breaking point" and international cooperation becoming more difficult, without specifically mentioning Trump. "Today, world order is increasingly chaotic. Power relations are less clear," Guterres told the 193-nation assembly. "Universal values are being eroded. Democratic principles are under siege," he added just minutes before Trump was to take the podium.

Trump however robustly attacked the "globalist" view of the world and vowed that "America will never apologize for protecting its citizens". He said that the UN-backed International Criminal Court has "no jurisdiction, no legitimacy and no authority" and said

that his administration - which has recently choked off aid to the Palestinians - would only support "our friends" in the future. "The ICC claims near-universal jurisdiction over the citizens of every country, violating all principles of justice, fairness, and due process. We will never surrender America's sovereignty to an unelected, unaccountable global bureaucracy."

He also reserved harsh words for OPEC, the global oil cartel that includes both US allies and foes. "OPEC and OPEC nations are, as usual, ripping off the rest of the world, and I don't like it. Nobody should like it." A Gulf diplomat said in response that "we have been doing our fair share of burden sharing".

Continued on Page 24

Amir receives top state officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Khaled Nasser Al-Roudhan.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday at Bayan Palace. HH also received Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth

Affairs, Khaled Nasser Al-Roudhan, and Director General of Kuwait's Public Authority for Industry, Abdul Karim Taqi, Deputy General Manager for development sector and industrial and licensing Abdullah Al-Zamami. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri

Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

Kuwait's FM takes part in consultative meeting of Arab League at UN

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Monday attended a ministerial consultative meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States, which was presided over by Sudan's Foreign Minister, which was held on the sidelines of the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly. During the meeting, a number of topics were discussed on the League's agenda and the current session of the UN General Assembly, especially the Palestinian issue, the Middle East peace process and developments in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya.

The meeting also discussed means of joint coordination to meet the challenges in the region as well as discussing the latest developments in regional and international arenas. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

Earlier that day, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended a luncheon hosted by the foreign ministers of Britain and France, to discuss the Muslim Rohingya crisis in Myanmar. During the event, hosted by Jeremy Hunt and Jean-Yves Le Drian respectively, attendees discussed global efforts aimed at ending the suffering of the Rohingya minority and the most effective solutions to resolve this humanitarian crisis.

At the talks, held on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Sheikh Sabah Khaled praised the government of Bangladesh's role in this catastrophic crisis. He expressed sorrow over the difficulties faced by those internally-displaced and refugees, particularly in regards to health and living conditions. The Kuwaiti foreign minister also urged the importance of maintaining the security situation and opening up humanitarian aid channels to all



NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah during the ministerial consultative meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States. — KUNA photos



Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah during a working lunch discussing the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar.

affected regions in Myanmar.

The Foreign Minister later met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas expressed his thanks for Kuwait's support to Palestine in all fields regionally and internationally. He also praised efforts of Kuwait within the framework of the United Nations Security Council and its support of Palestinians around the world. He had also

held meetings with his international counterparts such as Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi, Mauritania's Foreign Minister Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati. Issues of mutual concern and cooperation in all fields were discussed and were attended by senior officials from Kuwait's Foreign Ministry. — KUNA

Thousands benefited from hepatitis campaign: MoH

KUWAIT: Director of media office at the ministry of health Dr Galiyah Al-Mutairi said yesterday that more than 20,000 people benefited from hepatitis awareness campaign in its three phases. This came during an awareness lecture organized by the ministry of health in coordination with ministry of interiors about Hepatitis Virus at Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences as part of the third phase of the campaign.

The lecture, presented by Digestive Diseases Consultant Dr Salem Al-Shammari, aimed to shed light on the disease and help officers from the academy in identifying the disease and ways to cure from it. "The third part of the campaign witnessed more cooperation with consultants for liver and digestive diseases, through organizing

lectures, health fairs, distribution of health publications, as well as affording a free test to diagnose the virus", Al-Mutairi added.

"A special team is formed especially by media office to help guide patients to the needed procedures to identify the disease and ways to get the suitable health care associated with it," she explained. Al-Mutairi stated that media department is working on an electronic campaign to spread awareness through social media, YouTube, and the office's official website, by showing educational movies and meetings with specialized doctors from the ministry of health.

In related news, Kuwaiti Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah yesterday issued two ministerial decrees, the first one concerning citizen's treatment in nursing centers, and the second being a reconstitution of specialized council for public health. The spokesperson of ministry mentioned in a press release that citizens are allowed to review any health center in their governorate after 1pm without being restricted to their center in their residential area. It added that the second resolution was on restoring the specialized council for public health. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Personnel of Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences participate in the Hepatitis awareness campaign organized by the ministry of health. — KUNA

Kuwaiti markets seek global exposure



DOHA: Kuwaiti officials at the construction fair in Doha. — KUNA

DOHA: Kuwait's Public Authority for Industry (PAI) said yesterday that the growth and development of the local industrial sector largely hinge on the government's support and much-needed exposure. PAI has always been eager to prop up Kuwaiti industries through increasing local exports, its director general for exports Mohammad Al-Ajmi told KUNA on the

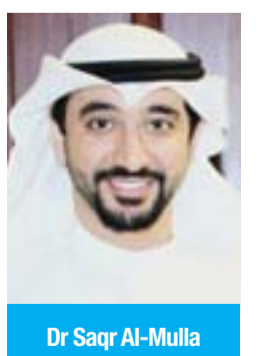
sidelines of a construction fair in the Qatari capital.

He said that such events provide an opportunity for Kuwaiti markets to promote their goods and familiarize foreign consumers with products made in the Gulf state. On the construction fair, which is one of the most popular events in the region, Al-Ajmi said the omnipresence of Kuwaiti factories

and markets is an indicator that the industrial sector in Kuwait is poised for growth. He added that Kuwait's pavilion at the expo, which has attracted more than 240 companies from 21 nations, stretches over 120 square meters, where goods running the gamut from healthcare to construction and design are on display. — KUNA

Sports Public Authority denies reports of dissolving clubs

KUWAIT: Deputy Director-General of the Public Authority for Sports Dr Saqr Al-Mulla yesterday denied reports that circulated through social media on the dissolution of sports club boards and the formation of temporary committees, stressing that such reports are "baseless." In a statement to KUNA, Al-Mulla said that the six-party committee, which is formed by the International Olympic Committee, is working to supervise the road map to lift the suspension of external sports activity. Al-Mulla called on all who work in the sports fields to be careful when dealing with sport news, or suspension, especially in current developments, which require concerted efforts to lift the suspension permanently.



Dr Saqr Al-Mulla

Local

Kuwaitis safekeeping past and tradition through special enamel pins artwork

Making enamel pins of culturally and historically significance

KUWAIT: Living in the current era of technological advancement and fast-paced lifestyles, many of the new generation, and possibly some of the elderly, have lost their connection with the past and tradition. In Kuwait, the connection seems to become weaker as generations after generation appear to treat the past as a forgotten memory or a relic of unknown origins.

Despite the challenge, two Kuwaiti artists decided to keep the past alive through enamel pins artworks depicting various periods, buildings, structures, and important individuals in the country's long and illustrious history. "It is sad to see new generations growing without having the knowledge of their own history," said Ammar Al-Abbad, a Kuwaiti collector of traditional and historical items, in a KUNA interview. "As a collector I cherish and appreciate the importance of history as it is a part of one's identity," he added.

The grievances of Al-Abbad inspired him and his colleague Hussain Al-Haddad, a history enthusiast with a bachelor degree in fine arts, to come up with the idea of combining their skills and interests to create something that would contribute to reviving and safekeeping Kuwaiti history. "To us history is an inspiration to thrive on", expressed Al-Haddad in his own statement during the interview. Subsequently, both artists began their mission through their 'H&A ArtWorks' initiative, a project, which began in 2017 to create enamel pins of cultural and historically significance.

A modern touch

Al-Abbad and Al-Haddad created each pin to represent buildings, items or characters that took part in the country's history and added a modern touch to their output. One of the three main enamel pin designs depicted "Beit Dickson", the home of former British political Agent Colonel Harold Dickson and his wife Violet "Umm Saud" whose love and contributions to Kuwait are well documented and archived inside their house-turned-museum. The second design was Ash Shamia Gate, which is one of the five gates of the protective wall that once surrounded Kuwait. The final main design was ded-



icated to late renowned actor Abdulhussein Abdulredha, an icon of Kuwaiti theater and drama.

"Our goal is to represent Kuwait's history through a creative and innovative vision" Al-Haddad reiterated to KUNA. As for the beginning of their long and important endeavor, Al-Abbad and Al-Haddad used their own skills to produce the pins by hand, shaping and molding plastic to their designs. Later, they decided to expand their project and with an intention to sell those pins as souvenirs. Each pin is carefully designed and packed "to be educational and attractive to the buyer," said Al-Haddad, adding that a brief historical description was added to each mer-



chandise for such purpose.

Whether you are a tourist, a young Kuwaiti youth, or an expatriate, the pins present an opportunity for everybody to get educated on the history of Kuwait "Our plan is to create many more designs and a wide collection of Kuwait historical items, buildings and characters," said Al-Abbad on the duo future plans. Currently, both artists are working on adding historical locations such as "Koushk Mubarak", "Souq Al-Mubarkiya", "Al-Seif Palace", "Saat Al-Shuwaikh" to the designs and they are also planning to showcase some of the characters in famous Kuwaiti TV shows "Darb Ez lzalaq" to the roster.

Other kinds of souvenirs such as posters, handi-



crafts and works of art depicting Kuwaiti history figures and places are in the planning stage. "We want to be the hands that dig in history to solidify it for the future generations" said Al-Haddad who indicated that with his colleague Al-Abbad will continue to dedicate their effort and time to create valuable items and works of art. —KUNA

“ History is an inspiration to thrive on ”

Speech from the Georgian envoy on independence day

KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Georgia Roland Beridze hosted a reception on the occasion of Independence Day and in commemoration of 100th Anniversary of First Democratic Republic. Below is his speech he gave at the reception:-

Dear guests, together with my Embassy staff I am glad to see so many friends and colleagues to honor me with their presence today when Georgia is celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the establishing of the first democratic republic. I would like to extend my profound thanks to HE Waleed Al Khobeizi, Assistance Foreign Minister for European Affairs, who is here with us today to represent the Kuwait authorities.

Georgia's Statehood, in a form of a Kingdom, dates

back to thousands of years but it was only on 26 May 1918, when the first Democratic Republic of Georgia was born from the ruins of the Russian empire. The Georgian Republic emerged as a unique experiment of democracy, progress and human liberation. The government conducted impressive market economic and land reforms, developed a progressive constitution and made steps toward integration with the West. One hundred years ago, Georgia was among few countries in the world where elections were held by universal suffrage, and gender equality was widely promoted by the Constitution. Six women were elected at the first legislative body of the Georgian Democratic Republic and one of them was a Muslim, PeriKhanumSofieva. We have exhibited some highlights of that period in the hall as well as we offer brochures published by the Georgian Election Committee on the first democratic elections in Georgia.

Regrettably, the First Georgian Republic and its promising prospects lasted only three years. In 1921 this freedom was taken from us by Soviet invasion. Only in 1991 Georgia managed to restore its

Independence and its Democratic Republic.

Today, the world is rediscovering Georgia as a country of vibrant democracy, old history, but a modern and competitive outlook. Today's Georgia is a European democracy, with checks and balances, a level electoral playing field, the rule of law and a free media. Located at a historically vital crossroads, between emerging and developed economies, Central Asia and South-eastern Europe, the Caspian and the Black Seas, Georgia links economies and cultures. As a natural hub on the Silk Road, we bridge countries and regions with free trade and modern infrastructure to facilitate all kinds of flows: goods and services, data, energy, talents and even fashion. Last year we welcomed 7.4 million visitors - almost double the country's population!

And all these achievements have been attained despite continued, hybrid kind of assault on our democracy, on our sovereignty, on our territorial integrity and on our freedom, regrettably, from our Northern neighbor still on a mission to undermine our statehood. This behavior is condemned by the international community and most of our partners in the

Middle East express their unwavering support to our sovereignty.

We view our relations with Kuwait as exemplary, based on the common approach to the majority of international issues and shared understanding that peaceful cooperation is the cornerstone of the continuous development for the benefit of our nations. Kuwait has invariably expressed its strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. We appreciate this stance and express our profound gratitude to the leadership of Kuwait under the wise guidance of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Today we witness a surge in the interest to visit our country by many thousands of Kuwaitis who enjoy the opportunity of direct flights to Tbilisi operated by all of the airlines based in Kuwait. I want to say they are most welcome! We look forward to new opportunities for the further development of our close ties with Kuwait in various fields, including trade, tourism and cultural interaction. I am confident it will be beneficial to both our peoples.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Georgia Roland Beridze hosted a reception on the occasion of Independence Day and in commemoration of 100th Anniversary of First Democratic Republic at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Several higher officials, Diplomats and media persons attended the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

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www.waterwipes.com/ae/

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The sails at Jaber Bridge built to imitate Kuwait's marine environment. —KUNA

EQUATE's world class achievement: 50m continuous safe work hours

KUWAIT: Continuing its industrial records, the EQUATE Group, a global producer of petrochemicals, achieved over 50 million continuous safe work hours without a day away from work case (DAWC) throughout its industrial complex in Kuwait. As the owner and single operator of several manufacturing units in Kuwait, EQUATE's industrial complex annually produces more than four million tons of ethylene, ethylene glycol (EG), polyethylene (PE), styrene monomer (SM), propylene (PP), paraxylene (PX), benzene (BZ) and heavy aromatics (HA).

EQUATE Group Vice President for Operations Arnd Thomas said, "Safety is not only about having standards and policies, rather it is about a cultural lifestyle and a never-ending journey at work, home and everywhere you are. At EQUATE, safety is the number one priority that starts with each one of us. Our success in this field is not an individual achievement as it is an expression of our partnership and teamwork with the entire workforce contributing and working every second of the day to this success."

For his part, EQUATE Group Global Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) Director Mohammad Al-Shamary said, "Through an intense focus on safety, we have executed some of the globe's biggest turnarounds (TA) while setting new milestones for efficiency and operational excellence. We look forward to continuing these accomplishments in all our locations around the world to keep people and communities safe." In appreciation of this achievement by its personnel, EQUATE hosted a celebration that was attended by its leaders, employees and contractors in recognition of their contribution to long-term commitment and success.

The EQUATE Group is a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG). The Group has industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that annually produce over 5 million tons of Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET). The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The EQUATE Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC).



EQUATE Management during the celebration.



Arnd Thomas speaking during the celebration.

Envoy Bader presents credentials in Germany

BERLIN: Kuwaiti Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader presented his credentials yesterday to German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Berlin. In a statement to KUNA, Al-Bader said he had conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the president. Meanwhile, Ambassador Al-Bader affirmed the strong Kuwaiti-German ties, adding that Germany played a big role in the war to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion in 1991, by allowing allied troops to use its airbases and airports, as well as providing financial aid to the troops. He also said that Germany is the number one destination for Kuwaiti investments in Europe.



BERLIN: Kuwaiti Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader presenting his credentials yesterday to German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. —KUNA photo

The number of trade and investment cooperation between the two sides is estimated at over 35 billion euros, he noted. The Kuwaiti Ambassador to Spain Ayada Al-Saeedi also presented his credentials as an Ambassador Extraordinary yesterday. —KUNA

CBK announces cooperation with VOX cinema

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced its cooperation with the VOX cinema by

allowing its Tijari youth account holders to get 50 per cent discounts on its tickets, which makes CBK the first bank in Kuwait to take such an initiative and offer such a big discount to its clients. CBK added that Tijari account holders can get the discount on purchasing all tickets at VOX Cinema in the Avenues using their Tijari cards and explained that the discount is on all week days including weekends until the end of 2018. Notably, CBK's Tijari account is designed for clients aging 14-24 with the aim of helping them achieve their goals. It offers various discounts in a number of restaurants and stores.

ABK holds specialized training in sign language for branch staff

KUWAIT: In a move to improve communication with its customers with hearing disabilities, Al Ahli

Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held a training courses in sign language for its branch staff. The course focused on providing specialized training to staff responsible for assisting the Bank's special needs customers with their banking needs.

With 20 staff successfully completing the training, these ABK staff will be spread across the bank's seven special needs branches including Head Office, and the branches located in Jabriya, South Sabahiya, Shaab, Firdous, Qurain and Jahra 1. The staff can be identified through special badges, which will read 'We Know Sign Language'.



Local

PM arrives in New York for UNGA, praises UN peacekeeping efforts

‘The only legal umbrella for peacekeeping in the world’

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived in New York to attend the 73rd UN General Assembly session. HH the Prime Minister and his accompanying delegation were received at the airport by Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi and members of Kuwait's UN mission.

In a press statement, His Highness the Premier stressed on the importance of United Nation's role in maintaining security and peace, supporting stability in the world and promoting living standards in various countries. He praised UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' efforts and keenness to promote development in many countries. HH the Prime Minister also stressed on Kuwait's keenness to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations

and support all efforts exerted to achieve peace in the world, praising the effective cooperation between Kuwait and the international organization in dealing with various international crises.

“The State of Kuwait will continue its distinguished humanitarian role in dealing with disasters and crises facing some friendly countries,” he said, stressing that Kuwait will continue its support to the United Nations programs to assist the afflicted countries and provide assistance to the needy. He added Kuwait's election as a non-permanent member of UN Security Council (UNSC) for the years 2018-2019 will strengthen its international standing, show its bright side, and will highlight the great humanitarian role played for many years. HH the Premier called on the international community to support the United Nations as “the only legal umbrella for peacekeeping in the world”, and to support its efforts in promoting development, combating terrorism and ending wars, political unrest and terrorist operations in the Middle East.—KUNA



NEW YORK: Representative of His Highness the Amir HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah arrives in New York City. — KUNA photo



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman is seen at the American Education Expo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

American education fair held at Regency hotel

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: An American education fair was held at the Regency Hotel on Monday. Carine Nasrallah, Education USA Advisor, and Tina Bucton, Vice Consul - Consular Section at the US Embassy in Kuwait, inaugurated the event. The roadshow, organized by the International Student Network Inc, showcased various American colleges and universities, and attendees were able to learn more about US education, schools, tuition, housing, application requirements, visa processing, campus life, merit-based program scholarships, etc. Students, mostly from senior high schools in Kuwait, thronged the venue with their parents and communicated directly with representatives of participating schools. From Kuwait, the roadshow will head to Bahrain, Jordan, UAE and Morocco.

“If you are planning to study in the US, give some time to look and scout for a better and desired campus. This is actually the reason why we are here, to showcase universities and colleges available for Kuwaiti students,” said Nasrallah. “If you are new to a country like the US, which is really huge, I suggest you first go to a community college. Also, if you are considering the budget, fees are relatively lower compared to bigger universities. Also, learn the language and study the laws and regulations. Once you're familiar with the environment and people around you, you will be assisted by the community college to transfer to a public or private university,” she advised.

How to get student visa

Bucton said as soon as a student gets their I-20 form, the student must apply for a student visa immediately. “Go to the website provided, pay the required fee, make an appointment with us at the US Embassy, bring your passport and a short interview will be done by us. Clarify all the requirements with us because we do not want you to be delayed in your school programs. We also need proof you can actually pay for the school. The school is the most important contact you can provide for us. When you are in the US, follow US laws. We welcome you and we want you all to succeed,” Bucton added.

KGL co-sponsors ‘Green & Clean Environment’ Expo

KUWAIT: Kuwait & Gulf Link Transportation Company (KGL) recently announced that protecting the environment comes on top of its priorities and as part of its social responsibility. A statement issued by KGL announced its co-sponsoring of the ‘Green & Clean Environment’ Expo which is due to be held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural center in the period of October 2nd and 3rd. The statement added that the expo would be organized by Leaders Group Company for Consultancy and Development in collaboration with EPA and a number of relevant ministries and bodies.

Speaking on the occasion, KGL board chairman, Maher Ma'rafi stressed that social responsibility calls for prioritizing environmental issues and commitment to the development of the society with the aim of maintaining the country's resources. Further, Ma'rafi stressed that there is a great relation between social responsibility

and any company's credibility. “Every person has duties towards the land he or she lives on and the vicinity around as well”, Ma'rafi added noting that this supports Kuwait's 2035 vision and HH the Amir's aspirations.

Notably, KGL operates in many fields that have direct or indirect relations to clean environment, greening and agriculture, transportation, logistics, port management, shipping and freight forwarding needs of countless regional and international clients. It also operates in hiring and renting means of transport, warehouses, opening special garages to maintain company equipment, waste transport, cleaning, rodents fighting, sewer clearing, cleaning material trade and manufacture, rental services, on-call towing services and many other fields. In addition, KGL has an outstanding international image and has recently won a \$ 1.38 billion worth contract to provide logistic and catering services to the US troops in Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan for 24 months.



Maher Ma'rafi

Kuwait Food Bank launches charity project

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Food Bank announced launching its ‘charity warehouse’ project, which aims at helping the poor and the needy in the land of humanity by receiving donations from benevolent individual donors as well as companies, financial firms and food-stuff suppliers. General Manager Salem Al-Hamar said the project has a profound mission and aims at serving needy families throughout Kuwait by providing them with food supplies such as rice, lentils, chicken, sugar, oil and other items.

National Guard takes part in the C4ISR conference

KUWAIT: The National Guard yesterday took part in the ‘Command, control, communication, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance’ conference (C4ISR) organized by IQPC International at the Kuwait Hilton resort from 24th-25th September. During his speech, the National Guard undersecretary, Lt General Hashem Abdul Razzaq Al-Refae'e provided a brief history of the National Guard, its development, tasks and duties in guarding various national facilities, backing up of various bodies and its effective role in securing the country.

Drunk man crashes into car

KUWAIT: A car owner called the police after another car had crashed into it. When the police arrived at the scene, they discovered that the driver was drunk. When police asked for his papers he argued and claimed to be an advisor for a major company. Later, orders were issued to arrest him and he was taken to the nearest police station to face charges.

Stray gunshot

An Indian was rushed to the emergency room to administer treatment for a bullet wound in his foot. The Indian claimed to be walking back home when suddenly a bullet hit him. This was later ver-

ified by a passersby who told police the same. The passersby went along with the paramedics who rushed to the scene. Detectives are working on the case.

Fake detective

Detectives arrested a citizen for posing as a fake detective in order to scare expats and rob them. This was not the first time as the man has had a record of impersonating law officers before. Detectives identified the suspect and then located him. He resisted fiercely before his eventual arrest.

Wrongful insult

A non-commissioned officer in the palace of justice accused a trainee of insulting him in front of other officers. The insult occurred when he was asked to sit in a designated place for the public and stay well away from the lawyer's seats. The trainee now faces charges of insulting a public employee while on duty. — Al-Rai



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Pope warns against defining power as 'military strength'

Maldives destroys British statues deemed offensive to Islam

Page 9

Page 7



WASHINGTON: Hundreds of people protest against the confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh outside the offices of Sen Jeff Flake (R-AZ) in the Russell Senate Office Building on September 24, 2018. —AFP

US court nominee launches counteroffensive

Kavanaugh says he was a virgin, 'never' assaulted anyone

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh rebutted twin accusations of sexual misconduct in his youth Monday, telling national television he "never" sexually assaulted anyone and was long a virgin. With pressure mounting to put Kavanaugh's nomination on hold for the FBI to investigate his past—a day after a second woman came forward to accuse him—Trump stood firmly behind his embattled nominee, blasting the allegations as "totally political."

The bombshell claims, dating back to the conservative judge's high school and college days, threaten to derail what was seen as an all-but-certain confirmation to the lifelong post on the top court. Instead, he now faces an explosive Senate showdown against the first of his accusers, university professor Christine Blasey Ford, who is set to testify against him tomorrow. With his future and reputation on the line, Kavanaugh stepped up his counterattack, saying "I've never sexually assaulted anyone, not in high school, not ever. I've always treated women with dignity and respect."

"I did not have sexual intercourse or anything close to sexual intercourse in high school or for many years thereafter," he told Fox News, appearing alongside his wife Ashley ahead of his own Senate testimony due after Ford's. "I'm not going to let false accusations drive us out of this

process," he added, repeatedly calling for a "fair process."

Second accuser

After a dramatic weeklong standoff, Kavanaugh's accuser Ford finally committed Sunday to be questioned in a public hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is weighing Kavanaugh's nomination. Ford alleges that a drunken Kavanaugh and another boy shut her in a room and tried to tear her clothes off at a high school beer party in suburban Washington around 1982, when she was 15 and he 17. Just hours later, The New Yorker dropped a new bombshell, reporting that a second woman was accusing the Washington appeals court judge of sexual misconduct, while they were students at Yale University around 1983-84.

Deborah Ramirez, 53, says Kavanaugh exposed himself to her during a party, thrusting his genitals in her face and causing her to touch them without her consent, according to the magazine. The allegations stand to

derail a nomination that Republicans see as crucial to gaining conservative control of the high court for years. They could also play decisively in the November midterm elections, where Republican control of both houses of Congress is under threat.

Lack of witnesses

With emotions running high, dozens of protesters were removed from the US Capitol for unlawfully demonstrating against the judge's confirmation. Trump, speaking in New York where he was attending the United Nations General Assembly, threw his full weight behind Kavanaugh. "There's a chance that this could be one of the single most unfair, unjust things to happen to a candidate, but I am with Judge Kavanaugh," Trump said. "For people to come out of the woodwork from 36 years ago and 30 years ago and never mention it, all of a sudden it happens—in my opinion, it's totally political."



Bombshell claims threaten to derail his confirmation

German Catholic Church apologizes for child sex abuse

FULDA: Germany's Catholic Church yesterday apologized to victims of sexual assault by clergy, with the institution's top cardinal saying perpetrators must be brought to justice. Cardinal Reinhard Marx said he was ashamed over the decades of abuse that have shattered trust, the crimes carried out by officials of the Church, as well as how so many have looked away for so long. The dismay expressed by the head of the German Bishops' Conference came as the institution published a damning report showing that in Germany, almost 3,700 minors—mostly boys—were assaulted between 1946 and 2014.

The report's authors said however that the figure was "the tip of the iceberg" and that the real extent of the problem was far greater. "I have to say very clearly that sexual abuse is a crime. Those who are guilty must be punished," said Cardinal Marx. "For all the failures and for all the pain, as chairman of Germany's Bishops Conference, I apologize. I also apologize on a personal basis. "We are not done with confronting the incidents and consequences, it begins now," he stressed at a press conference.

'Abuse, transfers, cover-ups'

Victims have criticized the report for falling short of what is needed to flush out perpetrators. They urged the Church to bring in independent experts for a thorough audit, adding that victims should be offered compensation. "The

system of abuse, transfers (of offending priests) and cover-ups cannot be mapped out" by a study that had access only to available personnel documents, said the victims' association Eckiger Tisch. "We are not given names of perpetrators. There are no names given of the responsible bishops who have perfected the system of covering up sexual attacks over decades."

Justice Minister Katarina Barley also urged the Church to "take responsibility for decades of concealment, cover-ups and denials" and to work with state prosecutors to bring every known case to justice. The independent commissioner for child sex abuse issues, Johannes-Wilhelm Roerig, recommended state authorities step in to clear up the crimes and ensure victims get access to Church files and compensation. The state "has a duty of care for all children, including those who are in the care of the Church", he told the Sueddeutsche newspaper.

Predator priests

According to the study, 1,670 clergymen in Germany committed some form of sexual attack against 3,677 minors, mostly boys, between 1946 and 2014, intimidating their victims into keeping quiet. More than half of the victims were 13 years old or younger, the study concluded, after examining 38,000 documents from the 27 German dioceses. Researchers from three universities who carried out the survey warned that the true scale of the abuse was far greater, as many documents had been "destroyed or manipulated". Predator priests were often transferred to another parish, which was not warned about their criminal history. Only about one in three were subject to disciplinary hear-



DEUTSCHLAND: A German Bishop climbs down the stairs before the opening mass at the German Bishops' Conference yesterday in the cathedral in Fulda, western Germany. —AFP

ings by the Church, and most got away with minimal punishment. Only 38 percent were prosecuted by civil courts.

Systemic abuse

The research is the latest in a series of reports on sexual crimes and cover-ups worldwide spanning decades that has shaken the Catholic Church. Pope Francis has found himself embroiled over conservative US Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano claimed the pontiff had himself ignored abuse allegations against prominent US cardinal Theodore McCarrick for five years.

