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# PM meets Assembly speaker, head of judiciary, top editors

## Discussions focus on need to activate article 50 of the constitution

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah held meetings yesterday with the head of the Supreme Judicial Council Yousef Al-Mutawa and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem amidst consultations to form a new Cabinet. The premier also met editors of local Kuwaiti newspapers and other publications, but declined to provide a timeframe for the formation of the new Cabinet, only saying it will come at the right time.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, who was the foreign minister in the resigned Cabinet, said the new government will have new faces in the key ministries of foreign affairs, defense, interior and finance - since he was the foreign minister, the defense and interior ministers were removed and the finance minister had resigned. The Cabinet is expected to have a majority of new faces despite the

fact that it will serve for less than one year until Assembly elections expected to take place in November next year.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said his visits yesterday came after HH the Amir's instructions that the heads of the three authorities - government, legislative and judicial - should cooperate over major issues. He said his discussions focused on the need to activate article 50 of the constitution, which calls for the separation of the three authorities, but should ensure their cooperation. He said he benefited greatly from his talks with the Assembly speaker as they discussed ways to bolster cooperation in the coming period.

Sheikh Sabah was appointed as premier for the first time last week following the resignation of the previous Cabinet and after former prime minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah declined to form the new Cabinet.

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KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, with the attendance of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri, receives Chairman and Director General of KUNA Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah, Chairperson of Kuwait Journalists Association Fatma Hussein and editors-in-chief of local newspapers at Seif Palace yesterday. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Duke of Cambridge Prince William is received by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and Head of the Honorary Mission Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah upon his arrival in Kuwait on an official visit. — Amiri Diwan

## Israel plans new Hebron settlement

JERUSALEM: Israel's defense minister announced plans to build a new Jewish-only settlement in the heart of a flashpoint West Bank city yesterday, weeks after the United States said it no longer considered such communities illegal. The move in Hebron in the southern West Bank sparked Palestinian anger and accusations that US President Donald Trump effectively green-lighted the move.

Rightwing Defense Minister Naftali Bennett said the new development would double the Jewish population in the city, where around 800 settlers live guarded by hundreds of Israeli soldiers, surrounded by some 200,000 Palestinians. Hebron is holy to both Muslims and Jews and sees frequent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces.

The defense ministry said Bennett had instructed departments responsible for the Israeli-occupied West Bank "to notify the Hebron municipality of planning a new Jewish neighborhood in the wholesale market complex".

Continued on Page 24



BAYT AWWA: Hanan, the mother of 18-year-old Badawee Masalma, shows a picture of him on her phone during his funeral in this West Bank village southwest of Hebron yesterday. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Saudi takes over G20 presidency

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia became the first Arab nation yesterday to take over the G20 presidency. The G20 presidency, which Saudi Arabia takes over from Japan, will see it host world leaders for a global summit in its capital next Nov 21-22. Saudi Arabia will host more than 100 events and conferences in the run-up to the summit, including ministerial meetings. — AFP

#### Mexico shootout leaves 21 dead

MEXICO CITY: A shootout in a Mexican town near the US border between suspected drug traffickers and police left at least 21 dead, including four officers, officials said. The confrontation broke out shortly before noon in Villa Union in the northern state of Coahuila when officers detected several vehicles and heavily armed passengers touring the small community. — AFP

#### Tunisia bus accident kills 22

TUNIS: A bus carrying Tunisian tourists crashed in mountains in the country's north yesterday, killing 22 people and injuring 21, the interior ministry said. The bus was travelling through the Ain Snoussi region when it plunged over a cliff, the ministry said. The vehicle had "fallen into a ravine after crashing through an iron barrier", it said on its Facebook page. All those aboard were Tunisians, said the tourism ministry. The injured were transferred to nearby hospitals, the interior ministry said. The bus had been heading from Tunis towards the picturesque mountain town of Ain Drahm, a popular autumn destination for tourists. — AFP

## Iraqi PM bows out; protesters mourn dead

BAGHDAD: The government of Iraq's Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi ended yesterday after two months of violent unrest that has left more than 420 people dead and thousands mourning them in nationwide marches. As anti-government demonstrators across the strife-torn country massed to honor the fallen activists, parliament met to accept the resignation which the 77-year-old had offered two days before.