Francis has so far refused to respond

to the allegations. He has however announced a Vatican meeting of national Church leaders on the protection of minors, for February 2019. Joerg Schuh of the Berlin-based Tauwetter centre for victims of sexual abuse told AFP TV that "the Catholic Church has a global problem". "I would like the Pope to make it his number one topic, and for his Church to really work on it," he said. Major abuse cases in Germany have included a Berlin elite Jesuit school and the world-famous Catholic choir school the Regensburger Domspatzen where more than 500 boys suffered sexual or physical abuse. —AFP

Indian passenger mistakes the exit door for toilet

MUMBAI: An Indian passenger sparked panic in mid-air when he tried to open a plane door, apparently mistaking it for the toilet, the airline and reports said. The man was travelling on a GoAir flight from New Delhi to Patna on Saturday when he attempted to open the aircraft's rear exit, the carrier said. "A co-passenger raised the alarm and he was intercepted by the crew," GoAir said in a statement emailed to AFP yesterday. Indian media reports said he was a first time flier in his late 20s. When fellow passengers asked him what he was doing he told them he "needed to use the washroom urgently and kept tugging at the exit door". The Telegraph, a Kolkata-based newspaper, quoted an airport official as saying.

"Pandemonium prevailed amid all this and he was restrained and finally handed over to us. "He said that the confusion happened because he had boarded a flight for the first time in his life," Mohammad Sanowar Khan told the newspaper. GoAir said the passenger was handed over to the authorities for further investigation after the plane arrived safely at its destination. A spokesperson for the airline added that the man wouldn't have succeeded in opening the door anyway due to air pressure in the cabin.

India's aviation market has witnessed a six-fold increase in passenger numbers over the past decade as a growing middle class take advantage of better connectivity and cheap flights, with many taking to the skies for the first time. The incident comes almost a week after a cockpit mix-up left more than 30 passengers on a Jet Airways plane bleeding from their ears and noses after the crew reportedly forgot to flick a switch regulating cabin air pressure. The flight from Mumbai to Jaipur, which was carrying 166 passengers, had to turn back. Those affected were given medical attention while the flight crew was suspended pending an investigation. —AFP

International

Pope warns against defining power as 'military strength'

Baltics nervous about giant former master and next door

TALLINN: Pope Francis said yesterday as he wound up a trip to the Baltic states, all nervous about what they see as a newly aggressive Russia next door, that nations should not measure their strength by their military capability to prevail over others. "Some people speak in a loud voice, full of self-assurance - with no doubts or hesitation. Others shout and hurl threats about using weapons, deploying troops and implementing strategies...That way they appear to be stronger," he said in a homily of a Mass in the Estonian capital Tallinn.

"But this is not about 'seeking' the will of God, but about gaining power so as to prevail over others," he said near the end of a four-day swing through Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The pope did not elaborate. But nearly 30 years the three Baltics seceded from the Soviet Union, they look warily towards giant neighbor Russia. All three now belong to NATO and the European Union: standards of living have risen significantly.

Prosperity is not the be-all and end-all, however, Pope Francis suggested in his homily. "You did not gain your freedom in order to end up as slaves of consumerism, individualism or the thirst for power or domination," he said. The three Baltics won independence after the end of World War One only to be annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, occupied by Nazi Germany during World War Two and re-absorbed by the Soviet Union until its break-up in 1991.

Recent events in Russia, with which all three states share a land border, have brought on new jitters. After Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea region in 2014 and fears grew Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania might be next on Moscow's list, defense spending increased sharply and several thousand NATO soldiers were deployed in the Baltics. The Baltics say they are victims of a sustained anti-Western disinformation campaign by Russia and subjected to regular intimidation tactics including cyber attacks - accusations which the Kremlin denies.

Abuse scandals

Earlier yesterday, Pope Francis said young



TALLINN: The wind catches Pope Francis' pellegrina as he arrives at the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in Tallinn, Estonia on the third day of his Baltic tour. — AFP

people around the world were right to feel outrage at the Catholic Church's handling of its sexual abuse scandals as it grapples with a wave of new cases in countries including Chile and Germany. Francis has come under fire from victims groups and other members of the Church

scandals," he told 1,000 young people gathered in a Lutheran church in Tallinn. He spoke hours before the Catholic Church in Germany was due to present a report on its sexual abuse record. Its findings were leaked to German magazine Der Spiegel earlier this month and showed that nearly 1,700 of its clerics and priests had sexually abused 3,677 minors over a 70-year period ending in 2014.

A similar study in the US state of Pennsylvania shook the American Catholic Church in August and last week the number of Chilean bishops who have resigned over a recent sex abuse scandal rose to seven. Francis wrote an unprecedented letter to all Catholics last month, asking each one to help root out "this culture of death" and last year said the Roman Catholic Church had "arrived late" in dealing with sexual abuse of children by priests. Estonia, the last stop of the pope's three-nation tour, has only about 4,500 Catholics, or about 0.4 percent of the population of 1.3 million, according to a 2011 census. A majority said they have no religious identification. — Reuters



Pontiff winds up 4-day swing through three Baltic states

who say he has not done enough to make bishops accountable for mishandling or covering up abuse cases.

"They are outraged when they do not see clear condemnations of sexual and economic

Philippines arrests lawmaker fiercely critical of Duterte

MANILA: A Philippine lawmaker fiercely critical of President Rodrigo Duterte's drug war was arrested yesterday on charges for which he had been granted amnesty, a move condemned by watchdogs as persecution of the government's opponents. Senator Antonio Trillanes was taken into custody and then posted bail in Manila shortly after a court-issued warrant forced him from the Senate building, where he has been holed up for weeks to avoid arrest.

Trillanes is the second senator critical of Duterte's drug war to be detained. Leila de Lima has been behind bars since February 2017 on charges which she says were concocted to silence her. Duterte earlier this month voided an amnesty granted eight years ago to the senator, a former navy officer, for his role in two coup attempts in the mid-2000s.

"They twisted the law so our democracy and institutions failed," Trillanes told reporters. "This (case) has nothing to do with anything except for the vengeance of Duterte and his underlings." Duterte issued a decree earlier this month ordering Trillanes' arrest on the grounds that he had not completed the requirements of filing an official application for amnesty and admitting guilt. The case has prompted concern in the Philippines. Critics have questioned whether presidents have the power to undo amnesties, a repeatedly used tool in a nation plagued by insurgencies and military rebellions.

'Hitman mindset'

"The arrest... is part of the persecution of critics of the Duterte administration, the latest in the relentless



MANILA: Philippines senator Antonio Trillanes arrives at the senate building in Manila yesterday. Trillanes, the chief critic of President Rodrigo Duterte, was arrested but posted bail after a court issued a warrant for his arrest in what the lawmaker decried as a "failure of democracy". —AFP

campaign to silence those who dared to challenge the president's murderous 'drug war'," said Carlos Conde of Human Rights Watch Philippines. Bigger legal trouble could await Trillanes because the government is still seeking his arrest on another charge, stemming from a separate coup attempt, which does not carry bail.

The Philippines' creaking legal system is notoriously slow and defendants can remain behind bars for years before they get their day in court. After being released yesterday Trillanes returned to the safe haven of the Senate, where lawmakers have a certain amount of protection against arrest. Along with De Lima, Trillanes is Duterte's loudest critic, telling AFP last year: "This man is a sociopath and he has the mindset of a hitman." Trillanes last year appealed to the International Criminal Court to investigate killings in Duterte's war on drugs and has repeatedly accused the president of being a mass murderer and holding secret bank accounts. — AFP

No respite for relatives of Ethiopia's disappeared

ADDIS ABABA: When Ethiopia released thousands of prisoners earlier this year, Hannah Tesemma hoped her three siblings and cousin, seized from the streets 24 years ago, would be among them. They were not, so Hannah and her sister took a banner calling for their release to a rally for new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, sticking around even after a deadly grenade attack disrupted the gathering in the capital Addis Ababa. "We aren't living, so why should we hide?" Hannah said of her decision to openly challenge the popular prime minister in public.

Still, she has received no word on their whereabouts. Since taking office in April, Abiy has pursued an aggressive reform agenda that includes trying to right some of the wrongs committed by his party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). He has released scores of jailed dissidents and publicly admitted that the security forces tortured detainees. But he has yet to bring closure for Hannah and many other Ethiopians whose friends and family opposed the EPRDF and were never seen again. "Our family has been torn apart," Hannah told AFP, tears in her eyes. "Why do we have to suffer like this?"

Enforced disappearances

The EPRDF took power in 1991 after defeating the Derg military junta, establishing itself as the sole ruler in Africa's second most-populous country. Hannah's brother Menelik Tesemma, 19 at the time, was active in an opposition party, the All-Amhara People's

Organization. Not long after giving a forceful speech at a party meeting in 1994, plainclothes security agents in an unmarked car intercepted Menelik and his cousin. That evening Hannah's other brothers, twins aged 21, went out looking for the pair after neighbors told them about the arrests. Security agents seized them too.

None has been seen since: there were no court appearances, no police records. Once, Hannah secured a meeting with a government official who listened to her story before dismissing it, saying, "Our government would not do such things." But in the early 1990s, as the EPRDF consolidated power, the enforced disappearance of opponents was an explicit strategy, said Fisseha Tekle, a researcher with Amnesty International. Having survived the Derg's bloody purges against his Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), 47-year-old Berhanu Ejigu was arrested by plainclothes police in 1994. — AFP

'China's big mistake': Pakistanis lobby to free wives trapped in Xinjiang

BEIJING: Pakistani businessmen whose wives and children are trapped in China's restive Xinjiang are travelling to Beijing to lobby their embassy, in hopes that the south Asian nation's new government will pressure its ally for their release. Beijing has faced an outcry from activists, some governments and UN human rights experts over mass detentions and strict surveillance of the mostly Muslim Uighur minority, and other Muslim groups, in the western region.

Mirza Imran Baig, 40, who trades between his home city of Lahore and Urumqi, the Xinjiang regional capital, said his wife was detained in a "re-education" camp in her native Bachu county for two months in May and June 2017 and had been unable to leave her hometown since her release. His wife, Mailikemu Maimati, 33, and their four-year-old son, who are both Chinese nationals, are unable to get their passports back from Chinese authorities, he told Reuters outside the Pakistan embassy in Beijing.

"My ambassador says, 'Wait, wait, wait, one day, two days.' Okay, I wait," Baig said late on, after his meeting. Reuters could not immediately reach the ambassador, Masood Khalid, to seek comment. Beijing says it faces a

serious threat from Islamist militants and separatists in Xinjiang and has rejected accusations of mistreatment.

Asked about the Pakistani businessmen on Tuesday, Geng Shuang, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, told a regular news briefing that he was not aware of the situation. Muslim majority nations have mostly remained silent over the situation in Xinjiang. Last month's election of cricketer legend and firebrand nationalist Imran Khan as Pakistan's prime minister has fed the expectations of many for him to deliver on promises to create jobs, build an Islamic welfare state and restore the country's image abroad.

Mian Shahid Ilyas, a businessman in Lahore who has been collecting details of cases and seeking government support, said he was optimistic the new government would help. Pakistan's foreign ministry in Islamabad did not reply to questions from Reuters on the Uighur spouses. "A lot of people get married like us. It's no problem. But in 2017 they start to seal everything off in Xinjiang," Ilyas, who said his Chinese Uighur wife, a citizen of China, had been detained since April 2017, told Reuters by telephone. — Reuters

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International

'Love Corbyn, hate Brexit': UK Labour Party faces Brexit split

Tumultuous debate on the toxic issue of Brexit

LIVERPOOL: Britain's main opposition Labour Party is bracing for a tumultuous debate on the toxic issue of Brexit at its annual conference yesterday amid deep divisions between delegates. Many young members oppose it, carrying bags reading "Love Corbyn, Hate Brexit" at the gathering in Liverpool, while older, working-class Labour voters are in favor. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has so far played a canny game by allowing the debate to tie the government in knots while remaining ambiguous, but the time is nearing to reveal his hand. "It's decision time and we need to nail our colors to the mast," Emily Wallace, chair of the Vauxhall Labour party said on the sidelines of the party conference in Liverpool.

Her delegation plans to vote in favor of a conference motion yesterday supporting "all options remaining on the table", including the possibility of a second referendum on Brexit. The motion's wording was agreed on Monday after five hours of intense talks and it disappointed many party members, who had hoped for a firm commitment to a second vote on a final Brexit deal, including the option to remain in the EU. Labour's policy on Brexit is significant because of the current weakness of Prime Minister Theresa May's government, which lacks a stable majority in parliament and could face defeat by MPs if and when it brings a final deal with Brussels for a vote.

'Remain on the table'

Pro-EU activists were dealt another blow when shadow finance minister John McDonnell yesterday said any second vote should not include the choice

of whether or not to stay in the EU. Shadow Brexit minister Keir Starmer contradicted him, saying the motion "clearly keeps remain on the table", while pro-EU MP Stephen Kinnock told AFP he was "baffled" by the comments.

The confusion reflects the ideological and tactical splits within the party, which Corbyn has largely masked through vague messaging, instead focusing on unifying domestic issues. However, with Brexit negotiations entering the final phase, the pressure is on Corbyn to plot a clear path in order to capitalize on May's weakness in the negotiations. But the way ahead is far from clear and polls show the country is still more or less divided on Brexit—although a narrow majority might now support staying in the EU.

Labour's traditional left-wing working-class constituencies voted largely to leave the EU. "The EU was a social democratic movement, and it was a good idea, but after the financial crash, it decided to bail out the banks at the expense of the people," Brexit supporter Les Thomas told AFP at a protest against a second referendum. But the centrists who took charge when Tony Blair became party leader in 1994 strongly favour the EU, and despite being sidelined by Corbyn's election, they comprise a large rump of the party's MPs.

Ultimate prize beckons

The most complex set of voters are the new members, many young, who were attracted to Corbyn's social justice agenda, but who tend to not share his historic suspicion of the EU and its free-trade policies. The stakes couldn't be higher, with a wrong



LIVERPOOL: Britain's opposition Labor party Brexit leader Jeremy Corbyn listens to speeches on the third day of the Labor party conference in Liverpool. —AFP

move potentially returning Corbyn to the political sidelines. If he can bridge the party's divides, the ultimate prize beckons.

Speaking at a pro-EU demonstration at the conference, Claire Hallett, 60, said Corbyn was in "a terribly difficult position" but should come out firmly against Brexit. "He really needs to stand up and be

clear. He will get a load of support from people who are not natural Labour voters," said Hallett, who runs a holiday cottage business in Wales and attended the rally with her dog Desmond dressed in an EU flag. "If Jeremy Corbyn were to come out and support a second referendum, and they had a snap election next month, I think they would win." —AFP



Pro-EU activists dealt another blow

Merkel says still unclear what UK wants in Brexit

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday that Britain had still not expressed a clear position on its post-Brexit relations with the EU, warning that only "six to eight weeks" remained to reach an agreement. Success in the upcoming negotiations depended "largely on what it is Britain really wants, and on this the discussion has still not been entirely clear", Merkel told a business conference in Berlin. Merkel reiterated the stance of the remaining 27 EU members that "you can't belong to a single market if you want to stick to just one of its principles but not the other three".

Brussels believes May wants Britain to keep the benefits of free trade on goods with the EU without following its three other core principles, the free movement of people, services and capital over borders. British Prime Minister Theresa May had hit back Friday at the EU after it roundly rejected her Brexit plan, saying its refusal to compromise was "not acceptable" and warning she was still prepared to walk away from the talks. May blamed Brussels for the "impasse" just weeks ahead of a deadline to seal a deal-and six months before Britain leaves the EU in March.

The EU summit in Salzburg had also raised the stakes by putting on ice a special summit planned for November to seal a deal, saying it would only happen if there is progress next month. Merkel said the November special summit would "probably" take place but warned that "six to eight weeks of intense



LIVERPOOL: Anti-Brexit protesters hold placards as they take part in an anti-Brexit, pro-EU march through the centre of Liverpool in support of a People's Vote, on the official opening day of the annual Labor Party Conference. —AFP

work lie ahead in which we have to make political decisions". Progress could be achieved in October, she said, but added that any proposal should "formulate in the most concrete terms possible" what future relations should look like.

Otherwise, warned the chancellor, "the transition period could become too short to reach any kind of reasonable agreement". May's government faces

heightening pressure as it lacks a stable majority in parliament and could face defeat by MPs if and when it brings a final deal with Brussels for a vote. Critics of May's Brexit proposal have launched a "Save Brexit Campaign" to push for a clean break with the EU. Polls show the country is still more or less divided on Brexit, although a narrow majority might now support staying in the EU. —AFP

News in brief

Assault video goes viral

NEW DELHI: Three Indian police officers were suspended yesterday after footage emerged showing a constable attacking a female student they had accused of socializing with a Muslim man, officials said. The video, which has been circulated widely online, shows a female constable repeatedly striking the young student—who local media report is Hindu—and berating her for allegedly conducting an interfaith relationship. Such liaisons can be frowned upon in Hindu-majority India where Muslims make up one-fifth of the population. Police in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where the incident occurred, said that the female constable and two other police officials had been suspended pending an inquiry. "Their conduct has led to embarrassment for the UP police," a senior police official who did not want to be named said. —AFP

Deaths of sewer cleaners

NEW DELHI: The relatives of thousands of Indians who died cleaning sewers protested in the capital yesterday, aiming to stop the practice of workers entering underground conduits to unclog drains and remove waste with their bare hands. Hundreds of protesters shouted slogans accusing the government of delaying compensation for sewer deaths, while others waved banners saying they came as Prime Minister Narendra Modi pushes his "Swachh Bharat," or "Clean India", program. "I lost my only son," said Saroj, a mother among the protesters, who hails from the northern city of Ludhiana in Punjab. "He went into the sewers and never came out. How long will these deaths continue?" One placard read, "Eleven workers died in the sewers in seven days." —Reuters

S Africa relaxes visa rules

PRETORIA: South Africa yesterday announced visa reforms aimed at luring investment and tourists to help lift the continent's most advanced economy out of recession. Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba unveiled a raft of regulations allowing frequent visitors and foreign business travellers to have long-term multiple-entry visas of up to 10 years. The rules will take effect from next month. "Changes to our visa architecture have the potential to boost tourism and make business travel more conducive," Gigaba told reporters. "We are simplifying visa requirements for countries such as China and India." Applicants from those two countries will be able to have a 10-year visa processed within five days. "This arrangement is meant to attract business people and prospective investors," he said. Anti-trafficking rules requiring parents to travel with birth certificates of their children will be simplified, he added. —AFP

Putin's foe sentenced

MOSCOW: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was sentenced to 20 days in jail for organizing an anti-Kremlin protest in a new court ruling Monday, the day he was freed after spending a month behind bars. The authorities have turned up the heat on Vladimir Putin's top foe after the Russian president's popularity ratings have taken a beating and the Kremlin suffered a string of rare electoral defeats this month. "Twenty days," Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said on Twitter after a Moscow district court issued the ruling late Monday. The 42-year-old anti-corruption campaigner will have spent a total of 50 days in prison for organizing two opposition protests. Navalny's allies fear that the two consecutive administrative cases mean the authorities may be getting ready to open a criminal probe against him. —AFP

Europe's far-left seeks inspiration at UK Labour fest

LIVERPOOL: Criticized at home for its ambiguity on Brexit, Britain's Labour Party is the envy of European leftists with its 550,000-strong membership and social media-savvy campaigning tactics. Representatives of far-left groups from countries including France, Greece and Spain have been attending the party's annual conference this week to learn about its grassroots appeal.

Jean-Luc Melenchon, head of the France Unbowed party, was a star speaker at the meeting in Liverpool, northwest England where he met Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and spoke about "building ties". Melenchon, a former member of France's main Socialist Party, said he saw parallels between himself and Corbyn and credited his rise to a "wave of kick them out sentiment" that had overturned the party's previous leadership.

Members of Germany's Die Linke, Spain's Podemos and Greece's ruling Syriza party, as well as the En Comu party from Catalonia also took part in multiple discussions during the conference. Their interest is mainly in Momentum, the youthful pro-Corbyn activist group that has taken British politics by storm with its brand of local campaigning and swelled the Labour ranks. Podemos senator Idoia Villanueva tweeted from the conference:

"Where next for the European Left? Time to work for an alternative with progressive forces for a popular, democratic and Rupertist project for Europe".

Labour 'reinvented itself'

Philippe Marliere, a politics professor at University College London, told AFP Labour was doing "very, very well" in terms of organization and numbers. "It is completely original and different compared to the difficult times that the majority of other social-democratic parties are going through right now," he said. Corbyn was elected as party leader in 2015 and faced a difficult time asserting himself in the first few months as many of Labour's lawmakers were from a more moderate wing of the party inspired by former leader and Prime Minister Tony Blair. But, after surviving a leadership challenge, Corbyn emerged from the 2017 general election in a stronger position after the Conservatives lost their parliamentary majority and Labour made advances following a strong leftist campaign.

Labour's relative success compared to other social-democratic parties in Europe is due to Corbyn's "social discourse" that has appealed to people who have previously not voted, Marliere said. "There has been a willingness... to develop more flexible, democratic and open ways of working and campaigning. They try to attract young people, women, ethnic minorities and give them more senior jobs," he said. Labour MP Jon Trickett, the party's spokesman on business, told the conference: "Nowhere has the left reinvented itself more than in the UK with the Labour Party". —AFP

Father of boy saved by Paris 'Spiderman' in court

PARIS: When a Malian illegal immigrant rescued a child dangling from a Paris balcony, he was hailed worldwide as a hero—but the little boy's father will appear in court yesterday charged with negligence. Mamoudou Gassama, the migrant nicknamed "Spiderman" after footage of his daring rescue went viral in May, has since been rewarded with French citizenship and a job in the fire service.

But the four-year-old's father, who has not been named, faces a potential criminal conviction for leaving the child unattended in their 6th-floor apartment, popping out to buy groceries. Paris prosecutor Francois Molins said at the time of the incident that the father also delayed his return because he wanted to play the popular Pokemon Go game on his phone. The man's lawyer Romain Ruiz said prosecutors had taken "particularly reductive" elements of

the story out of context, but added that the 37-year-old father admitted he had "done something really stupid".

"He is leaving his fate up to the court," Ruiz said. He added that the father had left home "for between 30 minutes and an hour" and had taken "precautions" to keep the child safe in his absence. The little boy clambered onto the balcony and appears to have fallen, before miraculously managing to grab the rail of a balcony lower down. Footage of the incident, filmed by a bystander below, shows him hanging over the edge, a neighbor on the adjoining balcony desperately trying to hold onto him.

Gassama, 22, then scales the building Spiderman-style and pulls him to safety. In theory, parental negligence carries a maximum penalty of two years in prison under France's penal code, and a fine of up to 30,000 euros (\$35,300). But such a sentence is thought unlikely in the case of this father, who has been allowed to keep custody of his son. The boy's mother was away at the time of the May 26 incident on a trip to France's Reunion island in the Indian Ocean. Both parents were said at the time to be extremely shaken by the incident but hugely grateful to Gassama. —AFP

International

Afghan 'mullah' faces stoning death over sex tapes scandal

Mullah allegedly filmed himself while having sex with women

MAZAR-I-SHARIF: A self-proclaimed mullah in Afghanistan, who allegedly filmed himself having sex with women, is on the run after the videos went viral on social media, prompting religious leaders to order his death by stoning. Mullah Rasool, a traditional healer who wrote amulets for clients in a village in the north-western province of Faryab, is accused of sexually exploiting and raping several women who had gone to him for help. Rasool, whose nickname is Landay, which means "Shorty" in Pashto, allegedly used the videos to blackmail the women. A number of videos began circulating on social media in recent weeks, but it is not clear when they were made or if they were filmed in Rasool's village of Chinar in Pashtunkot district.

In one video posted on Facebook, a bearded and turbaned man purported to be Rasool is seen loosening his white baggy trousers, clearly aroused. A young woman, still wearing her long dress and headscarf, removes her trousers and lays on a large floor cushion where they have sex. While the identities of the women are not yet known, their faces are visible in the videos, which have been viewed tens of thousands of times, raising fears for their safety in the deeply religious country. "We predict there will be honor killings," Faryab governor spokesman Jawed Bidar said.

Provincial women's affairs department head Sharifa Azimi said the women had been "tricked" and has urged religious leaders to tell their worshippers that they are "innocent victims, not bad women". "We are very worried that they will be murdered," Azimi said. The body of a woman was found dumped in a ditch near Chinar village several days ago, but it has not yet been identified, Azimi added. Faryab's top religious leaders have sentenced Rasool to death by stoning. "If the government arrests and punishes him, okay, otherwise the people are also after this guy and will stone him to death," said Ghulam Nabi Ghafari, deputy head of the provincial Ulema Council.

The videos and whereabouts of Rasool have become a major topic of conversation in Afghanistan where sex is a taboo subject and women are largely treated as second class citizens. Much of the commentary on social media has targeted Rasool, who has been described as "Satan" and a "porn star". There have been calls for him to be hanged and his genitals cut off. But the scandal has also inspired a spoof on a popular television comedy show in which a character portraying Rasool fondles a male actor dressed up as a woman.

Traditional healers are much-revered in the ultra conservative countryside, where illiteracy remains rampant. A lack of conventional health services forces



NANGARHAR: Afghan security forces walk near a pile of burning drugs and alcohol on the outskirts of Jalalabad. Afghan authorities burned around 20 tons of narcotics which were seized during operations in Nangarhar province, officials said. —AFP

many to rely on healers for a variety of problems—from debilitating maladies and infertility to finding stolen items and reuniting lost lovers. To help police track down Rasool, provincial governor Naqibullah

Faiq is offering his own car as a reward to anyone with information leading to his arrest. "He will be arrested. He has no place abroad," Faiq told a recent gathering. —AFP



Traditional healer accused of raping several women

Maldives destroys statues deemed offensive to Islam

COLOMBO: Police armed with pickaxes and power tools have destroyed a modern artwork by a celebrated British sculptor in the Maldives, after the outgoing president in the tourist haven declared the installation offensive to Islam. Abdulla Yameen in July ordered the sculptures demolished but his ruling was not acted upon until Friday, on the eve of a presidential election which he lost to a liberal candidate. A series of statues by Jason deCaires Taylor were placed inside a semi-submerged metal cube in July at a resort in the Maldives, an archipelago of 340,000 Sunni Muslims popular with tourists.

Islam, the official religion in the Maldives, bans the depiction of idols, and the work provoked some criticism from clerics even though the statues have no religious symbols or meaning. Yameen said in July that "significant public sentiment" against the artwork known as 'Coralarium' had guided his decision to destroy it. It is unclear why the sculptures were not raised from the waters until Friday, just two days before Yameen was turfed out of office. Police were photographed chipping away at the works with pickaxes and using power tools to remove them from the large ornate cage housing them.

A video posted by state media showed several men tearing a statue off a plinth. "I was extremely shocked and heartbroken to learn that my sculptures have been destroyed by the Maldivian authorities at the Coralarium, despite continued consultations and dia-



MALE: Photo shows the newly opened Sinamale Bridge—formerly known as the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge after a major funding input from China—in the Maldives capital Male. —AFP

logue," deCaires Taylor told AFP in a statement. "The Coralarium was conceived to connect humans to the environment and a nurturing space for marine life to thrive. Nothing else! "The Maldives is still beautiful, with a warm and friendly population, but it was a sad day for art and sad day for the environment."

The import of statues is prohibited in the Maldives. Even depictions of the Buddha are banned despite a long legacy of Buddhism in the islands before Islam

came to dominate the archipelago. Despite the edict, huge cutouts of Yameen towered over the capital Male in the lead-up to Sunday's poll, which he lost after five years of strongman rule marked by a regression from democracy. Many of these cardboard posters depicting the ousted leader were torn down after he suffered a shock defeat to opposition candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, an act of defiance unthinkable under his iron-fisted leadership. —AFP

US irks Beijing with proposed sale of military parts to Taiwan

BEIJING: China expressed "strong dissatisfaction" yesterday over US plans to sell a batch of military parts to the self-governing island of Taiwan, adding to tensions between the global superpowers. The \$330 million contract would see the US ship standard spare parts for several aircraft including the F-16 fighter and the C-130 cargo plane, the State Department said in a statement on Monday.

China lashed out at the deal, saying it "severely violates" international laws and norms governing foreign relations, and expressed "strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition" to the sales. Beijing sees Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting unification, and is deeply suspicious of the island's relations with the US.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular press briefing that Beijing has lodged "solemn representations"—an official protest—with the United States. "We urge the US side to... immediately withdraw this armed sales plan and stop military contact with Taiwan lest it should cause severe damage to US-China relations, cross-straits stability and peace, and our cooperation in other important areas," he said. Congress has 30 days to raise objections to the sale, though this is unlikely given the State Department has determined Taiwan continues to be "an important force for political stability, military balance, and economic progress in the region."

Washington remains Taipei's most powerful unofficial ally and its main arms supplier despite switching diplomatic recognition to Beijing in 1979. China has stepped up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan



BEIJING: In this file photo, China's President Xi Jinping (left) and US President Donald Trump review Chinese honor guards during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. —AFP

since the Beijing-sceptic President Tsai Ing-wen took office two years ago, including staging a series of military exercises near the island. Taiwan yesterday welcomed the US announcement, saying it would help the island strengthen its defense capabilities.

"As Taiwan faces gradually heightened threats, the US arm sales would... also boost Taiwan's confidence in strengthening self-defense to help maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," the foreign ministry said in a statement. Taiwan's presidential office said the island's government would continue to increase its defense investment and "maintain close communication and cooperation" with the US on security issues. Beijing has been incensed by recent warming ties

between Washington and Taipei, including the approval by the US State Department of a preliminary license to sell submarine technology to the island.

The US recently sanctioned a Chinese military procurement organization, drawing a sharp protest from Beijing and a decision to postpone planned military talks. Beijing and Washington are also at odds over China's wooing of Taiwan's diplomatic allies. The new arms sale was announced on the same day that President Donald Trump's administration enacted new tariffs against China covering another \$200 billion of Chinese imports. The move brings the amount of Chinese goods hit by duties to more than \$250 billion, roughly half of China's US exports. —AFP

News in brief

UK retiree, wife murdered

BANGKOK: The bodies of a wealthy British retiree and his Thai wife were found buried on their own property yesterday a week after an alleged contract killing that implicated the woman's brother, police said. Alan Hogg was shot while his wife Nhot Suddaen was bludgeoned to death with a hammer at their villa in the northern province of Phrae by men paid 50,000 baht (\$1,540). Their bodies were discovered Tuesday morning in graves two meters deep on their own land, Colonel Manas Kerdsukho, police commander in Phrae said. Three suspects have been arrested, including Nhot's elder brother Varut Rattanasajjakit, the alleged mastermind accused of paying the killers. "The motive for the killings was a long-running internal family conflict, feuds and property," Manas said. He added that prime suspect Varut was arrested later and one of the alleged accomplices told authorities he helped carry out the murder. —AFP

'Extremist' Islamic school

NOUAKCHOTT: The authorities in Mauritania have closed a school of Islamic theology accused of promoting extremism and having links with the Muslim Brotherhood, a security official said yesterday. The measure comes on the heels of a warning against politicized Islam issued by President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. "The centre for training ulemas (Islamic scholars) was closed last night by the police on the orders of the government, which accuses it of extremism," the source told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. Located in the capital Nouakchott, the school was set up several years ago by Mohamed Elhacen Ould Dedaw, a prominent scholar reputed to be Mauritania's "main theologian" for the transnational Muslim Brotherhood. The school trains high-level students, including nationals from West African states. —AFP

Baby body in a locker

TOKYO: Tokyo police said yesterday they had arrested a 49-year-old woman suspected of dumping a stillborn baby's body in a coin locker, amid reports she had moved the corpse around for as many as five years. "The suspect... left and abandoned the body of an infant inside the locker," near Uguisudani Station, a Tokyo police spokeswoman told AFP, with the latest incident occurring around September 13. According to local media, the unemployed woman handed herself in and confessed she had been storing the body in lockers near the station since suffering a stillbirth "four or five years ago". "I panicked after I did not give birth to a living child and kept the body as I could not dispose of it," she told investigators, according to Kyodo News. —AFP

'Antiquated' gay sex law

SINGAPORE: One of Singapore's most influential diplomats yesterday called for the repeal of a law criminalizing sex between men, saying it was time for the modern city-state to abandon the "antiquated" legislation. The Indian Supreme Court's decision earlier this month to decriminalize homosexual sex has sparked fresh debate in Singapore, and a new legal challenge has been lodged against the city's anti-gay sex law. Sex between men remains illegal in Singapore under "Section 377A" of the penal code, inherited from the British colonial era, although it is rarely enforced. Tommy Koh, a veteran diplomat and former ambassador to the United Nations and the US, wrote in a column for the pro-government newspaper The Straits Times that the statute should be abandoned. —AFP

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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How Trump split Mexico and Canada in NAFTA talks

After winning the Mexican presidential election, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took a congratulatory call from US President Donald Trump. But Trump had something more important on his mind: Would Mexico's new president consider a bilateral trade deal? Lopez Obrador responded he would be "open to the possibility" in the absence of a trilateral agreement that also included Canada, said Hector Vasconcelos, a foreign policy advisor to Lopez Obrador's campaign who listened to the call on July 2.

Lopez Obrador's answer marked a pivotal moment after a contentious year of negotiations between the United States, Canada and Mexico to rework the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the framework for more than a trillion dollars in annual trade between the three. Until then, Mexico and Canada had worked together to counter the economic and political clout of the United States as Trump demanded more favorable terms for the world's largest economy and repeatedly called NAFTA a "disaster" for US workers. But the election victory for Lopez Obrador, a leftist opposition candidate, gave Trump an opportunity to divide Mexico and Canada and cut a deal the way he wanted - one-on-one.

"I think I'm doing better with (Lopez Obrador) than the capitalist," Trump told his supporters at a West Virginia rally last month, referring to Mexico's outgoing president, Enrique Pena Nieto. The shift in Mexico's position came as the rival incoming and outgoing administrations realized that a deal with the United States before the presidential changeover would suit them both, according to interviews with more than a dozen people familiar with the talks.

Lopez Obrador's new government was eager to sidestep conflict with Trump and focus on domestic issues. The president-elect - who has little enthusiasm for foreign relations - wanted to avoid the headache of navigating a complex trade negotiation left over from a previous presidency, said three senior officials with the incoming administration. "The best foreign policy is domestic policy," Lopez Obrador has said several times publicly.

Pena Nieto's outgoing team wanted to rescue a tangible achievement from two years of bruising negotiations, which overshadowed the last third of his presidency, hampered investment and roiled Mexico's currency, according to the sources familiar with the talks. While Mexican law doesn't allow presidents to seek re-election, the candidate Pena Nieto backed lost by a wide margin. Throughout most of the talks, Pena Nieto's administration had reasoned that, together, Canada and Mexico had more leverage in negotiations that were stacked in Trump's favor. Both economies depend heavily on US customers, with Mexico sending about 80 percent of exports to the United States and Canada sending about 75 percent. Together, Mexico and Canada account for slightly more than a third of US exports.

But on Aug 27, less than two months after Trump's call to Lopez Obrador, negotiators for the United States and Mexico struck a deal. "Mexico had to look out for Mexico," said Moises Kalach, head of the international negotiating arm of the CCE business lobby, which represented Mexico's private sector at the NAFTA talks. Mexican officials point out that Canada had previously signaled that it might take the same path. Early last year, the Canadian ambassador to Washington, David MacNaughton, said publicly that Canada would act bilaterally or bilaterally depending on its interests. Canada's office of Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland declined to comment on the US-Mexico deal or its impact on Canada's ongoing talks with the United States. The White House did not comment in response to Reuters questions.

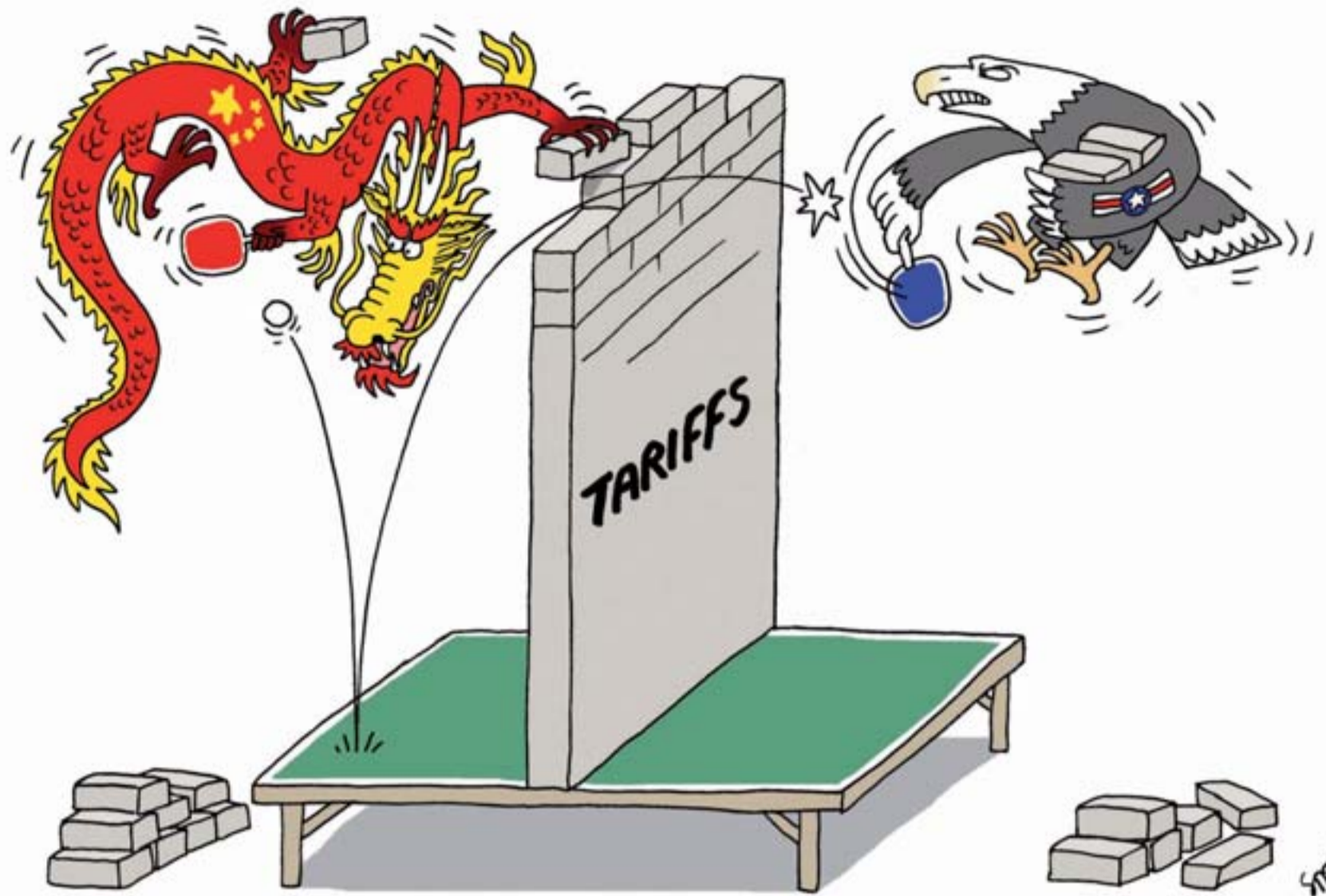
Left out

The US-Mexico pact has prompted many of Canada's business and political leaders to ramp up pressure on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to cut his own deal with the United States. Mexico weakened Canada's negotiating leverage when it conceded on some issues important to Ottawa, including a mechanism to resolve disputes between NAFTA members known as Chapter 19, which Canadian officials say offers protection from unfair trade practices. Canada used the process to defend its lumber exports in the face of US charges that the timber is unfairly subsidized.

Canada is also resisting US demands to open the protected dairy industry to US competitors. Canadian officials believe Mexico gave up too much in the deal, said an influential private sector union leader with close ties to Canada's negotiators. "There's a general feeling that the Mexicans capitulated in some key areas," Unifor president Jerry Dias said in a phone interview.

Deadline for a deal

Pena Nieto needed an agreement by the end of August. Any later would have meant that he won't be able to sign it before leaving office on Nov 30 because it could take 90 days for the US Congress to review and approve the deal. Trump, a Republican, still faces opposition from some members of his party in Congress who favor a trilateral agreement, along with the risk that Republicans could suffer defeats in the upcoming mid-term elections on Nov 6 and lose their majority in the US House or Senate. Trump's deal with Mexico could help his party in the elections because many states that helped elect the president in 2016, particularly in agricultural regions, would have been hurt by a breakdown in trade with Mexico, said Kalach of the CCE business lobby. Personal connections also smoothed the path to a deal. Among those tasked with leading the Mexican negotiation was Luis Videgaray, foreign minister for the outgoing administration, who forged a relationship with Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner. The two men had met through Wall Street connections before Trump's inauguration in 2017. —Reuters



Trump targets Iran with 'max pressure'

One year after mobilizing the international community against North Korea, Donald Trump is trying to force another arch enemy to the negotiating table by targeting Iran with a similar campaign of "maximum pressure". But if North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un has seen his standing with the US president transformed in the 12 months since Trump's United Nations debut, the prospects of Hassan Rouhani undergoing a similar transformation appear far from clear.

In his debut speech before the UN General Assembly last September, Trump gave an initial airing to his "maximum pressure" philosophy as he railed both against Iran and North Korea. But Kim, derided a year ago by Trump as "a little rocket man" who was on a "suicide mission" is now being hailed as a "terrific" leader by the US president after their historic summit in Singapore in June. A second get-together could be announced shortly.

According to one senior European diplomat, the Trump administration is convinced that its tough talk - allied with a massive program of sanctions - forced the North Korean leadership to change course, even if doubts remain about how many concrete measures the North has actually taken towards ending its nuclear program. The Trump administration therefore plans to "do the same thing with Iran: Hit hard and then negotiate from a position of strength", the diplomat added.

Much to the dismay of Washington's Western allies, Trump slammed the door in May on a deal that the US and European powers brokered with Iran back in 2015 that allowed for a lifting of sanctions in exchange for restrictions on

Tehran's nuclear program. With the Iranian economy showing increasing signs of strain, the Trump administration is hoping that Tehran will have no option if it wants to survive and return to the negotiating table.

Behnam Ben Taleblu of the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, whose organization is known for its hardline stance towards the regimes in both Pyongyang and Tehran, said there were clear parallels. "It's hard not to mention Iran and North Korea in the same breath when talking about rogue regimes and nuclear non-proliferation," he told AFP. "I believe that a 'maximum pressure' strategy towards both regimes is wise and warranted, but it will be challenging to conduct," added Ben Taleblu.

While both regimes have been accused of trying to develop nuclear weapons, Washington's complaints against Iran are more extensive - encouraged by its Sunni Arab allies who have long been hostile towards the mainly Shiite regime in Tehran.

Changing behavior

Various administration officials have accused Tehran of destabilizing large parts of the Middle East by becoming directly or indirectly involved through proxy militias in the conflicts in countries such as Syria, Yemen and Iraq. "What we expect from Iran is massive changes in their behavior. And until that happens, we will continue to exert what the president has called 'maximum pressure,'" Trump's national security advisor John Bolton told reporters in New York on Monday.

While Trump has not totally ruled out

army," Netanyahu said yesterday.

But Netanyahu's government has little choice but to take into account Russia's anger over the incident and the potential risk to Israeli aircraft, analysts say. In deciding to provide Syria with the S-300 system, Russia overrode years of Israeli opposition to supplying President Bashar Al-Assad's regime with the technology. Eran Lerman, former deputy director for foreign policy at Israel's National Security Council, called it a "very serious issue" that could amount to an "intolerable situation from an Israeli perspective".

But he added that it seems communication "channels remain open and operational". "We don't work for the same purposes, but we have a common interest in preventing clashes," said Lerman, adding that there are "mutual understandings" that can eventually prevail. Israel and Russia put a hotline in place in 2015 to avoid accidental clashes in Syria. In recent years, Israel has carried out repeated strikes against Iranian targets in Syria as well as what it says are advanced arms deliveries to Hezbollah. It has hit Syrian sites where those targets were located.

Iran and Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah, two of Israel's main enemies, are backing Assad in his country's civil war alongside Russia. Israel also remains technically at war with Syria. The hotline - or "deconfliction mechanism" as diplomats refer to it - failed to prevent Russia's Ilyushin Il-20 military plane being shot down on September 17 by Syrian air defenses. Syria was responding to an Israeli strike, and Russia accused the Israeli pilots of using its larger plane as "cover" while only giving one minute of advance notice for their raid.

Israel strongly denied the Russian



US President Donald Trump addresses the 73rd United Nations General Assembly yesterday in New York City. —AFP

meeting with Rouhani on the sidelines of the General Assembly, the Iranian president appears in no mood to meet his US counterpart and rejects any comparison with the situation with North Korea. "The North Korean model cannot be a correct model, because we cannot draw such comparisons," Rouhani, who made his own address to the General Assembly yesterday, told the NBC network.

While US hardliners reject the president's reputation as a moderate, the Iranian government - with Rouhani resoundingly re-elected last year on a platform of better relations with the world - is far more multifaceted than North Korea where Kim's family has ruled with an iron fist for more than a half-century.

Thomas Countryman, who served in the State Department under Trump's predecessor Barack Obama, said that one of the reasons why Trump's strategy appears doomed to fail with Iran is that he has failed to work with key allies such as fellow members of the Security Council and has been instead too heavily guided by Tehran's enemies. "The campaign of pressure against Iran is driven in part by Middle Eastern friends of the Trump administration who wish to draw the US into an active confrontation with Iran," said Countryman who now heads the Arms Control Association pressure group. "The US is burning up its traditional credibility on the Security Council," he added. —AFP



In this file photo taken on April 18, 2017, an Iranian military truck carries parts of the S-300 air defense missile system during a parade on the occasion of the country's Army Day in Tehran. —AFP

version of events. In a further sign of the seriousness of the Russian reaction, Netanyahu convened a meeting of his security council yesterday to discuss the issue before flying to New York for the UN General Assembly. He said afterwards that he had agreed with Putin to have Israeli and Russian military teams meet soon to enhance coordination.

'Only concern for now'

But Israel sees the stakes as too high to accept severe limitations on its actions against Iran and Hezbollah in Syria, some analysts said. Its pilots have already been trained to deal with the threat of the S-300, they say. As for the Russians, they have not forgotten the 1970 battle when Israeli Phantom and Mirage planes destroyed Soviet MiGs stationed in

Egypt in a matter of minutes, said Efraim Inbar, head of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies

Lerman does not believe the Russians are looking to escalate the situation, not wanting to compromise their gains in Syria. But he believes that Russia will try to use the September 17 incident as a "bargaining chip in the larger game that they are playing with the United States and the international community". Russian expert Vladimir Sotnikov also does not see a severe downturn in relations. "Russia's only concern for now is to reach a settlement in the Syrian conflict because its armed forces are there," he said. "Israel is a very important partner for Moscow. It is an ally of the United States, with whom Moscow wants to renew dialogue." —AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

13 China says impossible to hold talks with 'knife to the throat'



14 Turkish Airlines conference hosts global business travel professionals



15 Google tunes search for prescience and pictures



KUWAIT: Delegates attend the 10th Euromoney Kuwait Conference at the Four Seasons Hotel, yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat.

Kuwait to push reforms to boost private sector

Al-Hajraf opens 10th Euromoney Conference Kuwait

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance Minister Dr. Nayef Al-Hajraf yesterday underlined the importance of a planned economic reforms to activate the role of the private sector and "reduce government intervention in the economy."

Al-Hajraf made his remarks in his opening speech at the 10th session of the Euromoney Conference - Kuwait 2018. Kuwait has great potential in its institutions, human and financial resources, he said. He said that article 20 of Kuwait Constitution affirms that the national economy is based on social justice and fair cooperation between public activity and private activity, to achieve economic development, increase production, and promote living standards.

The minister spoke of certain amendments to legislations, in addition to changes made to the state budget, taking into account the latest economic and financial developments. He revealed that the new legislation has been referred to parliament and will come under close scrutiny by lawmakers during the National Assembly's forthcoming session. The key objective is to preserve Kuwait's financial resources, which in turn, gains the trust of the state audit bureau and simplifies the process of putting together the state budget, Al-Hajraf explained. As per the new legislation, he said that all government bodies are required to provide the finance ministry with an annual report detailing such intricacies as the gap between expenses and revenues.

This law draft will replace existing law No 31/1978. "We reformed the 40-year-old law to apply modern developments on public budget principles to make it more accurate. We have sent this draft law to the Cabinet to be listed among the priorities during the next term of the parliament," added Hajraf. "We are resetting the role of the ministry of finance in the governmental system to transfer from 'an accountant of public institutions' to 'chief financial officer', to direct the financial policies of the country," he said.

Similarly, he said that the "government is also required to inform parliament of current



KUWAIT: Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf addresses the Euromoney Kuwait Conference.

financial conditions" on a regular basis, citing the finance ministry's official website for further details over the new legislation. The "Euromoney 2018 Conference" brings together several economic and financial experts to discuss how integral the financial sector is to Kuwait's national development plans.

The 10th edition of the Euromoney Kuwait Conference held at the Four Seasons Hotel is titled 'New Kuwait - the financial sector's response.' Kuwait unveils plan to attract direct investment

More FDI inflows

The Kuwait government has devised a strategy to lure direct investment as part of efforts to buoy the national development plan, director general of Kuwait's Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Dr. Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Sabah told the 'Euromoney 2018 Conference.'

He said that the privatization of Kuwait's stock exchange, among other measures taken to create a more business-friendly environ-

ment, served as the catalyst for local market growth. "These direct investments will serve the national vision 2035 - New Kuwait - which will ensure economic diversification, in addition to developing human resources and improving Kuwait's international position. We



KDIPA strategy to attract more FDI

aim to achieve sustainable development goals based on our youth to build a bright future," Sheikh Mishal said.

The official said these measures go a long way in gaining the trust of investors and encouraging them to foray into the Kuwaiti market, citing "ample investment opportunities"



KUWAIT: Dr. Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks at the Euromoney Kuwait conference

the Gulf state has to offer. He pinpointed the growing cooperation between the private and government sectors as another factor that contributed towards increased foreign investment.

Sheikh Mishal said the Euromoney Conference is an important platform to showcase the model international development of finance and banking and its impact on the national economy. "This conference is a great opportunity for networking and gathering decision makers, officials, investors, bankers, executive directors, businessmen and experts at one event to exchange experiences and discuss important economic issues," he pointed out.

"The Kuwaiti market has become attractive, even more especially after reclassifying the Boursa Kuwait as an emerging market and continuing the privatization process of the market. Also, issuing modern economic laws and regulations boosted the business environment in the country, in addition to increasing transparency," explained Sheikh Mishal.

According to him, these achievements will increase investor trust. "These achieve-

ments reflect positive messages to the business community to encourage them to enter the Kuwaiti market and benefit from the investment opportunities. This is supported by encouraging partnership between the private and public sectors, protecting competition and using electronic transactions," he added.

New projects

Mazin Al-Nahedh, CEO and General Manager of Kuwait Finance House, said there are many upcoming projects in different sectors including health, oil, education and other vital sectors. "What we most care for is the execution of these projects. We hope the oil price hike in the present time won't negatively affect these developing projects or plans. I hope to see more of these projects in 2019," he told Kuwait Times.

Manaf Al-Hajeri, Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Finance Center (Markaz), said the most important target for Kuwait is to diversify sources of income. "We coordinate with the oil sector to diversify income resources. The foreign investment in the stock exchange is great, but we haven't noticed local investments by public institutions in the stock exchange - they give priority to invest in the oil sector," he noted.

Privatization will have an impact. "I think privatization should be executed by a strong auditing institution. The Kuwait Stock Exchange is a good example. Also, I think that developing the public sector and providing work opportunities in the private sector through giving the private sector a bigger role is also very important for developing our economy," added Hajeri.

He feels optimistic about the financial sector in 2019. "At the same time, I'm not very optimistic about the economic sector as all, as it includes many sectors such as education, health and public administration, which need more efforts. The current price of oil is good for Kuwait, but we should focus more on adjusting expenses, as we can live at a very good level even with lower oil prices," he concluded.

Business

Kuwait banking system well-positioned for future growth: Shaikha Al-Bahar

NBK Deputy CEO addresses 10th Euromoney Kuwait Conference 2018



KUWAIT: Shaikha Al-Bahar addresses the Euromoney Kuwait Conference yesterday.

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait Deputy CEO Shaikha Al-Bahar said yesterday that the banking system in Kuwait is among the healthiest in the region. "Our banking system is very well positioned for future growth and well-equipped to absorb any economic shocks," she said addressing the 10th Euromoney Kuwait Conference 2018 yesterday.

Good morning everyone. I am flattered to be addressing you today in the presence of such an outstanding crowd.

I want to talk to you today about the future of banking in Kuwait, a topic that comes with a lot of optimism, in my view. The Kuwaiti banking sector is well-positioned for a positive cycle with lots of opportunities.

I would like to focus on two main areas that will create a lot of future opportunities for banks in Kuwait: (1) Kuwait's 2035 vision and (2) Technology and digitization in banking.

But before I get to that, I want to spend some time on our journey as Kuwaiti banks over the past decade, more precisely since the global financial crisis. This is very important as it marks a very interesting era for the banking industry not in Kuwait, not in the region but globally. But also it is a very important phase for the banking system in Kuwait as it shaped our present. As a banking sector, our strength today, our future outlook and our capacity to support the development of Kuwait is all the outcome of the wise actions taken during the past decade with all its instabilities.

Over the past decade, the landscape of banking changed dramatically across the world. We saw banking industries shrink, governments intervene, and financial giants disappear. We also witnessed mergers, divestitures, and bankruptcies.

Our region went through similar waves of changes, not as severe as the developed markets, but we had our share of economic and geopolitical turbulences.

In the region, we faced the spillovers from the damaged economies in the larger, more developed economies as well as the volatilities and imbalances of emerging markets.

More importantly, we also went through a tough regional challenge, the Arab Spring. These are all challenges that can lead to the fall of economies and the collapse of banking systems, but look where we are today.

Generally, our regional markets banking systems held-up very well. But more interestingly is the banking sector in Kuwait which emerged from that era much stronger and significantly better-positioned for the future.

Now, allow me to put in simple words what the financial systems went through in the past decade.

Exactly ten years ago and on September 15, 2008, Lehman Brothers filed for the largest bankruptcy in history. This was followed by a global meltdown of financial markets, and a wave of failures hitting the largest financial institutions in the world.

Although most of MENA countries had limited integration with global financial institutions at the time, but the impact of the crisis was inevitable. Transmission channels ranged from global economic recession, plunging

asset prices, a lower price of oil and drying out of global liquidity. This all led to the contagion effect that we saw in our regional markets despite very limited direct exposures to the US subprime debt, which was the main cause of the problem.

GCC was no different, asset quality turned very doubtful, refinancing needs became more challenging, and credit growth started slowing down.

This all translated into sector specific issues like the downfall of the property market, the failure of some large conglomerates and the well-known collapse of the investment companies in Kuwait.

In Kuwait, and during the years preceding the crisis, credit growth was relatively high with concentrations in the real estate, share purchases, and investment companies sec-

adopted a balanced and gradual approach in implementing financial regulations to increase system resilience without jeopardizing economic recovery.

To address system NPLs, the biggest challenge at the time, CBK adopted a conservative provisioning approach which required banks to build precautionary provisions to build system provisions to acceptable levels. And at a later stage, adopted Basel 3 requirements improving capitalization with focus on core capital.

The question is:

What does this all mean for us today?

As someone who has been involved in banking for many years, I can comfortably say that the banking system in Kuwait is among the healthiest in the region. Very well



positioned for future growth and well-equipped to absorb any economic shocks.

Asset quality is at its best with a record low NPL ratio approaching 1.9 percent and a record coverage of around 230 percent. Capitalization is very comfortable across the system with levels exceeding all international standards and mostly driven by core capital.

Healthy banking system

Corporate governance, risk management practices, liquidity levels, concentrations, quality of banking practitioners, have all improved over the years, putting banks' practices at par with their counterparts in the developed markets. I know I spent some time detailing how significant the challenges were, and how fruitful the efforts to tackle them, have turned out. I am stressing on this long journey as it helped restore confidence in the banking sector in Kuwait and brought us to where we are today.

Now let me just switch gears to focus more on the future of banking, and where we see opportunities. And as I mentioned in my introduction, I would like to especially focus on two main areas: Kuwait's 2035

CBK's positive approach

Similarly, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) took a very proactive approach during those tough years acknowledging the risks that emerged in the sector as a result of previous exposures and working on multiple fronts to restore the system credibility.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK)

vision, as well as technology and digitization in banking.

I derive my optimism from the headline of Kuwait's national development plan, which describes it as "A consolidated approach towards a prosperous and sustainable future". Our national development plan stems from His Highness the Amir's vision of a new Kuwait by 2035. The plan revolves around seven key pillars of focus, targeting the transformation of Kuwait into a leading Regional, Financial, Commercial, and Cultural hub by 2035.

The banking sector in Kuwait will have a major role to play in supporting the government in the implementation of some of these pillars, but most importantly in the development and modernization of the national infrastructure.

We have seen in recent years, a marked pick-up in activity related to tendering and awarding of projects as part of the upgrade of Kuwait's infrastructure. This is happening across all sectors, confirming the government's commitment to the development plan. The projects currently underway are quite diversified, including, upstream and downstream oil sector, transportation, healthcare, housing, and utilities. This will further improve private sector activity and sustain economic diversification.

Non-oil growth

Total project awards and execution, will remain a key driver of non-oil growth over the next few years. Awards proceeded at a steady pace in 2018, are projected to pick-up going forward.