While Abdel Mahdi stays on initially to lead a care-

taker government, President Barham Saleh will now be asked to name a successor to face the challenge of resolving the political chaos that has engulfed the nation. The protest movement is Iraq's biggest since the US-led invasion of 2003 toppled Saddam Hussein and installed a democratic system in the oil-rich but poverty-plagued nation. Tens of thousands have vented their anger at a governing class they despise as inept, corrupt and beholden to foreign powers, especially neighboring Iran, whose consulate in the city of Najaf was torched last Wednesday.

The rallies spread yesterday from the protest epicenter in Baghdad and the mostly Shiite south to the northern, majority-Sunni city of Mosul, where hundreds of students dressed in black organized a mourning march. Some protesters cautiously welcomed the

Continued on Page 24



NAJAF: An Iraqi demonstrator brandishes the national flag in this southern Shiite holy city yesterday. — AFP

## UN expert warns some expats face racial profiling

DOHA: Migrant workers in Qatar are facing discrimination because of their nationality, racial identity, stereotyping and the "prevalence" of profiling, an independent UN expert warned yesterday. The Gulf monarchy has seen an influx of migrant workers, mainly from poor developing countries, in advance of the 2022 World Cup meaning that the population is 90 percent non-Qatari. "For many people living in Qatar, their capacity to enjoy human rights fully is mediated by their nationality or national origin," the UN's special rapporteur on racism and discrimination Tendayi Achime told AFP.

Migrants from specific countries are often recruited for certain roles such as women from southeast Asia for domestic work and men from south Asia for unskilled construction jobs, she said. "Far from being mostly short-term guest workers, many low-income workers spend the better part of their working lives in Qatar and do so facing serious barriers to full enjoyment of their fundamental human rights," she said.

Very few migrant workers ever qualify for permanent residency and almost none achieve citizenship and the welfare benefits enjoyed by Qataris. UN experts are independent and do not speak for the world body, but their findings can be used to inform the work of UN organizations including the rights council. Achime will present her final report on the visit to the UN Human Rights Council in July 2020.

She warned that stereotypes persist in public and private that "Sub-Saharan African men are presumed to be unsanitary, sub-Saharan African women are presumed to be sexually available, and South Asian nationalities are presumed unintelligent".

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## Local

# Amir receives top Kuwaiti officials at Bayan Palace

## Amir congratulates UAE on national day, Saudi King on coronation anniversary



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — Amiri Diwan photos



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



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, President of the Supreme Judicial Council, President of the Constitutional Court and Head of the Cassation Court Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa, and Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed on his country's 48th National Day. In his cable, His Highness the Amir praised the steady growth of the historical ties and cooperation between both countries in all fields. His Highness the Amir applauded the achievements made by sisterly UAE in areas of development and construction under the wise leadership of Sheikh Khalifa. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Sheikh Khalifa.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia on the fifth anniversary of his coronation. In his message, His Highness the



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan.

Amir praised the steady growth of the historical ties and cooperation between both countries in all fields. He applauded the achievements made by sisterly Saudi Arabia in areas of development and construction under the wise leadership of King Salman. He expressed best wishes for King Salman and expressed hope for Saudi Arabia to continue the march towards prosperity and welfare for its people and Arab and Muslim nations as well. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to King Salman.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulation to President of Namibia Hage Geingob, on his re-election. His Highness the Amir wished the Namibian President success in his new presidential term, and further progress and prosperity for bilateral ties between the two nations. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

Separately, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah offered in a cable yesterday his deepest condolences to US President Donald Trump on a plane crash incident, which

occurred in South Dakota, leading to several casualties. In the cable, His Highness prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the dead and wished a speedy recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent cables yesterday to Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, expressing sincere condolences over the demise of Yasuhiro Nakasone, former Japanese premier. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables.

In addition, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo Felix Tshisekedi, expressing condolences over the victims of Kinshasa torrential rains and landslides. His Highness expressed sorrow over the victims and wished speedy recovery to those injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — KUNA

## KIB sponsors 8th Shura Sharia Fiqh Conference

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its participation as main sponsor of the 8th Shura Sharia Fiqh Conference. The two-day event is organized by the Shura Sharia Consultancy Company under the patronage and attendance of the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Mohammad Al-Hashel. Taking place on December 8 to 9 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Kuwait, the conference will be attended by a group of leading Islamic scholars, Islamic financial industry and fiqh experts, and international Sharia supervisory boards.