We foresee large investments focused on the transportation and construction sectors. This level of activity is expected to continue, and we are very optimistic around the pace of project execution.

With this elevated level of activity taking place in our domestic market, banks will play an important role to support the long term development of Kuwait's infrastructure. This role comes with a lot of opportunities from simple lending activity to more complex transactions as well as, consulting, trade facilities, capital markets, and other ancillary banking business.

The opportunity we have as Kuwaiti banks goes beyond the elevated levels of activity. Kuwait's development plan, considering its size is attracting a large number of highly qualified regional and international corporate and financial institutions as we just heard from Dr Meshal Al-Sabah.

This will improve the banking industry in Kuwait through transfer of best practices and industry high standards.

Another important area of relevance stems from our belief, that the future of banking is technology, and for banks to cope they need to spend on building IT platforms and investing in their back-end and front-end technologies.

The world of banking is being transformed through technology.

Digitization is becoming not only an exciting topic for banking executives but it is

turning into an area requiring significant financial and human resource allocation.

Technology

With today's pace..., very soon, technology will drive everything in banking. We have already seen significant developments in recent years that would have been considered fiction ten years ago.

We have seen the rise of Fintechs over recent years, as a result of growing demand for technology-based financial services. This is a trend that will not slow down any time soon. Disruptive technologies will influence the financial sector the same way it has influenced and fully transformed other industries.

We all know how the likes of Apple, Amazon, Netflix, YouTube, Facebook and others led to a full transformation of industries like telecommunication, retail, and entertainment. This was followed by the downfall of industry leaders, who failed to cope. Banking is no difference.

With mobile penetration and internet usage on such a rise, digital transformation of banking services becomes inevitable. Innovation will be the growth driver for banks going forward especially in our region where the population is very young and highly tech savvy.

In today's world, we are already in the era of internet and mobile banking, contactless transactions, digital wallets, virtual currencies as well as other under-developed technologies. That said, technology is taking large leaps and very soon banking platforms will have to accommodate artificial intelligence and robotics as a common standard for both banking operations as well as customer transactions.

With the growing excitement around technology and innovation in banking, there is a growing risk as well. We all know the increasing concerns around the world from cyberattacks, data piracy, and manipulation, as well as transactional fraud. These trends put pressure on us, as banking executives to not only invest in technology and digitization, but also to give similar attention to the risks associated with this emerging trend.

Optimism

Finally, I hope my words have articulated my optimism around the future of Kuwait and the potential for our banking sector. But, as someone, who cares about this country and is keen to see all that optimism transforming into reality, allow me to conclude with few words that might seem slightly out of topic.

Our future plans are worthless if we don't have the human capital for execution and sustainability.

I am very glad that human capital is among the main pillars of our national development plan as we need to continue to rationalize and improve our educational system to produce better candidates, who are highly qualified, more competitive with the skill set needed to drive our future.

Thank you very much.

Business

China says impossible to hold talks with 'knife to the throat'

Two sides must treat each other 'equally and with respect'

BEIJING: China said yesterday it was impossible to hold trade talks with the United States while Washington is imposing tariffs that are like "holding a knife to someone's throat".

Speaking a day after Washington activated tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods, vice commerce minister Wang Shouwen said China is open to negotiations but that the two sides must treat each other "equally and with respect".

"Now that the US has adopted this type of large-scale trade restrictions, they're holding a knife to someone's throat. Under these circumstances, how can negotiations proceed?" Wang told a news conference.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had invited Chinese officials to hold new talks, but President Donald Trump's latest salvo-and warnings that another \$267 billion of goods are being lined up-appear to have scuttled that effort. Wang met US officials in Washington in August but there have been no high-level meetings between the world's top two economies for months.

He said yesterday the US measures "have made it impossible for the negotiations to proceed" and blamed the US for abandoning a consensus on trade that was struck in May, but was quickly followed by new US tariffs. High-ranking officials from several Chinese government agencies held a press conference yesterday as Beijing rolled out a new white paper claiming to set the record straight on trade related facts.

Fu Ziyang, another vice minister of commerce, noted that some in the United States accuse Beijing of engaging in unfair competitive practices, causing the huge trade deficit between the two countries.

"This is totally devoid of fact, groundless, and

totally misleading," he said, adding that American firms sold \$700 billion worth of goods in China each year, earning more than \$500 billion in profit.

Support for exporters

The trade fight between the top two economic giants has steadily escalated through the summer, as the US levied two waves of new tariffs that have now hit about \$250 billion worth of goods, roughly half of China's exports to the United States. Beijing has struck back with each step, hitting \$110 billion worth of US goods, or nearly everything China buys from the United States.

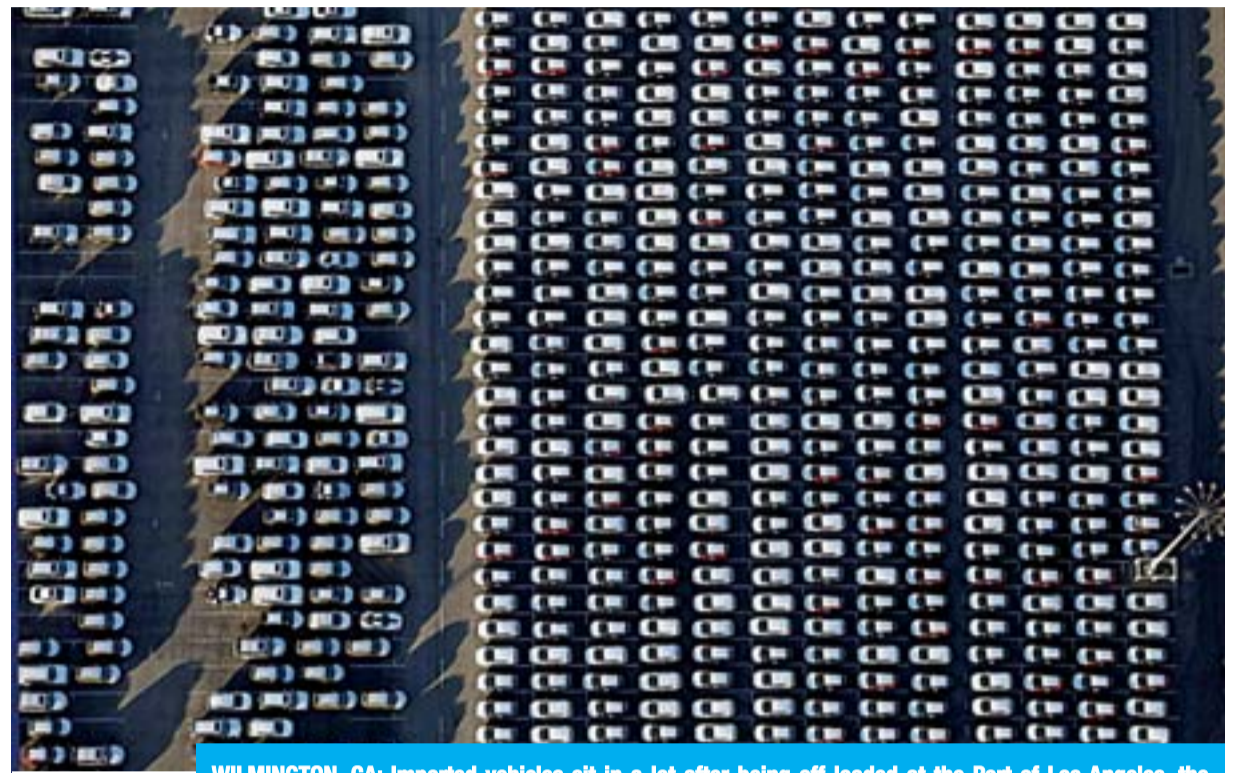
Experts have warned the snowballing trade spat will harm both economies and even global growth, with Fitch Ratings cutting its growth estimates for China and the world for 2019.

China's exports to the US accounted for 19 percent of all its overseas shipments last year, according to the white paper published by China's cabinet, the State Council, on Monday.

Officials in Beijing said they planned to step up support for harmed industries and companies as they seek to offset the trade war's effects. "We will actively take all types of measures to help companies resolve their difficulties," said Luo Wen, vice minister of industry and information technology.

China will "earnestly reduce taxes and burdens for companies and strive to optimize the business environment", he added. Some European and American firms have already started shifting supply chains out of China, or put new investments on hold, according to industry group surveys, a potential problem for Beijing as economic growth sags.

Foreign firms said the latest round of US tariffs, hit-



WILMINGTON, CA: Imported vehicles sit in a lot after being off-loaded at the Port of Los Angeles, the nation's busiest container port in Wilmington, California. —AFP

ting a wide swathe of products including electronics and furniture, would worsen their problems, according to the surveys.

Luo called the trade-related risks driving firms out

of China a natural phenomenon and said Beijing would look at the situation rationally. "We believe the vast majority of companies will remain in China and deepen their development," he said. —AFP

World Bank warns Gaza's economy in 'free fall'

JERUSALEM: The World Bank warned yesterday that the Gaza Strip's economy is in "free fall" as cuts to aid and salaries add to an already crippling Israeli blockade on the Hamas-run enclave.

The bank's report will be presented to the international donor group for Palestinians, known as the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, at its meeting in New York on Thursday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. The meeting will coincide with the speeches to the assembly of both Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Already squeezed by the more than decade-long Israeli blockade, Gaza's economy has been further weakened by US aid cuts and financial measures by Abbas's Palestinian Authority.

Abbas has been seeking to pressure Islamist movement Hamas, which expelled his loyalists from the territory in 2007, as well as save costs. According to the World Bank, he has reduced monthly payments to Gaza by some \$30 million.

US President Donald Trump's administration has meanwhile cut more than \$500 million in aid to the Palestinians, including ending all support for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

"The economic deterioration in both Gaza and West Bank can no longer be counteracted by foreign aid, which has been in steady decline, nor by

the private sector, which remains confined by restrictions on movement, access to primary materials and trade," the bank said.

Gaza's economy shrunk by six percent in the first quarter of 2018 "with indications of further deterioration since then," it said. The bank said one in two Gazans now lives below the poverty line and that unemployment is running at 53 percent. More than 70 percent of young people are jobless, it said.

"Increased frustration is feeding into the increased tensions which have already started spilling over into unrest and setting back the human development of the region's large youth population," said Marina Wes, World Bank director for the West Bank and Gaza.

On September 20, UN envoy for the Middle East peace process Nickolay Mladenov told the UN Security Council that "Gaza can explode any minute."

Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza have fought three wars since 2008. In recent months, mass protests along Gaza's border with Israel have triggered repeated deadly clashes with the army, prompting warnings of the risk of a new conflict. At least 187 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since the protests began on March 30. One Israeli soldier has been killed in that time.

Israel says its actions are necessary to defend the border and accuses Hamas of using the protests as cover to attempt infiltrations and attacks. Palestinians and human rights groups say protesters have been shot while posing no real threat.

Mladenov and Egyptian officials have been seeking to broker a long-term truce between Israel and Hamas, but those efforts have stalled in recent weeks. —AFP

Turkey's lira slightly firmer, investors eye better US ties

ISTANBUL: The lira firmed slightly yesterday as investors weighed up the prospect of an improvement in Turkey-US ties after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he expected talks this week over the fate of a US pastor on trial in Turkey.

The lira has lost nearly 40 percent of its value against the US currency this year on concerns about President Tayyip Erdogan's grip on monetary policy and, more recently, due to a diplomatic row between Turkey and the United States.

In August US President Donald Trump slapped additional tariffs on Turkish imports over the trial of evangelical pastor Andrew Brunson on terrorism charges. Turkey responded in kind, raising tariffs on some US imports.

Erdogan is visiting the United States this week to attend a United Nations meeting. Pompeo said on Monday that he expected talks with Turkish officials this week, during which Brunson's fate will be discussed. "If they can solve the (issue) with the US that will be quite a relief and we will see the dollar-lira going below 6 if this is announced," said Jakob Christensen, head of emerging market research at Danske Bank.

"But we are seeing the challenges of a weak economy underlying and therefore we think the

lira will weaken towards the dollar over the next year." The lira firmed to 6.1424 against the dollar by 0921 GMT, compared to a close of 6.1600 on Monday.

Economy program

However, it was not clear whether the talks would lead to any improvement in relations. Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin told reporters in New York on Monday that Turkey's judiciary would make a decision on Brunson and urged everyone to respect the court's ruling. Brunson's next trial session is set to take place on Oct. 12.

The row between Ankara and Washington helped send the lira to a record low of 7.24 against the dollar in August. The currency has since rebounded with a series of measures taken to prop up the lira, including a 6.25 percentage point rate hike by the central bank and a new economy program announced by the government.

But along with a weak lira, double-digit inflation and the main interest rate at 24 percent, Turkey's economy has recently shown signs of a noticeable slowdown in the second half of the year.

The new economy program presented by Finance Minister Berat Albayrak last week showed sharply lower growth forecasts for 2018 and 2019. The latest data for economic and manufacturing confidence indices showed that both indicators had tumbled to their lowest since 2009.

Investors are also concerned about the state of the banking sector, which faces a potential deluge of bad debt with companies' cost of servicing foreign-currency debt increasing with the decline in the lira. —Reuters

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Business

Turkish Airlines Corporate Club conference hosts global business travel professionals

Annual international event held in partnership with GBTA in Istanbul



KUWAIT: Turkish Airlines, the airline flying to more countries than any other airline, hosted the Turkish Airlines Corporate Club Conference on 17-18 September in Istanbul, in partnership with the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA).

The conference is an annual international event where industry leaders come together and discuss the future of business travel. This year's event saw 900 participants attend from 71 countries across the widest international flight network that Turkish Airlines operates. The program features leading names in the industry including Mike Walsh as a keynote speaker, the CEO of Tomorrow, and best-

selling author of the book "Futuretainment".

The theme of 2018's conference is "Building for the Future", featuring Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines, M. Ilker Ayçi, with the BBC's Aaron Hestehurst moderating. This year's theme resonates on three levels - for Turkey as a country, Turkish Airlines as a global flag carrier and for the travel industry. Turkey has undergone a huge transition over recent years in developing its economy and infrastructure. To set just one example in this regard, the Istanbul New Airport - a state-of-the-art facility, which will open on 29 October 2018, will be the largest airport in the world by 2023. The much-anticipated opening of



the New Airport will position Istanbul as the 'Hub of the World', and will see 200 million passengers per year on final completion. Turkish Airlines' expansion has increased demand for this world-class facility, which will help the national flag carrier's goals of 120 million passengers and a fleet of 500 aircraft by 2023.

Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines, M. Ilker Ayçi noted: "Building on the recent economic success of our airline, 2018 is a highly significant year for the future of Turkish Airlines with the opening of Istanbul New Airport in October. As the new home of Turkish Airlines, this will allow us for greater capacity and increased network, allowing cor-

porate travelers a streamlined and innovative services and state-of-the-art Lounge facilities meaning an even better travel experience for Business Travellers."

Turkish Airlines Corporate Club offers many privileges to its valued customers with a renewed loyalty program, which provides many time-saving benefits for the business travelers, keeping corporate travel easy and enjoyable. Owing to the fact time is of the essence, Business Class guests benefit from pre-boarding advantages, flexible tickets and unbeatable Business Class CIP Lounge facilities. They also have the access to free Wi-Fi, flatbeds and the best of inflight entertainment and technology.

Gulf Bank holds Al-Danah third quarterly draw today

KUWAIT: Today, Gulf Bank is holding the third quarterly Al-Danah draw of the year for a cash prize of KD 500,000, which will be aired live on the "Diwanayat Al-Yaqout & Al-Ansari" program on Kuwait Pulse (88.8 FM) at 1.30pm. The Al-Danah draw, is internationally recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest acclaimed prize linked to a bank account in the world. The grand prize of this internationally renowned draw was claimed last year by the draw's youngest winner, 11-year old Obaid Saad Al-Rashidi.

Al-Danah's 3rd Quarterly draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held today, on 26th September. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1 million will be held on 10 January 2019, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers several unique services



to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their daily, weekly and yearly chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account

monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2018 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Al-Danah chances are added on a daily basis, the more customers save and the longer they save for, the higher their chances of winning. Furthermore, loyal customers will be rewarded and have their previous year's chances transferred to the next year.

To take part in the Al-Danah 2018 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

Do economic risks lurk as US interest rates rise?

WASHINGTON: The US economy is cranking out robust figures 10 years after the start of the global financial crisis: strong growth, historically low unemployment, a soaring stock market.

But with the good news come rising interest rates as the Federal Reserve—which today is expected to raise the key lending rate for the third time this year—tries to keep the economy from overheating.

And after a decade of very low rates that enticed many to load up on debt, rising borrowing costs can expose hidden risks lurking in the US and world economies.

So where are they? Mortgages? Not this time

Unlike the runup to 2008, this time mortgages are not expected to be the root of the next crisis. While US home loans continue to form the large bulk (68 percent) of household debt, and totaled \$9 trillion through June 30, according to the New York Federal Reserve Bank, they are much healthier now. The share of loans going to homebuyers with low credit scores is very small, and the delinquency rate on payments has declined to just over one percent, close to 20-year lows, according to quarterly data.

Meanwhile, the share of adjustable-rate mortgages, or ARMs, remains a very low, 5 percent to 6 percent compared to 35 percent in 2005. It was these ARMs which caused numerous defaults during the crisis when monthly payments skyrocketed and homeowners who counted on refinancing could no longer afford their homes.

Instead, homeowners have "locked in, many at extraordinarily low rates," Mortgage Bankers Association Chief Economist Michael Frattoni said. The average rate for a 30-year mortgage was 4.9 percent in the latest week and is only expected to rise to 5.3 percent by next year, he said.

Consumer debt more worrying

Of more concern than mortgages are auto and student loans, in the first case because of the rising number of borrowers with low credit



Unlike the run-up to 2008, mortgages are not expected to be the root of the next crisis. — AFP

scores and in the second because of the growing total. However, economists say that while the situation is increasingly worrying for individual households, these debt categories are unlikely to create systemic risks for the financial sector.

Outstanding student loan debt stood at \$1.41 trillion as of June 30 and about 11 percent was delinquent or in default. The New York Fed previously has flagged the auto loan sector—with a total outstanding of \$1.24 trillion—as finance companies extend an increasing amount of loans to subprime borrowers, or those with low credit scores, causing the median credit score to decline steadily and delinquencies to rise.

Corporate bonds could hit a wall

After years of very low borrowing rates, companies have taken advantage to issue debt and found willing buyers for the bonds that were among the few options offering a return on investment.

That search for yield has led to investors snapping up an increasing share of lower-rated debt, known as speculative grade. William Rhodes, former senior vice chairman of Citigroup, warns that the financial sector "failed to learn the lessons of the last global crisis."

"In their reach for yield they have continued to make short-term gains their paramount objective and now they are set to be burned," he said in a recent column. —AFP

Gulf Bank raffle winners announced

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced the five lucky winners of its competition for debit and credit cardholders, who won cash prizes with a total value of KD 50,000. The raffle draw was held on 23 September in the presence of officials from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The overall winner was Farah Arnaoot who won KD 25,000, followed by Mona Abdulla Al-Tarrah in second place who received KD 10,000 and three customers including Essa Hasan Safar, Faisal Ahmad Al-Sharqawy and Ahmed Soud Al-Rudaniy who were each awarded KD 5,000.

During the summer campaign, which ran from May 1 until August 31, 2018, Gulf Bank customers who used their debit and credit cards both locally and internationally earned draw chances. Gulf Bank cardholders received one chance in the raffle draw for every KD 10 spent locally and three chances for every KD 10 spent internationally. In addition, Gulf Bank customers were also able to use the newly designed cards featuring 'Tap & Pay', which offers a fast, secure and convenient way to make payments worldwide.

Congratulating the winners, Ahmad

The Bank is currently ranked 'A' by the four leading international credit rating agencies:

	Long Term Rating	Outlook
Moody's	A3	Positive
S&P Global Ratings	A-	Positive
Fitch Ratings	A+	Stable
CI Capital Intelligence	A-	Stable

Novartis slashes thousands of jobs in UK, Switzerland

ZURICH: Pharmaceutical giant Novartis said yesterday it will cut more than 2,000 jobs in Switzerland by 2022, while some 400 jobs could go in Britain as part of a global restructuring.

The Swiss group said in a statement there would be a net-loss of 1,000 jobs at different manufacturing facilities across the wealthy Alpine nation, in Basel, Schweizerhalle, Stein and Locarno.

But it stressed that this included the recently announced buildup of a cell and gene therapy manufacturing unit in Stein that was expected to create up to 450 new jobs. Another 700 jobs would be meanwhile be cut over the same period

Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager of External Communications at Gulf Bank said: "At Gulf Bank we are committed to providing our valued customers with the latest and best financial solutions, products and services, as well as exciting offers. On behalf of Gulf Bank, we would like to congratulate the five winners."

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

The Bank was founded in 1960 and is listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (Boursa Kuwait) since 1984.

The Bank kicked off last year by setting an international Guinness World Records achievement for its Al Danah account prize of KD 1 million as the 'largest prize linked to a bank account in the world'. Gulf Bank's performance continues to be strongly recognized on local, regional, and international levels, spread over different sectors of its work. Gulf Bank is strongly committed to giving back to Kuwait and society through its corporate social responsibility program. The Bank supports numerous events focusing on youth, education, health and fitness, helping the underprivileged, women's empowerment, as well as promoting Kuwait's heritage and culture.

due to a shift in business functions from Switzerland to other Novartis sites around the world, according to the company, which currently employs some 12,800 people in Switzerland.

In a separate release, the company said it planned to exit its manufacturing site in Grimsby in Britain by the end of 2020. "Three hundred and ninety-five Novartis employees at the Grimsby site are directly affected by the decision, and additional contactors employed through third parties may also be impacted," the statement said. Novartis has already announced adjustments in its manufacturing units in Japan, the US, and other countries as part of a strategy announced in 2015 amid an increased emphasis on specialized and personalized medicines over high-volume products. "We are continuing our efforts to globally transform Novartis into a more efficient, agile organization that can sustainably innovate and deliver breakthrough medicines to patients," company chief executive Vas Narasimhan said in a statement. —AFP

Technology & Science

Google tunes search for prescience, pictures; redesigns lens technology

Google to answer questions before being asked

SAN FRANCISCO: Google unveiled changes Monday aimed at making the leading search engine more visual and intuitive to the point that it can answer questions before being asked. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are core drivers of how Google will pursue its mission to organize the world's information and make it accessible to anyone, search vice president Ben Gomes said at an event in San Francisco.

The search engine focused strongly on mobile use and appeared to be growing more like Facebook, encouraging users to linger and explore topics, interests or stories with growing emphasis on photos and videos. Results will be increasingly personalized. "Search is not perfect, and we are under no illusions it is," Gomes said. "But, you have our commitment that we will make it better every day." He described the latest changes as shifting from answers to journeys, providing ways to target queries without knowing what words to use and enhancing image-based searches.

Searching with pictures

Google Images was redesigned to weave in "Lens" technology that enables queries based on what is pointed out in pictures. The Images overhaul includes carousels of online video clip high-

lights displayed with mobile search query results. New Activity Cards will let users pick up searches where they left off, eliminating the need to retrace online steps. The search engine will also let users create Collections of online content, and suggest related material that might be of interest.

A Google feed used by more than 800 million people monthly is getting a new name, Discover, and increased ability to offer people relevant information they are likely to want but haven't thought

“ Search is not perfect ”

to ask for yet. The feature was described as "Google search helping you discover new things without a query." Google said it is also testing out an improvement to its job-related search results that will figure out what skills are needed for such posts and information about how to acquire them. "Information and language are core to what we are as human beings," Gomes said. "Our work here is

never done." Since being launched 20 years ago, Google has grown from simply a better way to explore the internet to an online tool so woven into daily life that its name has become a verb. Early days of search were about software matching keywords or precise phrases to content on web pages, with typos or imprecise queries destined to fail. Google has consistently refined its search algorithm, which it keeps secret, and uses AI to understand what people are looking for online and to tailor results based on what it knows about users individually and collectively.

Google's rise put it in the crosshairs of regulators, especially in Europe, due to concerns it may be abusing its domination of online search and advertising as well as Android smartphone operating software. There have been concerns that parent company Alphabet is more interested in making money from people's data than in safeguarding their privacy. Google was under fire anew from privacy advocates for a change that automatically signs users into Chrome browsers on desktop computers when they sign into any of the company's other services such as Gmail or search. Chrome search data is not in sync with Google servers unless that function is enabled, the company said in an update to its policies.

Google is among the tech companies being called upon to better guard against the spread of



SAN FRANCISCO: A Noogler hat, given to each new employee, is displayed at the Google Search 20th Anniversary Event in San Francisco, California. — AFP

misinformation—and has also been a target of US President Donald Trump, who added his voice to a chorus of Republicans who contend conservative viewpoints are downplayed in search results. Google's anniversary also comes with the rising trend of people engaging with the internet

through voice-commanded digital assistants, including one backed by the Silicon Valley giant. Seattle-based Amazon last week sought to make its Alexa digital assistant and online services a bigger part of people's lives with an array of new products and partnerships. — AFP

A swipe is not enough: Tinder trials extra control for women

MUMBAI: The Indian edition of dating app Tinder is trialing a new feature which gives women an additional level of scrutiny and security before they allow men to start messaging conversations, with a view to rolling the function out globally. The "My Move" feature allows women to choose in their settings that only they can start a conversation with a male match after both have approved each other with Tinder's swiping function.

Normally, the app gives both parties to a successful match — where both have swiped yes on the other's photograph — the right to text each other immediately. Tinder has been testing the function in India for several months and plans to spread it worldwide if the full roll-out proves successful. Rival dating-app Bumble already only allows the female party to a heterosexual match to start conversations. Dating is still frowned upon in many circles in India's religiously- and ethnically-divided society, where arranged marriages are still the norm. The country is also ranked the world's most dangerous for women due to the high risk of sexual violence, according to a poll by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the philan-

With genetic tweak, mosquito population made extinct

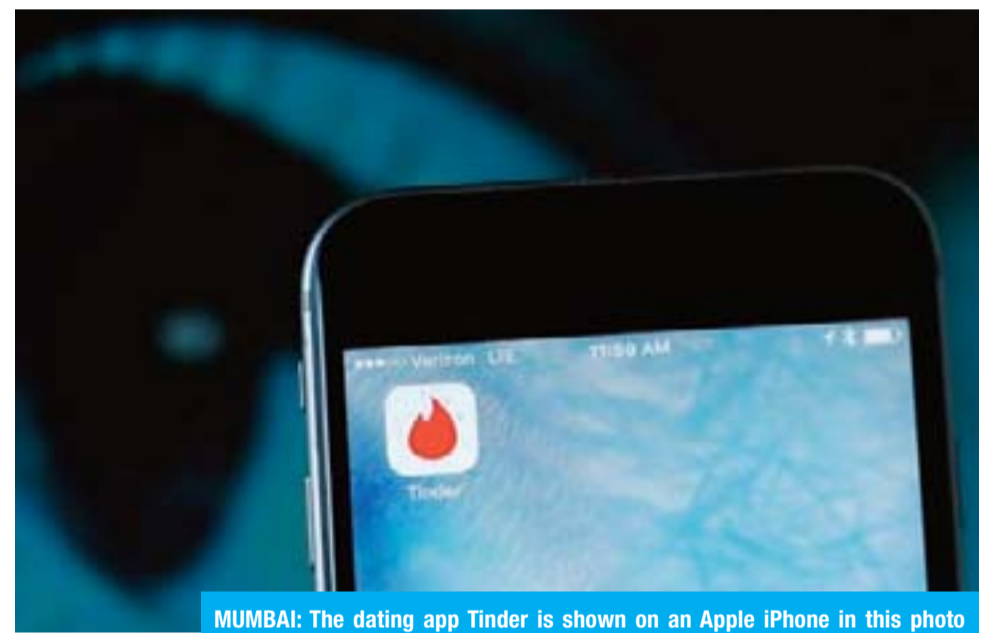
PARIS: Scientists said Monday they had succeeded for the first time in wiping out an entire population of malaria-carrying mosquitoes in the lab using a gene editing tool to program their extinction. So-called gene drive technology works by forcing evolution's hand, ensuring that an engineered trait is passed down to a higher proportion of offspring across many generations—than would have occurred naturally.

In experiments with the species *Anopheles gambiae*, scientists at Imperial College London tweaked a gene known as doublesex so that more females in each generation could no longer bite or reproduce. After only eight generations, there were no females left and the population collapsed due to lack of offspring. "This breakthrough shows that gene

Instagram co-founders resigning

SAN FRANCISCO: Instagram co-founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger are leaving the smartphone photo-sharing service bought by Facebook six years ago for a billion dollars, the New York Times reported late Monday citing unnamed sources. Systrom and Krieger have resigned from their posts as chief executive and chief technology officer respectively, not giving reasons and saying they planned to take time off, according to the Times. Facebook did not respond to a request for comment.

Instagram in June announced it passed a billion active users, and unveiled a new long-form video feature in a bid to attract "creators" like those on YouTube. It became the fourth Facebook platform to eclipse the billion-user mark, including the namesake social network with more than two billion users, and the messaging applications WhatsApp and Messenger. Facebook acquired Instagram in April 2012 for a



MUMBAI: The dating app Tinder is shown on an Apple iPhone in this photo illustration. — Reuters

thropic arm of Reuters News owner Thomson Reuters Corp. Yet an emerging class of young, well-to-do Indians in cosmopolitan cities like Bengaluru and Mumbai have made the country Tinder's largest market in Asia.

The company also says it is the "chattiest" globally, with users using the in-app messaging feature more than any other country. Taru Kapoor, General Manager for Tinder owner Match Group in India, told Reuters the function had been pioneered in India because of

drive can work, providing hope in the fight against a disease that has plagued mankind for centuries," said lead author Andrea Crisanti, a professor in Imperial's Department of Life Sciences.

Malaria sickened more than 200 million people worldwide in 2016 and killed nearly 450,000. It remains one of the most deadly of infectious diseases. Previous attempts by the same team and others to induce the genetically-programmed extinction of mosquitoes in the laboratory ran into "resistance" in the form of mutations that fought back against the high-tech engineering.

A timely breakthrough

The next step will be to test the technology in a confined laboratory setting that mimics a tropical environment, said Crisanti. "It will be at least five-to-ten years before we consider testing any mosquitoes with gene drive in the wild," he said in a statement. The doublesex gene targeted in the experiments is deeply "conserved", meaning that it is formed tens or even hundreds of millions of years ago and is today shared by many insects with only minor variations. "This suggests the technology could be used in the future to specifically tar-

get other disease-carrying insects," the researchers said. Scientists not involved in the study described it as a timely breakthrough. "Traditional approaches to controlling mosquitoes—especially the use of insecticides—is becoming less effective," mainly due to the build-up of resistance, said Cameron Webb, a clinical lecturer at the University of Sydney.

2016 marked the first time in over two decades that malaria cases did not fall year-on-year, despite aggressive and well-funded anti-malarial campaigns. Some scientists and technology watchdog groups have called for a moratorium on gene drive research.

Calls for a moratorium

"The ability to eradicate species and natural populations at will with synthetic gene drive is not to be celebrated but should rather sound an alarm," said Jim Thomson of the ETC Group, an NGO monitoring new technologies that often race ahead of regulatory frameworks. "There are ecological risks from manipulating and removing natural populations, such as destroying food webs and shifting the behavior of diseases, as well as social risks of disrupting agriculture and enabling new weapons." — AFP

combination of cash and stock worth some \$1 billion at the time.

Instagram has been a hit with young internet users, an audience that Facebook is keen to keep in its fold. The departures come as Facebook grapples with the worst crisis in its history, vilified for not more zealously guarding information users share at the leading online social network. Many see Facebook as being the main vehicle for spreading false information in recent years, and of being used by nefarious interests out to sway the results of the elections such as the one that put President Donald Trump in the White House.

The Cambridge Analytica public relations disaster, in which Facebook admitted that up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked by the British consultancy firm, came on top of widespread criticism of the social network's propensity to spread and accentuate large amounts of completely false information. Facebook is facing multiple inquiries from US and British regulators about the Cambridge Analytica user data scandal, and its boss Mark Zuckerberg was grilled by the European Parliament and the US Congress earlier this year.

WhatsApp co-founder Jan Koum earlier this year left Facebook, which bought the smartphone messaging service for \$19 billion. Koum said in a



NEW YORK: In this file photo Kevin Systrom, left, and Mike Krieger attend the 16th Annual Webby Awards at Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City. — AFP

post on his Facebook page that he was taking time off to pursue interests such as collecting air-cooled Porsches, working on cars and playing ultimate Frisbee. US media reports indicated that a disagreement with Facebook over the privacy of user data may have also been a factor in Koum's decision to quit his position as a high-ranking executive and likely leave his seat on the board at the leading online social network. — AFP

Fall of top US scientists points to ethics gap in research

WASHINGTON: Three prominent US scientists have been pushed to resign over the past 10 days after damning revelations about their methods, a sign of greater vigilance and decreasing tolerance for misconduct within the research community. The most spectacular fall concerned Jose Baselga, chief medical officer at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. He authored hundreds of articles on cancer research.

Investigative journalism group ProPublica and The New York Times revealed on September 8 that Baselga failed to disclose in dozens of research articles that he had received millions of dollars from pharmaceutical and medical companies. Such declarations are generally required by scientific journals.

Links between a doctor leading a clinical trial and manufacturers of drugs or medical equipment used in the study can influence the methodology and ultimately the results. But journals don't themselves verify the thoroughness of an author's declarations. Caught up in the scandal, Baselga resigned on September 13.

Pizza expert

Next came the case of Brian Wansink, director of the Food and Brand Lab at the prestigious Cornell University. He made his name thanks to studies that garnered plenty of media attention, including on pizza, and the appetites of children. His troubles began last year when scientific sleuths discovered anomalies and surprisingly positive results in dozens of his articles. In February, BuzzFeed published messages in which Wansink encouraged a researcher to extract from her data results more likely to go "viral." After a yearlong

inquiry, Cornell announced on Thursday that Wansink committed "academic misconduct in his research and scholarship," describing a litany of problems with his results and methods. He is set to resign at the end of the academic year, but from now on will no longer teach there.

Wansink denied all fraud, but 13 of his articles have already been withdrawn by journals. In the final case, Gilbert Welch, a professor of public health at Dartmouth College, resigned last week. The university accused him of plagiarism in an article published in The New England Journal of Medicine, the most respected American medical journal.

Cutting corners

"The good news is that we are finally starting to see a lot of these cases become public," said Ivan Oransky co-founder of the site Retraction Watch, a project of the Center for Scientific Integrity that keeps tabs on retractions of research articles in thousands of journals. Oransky told AFP that what has emerged so far is only the tip of the iceberg. The problem, he said, is that scientists, and supporters of science, have often been unwilling to raise such controversies "because they're afraid that talking about them will decrease trust in science and that it will aid and abet anti-science forces."

But silence only encourages bad behavior, he argued. According to Oransky, more transparency will in fact only help the public to better comprehend the scientific process. "At the end of the day, we need to think about science as a human enterprise, we need to remember that it's done by humans," he said. "Let's remember that humans make mistakes, they cut corners, sometimes worse." Attention has long focused on financial conflicts of interest, particularly because of the influence of the pharmaceutical industry.

But the Wansink case illustrates that other forms of conflict, including reputational, are equally important. Academic careers are largely built on how much one publishes and in which journals. — AFP

Conservationists slam Australia shark policy as more killed

SYDNEY: Conservationists yesterday slammed the baiting and killing of sharks at a popular Great Barrier Reef tourist spot after two swimmers were attacked, saying the policy was brutal and indiscriminate. Queensland state authorities deployed drumlines—which use baited hooks to catch the predators—at the Whitsunday Islands after two tourists were mauled in separate incidents a day apart last week. Hannah Papps, 12, and 46-year-old Justine Barwick, who were bitten on their legs, remain in hospital.

Fisheries Queensland said Monday that six sharks—five tiger sharks measuring up to 3.7

meters (12 feet) long and one smaller black tip shark—were killed after being ensnared in the drumlines. The government agency said the sharks were "humanely euthanized" and "taken out to sea for disposal". Local media said they were shot. "The message is these waters are not safe for swimming," a Fisheries spokeswoman said.

The attacks have revived debate about the best policies to reduce shark encounters. Conservationists have been critical of the use of drumlines, saying they are a blunt instrument that would often catch other marine creatures as well. Marine scientists have also said that killing sharks could disrupt the ecology of the ocean. "Culling is not the solution to prevent shark bites," Humane Society International said. "These drumlines will indiscriminately catch and kill marine life, whilst potentially attracting sharks to the area."

Sea Shepherd Australia's Jonathan Clark said the attacks had taken place in an area where "fishers take sharks" and where locals should know not to swim. — AFP

China shuts thousands of websites

SHANGHAI: China has shut down more than 4,000 websites and online accounts in a three-month campaign against "harmful" online information, the official Xinhua news agency said on Saturday, citing the country's illegal publication watchdog. China keeps the internet under tight control and has been cracking down on a range of illegal online activities including pornogra-

phy, gambling, religious proselytizing and even "spreading rumors".

In a campaign that started in May, the authorities tackled 120 violations and ordered 230 firms to rectify irregularities. More than 147,000 pieces of harmful information were removed by the end of August, according to China's National Office Against Pornographic and Illegal Publications. Xinhua said the campaign targeted content in online fiction that spread improper values, vulgarity and obscenity, as well as content that infringed on copyright. Authorities announced last week that they had busted a live-streaming pornography platform hosted in Cambodia and said to have more than 3.5 million registered users. — Reuters

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What's On

Ahmadi Governor receives Director General of Minors Affairs Public Authority



Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the Director General of the Minors Affairs Public Authority Barrak Al-Sheetan and a number of authority leaders on the occasion of one year anniversary on opening its branch in Ahmadi governorate. The governor appreciated the dis-

tinguished role the authority plays through its branches in the governorate to serve the minors, and proved successful over many years. Director of the Ahmadi Governorate branch said 12,900 cases were dealt with and that the branch had reduced the pressure on the main premise.

AAW Chairman meets Ambassador of the United States of America to Kuwait

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) Chairman and CEO Faisal Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa received the Ambassador of the United States of America to the State of Kuwait, Lawrence R Silverman at his office to discuss opportunities of cooperation between AAW and the US private sector. Ambassador Silverman expressed his pleasure during the visit where he commemorated the excellent commercial relations the Kuwaiti private sector has with US companies and cooperation between AAW and other retail and wholesale companies in Kuwait.

AAW Chairman and CEO, Faisal Ali Al Mutawa said: "Over the past decades we've carried excellent business relations with several US companies in various industries. The private sector in Kuwait is the best mediator for the

consolidation of economic and trade relations between Kuwait and the US, and we look forward to further years of cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Silverman for his visit and look forward to welcoming him again to our office anytime to continue to build upon our relations and mutual interests."

AAW is one of the oldest, largest retail and distribution companies in Kuwait with world-class operations in seven diverse retail divisions, representing over 100 global brands including US brands such as Procter and Gamble, Pfizer, Clorox, Nike, Hershey's, The North Face, Eastpak and more.



NCCAL conducts preservation course for employees

National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters held a preservation and maintenance of antiquities and arts collection course for its employees from September 24 to 26, 2018. The course targets employees at the antiquities and museums department of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, in order to enhance their abilities and develop their skill in the field of preservation and maintenance of antiquities and arts collection. The course deals with the most important processes of preservations, maintenance, and repair of metal, glass, stone and ceramic antiquities, in addition to antique textiles. There will be applied studies for all these types, after learning the laws that regulates the restoration process, conditions and specifications of the restoration, in addition to the most practical studies that are done to choose them.



From right: Dr. Usama Al-Fiqi, Dr Sultan Al-Duwaish, Dr Ahmad Saeed, Dr Sayyed Mahfouz, Dr Mohammad Abdelhadi and Dr Abdallah Attiya.



'Agthia' inaugurates Al Ain water, first water bottling plant in Kuwait

United Khaleeji Water Co., a joint venture established by UAE's Agthia Group PJSC and Kuwait's Al Wafir Marketing Services Company KSCC to produce Agthia's leading Al Ain Water locally in Kuwait, yesterday inaugurated at the Company's manufacturing site in Sabhan Industrial Area. The ribbon cutting ceremony was held in the presence of His Excellency Rahma Hussein Al Zaabi, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, along with HE Eng. Dhafer Ayed Al Ahbabi, Agthia Chairman, HE Ali Al-Rqobah, Chairman and CEO of Al Wafir, Tariq Ahmed Al Wahedi, Chief Executive Officer of Agthia and Marzouq Al-Bahar, General Manager of Al Wafir.

Initiated back in 2016 with equal partnership interests, the new entity completed establishment phase in July this year and started production of Al Ain Water, UAE's number one bottled water brand, in its fully automated manufacturing facility in the Sabhan Industrial Area, with annual bottling capacity of 8 million cases. HE Rahma Hussein Al Zaabi, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, highlighted the brotherly ties between the UAE and Kuwait and commended the visionary leadership of both nations for supporting cooperation and collaboration across a wide range of fields, resulting in significant growth and innovation.

The ambassador also praised the opening of the United Khaleeji Water Co., producing Al Ain water for the first time in Kuwait, as the remarkable achievement comes to emphasize the company's ongoing efforts to expand regionally. The new plant further establishes Al Ain as a regional industry

leader, in line with the company's vision and mission. HE Eng Dhafer Ayed Al Ahbabi, Agthia Chairman, stated, "The opening of Agthia's first facility in Kuwait demonstrates our commitment to establish the Group as a leading regional food and beverages player, growing our business beyond the UAE and above all, ensuring sustainable value creation for our shareholders and business partners."

HE Ali Al-Rqobah, Chairman and CEO of Al Wafir, said, "We are very excited to launch Al Ain Water's first bottling plant in Kuwait and to offer locally produced Al Ain Water to the Kuwaiti consumers. We look forward to transferring the expertise of Agthia Group to Kuwait, and providing the local market with innovative, high-quality products that compete with the largest brands locally and globally." Tariq Al Wahedi, Chief Executive Officer of Agthia, added, "Water is a core expansion category within our 2020 vision and stronger regional penetration constitutes a critical part of our strategy. Opening Al Ain's first drinking water plant in Kuwait in partnership with Al Wafir is the right action, given our partner's strong and diverse business model."

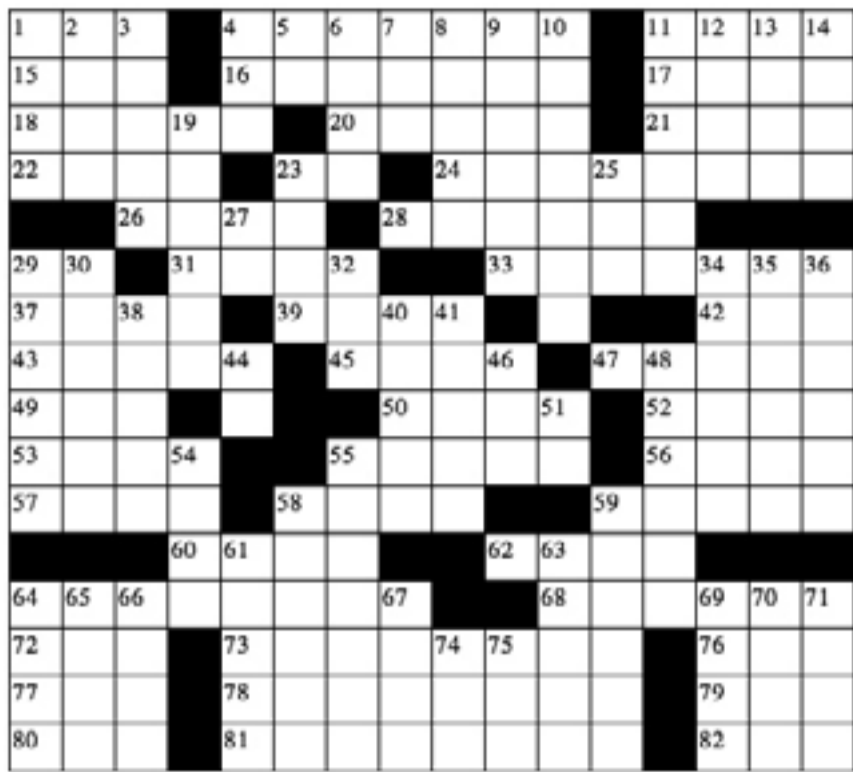
Al Wahedi explained that this initiative with Al Wafir will support the company to significantly increase its presence in the country and also benefit from Kuwait's strategic location to open up new export opportunities. In addition to Al Ain regular water that is produced locally in sizes of 200, 330, 500, and 1500 ml, Agthia also offers Kuwaiti consumers its breakthrough Al Ain Zero no-sodium drinking water, Al Ain still and sparkling water in glass bottles, and Alpin Natural Spring Water exported from the UAE.



— Photos by Joseph Shagra

Stars

CROSSWORD 2018



ACROSS

1. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
4. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
11. Moving quickly and lightly.
15. Beyond or deviating from the usual or expected.
16. The act of clasping another person in the arms (as in greeting or affection).
17. A hardy cabbage with coarse curly leaves that do not form a head.
18. Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
20. Marked by excessive enthusiasm for and intense devotion to a cause or idea.
21. The highest level or degree attainable.
22. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
24. Cosmopolitan genus of ferns.
26. A law passed by US Congress to prevent employees from being injured or contracting diseases in the course of their employment.
28. Prepared by cutting.
29. A state in north central United States.
31. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
33. Genus of tall smooth herbs of forested mountains of Europe and Asia minor.
37. A member of a pastoral people living in the Nilgiri hills of southern India.
39. A girl or young woman who is unmarried.
42. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
43. Eliminate from the body.
45. Shout loudly and without restraint.
47. A semiliquid mass of partially digested food that passes from the stomach through the pyloric sphincter into the duodenum.
49. A three-year law degree.
50. Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
52. A slight rounded elevation where the malleus attaches to the eardrum.
53. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
56. The bags of letters and packages that are transported by the postal service.
57. A city in northern India.
60. A member of an extinct North American Indian people who lived in the Pit river valley in northern California.
62. Meat from a calf.
64. (Old Testament) An ancient city near the Dead Sea that (along with Sodom) was destroyed by God for the vice and depravity of its inhabitants.
68. Placed crosswise.
72. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
73. God of wisdom or prophesy.
76. Range of what one can know or understand.
77. Mythical bird of prey having enormous size and strength.
78. A cephalosporin antibiotic (trade name Ultracel).
79. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
80. Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
81. Being such as to cause things to slip or slide.
82. An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.

DOWN

1. Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
2. An inlaid furniture decoration.
3. (psychoanalysis) An idealized image of someone (usually a parent) formed in childhood.
4. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
5. A metric unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter.
6. A Spanish river.
7. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
8. A clique that seeks power usually through intrigue.
9. (chemistry) Being or containing an acid.
10. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
11. God of war.
12. A written agreement between two states or sovereigns.
13. Tall New Zealand timber tree.
14. (cosmology) The original matter that (according to the big bang theory) existed before the formation of the chemical elements.
19. A Black youth subculture and religious movement that arose in the ghettos of Kingston, Jamaica, in the 1950s.
23. A telephone connection.
25. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
27. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
30. Angle that resembles the hind leg of a dog.
32. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
34. Someone who is not a clergyman or a professional person.
35. (prosody) Of or consisting of iambs.
36. Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
38. Bar temporarily.
40. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
41. A Hindu religious teacher.
44. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
46. A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.
48. A characteristic (habitual or relatively temporary) state of feeling.
51. A state in southeastern United States between the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico.
54. Knock unconscious or senseless.
55. Dry red Italian table wine from the Chianti region of Tuscany.
58. The state of being under the control of another person.
59. Cause to be more favorably inclined.
61. (Greek mythology) A giant with 100 eyes.
63. Someone who consumes food for nourishment.
65. A slender double-reed instrument.
66. (trademark) A liquid that temporarily disables a person.
67. A chordophone that has a triangular frame consisting of a sounding board and a pillar and a curved neck.
69. Long green edible beaked pods of the okra plant.
70. Cause to go somewhere.
71. The act of catching an object with the hands.
74. Worthless or oversimplified ideas.
75. (informal) Of the highest quality.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find your tendency to be indecisive may cause conflict with someone you care about. Consider all the options diplomatically, then make a choice. Recognize that ignoring this situation is not the right choice. Consider consequences, then choose, and act. Someone may find your actions offensive. Pay no attention to anyone who doesn't seem supportive. They will get over it.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find yourself getting mixed signals from someone close to you. You feel as if you don't know up from down. The harder you try to please this person, the more you seem to do wrong. You could find yourself in the company of someone whose values are opposite of yours. You do not like what they represent. You have a strong sense of values and morals and are very picky about the company you keep. It is important to remain kind and try to be understanding. This is why they make chocolate and vanilla, not everyone has the same taste.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

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



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Repetition is key to making a practice second nature. The change you are considering may seem hard at first. And it will be. But as you consciously practice doing it over and over, it will become a habit. The habit will become second nature. Ta da! It's ingrained in your character. Which is what you are aiming for. Cancer. A new you with a positive outlook on this world and all it has to offer is the best thing you can bring into your world now.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

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



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

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



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You have a great desire for change. Your career or something concerning your profession seem to be preventing it. You have a deep desire for self-growth and change now. It seems if you continue on the same career path this will be a huge interference for you. You may find that your sensitivity is stifled by your job requirements. Too much work and no play is never a good thing. Find your balance.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You not only feel as if you need to be respected. You demand it and will not settle for anything less. This is an emotional time for you. You have no room in your life for anyone you feel is disrespecting you in any way. You have worked hard and treat others as you want to be treated. You are beginning to discover not all in your circle have your best interest at heart. It may be time to tighten that circle. Scorpio. You are able to work with haste and without emotion when it comes to dealing with anyone you feel as wronged you. You desire a life of peace and will settle for nothing less. You are able to use your abundance of common sense to deal with any drama that arises today.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

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



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You look and feel good as you focus on getting things done. You could feel something amiss, something that just niggles and irritates but you can't tell exactly what. A new project progresses and the teamwork is excellent: someone could challenge some of your decisions on this! A quick visit with someone sparks your thoughts and ideas as you connect on a mutual understanding and agree to pursue this together. Warm feelings for someone younger brighten your day; you feel strongly about the future being with those of the younger generation and you contribute to this in some way. Your energy is very positive, your heart is light and it feels good! A new romantic interest invites you for a light dinner to become more acquainted.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

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



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

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

Wordsearch Puzzle

Mystery Christmas Carol

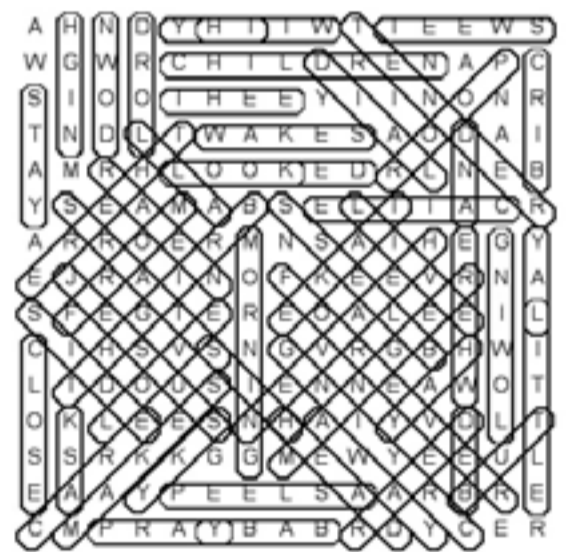
The words listed below are from a familiar Christmas Carol. What is it? Find and circle all of the words hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of the Christmas Carol.



- | | | | |
|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| ALL | FOLLOW | MEASURE | TIDE |
| ANCIENT | GAY | MERRY | TIS |
| APPAREL | HAIL | NEW | TOGETHER |
| AWAY | HARP | NOW | TREASURE |
| BEFORE | HEEDLESS | OLD | TROLL |
| BLAZING | HOLLY | OUR | WEATHER |
| BOUGHS | JOIN | PASSES | WHILE |
| CAROL | JOLLY | SEASON | WIND |
| CHORUS | JOYOUS | SING | WITH |
| DON | LADS | STRIKE | YEAR |
| FAST | LASSES | TELL | YULE |

Yesterday's Solution

Mystery Christmas Carol #2



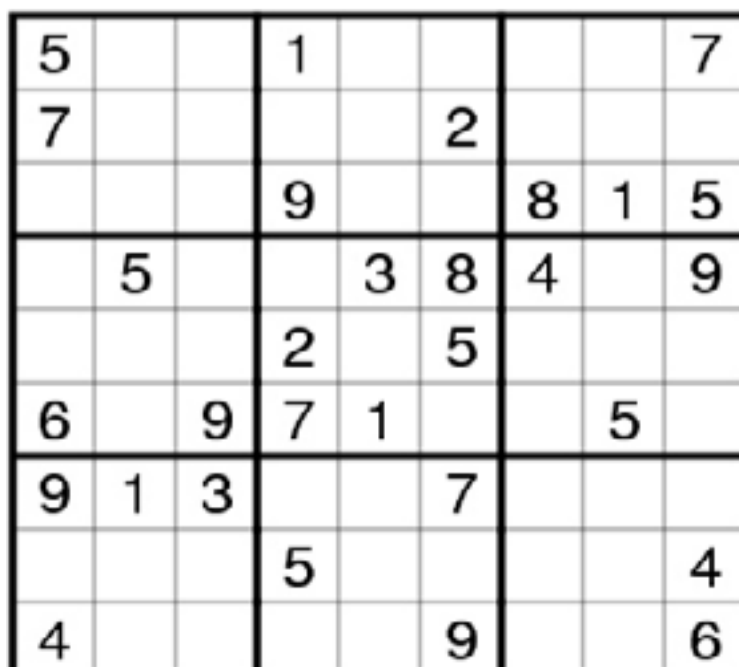
- | | | | | |
|--------|----------|--------|---------|--------|
| ALL | CATTLE | HEAVEN | LOWING | STAY |
| AND | CHILDREN | HIS | MAKES | SWEET |
| ASK | CLOSE | JESUS | MANGER | TAKE |
| ASLEEP | CRIB | LAI | MORNING | TENDER |
| AWAY | CRYING | LAY | NEAR | THEE |
| BABY | DEAR | LITTLE | NIGH | THERE |
| BED | DOWN | LIVE | POOR | THY |
| BLESS | FOREVER | LOOK | PRAY | WAKES |
| BRIGHT | FROM | LOOKED | SIDE | WHERE |
| BUT | HAY | LORD | SKY | WITH |
| CARE | HEAD | LOVE | STARS | |

The Mystery Christmas Carol is: AWAY IN A MANGER

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018



An actor performs during the media preview of "Halloween Horror Nights" at the Universal Studio on Sentosa Island in Singapore. — AFP

MICHAEL KORS BAGS VERSACE FOR \$2.1BN

Fashion house Michael Kors announced yesterday it had agreed to buy Italian luxury giant Versace, signalling an intention to move deeper into the international big league after snapping up shoemaker to the stars Jimmy Choo last year. Michael Kors, an iconic label rooted in American and New York fashion but headquartered in London, will pay €1.83 billion (\$2.1 billion) for Versace, a statement said. "We are excited to have Versace as part of our family of luxury brands, and we are committed to investing in its growth," said Michael Kors chief executive John Idol.

"With the full resources of our group, we believe that Versace will grow to over \$2.0 billion in revenues," he added. "We believe that the strength of the Michael Kors and Jimmy Choo brands, and the acquisition of Versace, position us to deliver multiple years of revenue and earnings growth."

Idol said that Donatella Versace, artistic director and vice president of the Italian group, would stay on to lead the label's creative vision, saying her "iconic style" was "at the heart of the design aesthetic of Versace". Donatella said the takeover was "essential to Versace's long-term success". She added in the statement: "We are all very excited to join a group led by John Idol, whom I have always admired as a visionary as well as a strong and passionate leader."

Bags, watches and perfume

Michael Kors, best known for its bags, watches and perfume, said it planned to grow the number of Versace stores worldwide by 50 per-

cent to 300, and expand accessories and footwear from 35 to 60 percent of revenues. The deal is the latest push by Michael Kors into high-end luxury after it bought British shoemaker Jimmy Choo in 2017 for \$1.4 billion. It is seen also as positioning Michael Kors more fully as a competitor to Paris-based LVMH and Kering and the Swiss company Richemont among global heavyweights in luxury across various product lines, analysts said. Shares in Michael Kors were down 0.4 percent at \$66.43 in early trading in New York yesterday.

Michael Kors said the acquisition of Versace was expected to help grow its group's revenues to \$8.0 billion in the long-term, and diversify its geographic portfolio, pushing further into Asian markets. Capri Holdings Limited is the new name to be adopted by Michael Kors Holdings Limited upon the closing of the acquisition, inspired by the Italian island in the Bay of Naples that has long attracted the international jet-set.

Versace was the brainchild of Gianni Versace, who was born in Calabria to a dressmaker mother and presented his first signature collection in 1978, with his brother Santo taking care of the label's business arm. The designer, whose bold designs were embraced by Madonna and other mega-celebrities, was assassinated in 1997 by luxury-obsessed male prostitute Andrew Cunanan in Miami.