The conference will feature three workshops to discuss a number of key Islamic finance products, including diminishing musharaka to finance fixed assets, share adjustment according to Islamic fiqh, and entering into sale or lease contracts where a late penalty is imposed, and where a lessee

cannot terminate the contract. On this occasion, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Raed Bukhamseen, said: "Our participation in this conference in its eighth edition reflects KIB's interest in matters related to Shariah and its commitment to supporting these conferences that shed light on the Islamic banking and finance sector."

The Islamic banking industry is witnessing continuous growth. Accordingly, Islamic financial institutions should set clear performance criteria to maintain business strength, stability, and continuity in today's competitive market. KIB continues to offer new Sharia-compliant products and services that are flexible and easy-to-use.

Bukhamseen also thanked the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel, for his patronage and participation in this conference. He also lauded the efforts made by the CBK in supporting the Islamic banking industry in order to achieve further development and improvement through policies and regulations that govern the local sector. Bukhamseen also noted Hashel continuous support of conferences and events related to Islamic finance and its development; thereby strengthening and regulating the Islamic banking sector in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Manager of the Internal Sharia Audit Department at KIB, Mohammed Al-Shamri, said: "KIB's sponsorship of this conference for a second consecutive year came as part of its key role in the community and its commitment to participating in various events and activities that positively impact the community; particularly events that contribute to the development of the Islamic banking sector."

Shamri noted that the conference will discuss several key topics, focusing on fixed asset financing, sales contracts and leasing, as well as adjustment of corporate shares according to Islamic fiqh. These discussions contribute to the Islamic financial renaissance that is currently taking place, which is supported by the collective efforts of fiqh experts who offer more adaptable and realistic guidelines.



Raed Bukhamseen



KUWAIT: Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## PM, Speaker committed to separation of authorities

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem stressed yesterday the importance of discussing ways to implement the leadership's supreme directives and means to enhance cooperation with the heads of the judicial, legislative, and executive authorities to better serve the country in the upcoming phase. This came in a statement to the press after a meeting between His Highness the Prime Minister and Speaker Ghanem.

In his statement, His Highness Sheikh Al-Khaled said "Our meeting comes in implementation of the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in his meeting with the heads of the three authorities where he urged them to uphold the constitution and activate Article 50, which deals with the separation of the two authorities

with their cooperation." He expressed his thanks to Speaker Ghanem and his happiness to meet him and hoped to continue meetings in the future. His Highness the Prime Minister also referred to the fruitful visits he paid to the heads of the other authorities where he "found every interest in cooperation in the next phase and the desire to implement the directives of His Highness the Amir during the next phase."

Meanwhile, Speaker Ghanem described the meeting as "an excellent start" where both sides discussed several aspects of the futuristic relationship between the legislative and executive authorities. Ghanem said he was honored to meet with His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, and renewed his congratulations to His Highness the Amir on his confidence in appointing him as Prime Minister and assigning him to form a government. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with UN Secretary General Representative and Resident Coordinator to Kuwait Dr Tareq Al-Sheikh.

## Deputy FM receives UN official

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday received UN Secretary General Representative and Resident Coordinator to Kuwait Dr Tareq Al-Sheikh. During the reception, Al-Sheikh handed a letter to Jarallah from Secretary General Antonio Guterres to be

delivered to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The meeting also discussed relations between Kuwait and the UN, as Al-Sheikh expressed deep appreciation for Kuwait's support to UN and its mission in the country. — KUNA

## Companies want to invest in multi-storey parkings in Kuwait

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The technical committee at the Municipal Council is scheduled to discuss during its meeting tomorrow a letter from the Kuwait Real Estate Association, in which it requests approval for allowing the private sector to invest in multi-storey parking lots in Kuwait. It is also planned to discuss a project of dividing Al-Messila Palace located on the coastal strip of Messila. Furthermore, the panel plans to discuss a proposal submitted by several councilmembers to build a health, cultural, social and sports club for Kuwait Municipality.

Meanwhile, the Capital Committee at the Municipal Council is scheduled to discuss a proposal submitted by Deputy Chairman of the Council Abdullah Al-Mahri and councilmember Meshaal Al-Hamdan to increase the percentage of multi-storey parkings at the Liberation Tower's parking lot. It is also set to discuss a proposal submitted by councilmember Abdulaziz Al-Mojel to name a street after Martyr Captain Hamad Majid Al-Samhan in Kaifan or any other area in Kuwait.