Expansion into Asia

Twenty percent of Versace, known for its Medusa head logo, was bought by US private equity group Blackstone in 2014, and the family

owns the rest. Versace chief executive Jonathan Akeroyd, who is also staying on, said yesterday that since joining the company two years ago, "focus has been on leveraging the company's heritage and strong brand recognition worldwide", in turn helping "to experience significant growth in all regions".

Launched in 1981, Michael Kors is named after its US founder, the New York designer with an avid celebrity following who has dressed the likes of Melania Trump and Michelle Obama. The 59-year-old Long Island-born self-made tycoon is still creative director and the company has been through highs and lows, forced to file for bankruptcy protection in 1993, but able to restructure with an initial investment by LVMH before going back on the New York Stock Exchange in 2011.

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, said the deal and name change signalled the group's intention to become a luxury powerhouse, and would give the business a better international reach, particularly in Europe and Asia. But he warned it would "absorb both time and money" to position Versace, however iconic and high-profile, on track for higher growth. "Capri Holdings now needs to find a way of leveraging all of its brand assets to make the business worth more than just the sum of its individual parts," he said. — AFP

Mystery of art's most scandalous picture revealed

One of the greatest mysteries in art history appears to have been solved. The identity of the model who posed for the most scandalous painting of the 19th century, Gustave Courbet's "L'Origine du monde" (The Origin of the World), has finally been revealed. Experts say they are "99 percent sure" the painting's notoriously naked nether regions belong to the Parisian ballet dancer Constance Queniaux.

The canvas has never lost its power to shock-bringing out the prude in Facebook, which censored profiles using it as late as 2011. For decades art historians have been convinced that the naked torso and genitalia it depicts belonged to Courbet's lover, the Irish model Joanna Hiffernan. In a typically Parisian love triangle, she was also romantically linked with his friend, the American artist James Whistler.

Now documentary evidence found in the correspondence between the French writers Alexandre Dumas fils—the son of "The Three Musketeers" author—and George Sand points directly to a former dancer at the Paris Opera. Queniaux was a mistress of the Ottoman diplomat Halil Sherif Pasha—aka Khalil Bey—when the picture was painted in the summer of 1866. And it was he who commissioned the painting from Courbet for his personal collection of erotica.

Competing courtesans

French historian Claude Schopp discovered the Queniaux connection when he was going through copies of Dumas' letters for a book. One particular passage perplexed him: "One does not paint the most delicate and the most sonorous interview of Miss Queniaux (sic) of the Opera." It was only when he consulted the handwritten original that he realized there had been a mistake in its transcription. "Interview" was in fact "interior". "Usually I make discoveries after working away for ages," said the writer, whose new book on the find will be published this week. "Here I made it straight away. It almost feels unjust," Schopp joked.

Schopp shared his discovery with the head of the French National Library's

prints department, Sylvie Aubenas, who is also convinced that Queniaux was the model. "This testimony from the time leads me to believe with 99 percent certainty that Courbet's model was Constance Queniaux," she confirmed to AFP. Queniaux was 34 at the time, and having retired from the Opera, was competing with the famed courtesan Marie-Anne Detourbay for Halil Sherif Pasha's affections. Detourbay, sometimes known as Jeanne de Tourbey, held a famous salon and would later become the comtesse de Loynes. She was also thought by some to be the model for "L'Origine du monde".

'La Traviata' link

But Aubenas said contemporary descriptions of Queniaux's "beautiful black eyebrows" corresponded better with the model's luxuriantly bushy maidenhair. The library has several photographs of her including one by the famed photographic pioneer, Nadar. Aubenas believes the secret of the model's identity was known by the cognoscenti but was lost over time as Queniaux became a highly respectable lady of leisure known for her philanthropy. Another discovery by Schopp helped to clinch the argument, she said. When she died in 1908, Queniaux left a Courbet painting of camellias in her will at whose centre is a lusciously open red blossom.

Camellias were strongly associated with courtesans at the time thanks to Dumas' novel "The Lady of the Camellias", which was adapted into Verdi's opera "La Traviata". "What better tribute from the artist and his patron to Constance?" Aubenas said, who believes it may have been a gift from Halil Sherif Pasha. Born in Cairo, the pasha was a renowned art collector and gambler who came from a Turkish-Albanian family from what is now northern Greece. He commissioned a series of major works from Delacroix including "The Women of Algiers" and Ingres' equally iconic and extravagantly fleshy depiction of a harem, "The Turkish Bath". — AFP



Pedestrians walk past a Versace store in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP photos



Merchandise is displayed in the front window of a Versace store.

DIOR LEADS PARIS FASHION ON A DANCE AS GUCCI GOES FOR GAGS



Dior led Paris fashion week on a sensual dance Monday with a spectacular show woven around a new modern dance piece by choreographer Sharon Eyal to kick off the nine-day extravaganza. Icily restrained models brushed past writhing dancers in a performance specially created by the acclaimed Israeli in a fog of mist and falling paper petals. Designer Maria Grazia Chiuri told AFP that using dance was "an act of liberation" to break free from the catwalk corset. Gucci-which quit Milan for the French capital to show its spring summer collection-later got in on the act by taking over a Paris theatre and having singer Jane Birkin, her back turned to most of the audience, sing her 1983 hit "Baby Alone in Babylone".

With K-pop superstar Kai mobbed outside by fans, Gucci's designer Alessandro Michele served up an extra large helping of the oddball 1970s kitsch which has made him such a hit with millennials. Mickey Mouse mabags, wacky Y-fronts, sleeping mask shades, underpants on the outside of slacks and medallions as big as mayoral chains are only a taster of some of the wacky new looks fashion's jester-in-chief pulled from his wide-brimmed hat.

Gucci's jokey bad taste

His playful, luxuriant bad taste could not be further from Chiuri's earnest elegance. Chiuri said she wanted to replicate dance's "naturalness... but also its discipline" in a striking collection full of flesh tones and nifty headwear. Pirouetting deftly from Martha Graham-style robes fit for Greek goddesses to elongated tutus and hip-hop tank tops, the Italian blurred the lines between ready-to-wear



Dancers perform during the Christian Dior Spring-Summer 2019 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos

wanted them to experience a show differently... to feel it," she added. "It is dance and a fashion show, it is not a traditional catwalk experience at all."

Even so Chiuri—who is known for her sharp eye for accessories—appeared to have hit the social media bulls-eye with her skin-tone square front-window sun glasses and "CD" (for Christian Dior) belt buckles that were being shared on Instagram within minutes.

Beret nice

The designer began with typically austere and ethereal monochrome black and white tulle dresses before sending out a shimmering run of skin-tone looks followed by muted greens, greys, ivory and navy blues. Fishnet and embroidered dresses and tights ran through a sizeable slice of the collection that was as also strong on classily muted florals, tie dye and restrained ethnic edging. The woman who has helped make the French beret hip again created a new feather-light version for spring and summer as well as more tight-fitting skull caps with British hat designer Stephen Jones, also wrapping her models heads in two rounds of taupe-coloured ribbon. Chiuri finished by giving the classic 1950s New Look Dior fitted jacket a radical chic upgrade, matching it with combat trousers and even bleached denim trousers.

The Dior designer was not the only Italian star on Monday. Gucci's decision to show in Paris rather than in Milan base hammered home yet again how utterly dominant the French capital has become in the last few years. Young French debutant Simon Porte Jacquemus also turned heads with a breeze collection of barely there beach chic dresses for those with the most beautiful of bodies to show off. Those that don't took consolation in his tiny handbags, huge earrings and equally enormous shoulder bags. — AFP



and haute couture. Chiuri, a committed feminist and the first woman to lead the fabled French house, said the show was "about liberty. Clothes are tied to the body and are very personal."

And she insisted that like each dancer, every look was individual. "There are none of the sequences (of looks) you usually get in fashion shows, each look is for each model." Channelling the ghosts of dance greats like Isadora Duncan and Pina Bausch, Chiuri said she was trying to capture the "powerful explosion of the female imagination". The show-in a specially built auditorium at the Longchamps race course on the edge of Paris—was a hymn to the carnal and the fleshily human, she told AFP. "These days everything seems virtual but we do things by hand in our workshops. All the floral printing, the tie dye is done by hand, it's couture, it's not industrial."

Misted up Instagram queens

With all the billowing dry ice, the designer also wanted to frustrate the front row Instagram queens who spend their time snapping the shows rather than looking at the clothes. "People miss the moment because they are spending their time taking photos with their phones. I



Models present creations by Christian Dior during the Spring-Summer 2019 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris.



Slimane revolution at Celine as Paris fashion week starts

Paris women's fashion week starts Monday with fashionistas waiting with bated breath to finally see Hedi Slimane's debut at Celine. The superstar designer, who pioneered the skinny look at Dior and Saint Laurent, was handed carte blanche in January to make the fabled French house his own. The results of his nine months of cogitations will be revealed on Friday. The signs so far are that his approach is likely to be revolutionary.

Slimane has already changed the logo, doing away with the French accent on Celine's first "e" and mention of Paris on its advertising campaigns—a possible hint that he intends to continue spending time photographing his rock star friends in Los Angeles. He has also erased all trace on Instagram of his predecessor Phoebe Philo's hugely influential decade at the label.

The British designer gave Celine a much-copied hip minimalism, with her love of white Adidas Stan Smith tennis trainers helping to popularise the vintage look. But Paris-born Slimane wants to make a clean break with the past. Earlier this month the label said that the new upper-case logo was inspired by its 1960s modernist incarnation, and that having at first got rid of all mention of the French capital, Paris would be "reinstated" on its clothing labels and on packaging. Luxury giant LVMH, which owns Celine, gave Slimane complete control of the brand's images and creative side in order to sign him up after he walked away from Saint Laurent last year.

They are also letting him create a menswear line. Up to now Celine has only made clothes for women. The 50-year-old fell out with Saint Laurent reportedly because of his frustration at not being able to control its perfume and cosmetics arms.



In this file photo French designer Hedi Slimane for Saint Laurent acknowledges the public during the Spring/Summer 2013 ready-to-wear collection show in Paris. — AFP

Paris utterly dominant

The LVMH deal has put Slimane alongside Chanel's Karl Lagerfeld as one of the most powerful designers in fashion. After New York, London and Milan, fashion returns to its undisputed capital on Monday. The biggest, longest and most important fashion week of all kicks off with Italian designer Maria Grazia Chiuri's spring summer collection at Dior. She has quit Dior's traditional Rodin museum venue for the show, which will take place instead at the legendary Longchamps horse racing track.

With the French capital utterly dominant these days, nearly a dozen new brands—almost all international—will be showing in the official calendar for the first time. These include the highly-rated young Chinese-Korean designer Ximon Lee who has previously shown in New York and the Ukrainian Anton Belinskiy, as well as the London-based brand A.W.A.K.E. founded by the fashion director at Russian Harper's Bazaar, Natalia Alaverdian. Another British-based brand, Marques' Almeida—founded by the Portuguese pairing Marta Marques and Paulo Almeida—has also swapped London for Paris. Young Berlin-born designer Yolanda Zobel will also make her debut at futuristic French brand Courreges during the nine-day marathon of catwalk shows. — AFP

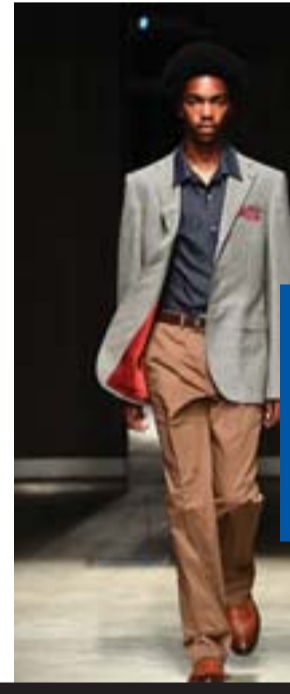
Curtain falls on Milan fashion shows with Nakashima's 1960s funk



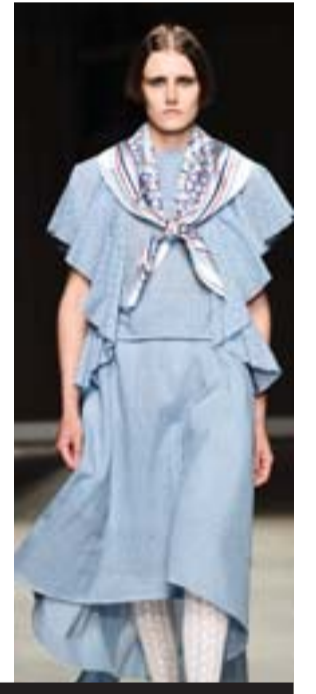
The music and culture of the 1960s inspired Japanese designer Atsushi Nakashima's spring/summer 2019 funk-themed collection which brought down the curtain on Milan's fashion week. The fashion extravaganza, which opened on Sept. 19, will now make way for Paris - with first shows from Kering's Gucci and LVMH's Dior - for the last leg of a month-long catwalk season which started in New York. The Milanese runways were dominated by satin and snakeskin, with many brands also using elements of sportswear in their collections. Fashion brands looking to next year's warm seasons offered clothes in bold prints and strong tones. "My idea is always to play with the past and reinvent it in a contemporary key," Nakashima told Reuters just before his show started.

Nakashima became Jean Paul Gaultier's assistant designer in 2004, and five years after he was appointed head designer for men's and women's designs at the fashion house. Often inspired by music for his designs, Nakashima said that 1960s culture and funk, disco and soul music were behind his latest collection's palette, with vivacious, strong colors highlighted here and there with neon hues. The 1960s feel was clear from the start: a model wore a patterned long dress with a ruffle at the bottom, with a silk foulard on her shoulders offset by thin white gloves, white stockings and high-heeled peep-toe clogs.

The designs included many prints as well as wide trousers, flares and head foulards. Looks for men ranged from acetate sports ensembles to smarter suits, some with trousers and others with shorts. The 1960s were in full swing with high-waist and ankle-high dark blue trousers, worn by male models with cropped jackets. Women also wore dresses in broderie anglaise in yellow and white. Nakashima sourced all materials used in the collection from Japan. In his third year in Milan, Nakashima said he was happy to showcase his collections in Italy's fashion capital. "Italy has a strong heritage, especially in the fashion sector, and there are a lot of meeting points between the country's culture and fashion with Japan's," he said. "Italy is a true inspiration." — Reuters



Models present creations for Atsushi Nakashima during the Women's Spring/Summer 2019 fashion shows in Milan.



Cavalli raises hemlines in body conscious show in Milan

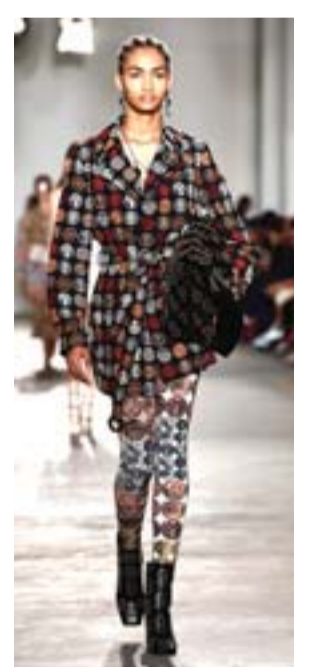
Short and wrapping designs that highlighted the body's form and movement marked out Roberto Cavalli's dynamic spring-summer 2019 collection in a runway full of energy on Saturday at Milan Fashion week. The show, held in a former railway depot in the northern part of Italy's fashion capital, moved to the pounding beat of drum-based tribal music, with jungle noises in the background. In the front row, among celebrities were newlyweds French actor Vincent Cassel and model Tina Kunakey. "The attention is on the legs and on barycentre, the origin of the body's strength and it is emphasized with short hems and the shape of the bust line," read a designer note.

Designer Paul Surridge wanted to give "power to the body and strength to its movement," it added. Celebrity model Gigi Hadid, who has been walking all the major catwalks of the fashion extravaganza that started on Wednesday, opened the show wearing a bermuda shorts suit in taupe with a subdued animal print—a trademark of the fashion house—and black studded short boots. She later re-appeared with tight black biker shorts matched with a glitzy jacket decorated with metallic bronze coloured sequins. Her sister Bella, also in many shows in Milan, wore wide silver shorts and a crop knitted top in grey and silver, a belt showing off her waist.

Models strutted in short trench coats, mini dresses revealing biker shorts underneath, and draped tops in various tones of brown and beige, at times interrupted by aqua blue and mustard. Many designs were in leather and silk. Some clothes used the patchwork technique, putting together different colors of snakeskin and leathers. Accessories included wrap-around sunglasses fastened to the head with soft fabric and big shopper leather bags carried folded in the hand. — Reuters



Models present creations during the presentation of the Roberto Cavalli fashion show, as part of the Women's Spring/Summer 2019 fashion week in Milan.



Lifestyle | Music & Movies



Indian filmmaker Snehasis Das points to the poster of one of his documentary films at his office in Odisha, India.



Indian filmmaker Snehasis Das on the set of the making of "Kokoli".

Love in the time of climate change: Indian film with a new take on romance

Eschewing the typical Bollywood storyline of young lovers facing family opposition, an upcoming Indian film instead features a couple battling climate change in order to be together. "Kokoli", which is the name of the female protagonist and also a type of fish, tells a story of a fishing community facing the loss of livelihoods and land as sea levels rise in the eastern state of Odisha. It will be released in November.

The Oriya-language film centers on Kokoli and her boyfriend, who sets out to build a wall to keep towering waves from destroying and uprooting his village - a task he must succeed in order to win her mother's approval. "Fishing is the only livelihood for them and the only skill they know. They are victims of climate change," filmmaker Snehasis Das told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Simultaneously, I focus on how love - a relationship - can be disturbed due to calamities," said the 43-year-old. "It is a lot about how they adapt to love and climate change. Their future hinges on adaptation." With a nearly 500 km (300 mile) coastline, Odisha is home to many coastal communities that depend on the sea.

The state is also one of India's most vulnerable to the effects of global warming, hit by rising sea levels, cyclones and floods, with vast stretches of the shoreline being lost to erosion. In June, the state government warned in a report that fishermen's catches could plummet with rising temperatures. India faces the most severe threat from climate change, followed by Pakistan, the Philippines and Bangladesh, HSBC showed in a March survey of 67 countries. Changing weather, along with more frequent droughts and heat waves, will hurt agricultural output and food security in developing nations such as India, according to studies by HSBC, the World Bank and the World Health Organization.

Climate change will also lead to water shortages and outbreaks of water and mosquito-borne diseases such as diarrhea and malaria, according to their research. "The effects (of climate change) creep up on you and many of these communities know there is something brewing - more tides, water reaching their huts - but don't see any immediate danger," said Das. "But they have to understand that they must start adapting now, before it is too late, which is something I have touched upon in my film."

Change makers

In order to appeal to a wide audience, Das also threw a song sequence into the mix, like Bollywood does, but he said the main aim is to get a message across to people. "A good way to do this is through a human angle that says, 'If this is happening to them, it can happen to you too,' - to make it relatable. And what is better than a love story? Everybody likes a good love story." He urged Bollywood - the world's largest film industry - to steer away from glitz and glamour and make some movies about climate change, even if the prospects of producing blockbusters about such subjects are slim.

"Bollywood has the power to reach the masses so easily. And it can be challenging weaving in a social message in a commercial film, but it can be done," said Das, who has made about 15 documentaries and several music videos on the topic. More than anyone else, Das hopes his film reaches the country's youth who he says are "future change makers". "This problem is only going to snowball and the younger generation can help, perhaps by dedicating some of their work to this cause and create awareness," he said. "They are my target audience." — AFP



'Simultaneously, I focus on how love - a relationship - can be disturbed due to calamities'



Bradley Cooper arrives on the red carpet at the Premiere of Warner Bros Pictures' 'A Star is Born' at The Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Cooper says 'explosion of chemistry' with Gaga key to 'Star is Born'

When first-time director Bradley Cooper hired pop superstar Lady Gaga for her first movie role in the remake of classic film "A Star is Born" both were taking a leap of faith. Trust, hard work and chemistry were key to their re-telling of the romance between an aging alcoholic musician and an ingenue who had previously been played by Barbra Streisand and Judy Garland. Cooper, 43, who also stars, sings and co-wrote the screenplay as well as some of the music, said the two had "an explosion of chemistry at the offset and then a massive commitment and that commitment followed up by a work ethic." "I found somebody that works as hard as I do. It pushed me to work harder," Cooper told Reuters Television.

"A Star is Born," opening in movie theaters around the world next week, tells the story of country singer Jackson Maine (Cooper), who meets, nurtures and falls in love with aspiring musician Ally (Lady Gaga). As Jackson deals with addiction and tinnitus and his own star wanes, Ally's career takes off. Despite a career as one of the world's biggest pop singers and a television role in series American Horror Story, the film marks Gaga's debut as a movie actress.

Reviews have been glowing for both Cooper, who is better known as an actor in "The Hangover" and "Silver Linings Playbook," and Gaga, who built a name for herself with flamboyant outfits and performance stunts. "I trusted him," Gaga said of Cooper. "We built a great friendship and we worked really hard." "Because of the trust I had with him, I felt very open and able to be revealing in a way that I didn't even know that I had inside of me," she added. Gaga, 32, said she was humbled and grateful to be part of the film. —Reuters

Hardy says on-screen 'Venom' stays true to Marvel comics



British actor Tom Hardy said on Friday he believes his new superhero movie "Venom" remains faithful to the Marvel Comics books in its portrayal of an investigative journalist whose body becomes the host for an alien with enhanced powers. Hardy, who previously starred in "Dunkirk" and "Mad Max: Fury Road," plays the sharp-toothed title character and his human alter-ego, reporter Eddie Brock. "The depiction of Venom, I think, has been extremely faithful to the comics," Hardy said at a press conference in Moscow to promote the movie.

"If we look at some of the images directly from comic book, they haven't deviated in any," he added. "If anything they've recreated certain elements accurately from comics book." "Venom" is scheduled to start rolling out in worldwide theaters on Oct 3. It debuts in the United States and Canada on Oct 5. — Reuters

K-Pop stars at UN urge world's youth to 'just speak yourself'

K-Pop sensation BTS brought their star power to the United Nations on Monday, telling the world's youth to listen to their inner voice and resist pressure to conform. "No matter who you are, where you're from, your skin colour, your gender identity, just speak yourself," group leader Kim Nam-jun told a packed hall at the launch of a UNICEF youth campaign. Dubbed "Generation Unlimited", the campaign to promote education, training and employment kicked off during the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations. Wearing business suits and ties, the septet joined UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, World Bank president Jim Yong Kim and Rwandan President Paul Kagame for the event - that was oddly devoid of screaming fans.

Kim Nam-jun, who also calls himself RM, spoke of growing up in Ilsan, South Korea, imagining he was a superhero and being "just a normal little boy" until self-doubt settled in at the age of nine or ten. "I think that's when I began to worry about what other people thought of me and started seeing myself through their eyes," he said. "I tried to jam myself into the molds that other people made." The lead singer of the world's most popular boy band said there were times when he wanted to quit music but he overcame his insecurities by listening to the "small voice that said, wake up man, and listen to yourself." "I have many faults and I have many more fears but I am going to embrace myself as hard as I can and I am starting to love myself," he said.

Among South Korea's best known and most lucrative musical exports, BTS made music history this year by becoming the first K-Pop group to top the Billboard 200 music charts. "BTS has become artists performing in huge stadiums and selling millions of records right now, but I am still an ordinary 24-year-old guy," said Kim Nam-jun. "We have learned to love ourselves, so now I urge you to 'speak yourself.'" BTS is bringing its "Love Yourself" tour to New York for a series of concerts including its first-ever US stadium performance. — AFP



In this photo released by the United Nations, singer Lilly Singh speaks during a meeting focused on youth issues at the United Nations in New York. — AFP

Cosby risks sentence of up to 10 years

Disgraced television icon Bill Cosby risks being sentenced to a maximum punishment of 10 years after the Canadian woman whom he sexually assaulted appealed for "justice" from a US court. The frail 81-year-old-once beloved as "America's Dad" - became the first celebrity of the #MeToo era convicted of a sex crime, for drugging and molesting Andrea Constand, a former university basketball administrator, at his Philadelphia mansion in January 2004. "All I'm asking for is justice as the court sees fit," Constand told the court Monday on the first of Cosby's two-day hearing in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Around 60 women, many of them onetime aspiring actresses and models, publicly branded the pioneering actor a calculating, serial predator who plied victims with sedatives and alcohol to bed them over four decades.

But the case involving Constand, a former Temple University employee turned massage therapist, was the only one recent enough to have come to court. The pioneering comedian and award-winning actor now risks becoming one of the most famous Americans ever sent to prison. Prosecutors demanded the "maximum" sentence, served in a state prison, together with a \$25,000 fine and the full cost of the prosecution. Defense lawyers argue that Cosby should be restricted to house arrest, arguing that he is too old and too frail - the actor says he is legally blind - to endure the rough and tumble of a correctional facility.

'No remorse'

The actor once adored by millions for his defining role on "The Cosby Show" sat silently in court, dressed in a dark suit, white shirt and patterned tie. He appeared relaxed, at times chatting and smiling with his defense team. Constand's parents and sister testified, recalling how traumatic her ordeal at the hands of Cosby had been for the entire family. Her sister described Constand as "frail," "timid" and "nervous" after the assault, the opposite of her customary vibrant personality. Chief prosecutor Kevin Steele castigated Cosby for failing to express any remorse for his crimes.

"He doesn't believe that he did anything wrong," Steele told the court, dismissing the argument that Cosby was "too old" to go to jail. "Nobody is above the law," he

added. On Monday, Judge Steven O'Neill confirmed that both sides agreed to merge into one the three counts of aggravated indecent assault, reducing the maximum sentence he had theoretically faced from 30 to 10 years. The prosecution also wants Cosby slapped on a list of violent sexual predators, as recommended by a state board. The defense does not.

Future victim 'possible'

Pennsylvania law defines a sexually violent predator as an offender with "a mental abnormality or personality disorder" that makes them likely to engage in repeat crimes. The classification would force Cosby to register with state police for the rest of his life and submit to mandatory sex offender counseling. "Mr Cosby is not dangerous. Eighty-one-year-old blind men that are not self sufficient are not dangerous," hit back defense lawyer Joseph Green.

A psychologist and member of the assessment board said that it was "possible" he had already met "a future victim," saying being blind was irrelevant. "Being blind doesn't make you unconscious," she said. A key witness for the defense, psychologist Timothy Foley, testified yesterday. Only after that will O'Neill impose his punishment, making Cosby the first celebrity sentenced for a sex crime since the 2017 downfall of Harvey Weinstein ushered in a US watershed on sexual harassment. — AFP



Comedian Bill Cosby leaves after the first day of a sentencing hearing at the Montgomery County Courthouse in Norristown, Pennsylvania. — AFP

Classifieds

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h causing rising dust over open areas.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 25/09/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	42 °C	32 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	43 °C	26 °C			
ABDALY	44 °C	25 °C			
BUBYAN	-- °C	0- °C			
JAHRA	43 °C	29 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	41 °C	27 °C			
SALMIYAH	39 °C	32 °C			
AHMADI	38 °C	30 °C			
NUWAISIB	42 °C	27 °C			
WAFRA	43 °C	25 °C			
SALMY	44 °C	26 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	09/26	Hot	44 °C	27 °C	NW	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	09/27	Hot and some high clouds will appear	43 °C	25 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 30 km/h
Friday	09/28	Hot	44 °C	26 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Saturday	09/29	Hot	41 °C	26 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:19
Sunrise	05:38
Zuhr	11:40
Asr	15:06
Sunset	17:42
Isha	18:58

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	43 °C
MIN. Temp.	30 °C
MAX. RH	34 %
MIN. RH	10 %
MAX. Wind	N 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

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Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
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American Airlines	22087425
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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

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Arrival Flights on Wednesday 26/9/2018															
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	KAC	357	Mashhad	13:05	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KNE	684	Madinah	15:50
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	JZR	779	Riyadh	13:30	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	FEG	341	Jeddah	13:45	JZR	142	Doha	03:20	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	13:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	RBG	216	Sohag	03:45	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	JZR	125	Bahrain	14:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	618	Doha	14:20	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	364	Colombo	14:20	JZR	902	Baku	05:30	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:25	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35	SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	512	Mashhad	14:25	KAC	103	London	05:45	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KNE	683	Madinah	14:55	JZR	786	Riyadh	06:05	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
JZR	651	Lahore	02:55	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:05	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10	RJA	649	Amman	07:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10	JZR	356	Mashhad	07:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20	KAC	167	Paris	07:30	KAC	381	Dubai	17:45
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	562	Amman	15:20	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:55	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	502	Beirut	15:35	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
KAC	796	Madinah	03:45	SVA	504	Madinah	15:55	BAW	156	London	08:20	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	KAC	118	New York	16:00	KAC	165	Rome	08:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10	KAC	511	Mashhad	08:45	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	1541	Cairo	04:35	JZR	535	Cairo	16:10	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	KAC	117	New York	09:05	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	FDB	051	Dubai	16:20	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	CLX	792	Hong Kong	19:00
KAC	544	Cairo	05:20	KAC	542	Cairo	17:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	KAC	151	Istanbul	19:10
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	JZR	534	Cairo	09:45	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	154	Istanbul	05:35	CLX	758	Luxembourg	17:30	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR	145	Doha	17:35	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	177	Dubai	17:40	KAC	101	London	10:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00	JZR	552D	Alexandria	20:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20	KAC	617	Doha	10:20	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
JZR	505	Luxor	06:55	RJA	640	Amman	19:00	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10	SYR	342	Damascus	11:05	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00
KAC	358	Kochi	08:00	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05												
JZR	529	Asyut	08:10												
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25												
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55												
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00												
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25												
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30												
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40												
SYR	341	Latakia	10:05												
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20												
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30												
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40												
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55												
IRM	1188	Mashhad	10:55												
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00												
JZR	903	Baku	11:10												

'Ka pai': New Zealand's Maori language is back from brink

WELLINGTON: Beneath the carved timber roof of a traditional "marae" meeting house at Wellington High School, dozens of students watch entranced as a play performed entirely in the Maori language unfolds. Many only understand a smattering of the indigenous language, but pick up emotional cues from the performers. Some audience members are close to tears as the production in the New Zealand capital ends. It is a scene that actor Eds Eramiha says would have been difficult to imagine as recently as two decades ago, when te reo Maori was widely regarded as a dying language not worth teaching.