Local

# Education Ministry cleaners protest unpaid salaries since July

Statistics show 57 percent marriages end in divorce within the first year

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** A number of cleaners rallied outside the Education Ministry building yesterday in protest over not receiving their salaries since July, which made the ministry's services manager Fahd Al-Hayyab summon the contracting company's representative to warn him to resolve the problem. The ministry's assistant undersecretary and official spokesperson Faisal Maqseed stressed that cleaners' salaries are the responsibility of the company hiring them and that the ministry will take legal action against the company.

Meanwhile, assistant undersecretary for administrative affairs and development Raja Boroki said the min-

istry had paid all its financial commitments to the company providing the cleaners and that the company had been already contacted and urged to resolve the problem of cleaners' overdue salaries. Boroki added the manpower authority has also been contacted to take legal action against the company.

## Former justice ministers sued

the past nine years was 13,528, including 5,070 Kuwaiti women divorced by expat husbands. The report also showed that the highest rate of divorces was registered in 2018 with 587 cases, compared to only 382 in 2009. "In most cases (57 percent), couples divorced within the first year of marriage," the sources highlighted.

Meanwhile, the report showed that 8,880 marriages were registered between expats and Kuwaiti women within the same period. Further, the report showed 23,251 Kuwaitis got married to expat women in the same period and that 36 percent (8,458) got divorced - an annual rate of 2,300 marriages and 730 divorces.

### Former ministers sued

Lawyers Mohammed Al-Ansari and Abdullah Al-Hammadi yesterday filed cases at the public prosecutor's office against former justice ministers Yaqoub Al-Sane and Fahd Al-Azab, accusing them of forgery and public funds violations. Meanwhile, well-informed sources said it will be hard to deal with the consequences of a court of cassation verdict which annulled the appointment of 560 experts at the justice ministry, that had been made by the two former ministers. Further parliamentary and cabinet intervention will be needed to finalize the matter, especially after discovering several cases of corruption, profiteering and manipulation in appointing the experts, the sources explained. In this regard, chairman of the justice ministry's experts syndicate Nasser Ayed stressed he had met Justice Minister Fahd Al-Afasi to discuss the problem. Ayed also noted that the syndicate made several suggestions to resolve the problem and explained that only 1 percent (5 to 6) of the 560 experts were unlawfully appointed.

### Joint contract

Well-informed sources said a delegation from the



**KUWAIT:** Education Ministry cleaners protest over their unpaid salaries.

Philippines will visit Kuwait in January to sign a joint contract to provide Kuwait with domestic helpers. "The new contract will resolve problems related to resuming the recruitment of domestic helpers from the Philippines," the sources underlined, pointing out that more points are yet to be discussed and tackled in the agreement, namely those related to litigations and resolving employee-sponsor problems. The sources added that a Kuwaiti delegation will visit Indonesia and the Philippines by the end of the year to work on problem solving and expanding the scope of recruitment at reasonable prices.

### Self-defense

The detention extension judge yesterday ordered the release of a janitor from Mali who had been accused of killing a Saudi and injuring his friend in the Jahra desert. The judge's decision was made after he deemed the murder as self-defense, as the two had assaulted the defendant to rob him. Meanwhile, the court of cassation yesterday sentenced preacher Fuad Al-Refai to seven years in jail with labor and a KD 100,000 fine for blaspheming the Shiite doctrine.

## Woman arrives at hospital dead; two men arrested

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Police are investigating a case involving a woman who arrived dead at Farwaniya Hospital, as they arrested two men who dropped her off there earlier than disappeared immediately afterwards. The Interior Ministry's

Relations and Security Media Department explained in a statement yesterday that a call was received from Farwaniya Hospital about an unknown woman in her 30s who arrived dead. Preliminary investigations revealed that two men were seen stopping their vehicle in front of the hospital, dropping the woman off then driving away. Criminal detectives in Farwaniya were able to identify and arrest the two. The suspects, who are bedoon (stateless), said during questioning that they were with the deceased, an Arab woman, in Kabd, when she collapsed suddenly, so they rushed her to the hospital but escaped as soon as they learned she was dead. They were sent to concerned authorities for further action.



**KUWAIT:** Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham honored Corporal Athbi Jassim Al-Bannai from the traffic department for his hard work, dedication and commitment to law enforcement. Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs and Operations Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh attended the ceremony. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

## Manhunt for prison break suspect

**KUWAIT:** Investigations are ongoing in search for a prisoner who escaped from police's custody while being transported to a hospital. The suspect was reportedly last seen in the parking lot of a Jahra mosque with his uncle, who enabled him to escape before police could catch him. Police were able to arrest the suspect's uncle who faces charges of harboring a fugitive and enabling him to escape arrest. The fugitive is sentenced for 16 years in jail for beating an Egyptian man and causing him a permanent disability. He escaped by breaking the window of a prison bus while on the way to Farwaniya Hospital for a medical checkup.

### Drunk driver held

Police arrested two drunk girls on Second Ring Road. Police patrolling the busy street spotted a vehicle driving recklessly, so they ordered the driver to pull over. They arrested the female driver

and her female companion under arrest after finding out they were drunk. The suspects were transferred to the proper authorities for further action.

### Reckless driving

A citizen in his 20s was arrested for reckless driving in Aqaila. Police received several complaints from area residents about the reckless driver who performed dangerous stunts and blocked traffic in front of a mall. Police responded and detained the suspect, who did not carry a driver's license, then sent him to the proper authorities for further action.

### Teen driver arrested

Police arrested a 19-year-old Kuwaiti citizen following a chase that ended when his vehicle collided with a patrol car. The incident started when patrol police grew suspicious of him while driving erratically. The man ignored orders to pull over and drove away instead. Police started a chase, then he hit their vehicle in an attempt to escape. He stopped his car eventually and attempted to run away on foot, but police managed to arrest him despite showing strong resistance. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

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**KUWAIT:** The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China LI Minggang hosted a reception recently for outgoing Defense Attache Snr Col Zhang Ge at his residence. Defense attaches, diplomats, businessmen and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Kuwait envoy commends students' participation in Huawei competition

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**SHENZHEN:** Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Sameeh Hayat (center left) with the three Kuwaiti students. — KUNA

**SHENZHEN:** Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Sameeh Hayat commended yesterday the participation of three Kuwaiti students in the two-day Huawei ICT competition for the Middle East, which began yesterday in Shenzhen, China. Ambassador Hayat said in a press statement that the students were carrying out the directives of Kuwait's top authorities to develop and progress their country. His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah always made it a priority to support and develop the skills of the country's youth in order to benefit

society, affirmed the Ambassador who praised students Gaith Al-Gaith, Saad Al-Shimmari, and Mariam Al-Qallaf for their outstanding efforts in reaching the final of the competition. Some 21,000 students from 10 Middle Eastern countries took part in the initial phases of the contest. There are now 39 students left in the final stage after 500 of their colleagues took part in the semifinals. The Shenzhen-based Huawei was established in 1986 and it is now one of the biggest brands within the telecommunication and smart phone-manufacturing domain. — KUNA

### Info minister congratulates SIIF's Kuwaiti winners

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri congratulated Kuwaiti inventors Dr Mishari Al-Mutairi and Sara Abu Arjeeb, on receiving the Golden Award at Seoul International Invention Fair (SIIF) 2019, for their inventions in the health and environmental fields. Jabri said yesterday that he was proud that both inventors won. Jabri added that this win puts Kuwait in the record of creative inventors, underlining that young Kuwaitis are highly talented and creative. This win also reflects the



**Mohammad Al-Jabri**

attention paid by Kuwait to young people, especially the creative and distinguished, he pointed out. Engineer Abu Arjeeb received the Golden Award for her invention 'detector of bone fractures,' while Engineer Al-Mutairi received the same award for his invention 'treatment of oil contaminated soil,' at South Korean capital Seoul last Wednesday. The Patent Office of the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council chose many inventor candidates to partake in SIIF, including those two inventors. — KUNA



Local

# Economic growth inseparably linked with empowering young talents: Al-Khashti

Zain Platinum Sponsor of NUKS USA 36th annual conference



Ambassador Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah with Waleed Al-Khashti and Zain officials at the company's booth.



Waleed Al-Khashti with the participants of the sports seminar, sponsored by Zain.

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, participated in the opening ceremony of the 36th annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States of America (NUKS USA). Zain is the Platinum Sponsor of the event, which was held in San Diego with the attendance of the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the United States of America Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Zain expressed its pride in being the Platinum Sponsor of the conference, continuing its role as a main supporter of the event for 16 years. The conference is considered the largest gathering of Kuwaiti students abroad, and Zain's support comes in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the youth and education sectors, as well as its belief in connecting with the country's youth abroad.

During his opening speech at the conference, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti said: "with a spirit of hope, inspiration, and responsibility, we recommence this national gathering of our youth, who never forgot their country despite the distance."