"Attitudes have changed immensely," he said. "When I was at school, te reo Maori wasn't held in high value, it wasn't spoken, it wasn't as freely available as it is to our kids today." Te reo was banned in schools for much of the 20th century which, combined with the urbanization of rural Maori, meant that by the 1980s, only 20 percent of indigenous New Zealanders were fluent in the language. That number was virtually unchanged by 2013, when census figures showed that just 21.3 percent of the Maori population could converse in te reo.

An official report published in 2010 warned the language was on the verge of extinction. "Te reo Maori is approaching crisis point," it said, with older native speakers "simply not being replaced" as they passed away. The contrast with New Zealand today is striking. The language is enjoying a surge in popularity among Kiwis - Maori or otherwise - embracing their South Pacific nation's indigenous culture.

Te reo courses are booked out at community colleges, while bands, poets and rappers perform using the language. Te reo words such as 'kai' (food), 'ka pai' (congratulations), 'whanau' (family), and 'mana' (prestige) have entered everyday usage. Even the way Kiwis define themselves has taken on a te reo tone, with an increasing number preferring to use 'Aotearoa' rather than New Zealand.

'More than a language'

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is a passionate champion of the language, saying one of her great regrets is not being able to converse fluently in it. "We have a guardianship role, a duty of care to te reo Maori," she said this month. "It's our job to nurture it because it's about more than a language." Ardern chose to give her daughter Neve a Maori middle name 'Te Aroha' (the love) when she was born in June. Her



WELLINGTON: People walk past Maori language signs on Sept 13, 2018. — AFP

government has set a target of having one million fluent te reo speakers by 2040.

With the Maori comprising only about 15 percent of New Zealand's 4.5 million population, that would mean many non-Maori adopting the language. It is a prospect that excites Charles Royal, a Maori academic and storyteller at the national museum Te Papa (Our Place). "We've never had so many te reo speakers as we have now," he said. "What te reo enables me to do is articulate who I am in a very particular way...as a New Zealander," he added. "It's the vehicle by which humanity first gained a voice in this part of the world."

Royal said the earlier rejection of te reo stemmed from a sense of inferiority and a mistaken belief that European history was more important than that of New

Zealand. But he said Kiwis now felt more positive about their place in the world and the rising popularity of te reo was an expression of this confidence.

As an actor, Eramiha observes that te reo "flies off my tongue a bit better (than English), the flow's different". Head teacher Angela Fieldes has noticed a similar phenomenon among toddlers exposed to te reo at the Wellington child care centre she helps run. "They pick it up really, really quickly, so it just becomes part of their day," she said after the children performed a 'waiata' (song), reciting Maori colours, numbers and vowels. "They love the singing and I think a big part of learning te reo is that it's so rich in the way you can use song."

Royal said there were still New Zealanders who

maintained Maori culture was not valuable, but they were an ageing minority. He said the fact that so many non-Maori, including 'pakeha' (New Zealanders of European descent) wanted to learn te reo was "absolutely fantastic". "It makes me feel proud to be Maori, it's an act of generosity on both sides," he said.

Eramiha echoes the sentiment, saying the passion for the language has been evident as his Taki Rua theatre troupe performs in te reo across the country. He expressed confidence in the language's future, saying: "People from other cultures come up to me after our shows and say 'can you teach me how to say hello?'. "It's a treasure for us to be able to pass it on and a great gift to see other people wanting to learn it. It's amazing." — AFP

Bahrain accuses 169 of forming another Hezbollah

DUBAI: Bahrain charged 169 people yesterday suspected of forming "Bahrain's Hezbollah", a local version of the armed Shiite group, which prosecutors said was trained and backed by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. The announcement follows scores of arrests and penalties imposed in the Western-allied Gulf state on defendants accused by the authorities of militancy. Bahrain, a strategic island where the US Navy's Fifth Fleet is based, has long accused mainly Shiite Iran of stoking militancy, which Tehran denies.

A statement carried by the state news agency BNA said the prosecutor charged 169 defendants, including

111 who had already been arrested. They were accused of forming a terrorist group, planning assassinations and receiving training in handling weapons and manufacturing explosives. "The Public Prosecution had been informed by the Department of criminal investigation...that Iran's Revolutionary Guards have ordered some of their members to work on unifying different Bahraini militant groups," the statement said.

"(The groups) would get involved in one terrorist organization which they called Bahrain's Hezbollah," it said, adding the group was planning to send Bahrainis to Iraq, Lebanon and Iran for military training. A trial is set for Oct 3, BNA said. Bahrain has stepped up a crackdown on critics, shutting down two main political groups, revoking the citizenship of the spiritual leader of the Shiite community and jailing rights campaigners. The kingdom has seen occasional unrest since 2011. Demonstrators have clashed frequently with security forces, which have been targeted by several bomb attacks. — Reuters

Even though they spoke from the same stage, both Trump and Rouhani have ruled out a meeting on the sidelines of the assembly. In a tweet yesterday morning, Trump said he had no plans to meet Rouhani "despite requests" to do so. "Maybe someday in the future. I am sure he is an absolutely lovely man!" he said. Rouhani has said he does not want to meet Trump. He told NBC News that the US leader must first repair the damage done by exiting the nuclear deal. "That bridge must be rebuilt," he said.

Today, Trump will for the first time chair a meeting of the Security Council on non-proliferation that will give him a fresh opportunity to make the case for a tougher international stance on Iran. While he praised China's President Xi Jinping for his role in the North Korea peace process, Trump had harsh words for Beijing amid a growing trade war, saying the commercial imbalance with the Asian power "cannot be tolerated".

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday sharply criticized the use of economic sanctions "as weapons" in his address to the UN, in an implicit swipe at the United States. "None of us can remain silent to the arbitrary cancellation of commercial agreements, the spreading prevalence of protectionism and the use of economic sanctions as weapons," Erdogan told the UN General Assembly.

Ties between Washington and Ankara hit a low in August when Trump announced steep new tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminum in response to the detention of an American pastor in Turkey. The Turkish lira has taken a beating on the currency market, sparking fears in Turkey of a full-blown economic crisis. "Nobody wants the world to experience a new economic rupture," said Erdogan. He did not accuse the United States directly but pointed to "countries that are persistently trying to create chaos". "It is very easy to create chaos but it's difficult to re-establish order, and today some countries are persistently trying to create chaos."

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday he was hopeful Turkey would release this month the American pastor, Andrew Brunson, who has been detained for nearly two years on terror charges. Erdogan urged world leaders to crack down on followers of Fethullah Gulen, a US-based Turkish preacher whom the president has accused of backing a failed coup in 20016 and considers the leader of a terror organization. Calling once again for his extradition, Erdogan alleged that Gulen was living in Pennsylvania "in a very well-off fashion". — Agencies

Adasani files to grill minister...

Continued from Page 1

a policy of conflict of interests that promoted corruption and squandering of public funds. He accused the minister of making illegal appointments from outside the ministry in what appears to be a policy of appeasement that violated the law and squandered public funds. He said that he has "solid evidence" that by doing so, the minister has promoted corruption, chaos and conflict of interests, adding that the appointments made in August are a clear proof of the allegations.

Adasani accused the minister of violating budget guidelines, thus harming public interests and of transferring funds between various provisions of the budget in violation of the law. In addition, he accused the minister of failing to perform his duties specified in the law, especially in promoting cooperation between the National Assembly and the government, adding that relations between the two bodies have instead worsened.

This will be the second grilling by Adasani against Khorafi this year. In the first grilling debated several months ago, the lawmaker made almost similar accusations against Khorafi, who refuted the allegations. The grilling ended without a vote of no-confidence. Adasani

Saudis launch high-speed train...

Continued from Page 1

He can read books or magazines or enjoy watching the screens in business class, have a coffee or a light meal," he said in an interview ahead of yesterday's ceremony. The authorities hope the train will also stimulate growth of King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), a massive business zone that was initiated under the previous ruler but remains relatively empty. It will eventually link up with a new terminal at Jeddah airport, which has already started serving select domestic routes and will take over all flights by early next year.

Fatallah said further expansion could include connecting to a planned east-west train between the capital Riyadh and Jeddah. Pilgrims comprise the bulk of Saudi Arabia's 20 million annual foreign visitors, apart from workers and business travellers. More than two million came for this year's hajj and 6.5 million performed umrah in 2017. Officials aim to increase the number of umrah and hajj pilgrims to 15 million and five million respectively by 2020, and hope to double the umrah number again to 30 million by 2030.

In addition to public transit, Saudi Arabia is investing tens of billions of dollars in mega-hotels and a Grand Mosque restoration in Makkah. The Faisalia project, running from the edge of Makkah towards the Red Sea, aims to attract visitors to coastal getaways and Islamic research centers. Makkah governor Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, a nephew of the king and one of his closest advisers, anticipates that the initiatives will contribute to social and cultural development alongside economic growth. "We do not seek only to expand and develop. We want to expand and develop with distinction," he

had already urged the minister to step down and called on the prime minister to dismiss him from the Cabinet, saying his appointment was "illegal".

The grilling could be debated in the first session of the new term on Oct 30, but can be delayed for two more weeks. If one or more grillings are submitted, they will be debated in the same session. The strained Assembly-government ties have sparked speculations that the Assembly might be dissolved in the next term. Opposition MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain called on those who spread rumors that the Assembly is likely to be dissolved to stop saying so, because this is not in their hands. He said he respects the powers enjoyed by HH the Amir to dissolve the Assembly.

Meanwhile, six lawmakers yesterday formed a coordination committee to garner support for issuing a general amnesty for jailed political prisoners and against revoking the membership of two opposition lawmakers after they were handed jail terms for storming the Assembly building in Nov 2011. The committee comprises of MPs Thamer Al-Suwait, Omar Al-Tabtabaei, Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Khaled Al-Otaibi, Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei and Babtain. Omar Al-Tabtabaei charged the Assembly is "hijacked" by some and said that demanding a general amnesty for the two MPs is a constitutional right.

The lawmakers want to press the Assembly to issue a public amnesty law for the benefit of the two MPs and also for halting any attempts to revoke the membership of Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash, who were handed harsh jail terms.

said in an interview. "We want to begin from the point that others have already reached, not the point from which they began."

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia will offer an electronic visa for foreign visitors to attend sporting events and concerts from December, the kingdom said yesterday, as it tries to diversify its economy and open up its society. At present, foreigners travelling to the conservative Muslim country are largely restricted to resident workers and their dependents, business travellers, and Muslim pilgrims who are given special visas to travel to holy sites. Plans to admit significant numbers of tourists from abroad have been discussed for years, only to be blocked by conservative opinion and bureaucracy.

Crown Prince Mohammed is seeking to develop new industries to wean Saudi Arabia off dependency on oil exports. Economic reforms aim to lift total tourism spending in the country - by local citizens as well as foreigners - to \$46.6 billion in 2020 from \$27.9 billion in 2015.

"Saudi Arabia will open up its borders to fans of live sport, music and culture for the first time with the launch of a new online visa process dedicated to welcoming international tourists," the kingdom's General Sports Authority said. The "sharek" visa process will be introduced for a motor race on Dec 15, according to a statement by GSA. No other details were immediately available. "We hope the Saudia Diriyah E Prix will see fans from around the globe come to Saudi Arabia to watch this epic sporting spectacle as now your ticket is your visa," said Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, vice chair of the GSA.

In Aug 2017, the kingdom announced a multi-billion dollar project to turn 50 islands and other pristine sites on the Red Sea into luxury resorts. The country also plans to develop historic sites such as the centuries-old Mada'in Saleh, home to sandstone tombs of the same civilization which built the Jordanian city of Petra. — Agencies

Trump blasts Iran, OPEC; Rouhani...

Continued from Page 1

Boasting that his team "has achieved more than any administration in the history of our country," Trump was met with laughter, highly unusual in the solemn General Assembly. "I didn't expect that reaction, but that's okay," Trump responded.

But the most closely watched passage of his speech came when he turned to Iran. "We cannot allow the world's leading sponsor of terrorism to possess the planet's most dangerous weapons," Trump said, in an allusion to Tehran's support for Islamic militant movements such as Hamas and Hezbollah. "We cannot allow a regime that chants 'Death to America' and that threatens Israel with annihilation, to possess the means to deliver a nuclear warhead to any city on Earth," he said. "We ask all nations to isolate Iran's regime as long as its aggression continues."

French President Emmanuel Macron used his speech at the assembly to urge "dialogue and multilateralism" on dealing with Iran, crediting the 2015 accord with curbing Tehran's nuclear program. Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in May, to the dismay of the other parties which had invested years in negotiations to achieve a milestone agreement on keeping Iran's nuclear ambitions in check.

Speaking later, Rouhani accused Trump of trying to topple his government as he poured cold water on the idea of resuming talks with Washington after its pullout from an international nuclear accord. "It is ironic that the US government does not even conceal its plan for overthrowing the same government it invites to talks," Rouhani said in a speech. "For dialogue to take place, there is no need for a photo opportunity. The two sides can listen to each other right here in this Assembly. I am starting the dialogue right here, and state, in unequivocal terms, that the question of international security is not a toy in American domestic politics."

The Iranian leader said he was pleased that the international community did not follow the Trump administration's "unilateral and illegal withdrawal from the JCPOA," the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as the nuclear deal is known. "Unlawful unilateral sanctions in themselves constitute a form of economic terrorism," said Rouhani.

Sports

Woods back on top, bidding to end Ryder Cup struggles

Tiger carries his strong play from tee to green

SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES: Tiger Woods rediscovered his former glories by claiming his first title in over five years last weekend, but now he turns his attentions to a competition he has never dominated—the Ryder Cup. The 14-time major champion was peerless for 11 years as an individual, although struggled with the team dynamics of the match-play showdown and has only been on the winning side once in seven previous appearances.

His return from the wilderness of back surgeries and personal problems has brought about the opportunity to have another crack at the Ryder Cup in France, where he looks more relaxed and at ease among his teammates after serving as a vice-captain at Hazeltine two years ago and at the 2017 Presidents Cup.

And Woods is hoping that in the new stage of his career, and after his stunning victory at the Tour Championship, he can help the United States end their 25-year wait for a win on European soil. “We haven’t done well,” he admitted to reporters at Le Golf National yesterday. “My overall Ryder Cup record, not having won as a player since 1999 is something that hopefully we can change. “We haven’t won as a US squad here in 25 years on foreign soil, so hopefully that will change this week, as well.”

The 42-year-old, at Le Golf National for the first time since in 1994 as an amateur, unsurprisingly looked in an upbeat mood playing alongside possible partner Bryson DeChambeau, old adversary Phil Mickelson and Patrick Reed in practice yesterday.

Woods looked to have carried his strong play from tee to green from East Lake to Paris, as he and his teammates took their time trying to come to grips with the vagaries of the undulating areas around the Albatros greens. A different reception will surely face him when the competition starts, though, after he was greeted warmly yesterday by

the French spectators, many of whom would never have seen him play before. A tee shot on the dangerous par-three second hole to around four feet drew gasps from the crowd surrounding the green, as did a sumptuous pitch to the third.

RYDER CUP ‘NERVES’

Woods said that he couldn’t wait to experience the atmosphere of a Ryder Cup as a player for the first time since 2012. “It’s going to be fun. It’s going to be an awesome environment,” he added. “There’s a lot of nerves. It’s excitement. I mean, it really is.”

“It’s something we don’t get to experience in that regard because basically it’s the final round of a tournament on the very first hole and every match you tee it up. “It’s a different atmosphere and one that we absolutely love.” American captain Jim Furyk has long been expected to pair Woods with the more methodical DeChambeau, and that looks increasingly likely after the two spent much of yesterday morning locked in conversation on the fairways. Woods has appeared to intimidate partners in the past, with major champions Mickelson, Mark O’Meara and Furyk among those to struggle alongside him. But he and DeChambeau should, on paper at least, form a formidable foursomes combination on the tight, tricky course where placement will be more important than brute power.

“It would be awesome to play with him,” said DeChambeau. “Is it going to happen? We’re still working on it. “We’re still trying to figure out who is going to best fit with each other, not me personally but for everyone that’s going out that day.”

And ahead of a Presidents Cup captaincy next year, Woods will be desperate to finally prove he can be a successful team man. — AFP



SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES: US golfer Tiger Woods tees off during a practice session ahead of the 42nd Ryder Cup at Le Golf National Course at Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, south-west of Paris yesterday. — AFP

Poulter proud to serve as Ryder Cup ‘target’ for US

SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES: Ian Poulter said he relishes the prospect of the Americans targeting him at the Ryder Cup as they attempt to end a 25-year wait for a victory on European soil at France’s Le Golf National.

Poulter returns for his sixth Ryder Cup appearance after serving as a vice-captain for the 2016 defeat at Hazeltine following his plunge down the world rankings. Poulter’s starring role in the ‘Miracle at Medinah’ in 2012 guaranteed his place in Ryder Cup folklore, with US players in the past having made no secret of their desire to beat the charismatic Englishman.

“I take it as a huge compliment, I think, more than anything else,” said Poulter, who holds an impressive 12-4 with two halved career record and is unbeaten in five singles matches.

“It’s a daunting position to be in to know that everyone really wants to take you down, but quite frankly, I want to take them down just as much. “That’s why this week is so special. You can be friends week-in, week-out and be good friends week-in, week-out, but when it comes to the Ryder Cup, there’s something extra special there, and it means so much to want to win and have to win.”

Beset by injury and a precipitous dip in form, Poulter briefly dropped outside the world’s top 200 in early 2017 for the first time in 17 years. But the 2008 British Open runner-up has worked his way back from “the low of lows” and earned his first win in almost six years at April’s Houston Open.

‘DIFFICULT BEING VICE-CAPTAIN’

“When you are, you know, at the low of lows, and that wasn’t that long ago, there’s a little voice in the back of your head that says: ‘You might not get back to as good as you was.’ “But I was at a dinner in December 2016, and I was asked a question on stage at a PGA dinner: ‘What’s left for me in golf?’

“I answered the question, ‘I feel I’ve got more wins in me.’ And I said then, ‘I’m going to make the team in Paris.’ “That has been a goal for the last 18, 20 months. It has been something which has kept me going from a motivational standpoint.”

Poulter was one of five vice-captains assisting Darren Clark two years ago, and he admitted it was tough not being out on the course as Europe slid to a 17-11 loss.

“It was difficult being vice-captain last time, knowing how much I’ve helped the team in the past and I wanted to help the team in any way I could, so vice-captain was a great role,” said Poulter. “But I felt this time around, I really wanted to make the team.”

Despite his formidable Ryder Cup record, he was frank when he insisted he would willingly sacrifice personal success for the sake of the team. “Of course, 100 percent,” said Poulter. “It’s always about the team, and however you go about putting that trophy in (captain) Thomas (Bjorn’s) hands, it would be a very proud moment to be part of that team. “So we win together, we lose together. But as long as we win as a team, that’s all that really matters.” — AFP



GAZOO Racing celebrates back-to-back wins at World Rally Championship

The GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally Team is celebrating its second consecutive victory, after Ott Tänak followed his Rally Finland triumph by securing first place at the recent Rallye Deutschland, during the World Rally Championship (WRC) organized by the International Automobile Federation or Federation Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA). The race also marked the Toyota Yaris WRC’s maiden win on asphalt. As in Finland, the team achieved a double podium result, with Esapekka Lappi finishing in third place, enabling Toyota to climb to the second position in the manufacturers’ championship and placing the team within 13 points of the lead.

The ninth event of the calendar, Rallye Deutschland features terrain so diverse that it can be thought of as three asphalt rallies in one: the twisting roads through the vineyards overlooking the Mosel River close to Trier, the many challenging surfaces of the notoriously tough Baum holder military training area, and the fast and narrow country lanes around the service park at Bostal see Lake in the Saarland region.

With tire choice and car set-up further complicated by the often-changeable weather conditions, the Toyota Yaris

WRC’s versatility proved a decisive factor in the team’s victory. The car features a 1.6-liter turbocharged, direct injection engine that produces over 300bhp, a six-speed hydraulic shift gearbox, and a solid chassis shaped by advanced simulation, testing and production techniques.

Tommi Mäkinen, Team Principal, said: “This is another great moment for our team. Ott has once again been outstanding all weekend. Esapekka had a brilliant clean drive with no mistakes, which are very easy to make on this rally. Everybody has worked very hard to achieve this great result on asphalt, and we are all motivated to give maximum effort for the rest of the year.”

“We are very excited by the team’s outstanding performance, and I would like to congratulate them on attaining a double podium finish in this challenging race - a magnificent achievement that demonstrates their skills and determination,” said Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative of Middle East & North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. “Toyota is committed to building ‘ever-better’ cars, and motorsport is one of the means by which the skills of our people and the quality of our products can be further honed to achieve that aim. We extend our gratitude to our fans for their ongoing support and belief in our abilities and their constant encouragement.” Tanak was the front-runner for most of the race, only briefly conceding the lead after SS2. He carried an advantage of 43.7 seconds into the final day, which he managed carefully through the two runs over the 29-kilometer Graftschaff vineyard test. The win was sealed on the Bosenberg Power Stage, where he came within 0.1s of repeating his fastest time in Finland.

Rallye Deutschland is the third race that Tanak and co-driver Martin Jarveoja’s have won since joining Toyota this year. It is also the pair’s second victory at this event in as

many years, and one that brings Tanak closer to the two drivers currently ahead of him in the championship.

Lappi started the day in fifth position, moving up into third with a clean run through the first stage. He was third fastest on the Power Stage, as he and co-driver Janne Ferm steered their Toyota Yaris WRC to a second podium finish in the space of three events, and their first on asphalt. The result strengthens Lappi’s fourth place in the drivers’ standings in his first full season at this level.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC) and the Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota’s participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established ‘GAZOO Racing’ (GR), to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota’s belief that ‘the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,’ GAZOO Racing (GR) highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota’s commitment to making ‘ever-better’ cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, ‘GAZOO Racing’ (GR) aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone. The 2018 season marks the second year of the GAZOO Racing (GR) team’s mission to harness experience from motorsport to make ever-better cars. The team enjoyed a successful debut year in 2017 that included victories at Rally Sweden and Rally Finland, and finished third in the manufacturers’ championship.

The team will be looking to build on their success at Rally Turkey, the tenth round of the 2018 World Rally Championship.

European Ryder Cup squad pays tribute to Spain’s Barquin

SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES: Europe’s Ryder Cup team will wear yellow ribbons this week to honour Spanish golfer Celia Barquin, a 22-year-old college champion who was stabbed to death last week in America, captain Thomas Bjorn said yesterday. Upon each ribbon was written in red the name of Barquin, who died in Ames, Iowa, where she was named Iowa State University female athlete of the year after winning the Big 12 Conference golf title.

The ribbon and inscription used the colours of the Spanish flag as a mark of respect for a player who appeared set to join the LPGA Tour and who was killed while playing golf. A homeless man, Colin Richards, has been charged with her murder. Among those who paid tribute to Barquin last week were Spanish Ryder Cup team members Sergio Garcia, last year’s Masters winner, and Jon Rahm. “The golfing family extends way beyond what we are trying to do this week,” Bjorn said. “Those events in America with Celia being killed playing golf, is something that has hit everybody in the golf family, and obviously our two Spanish players very much.” Europe’s Ryder Cup

team contacted Miriam Barquin, Celia’s mother, to express support for the family. Miriam Barquin said she was “proud and humbled” by the gesture, according to a team statement, mentioning she and her daughter talked about the Ryder Cup in their final conversation.

“We felt that, after a conversation between Ryder Cup Europe with Celia’s mother, we would honour her this week,” Bjorn said. “That’s what we are doing, and it’s nothing about us, but it’s just more about the fact that the golfing family gets touched by these things all over the world. It’s terrible when things like this happen.”

“Such a great prospect for the game of golf, she was, but also a wonderful person. And when you speak to Sergio and Jon about it, they both couldn’t talk highly enough about her. We felt like that was appropriate for the week.”

Yellow ribbons will be available for players on the US and European teams to wear throughout the week.

Wives and partners of the players will wear yellow roses during Thursday’s opening ceremony in another tribute. It’s the second Ryder Cup in a row marked by players in mourning.

In 2016 at Hazeltine, the golf world mourned the death of Arnold Palmer, the American golf icon who died on the eve of Ryder Cup week at age 87. Palmer won seven major titles and was a member of seven triumphant US Ryder Cup squads. —AFP



Celia Barquin

Sports

Brewers win, gain in two races as Rockies whip Phillies 10-1

Dodgers rally, hold onto slim lead in West

MILWAUKEE: Eric Thames scored the tiebreaking run on an error by losing pitcher Bud Norris in the eighth inning Monday night as the Milwaukee Brewers outlasted the visiting St. Louis Cardinals 6-4 in a potential National League wild-card game preview. By winning the opener of a three-game series, the wild-card-leading Brewers reduced their magic number for clinching a playoff spot to three and moved within 1 1/2 games of the first-place Chicago Cubs in NL Central. The Cardinals, who fell three games behind Milwaukee, hold just a half-game lead for the second wild card over the Colorado Rockies. Ryan Braun homered for the Brewers, and Christian Yelich drove in two runs.

Pirates 5, Cubs 1

Francisco Cervelli and Pablo Reyes each homered and drove in two runs, and visiting Pittsburgh pulled away for a win over Chicago. Jose Osuna added a pair of hits and an RBI for the Pirates. Pittsburgh (79-76) has won seven of its past nine games and eight of its past 11 as it looks to finish the season above .500 for the first time since 2015. Chicago starter Cole Hamels (9-11) led his team at the plate with a solo homer. He gave up three runs (two earned) in six innings.

Dodgers 7, Diamondbacks 4

David Freese had three hits and two RBIs, and Manny Machado doubled and drove in two runs as Los Angeles maintained its 1 1/2-game lead over Colorado in the National League West with a comeback victory over Arizona in Phoenix. Freese hit a bases-empty homer in the fifth inning and had an infield single to load the bases in a two-run seventh, when Machado drove in the go-ahead run on a groundout to shortstop for a 4-3 lead. Clayton Kershaw (9-5) gave up six hits and three runs in six innings while making his 15th consecutive quality start, benefiting from the Dodgers' seventh-inning rally to get the victory. He struck out six and walked one, and he has not lost since July 21.

Rockies 10, Phillies 1

Jon Gray tossed seven strong innings, Gerardo Parra had three hits, and streaking Colorado continued its late-season playoff push with a win over Philadelphia in Denver. Trevor Story had two doubles in his return to the lineup for Colorado, which won its fourth straight. David Dahl added a two-run homer. Rhys Hoskins hit a solo homer in the seventh inning to break up Gray's shutout bid.

Athletics 7, Mariners 3

Shortly after learning that it had clinched its first

playoff spot since 2014, visiting Oakland got homers from Jonathan Lucroy, Jed Lowrie, Khris Davis and Matt Chapman in a win at Seattle. The clincher for the A's came when the New York Yankees defeated Tampa Bay, formally knocking the Rays out of contention for the second wild-card spot in the American League. The A's can still earn the first wild card-and the home-field advantage in the single-elimination playoff game that comes with it-by finishing ahead of the Yankees. Oakland trails New York by 1 1/2 games.

Red Sox 6, Orioles 2

Mookie Betts hit his career-high 32nd homer to help Boston take an early lead en route to a victory over visiting Baltimore. The victory was big for the Red Sox as it clinched home-field advantage throughout the American League playoffs, which start next week. Boston improved to 106-51, breaking the franchise's single-season wins record. Betts finished 2-for-5 with two RBIs plus a stolen base, his 29th of the season, and now he has a major-league-leading .343 average.