Khashti explained: "I would like to take this opportunity to express my utmost pride in our dear students, and remind them that Kuwait has given them her trust to be her ambassadors to the world. I would also like to express my pleasure in Zain's participation in this national gathering, through which we renew our support to our students abroad."

Khashti continued: "we believe in the importance of the private sector's role in sustainability efforts, and so we consider ourselves a main partner of student activities and programs. Our sense of joint responsibility has driven us to continue guiding and caring for our students and their initiatives."

Khashti stressed: "you are the lifeline of hope for our developmental plans into building a "New Kuwait". This immense responsibility comes at a time where our communities face many challenges, and perhaps those who are most affected by these challenges are the youth. Because you, the youth, make up most of our nation, we know very well that overcoming these challenges is a necessity, and so economic growth is inseparably linked with empowering young talents."

He added: "the digital revolution and the benefits that come with it will put us face to face with challenges between technological unemployment and offering job opportunities. And so, empowering the youth will pave the

way into positive transformation in the market. For this, we have decided to contribute to overcome such challenges by launching many initiatives and programs targeted at youth."

Khashti concluded: "I take this opportunity to stress that Zain is an integral part of this nation, and we will always be a main supporter of youth projects. I thank everyone for coming today and taking part in this gathering surrounded by feelings of warmth and love."

Khashti also announced one of the biggest surprises Zain prepared for students studying abroad, especially in the United States; an all-new offer that allows students who own postpaid lines to keep their numbers while studying abroad for KD 3 monthly only, with 1 GB of free local Internet that can be used when coming back home during holidays. Zain specially designed this offer to meet the needs and aspirations of students abroad, who usually lose their local numbers because of inactivity while studying abroad. The company was keen on presenting this offer to allow them to easily keep their numbers.

As it does every year, Zain contributed to the event by organizing a number of unique activities and programs. The company sponsored a special sports seminar that featured many distinguished Kuwaiti athletes, as well as organized a

thrilling Zain Football Tournament for student and awarded the winners. Zain also hosted a special workshop that discussed accelerating tech startups and featured many successful entrepreneurs.

Zain will also participate in recognizing the top performing Kuwaiti graduates from the USA, and will also take part in a special exhibition for sponsors, where the company will offer its exclusive promotions to students, present its available career opportunities, as well as showcase its leading experience in the telecom sector. In addition, Zain has prepared a number of surprises for students who will be visiting the event.

The conference featured many unique activities, including a workshop entitled 'Phonorizma' for creating a charismatic brand through social media and smartphones, a self-development workshop for female students, and an economic seminar. The event also hosted the stars of Kuwait Pulse 88.8 FM, and a concert by popular Kuwaiti band Miami. All these activities and more featured many public and media figures, politicians, social activists, athletes, and more.

Zain's presence in the event conveys its enthusiasm to interact with the future generations of Kuwaiti youth, espe-

cially those who pursue their education abroad, as the NUKS USA conference is considered the largest gathering of Kuwaitis outside of Kuwait, and welcomes students from all around the US. The distinctive event appeals to students on both an intellectual and social level and it serves as an open forum for them to exchange opinions and views regarding important domestic issues with the presence of distinguished national figures from the Kuwaiti society.

Zain sees its annual participation in the conference as part of its responsibility as a leading national company to help provide bright and enthusiastic young Kuwaitis with a great social experience, as well as listen to their ideas and experiences while pursuing their education abroad.

The National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States of America (NUKS USA) serves nearly 14,000 Kuwaiti students studying in the United States. The Union aims, through its events and programs, to connect Kuwaiti students with each other on one level, and with their nation and the latest updates of the Kuwaiti community on another. NUKS USA was publicized in the USA and was granted the recognition of the United States government. The achievement is considered a proud milestone for Kuwait's youth, and is a direct result of the great relations between the State of Kuwait and United States. Such a recognition is a clear reflection of the strategic relations between the two nations.



Waleed Al-Khashti delivers his opening speech.



## Zain unveiled surprise for Kuwaiti students

## Gulf Bank covers rent expenses for one Kuwaiti student

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank concluded its sponsorship of the annual National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) Conference in the United States. This year, Gulf Bank partnered with NUKS as part of its ongoing corporate social responsibility commitment to support and empower Kuwaiti youth.

This year's NUKS Conference kicked off November 28 in San Diego, California and hosted several events and activities for Kuwaiti students who are studying abroad in the United States. Gulf Bank organized numerous entertaining activities for the students starting Nov. 30, which included raffle draws for cash prizes. One lucky winner, Abdulaziz Al-Sibaie, was awarded the grand prize of having his rent expenses covered by Gulf Bank for an entire year. Two lucky winners - Sayed Ali

Al-Hashim and Layan Al-Sultan - also received cash prizes worth \$5000. Gulf Bank's Human Resources team attended the conference to offer career and training opportunities to students and collect resumes and CVs from interested applicants in an effort to facilitate their hiring process at the Bank after graduation. NUKS attendees also gained access to exclusive offers and services from Gulf Bank. In addition, Gulf Bank sponsored the 'Al-Danah Hour' show, which was hosted by Talal Al-Yaqout and Khaled Al-Ansari from Kuwait Pulse, 88.8 FM.

Commenting on Gulf Bank's sponsorship of this year's NUKS Conference, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj, said: "We are delighted to have sponsored this



Salma Al-Hajjaj

year's NUKS conference, and to have gotten a chance to meet with our Kuwaiti students there. We are looking forward to welcoming them back home as our colleagues at Gulf Bank. " Gulf Bank was represented at the conference by a number of employees from the Bank's Human Resources, Communications, and Consumer Banking departments.



Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah visits Gulf Bank's booth.

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EU leadership takes office touting green ambition

## Evacuations in Philippines as typhoon cancels sports events



LONDON: A woman places flowers with other floral tributes close to London Bridge in the City of London yesterday. — AFP

# UK PM vows to strengthen jail sentences

## Terror checks intensified as London attack enters election fray

**LONDON:** Britain's Boris Johnson said yesterday the security services were stepping up monitoring of convicted terrorists released early from prison, as the London Bridge attack became embroiled in the election campaign. The prime minister revealed around 74 people with terrorist convictions had been released early from prison in a similar way to Usman Khan, who left jail last December and went on to stab two people to death in Friday's rampage.

"We are going to bring in tougher sentences for serious sexual and violent offenders and for terrorists," Johnson told the BBC's Andrew Marr show. "I absolutely deplore the fact that this man was out on the street. I think it was absolutely repulsive and we are going to take action. They are being properly investigated to make sure there is no threat. We've taken a lot of action as you can imagine in the last 48 hours," said, adding he would not provide "operation details". Khan, 28, was shot dead while wearing a fake explosives vest by police on London Bridge after a stabbing spree that

also injured three people launched at a nearby prisoner rehabilitation event he was attending.

Members of the public were hailed as heroes for preventing even greater loss of life by tackling him - one armed with a 1.5-m narwhal tusk and another with a fire extinguisher. The incident comes two years after Islamist extremists in a van ploughed into pedestrians on the bridge before attacking people at random with knives, killing eight people and wounding 48. Police, who on Saturday searched two properties in central England believed to be linked to Khan, have said they believe he was acting alone and are not seeking anybody else. But the Islamic State group has released a statement claiming responsibility for the attack.

### 'Keep you safe'

Khan, a British national, had been handed an indeterminate sentence for the protection of the public in 2012, with at least eight years in prison. He was part of an eight-man network inspired by Al-Qaeda who had

plotted to bomb targets including the London Stock Exchange, and planned to take part in "terrorist training" in Pakistan. But his sentence was quashed by the Court of Appeal in April 2013 and he received a new 21-year term, comprising a custodial sentence of 16 years and five years on conditional release.

He had then been conditionally released from jail last December under so-called licensing conditions after serving around half of his jail term. Khan has become a contentious political issue ahead of Britain's Dec 12 election, with Johnson blaming the previous Labour government for changing the law in 2008 to allow for the early release of prisoners. The Tory leader has vowed that if he reclaims power this month he will end early release for terrorist offences and introduce minimum 14-year sentences, with some convicted never to be released.

The proposals were not in the Conservatives' formal manifesto released last Sunday. Johnson penned an article setting out the new stance in The Mail on

Sunday newspaper, under the headline: "Give me a majority and I'll keep you safe from terror".