Yankees 4, Rays 1

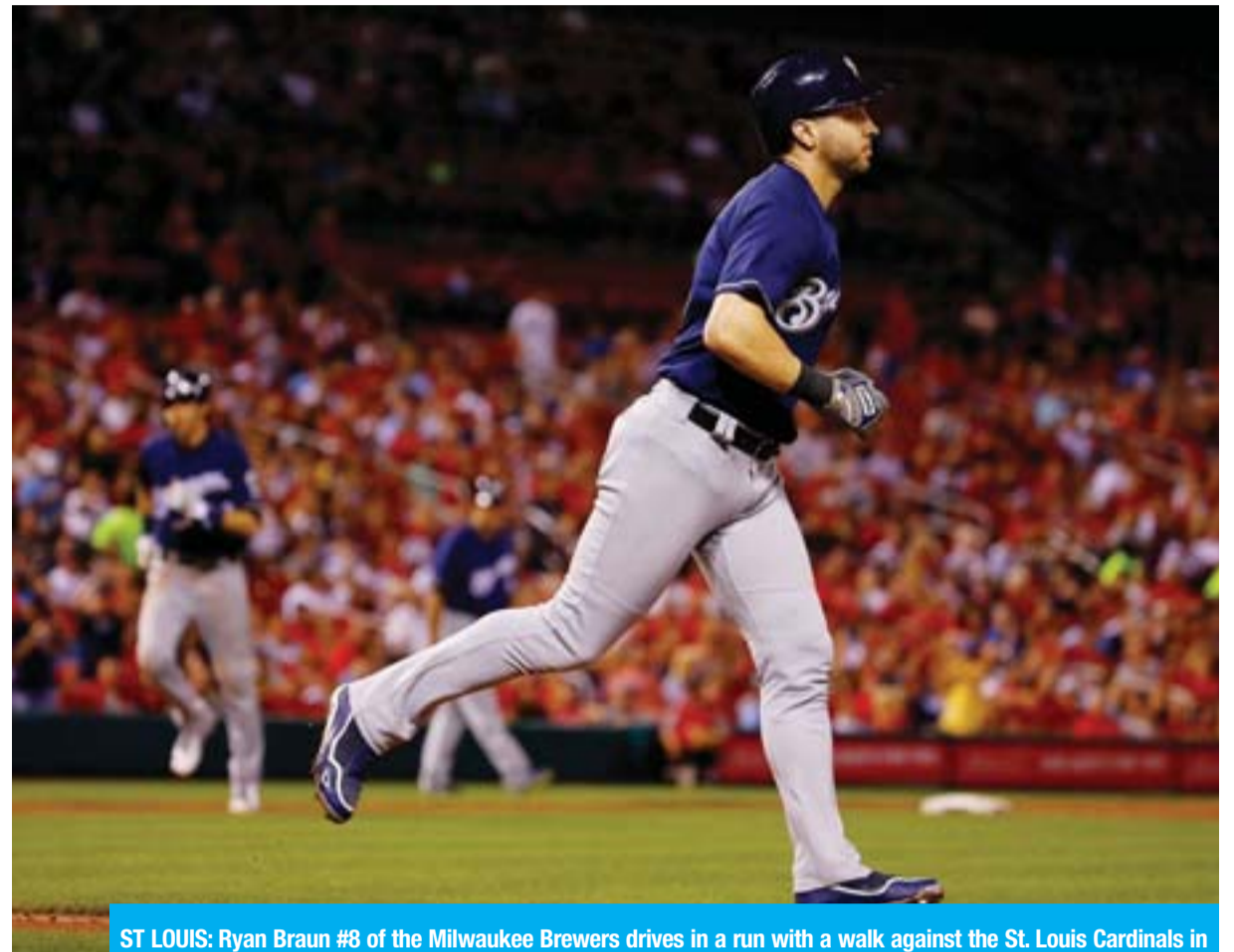
Brett Gardner delivered a tiebreaking single in the fifth inning and made a game-saving catch an inning later as New York Yankees inched closer to securing home-field advantage in the AL wild-card game with a victory at St. Petersburg, Fla. New York used eight pitchers, with Sonny Gray (11-9) getting the win in relief and Zach Britton picking up his seventh save. Andrew McCutchen led the Yankees' offense with two hits, including third-inning solo homer.

Angels 5, Rangers 4 (11 innings)

Jose Briceno's home run leading off the bottom of the 11th inning gave Los Angeles a victory over Texas in Anaheim, Calif. Briceno, pinch-hitting for fellow catcher Francisco Arcia, hit an 0-2 pitch from Matt Moore (3-8) over the fence in left-center field to end the Angels' five-game losing streak. Los Angeles earlier got solo homers from Shohei Ohtani, Jefry Marte and Michael Hermosillo.

Indians 4, White Sox 0

Corey Kluber struck out 11 in earning his 20th victory, and Brandon Guyer hit a seventh-inning home run to break up a scoreless tie as visiting Cleveland earned a shutout victory over Chicago. Kluber (20-7) went seven scoreless innings and became the second 20-game winner in baseball after the Rays' Blake Snell. It was Kluber's 46th career start with double-digit strikeouts. The right-hander allowed four hits and one walk.



ST LOUIS: Ryan Braun #8 of the Milwaukee Brewers drives in a run with a walk against the St. Louis Cardinals in the sixth inning at Busch Stadium on Monday in St. Louis, Missouri. — AFP

Indians pitchers retired the last 17 batters they faced, as Andrew Miller threw a perfect eighth inning and Cody Allen did the same in the ninth.

Astros 5, Blue Jays 3

Brian McCann and Josh Reddick hit back-to-back solo homers in the second inning, Dallas Keuchel pitched five innings, and Houston won at Toronto. Keuchel (12-11) allowed three runs, seven hits and three walks while striking out five. Houston maintained a 4 1/2-game lead over the A's in the American League West.

Nationals 7, Marlins 3

Anthony Rendon drove in four runs to lead host

Washington to a win over Miami. Rendon went 2-for-4 with a two-run homer and a two-run double. Washington's Stephen Strasburg was in line for his 10th win of the season, but he walked four batters in four innings and was removed after his pitch count reached 100. He allowed three hits and one run in four innings.

Padres 5, Giants 0

Bryan Mitchell pitched 8 2/3 shutout innings to lead San Diego to a victory at San Francisco. Kirby Yates came on with the bases-loaded in the ninth to strike out pinch hitter Austin Slater for his 11th save of the season. Mitchell (2-4) allowed seven hits and three walks with a season-high seven strikeouts. His totals of 8 2/3 innings and 118 pitches were career highs. — Reuters

Wozniacki, Kerber off to fast start at Wuhan Open

WUHAN: World number two Caroline Wozniacki and Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber eased through their opening matches at the Wuhan Open in China yesterday. Australian Open champion Wozniacki, who received a first-round bye, was barely troubled by the 61st-ranked Swede Rebecca Peterson, winning 6-4, 6-1 to set up a third-round clash with Olympic champion Monica Puig, who romped past Aliaksandra Sasnovich 6-2, 6-2.

Peterson offered some resistance in the first set, breaking Wozniacki's serve at 5-2, but faded as the Dane-who lost her first match at Japan's Pan Pacific Open last week-quickly regained control as she looks for a good run in Wuhan to secure a return to the WTA Finals, which she won last year.

"It's great to get a good start, obviously. Every match counts," Wozniacki said. "I'm just trying to keep my head down and keep focused and try to win as much as I can to get that (WTA Finals) spot." World number three Kerber has already qualified for next month's Finals which will be held in Singapore and advanced after a knee injury forced her American opponent Madison Keys to retire.

The German looked set for a big win over the 2017 US Open semi-finalist and was leading 6-0, 4-1 when Keys could not continue. "I was feeling good. I played the first set really well," Kerber said. "It's nice to be in the next round."

"The first rounds are... not easy. You have to find your rhythm," Kerber, who could return to world number one with a successful end to the season, said earlier this week she was not concerned about rankings.

"For me it's the most important thing, that I go on court, play my best, have fun out there, enjoying every single moment," she said Monday. "We will see what's happening at the end of the year."

Current number one and French Open champion Simona Halep plays later Tuesday against Dominika Cibulkova. Nine of the world's top 10 are at China's \$2.7 million Wuhan Open. US Open winner Naomi Osaka withdrew with an illness after losing the Pan Pacific Open final on Sunday.

Six spots at the WTA Finals next month remain up for grabs with only Halep and Kerber securing their places so far. Sixth-ranked Elina Svitolina became the biggest Wuhan casualty so far when the Ukrainian was beaten 6-4, 2-6, 6-1 by 20th-ranked Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus. — AFP

Kuwait Winter Games Club honors Kuwaiti athletes

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Winter Games Club honored Kuwait Ice Hockey team who won the gold medal during the Hong Kong World Championship, also Karate player Ali Al-Shatti and shooter Mansour Al-Rashidi were honored at the same event, for winning the gold medal during the Asian games in Indonesia.

Club Chairman Fuhaid Al-Ajmi said his club is keep on honoring Kuwaiti athletes who make achievements for their country. He said the honoring comes an encouragement for them to exert more efforts and make more achievements for Kuwait sports, and extend thanks and appreciation for them as they pleased Kuwaiti sports community. He said his club will have a busy season, as it will host the Gulf clubs tournament next December, also the ladies hockey national team will participate in the Asian Championship in Thailand in October. Kuwait Karate player Ali Al-Shatti thanked the Winter Games Club for its initiative adding that the achievements Kuwaiti players made are evidence for their outstanding performance and determination to come out winners. He said his priority now is to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Crown Prince shooting tournament to commence from October 4

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi lauded the continued support and care by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the sport of shooting.

He said Kuwait Shooting Sport Club commences its local season with one of the most important championships, that carries the name of HH the Crown Prince and this year it will be from October 4 - October 6. He said the tournament will include Olympic trap, skeet, double trap, 10m pistol and rifle as well as Olympic Archery.

He said the organization committee held several meetings with sub-committees to make sure all is ready for an outstanding launch of the tournament that declares the shooting season open.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic



Obaid Al-Osaimi

Shooting Complex is witnessing large number of shooters who are training to get ready for the tournament.



Indian, Irish yachtsmen 'stable' after remote ocean rescue

SYDNEY: Two solo yachtsmen stranded in the remote Indian Ocean during a round-the-world race were in a "good and stable condition" after being rescued in an multinational mission, Australian authorities said yesterday.

The yachts of Indian Abhilash Tomy and Irishman Gregor McGuckin, competitors in the Golden Globe race, were damaged during a storm on Friday, leaving them marooned some 3,500 kilometres (2,200 miles) off Australia's west coast. Tomy, a 39-year-old navy commander, was badly injured during the storm and on his bunk unable to move, race organisers said. As part of an international effort to reach the men, both sailors were located and brought on board French fisheries patrol vessel FPV Osiris on Monday.

"Both sailors at this stage are reported to be good and in a stable condition," Al Lloyd of coordinating agency the Australian Maritime Safety Authority

told reporters in Canberra.

Lloyd said the men were due to arrive at a nearby Indian Ocean island Ile Amsterdam later Tuesday, where they would be assessed by doctors. McGuckin, 32, was not injured but said he wanted to abandon his yacht after it was damaged. He made his way to Tomy in an attempt to assist him, and arrived at the same time as Osiris, Lloyd said.

At this stage, the plans were for them to be transferred onto the Royal Australian Navy's frigate HMAS Ballarat due to arrive at the island on Friday, and brought to Australia, he added.

The Golden Globe Race involves a gruelling 30,000-mile solo circumnavigation of the globe in yachts similar to those used in the first race 50 years ago, with no modern technology allowed except the communications equipment. Tomy's own yacht was a replica of Robin Knox-Johnston's Suhaili, winner of the first Golden Globe Race. — AFP

Sports

Ronaldo turns to Juventus challenge after FIFA best player award snub

Inter Milan face a tough task against Fiorentina

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo turns his focus back to Juventus's quest for a treble this season today after losing out in the FIFA's best player of the year award. Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo skipped the awards ceremony in London on Monday as his former Real Madrid teammate Luka Modric beat him for the award.

The 33-year-old Portuguese star also lost out to Liverpool's Mohamed Salah for the Puskas Award for the best goal. He had been nominated for his superb overhead bicycle kick for Real Madrid against Juventus in last season's Champions League quarter-final, which even drew a standing ovation from Juventus supporters in Turin. Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri had backed Ronaldo—who has scored three goals in his last two league games—for the award, as he led the way in the Champions League with 15 goals to help Real to a third straight title.

"With no offence to Luka Modric, I'd give the Ballon d'Or to Ronaldo for what he did last season. I think he deserves it," said Allegri. The Italian champions face a heavy week in Turin with three games in their Allianz Stadium in the space of seven days.

After today's game against 18th-placed Bologna, who shocked Roma 2-0 at the weekend, Juventus play Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli in a top-of-the-table clash on Saturday. Juventus have had a perfect start to the season with five wins and 15 points—three points ahead of Napoli. Allegri's side also play Swiss club Young Boys in the Champions League a week on Tuesday, a game which Ronaldo will miss after his controversial sending off against Valencia in Spain.

Napoli host promoted Parma, before their trip to

Turin, with an eye on their Champions League game against Liverpool in Naples. "We won there (Juventus) last season and still finished second," said Napoli striker Lorenzo Insigne.

"If we don't win the midweek game with Parma, then the result with Juve is irrelevant, so we have to take it one at a time." Under-pressure Roma host promoted Frosinone looking for a boost after slipping to 14th with their weekend defeat in Bologna.

Coach Eusebio Di Francesco has reportedly been given a week to save his job, starting against the newcomers from outside Rome, before the city derby against Lazio at the weekend.

Frosinone are second from the bottom of the table with 12 goals conceded, including two to Juventus last weekend. "At the end of the year when the points are counted the matches like the one in Frosinone you don't remember immediately, but you know how important they were," said Allegri. Roma then host Czech club Viktoria Plzen in the Champions League next week, having lost their opener to holders Real Madrid.

Meanwhile, Inter Milan face a tough task against Fiorentina in the San Siro with coach Luciano Spalletti serving a touchline ban for his over-exuberant goal celebration against Sampdoria.

Inter have been struggling but their last-gasp win against the Genoa side followed their come-from-behind 2-1 win in the Champions League against Tottenham. Spalletti's side travel to the Netherlands to play PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League next week. Fiorentina are third in the table five points adrift of Juventus, with Inter in ninth. — AFP



Cristiano Ronaldo

Pochettino won't let Spurs moan about stadium woe

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino has warned his Tottenham stars not to use the club's delayed new stadium as an excuse for their spluttering start to the season. Pochettino's side have been forced to play their League Cup third round tie against Watford today in Milton Keynes due to the on-going problems with the rebuilding of White Hart Lane.

Tottenham had hoped to open their redeveloped stadium this season, but safety issues have severely delayed the project, meaning the north London club have returned to playing their home games at Wembley.

With Wembley not ready to host a football match this week after the Anthony Joshua boxing bout on Saturday, Tottenham arranged to play as the 'home' team against Watford in Milton Keynes.

It is not an ideal situation, especially as Tottenham

have played only two home games all season, but Pochettino is adamant that shouldn't be used as an excuse for the team's inconsistent performances.

"If there is one thing I didn't want it is to give reason to the players to say, 'If we don't win it's because of Milton Keynes, it's because we don't play at our stadium, it's because we play at Wembley,'" he said.

"I understand that it is not the same as playing in your home and the help from our fans will be fantastic in our new stadium and the energy is different playing in MK than your own stadium. "That is our responsibility, it is not to blame the venue or the fans or the chairman. I try to avoid the players finding excuses." Tottenham should have settled into their new 62,000-seater stadium by now, had it not been delayed after failures to the alarm systems.

Argentine coach Pochettino admits it is a frustrating situation, but he doesn't want unhappy fans to create a negative atmosphere while the delay drags on. "I am the first that would like to finish the new stadium. If I have to go to work after training and help the builders finish the stadium as soon as possible so the fans will be happy, and all the players will be happy and the chairman will be happy, I promise I (will) go," he said.

"Of course we feel disappointed for our fans but they need to understand that is a venue for the rest of our



Mauricio Pochettino

lives and for the next generations and years and years and it is so important to finish (it) in the right way.

"Maybe one or two months means a lot but in the end it is no time because the most important thing is to finish and in the future have a venue that is going to help us win trophies." — AFP

LeBron warns 'long way' before Lakers challenge Golden State

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James warned Los Angeles Lakers fans not to expect an immediate challenge to the dominance of the Golden State Warriors as the NBA superstar addressed the media for the first time here Monday. The 33-year-old four-time NBA MVP joined the Lakers in July on a four-year \$154 million deal which was sealed just weeks after his Cleveland Cavaliers were beaten by the Warriors for the third time in four years.

James arrives in Los Angeles with the Lakers desperately trying to regain their former glory after several years of steady decline which has seen them fail to reach the playoffs for five straight seasons.

The capture of James prompted bookmakers to slash the odds on the Lakers winning another NBA title, with Las Vegas betting market Westgate installing them as 7/2 favourites behind the Warriors.

James however sought to put a lid on the expectations on Monday, warning that any challenge to their Western Conference rival Warriors was a long way off. "We've got a long way to go to get to Golden State," James said at the Lakers' media day.

"They can pick up right where they left off, starting with training camp. We're picking up from scratch. So we have a long way to go.

"We can't worry about what Golden State is doing. Golden State is Golden State and they're the champions. They've been together for a few years now.

"We can only focus on what we can do to get better every day as a Lakers franchise and hopefully some day we can put ourselves in position where we can compete for a championship as Golden State has done for the past few years."

James also rejected a suggestion that the Lakers would need to win a championship to be deemed successful. "I don't believe that," he said. "There's only one champion, but that doesn't mean you're not successful. There's going to be wins and losses and things of that nature. "But what you can control is how you prepare every day. How we prepare every day, try and get better every day. We're a new ball club trying to get better. We're all new to each other.

"We have to take our bumps and our bruises, there's going to be good times and bad times. That's what happens with a team that's new. "But if we continue to work the process, and sacrifice for each other and put in the work and the time everything will fall into place."

James however he admitted he was excited at the prospect of donning the Lakers' yellow jersey and following in the footsteps of iconic figures such as Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal.

"I think we all know this franchise has been a historical franchise in this league for years," James said. "You talk about the championships, the players that have come through this franchise, that have worn this uniform, that's an excitement in its own right.

"It's always humbling for me to be a part of something special."

James also emphasised that his decision to move to



LeBron James

Los Angeles—which puts him closer to the capital of the entertainment industry where he has multiple television and movie projects—was based solely on basketball.

"My decision was based solely on my family and the Lakers," James said. "I'm a basketball player. I play ball. That's what I do. "As far as my business is concerned, that stuff has been taking care of itself long before I came out here." — AFP

From ticketing to salaries, football explores power of blockchain

MADRID: Football clubs are starting to tap the potential of blockchain technology as an innovative way to deal with longstanding issues such as ticket scalping, fan engagement and the payment of players' salaries.

Considered by many as revolutionary as the internet, a blockchain is a database that is shared across a network of hundreds of computers. Once a record has been added to the chain it is very difficult to tamper with. And to ensure all copies of the database are the same, the network makes constant checks.

Blockchains have been used most prominently as the

tool behind cryptocurrency Bitcoin, but many other possible uses from medical records to banking—and now sports—are emerging. "Blockchain has the power to be the underlying infrastructure upon which sport functions," Michael Broughton of Sports Investment Partners told AFP as the two-day World Football Summit got underway in Madrid.

"Much as mobile phones and apps are today a broader expression of the underlying internet so sport can build upon blockchain."

After French champions Paris Saint-Germain announced earlier this month that they were launching their own cryptocurrency in partnership with Socios.com, a blockchain company based in Malta, Italian giants Juventus announced Monday they would do the same.

Fans of the two clubs will be able to buy club-branded tokens that come with voting rights as well as access to exclusive content and rewards.

'Limites potential'

English side Arsenal announced in January they had reached an agreement with California-based Cashbet to launch their own cryptocurrency which would be used to bet on matches. The technology could also have significant

implications for ticket sales. European football governing body UEFA used blockchain technology to sell all of the tickets for the Super Cup final in Tallinn in August between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid over mobile phones, preventing the duplication of tickets.

In a sign of the growing interest of the football world in blockchain, Barcelona's Argentine star Lionel Messi in December became a brand ambassador for Israeli start-up Sirin Labs which has developed an ultra-secure mobile phone that uses the technology.

Former Liverpool and England striker Michael Owen earlier this year invested in Hong Kong-based Global Crypto Offering Exchange (GCOX), a global platform that allows celebrities to create and list their own "tokens".

"I believe blockchain technology holds the future. It has limitless potential that we have yet to fully explore," Owen said at the time.

'Bring transparency'

The technology is even starting—albeit on a very small scale—to be used to pay players, which some believe could help stamp out corruption in football.

Gibraltar United announced in July that it would

become the world's first football club to pay its players in cryptocurrency while tiny Turkish club Harunustaspor made global headlines at the start of the year by announcing it had carried out the world's first football transfer of a player in bitcoins.

"It could bring transparency to world of football," said Pablo Dana of Heritage Sports Holding which owns Gibraltar United and in August bought 25 percent of Italian third division side Rimini using a digital currency.

Broughton agreed, saying "having a player's identify and registration on the blockchain could provide greater transparency to the transfer and ownership systems".

The technology could also be used together with big data analytics, to identify future football stars, according to Olivier Jarosz, head of club affairs at the Switzerland-based European Club Association.

"You can through the data base try to find out the biggest potentials without sending 200 scouts," he said.

But Sam Jones of the London Football Exchange warned that "you can't insure yourself" against some of the new cryptocurrencies that use blockchain.

"You relying on hope and hope is the key ingredient of a bubble," he said. — AFP



Match on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE		
Athletic de Bilbao v Villarreal	21:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1
Leganes v Barcelona	21:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Valencia v Celta de Vigo	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1
Sevilla v Real Madrid	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Udinese Calcio v Lazio	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 5
Atalanta v Torino	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 9
Juventus v Bologna	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4
Napoli v Parma Calcio 1913	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 5
AS Roma v Frosinone Calcio	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8
Genoa CFC v Chievo Verona	22:00	beIN SPORTS
Cagliari Calcio v Sampdoria	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Fortuna Dusseldorf v Bayer 04 Leverkusen	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 4
Borussia Dortmund v Nuremberg	21:30	beIN SPORTS
Borussia Monchengladbach v Eintracht Frankfurt	21:30	beIN SPORTS
FSV Mainz 05 v VfL Wolfsburg	21:30	beIN SPORTS
Leipzig v VfB Stuttgart	21:30	beIN SPORTS
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Olympique Marseille v Strasbourg	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6
Caen v Montpellier HSC	20:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 6 FR
Girondins de Bordeaux v LOSC Lille	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 7
Amiens SC v Stade Rennais	20:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 4 FR
Dijon v Olympique Lyonnais	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8
Nimes Olympique v Guingamp	20:00	beIN SPORTS HD 9
Paris Saint-Germain v Stade Reims	22:00	beIN SPORTS HD 6

25 Woods back on top, bidding to end Ryder Cup struggles



26 Brewers win, gain in two races as Rockies whip Phillies 10-1



27 LeBron warns 'long way' before Lakers challenge Golden State



Modric ends Ronaldo-Messi era

Luka crowned FIFA's best player of the year



LONDON: France's coach Didier Deschamps (C), winner of the Best FIFA Men's Coach of 2018 Award, is flanked by Orlando Pride and Brazil forward Marta (R) and Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder Luka Modric (L) winners of the Best FIFA Women's and Men's Player of 2018 Award, as they pose for a photograph with their trophies during The Best FIFA Football Awards ceremony, on Monday in London. — AFP

LONDON: Luka Modric ended Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi's decade-long domination of football's individual awards by being crowned FIFA's best player of the year on Monday.

The Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder starred for both club and country as Madrid won a third straight Champions League, and he inspired Croatia to reach the World Cup final for the first time.

"The emotion is huge because it is thanks to the work of everyone. So many people have come together and so many have supported me," said Modric.

Modric beat out Liverpool's Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah and Ronaldo, who along with Messi did not attend the glitzy awards ceremony in London.

Both are in action for Juventus and Barcelona today, but their no-show attracted criticism after so many years on top.

"Everyone has their own reasons," said Modric. "Obviously I would have liked them to be here but they aren't." Modric's success means Ronaldo remains tied with Messi having won FIFA's award in different guises

five times each.

At 33, Croatia's run to the final was the culmination of a brilliant career for Modric that had often been overshadowed by Ronaldo's goalscoring in their time together in the Spanish capital, before the Portuguese left for Juventus in July.

Modric scored twice and also netted in penalty shootout wins over Denmark and Russia, but it was his playmaking ability that caught the eye in winning the Golden Ball for the best player at the World Cup.

"It was an unbelievable season, the best season in my life," said Modric.

"I'm still not realising how good a year I had collectively, individually, and I'm very proud for everything I achieved this year and it will be remembered forever."

For a sixth straight season, Ronaldo was the Champions League's top scorer with 15 goals and also scored four times at the World Cup, including a hat-trick against Spain in a thrilling 3-3 draw to open Portugal's campaign.

However, Portugal's last 16 exit to Uruguay in Russia

and Ronaldo's failure to score in the semi-finals or final of the Champions League opened the door for Modric.

SALAH SCOOPS BEST GOAL

For the first time in 12 years, Messi was not among the finalists with Salah earning a place on the podium for his incredible 44-goal debut season with Liverpool that carried the Reds to the Champions League final.

Salah did not go away empty-handed, however, as he picked up the Puskas award for best goal for his strike against Everton in the Merseyside derby last December.

Modric was joined by Real team-mates Sergio Ramos, Raphael Varane and Marcelo in the FIFPro team of the year, also featuring David De Gea, Dani Alves, N'Golo Kante, Eden Hazard, Kylian Mbappe, Messi and Ronaldo.

"I am as happy as if I had won it," said Ramos of Modric's success. "He deserves it, he is an excellent player and has marked an important era in the history of Real Madrid."

France's World Cup-winning coach Didier Deschamps won the best coach of the year prize in recognition for his work in leading Les Bleus to success in Russia.

Deschamps, who became just the third man to win the World Cup as a player and coach, beat off competition from Dalic and his former France team-mate Zinedine Zidane, who won a third consecutive Champions League title with Real Madrid before resigning in June.

Thibaut Courtois won the best goalkeeper award for helping Belgium reach the World Cup semi-finals as well as the FA Cup with Chelsea before a summer move to Madrid.

Brazil's Marta was crowned best women's player for a record sixth time for her role in winning the Copa America to beat out Lyon duo Ada Hegerberg and Dzsenifer Marozsan.

Lyon boss Reynald Pedros did win the award for best women's coach, though, after winning the Champions League with the French giants. — AFP

Van Vleuten leads Dutch women to world time-trial sweep

INNSBRUCK: Olympic champion Annemiek van Vleuten defended her world championship time-trial title yesterday as compatriots Anna van der Breggen and Ellen van Dijk completed an all-Dutch podium.

Van Vleuten completed the 27.7km course in 34mins 25sec, with Van der Breggen second at 28secs and Van Dijk third at 1min 25sec.

The Dutchwoman shot to fame at the Rio Games when she won gold in the road race

despite falling several times.

She later admitted she had covered the whole course at least ten times and then watched her own video of the course at nights on her phone.

"We came in May and covered it four or five times on 'recon', then I covered the entire course every day since we got here with the team," said Van Vleuten.

"I know every single corner."

She added: "I usually make up time on the climbs and I put the pedal down on the climb, I went out fast and I know I had an amazing second part but then I just died at the end, I had no energy left."

"So I was exhausted and unsure if I'd won so I was surprised it was 28 seconds," she said.

Van Vleuten also revealed she had been wearing 'lucky' earrings her recently-deceased father had given her before the Rio Games.

"After what happened in Rio I wasn't sure

they were lucky, and said so to my mum but she was like 'no, no, they're lucky'," she said.

"But I wore them last year in Bergen (where she won the 2017 world time trial), which was a new chapter and now I wore them again today so I think now we can say they are lucky." Looking ahead to Saturday's road race, Van Vleuten said there was plenty of time to rest up. "I won't be going dancing tonight," she joked. "So don't worry, I'm in really good shape."

Van der Breggen also finished second last year in Bergen and said: "It's nice we made history with the 1-2-3, which is great for Dutch fans, I just wish it had been in a different order."

Bronze medallist Van Dijk, 31, said: "Unfortunately this was not the team time trial, it was the individual one." All three will now line up for Saturday's women's road race over the same pristine Tyrol roads with their dramatic Alpine backdrop. — AFP



Annemiek van Vleuten