### 'Knee-jerk reactions'

Critics have hit out fiercely at him for appearing to politicize Friday's attack - including the father of the first named victim. David Merritt confirmed on Twitter the death of his son Jack Merritt, a course coordinator at the Cambridge University's criminology institute which was hosting the event targeted by Khan. He described his 25-year-old son as "a beautiful spirit who always took the side of the underdog", in a series of messages that also responded to the political furor around the attack. "We don't need knee-jerk reactions," Merritt wrote. "It's not lenient policies that are to blame, it's the destruction of the probation service that is supposed to monitor and supervise prisoners after release, & rehabilitation services," he added. "Since 2010 these service(s) have been cut to the bone. We are all less safe as a result." — AFP

## Iran official points to more open elections

**TEHRAN:** A senior Iranian official has suggested in an interview with AFP that authorities may be more open than in the past in approving candidates for a looming parliamentary election. "We don't consider ourselves immune from criticism. We may also accept that mistakes have been made in the past," said Guardian Council spokesman Abbas Ali Kadkhodae. "But for the next legislative elections we are trying to reduce our mistakes and respect the rights of candidates."

Kadkhodae was speaking to AFP on the eve of the opening yesterday of the registration of candidates for the parliamentary election to be held on February 21. The Guardian Council, which is under the control of ultra-conservatives, is responsible for organizing and monitoring elections in Iran, including vetting candidates. "If we insist on enforcing the law, we'll be able to satisfy as many candidates as possible," said Kadkhodae.

In past elections, the council has faced accusations in Iran, particularly by reformists, of barring candidates more on political than constitutional grounds. In November, President Hassan Rouhani, a moderate conservative, called on the council to stick to the letter of the law in view of the forthcoming election. At Iran's last parliamentary election in February 2016, the council authorized 6,229 candidates for the 290 seats at stake - just over 51 percent of those who sought to stand.

In the interview, Kadkhodae said a higher number of successful candidates should also lead to a "higher participation rate". The



TEHRAN: Iranians register for the upcoming parliamentary elections at the interior ministry in the capital yesterday. — AFP

opening of the registration period, which runs until Saturday, comes two weeks after around 100 cities and towns in sanctions-hit Iran saw protests against a shock fuel price hike that turned violent. Authorities say they have restored calm after "rioting" backed by enemies of the Islamic republic, including the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia. London-based human rights group Amnesty International said 161 demonstrators were killed in a crackdown.

### 'Unjust economic sanctions'

But Iran's deputy interior minister, Jamal Orf, said such figures were "exaggerated", in remarks published on Saturday by state news agency IRNA. For Kadkhodae, the unrest was not a sign of the rejection of the political system of the Islamic republic. The people would "continue to support the country despite the difficulties, as they have patiently endured the unjust economic sanctions imposed by Western countries," he said. They would "continue to support the

Iranian political system", he added.

Iran's economy has been battered since last year when the United States withdrew from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal and began reimposing crippling sanctions. The International Monetary Fund expects the country's economy to shrink by 9.5 percent this year. "Sometimes the participation rate can be low when the people are not happy with the country's economic situation," said Kadkhodae.

"But we are sure that we will have a good participation rate, even if it is lower than it may have been in the past," said the Guardian Council spokesman. "Generally in Iran, the participation rate is between 50 and 70 percent, depending on the economic and social situation in the country," he told AFP. "Even if the turnout is low, it does not endanger the Iranian political system. We know that there are ups and downs depending on elections. "Personally I expect and hope that the rate will be higher than 50 percent." — AFP

## Bumps ahead for Merkel after ally loses shock vote

**BERLIN:** Angela Merkel faces a rocky political road ahead as she battles to hang on until 2021 as German chancellor, after her junior coalition partner SPD elected a left-leaning leadership duo. Rank and file Social Democrats late Saturday delivered a humiliating blow to Finance Minister Olaf Scholz's run for co-chair of his centre-left party, picking instead two relative unknowns as their new leaders.

The shock result heralded a week of uncertainty for the coalition, with next Friday a key date as the SPD is to vote on whether to stay in government when it meets for its annual congress. Merkel, in power for 14 years, has said she would step down when her term ends in 2021. But her departure may well be accelerated following Saturday's stunning vote.

### 'Unacceptable conditions?'

Wounded by an election rout in 2017, the SPD had initially sought to go into opposition, but allowed itself reluctantly to be coaxed into renewing an alliance with Merkel. Many within the party however remained wary of continuing to govern in Merkel's shadow, fearful that their social roots were being eroded by the conservatives. The uneasy marriage from the start had left the coalition lurching from crisis to crisis.

A new series of regional and European electoral defeats had finally forced the SPD to seek a new leadership. Saturday's

decision against Scholz is a "solid vote of no-confidence against the party establishment", said left-leaning TAZ daily. "Within the SPD, it is believed that an exit from the GroKo is very possible" with the new leaders Norbert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken, added Bild daily, using the expression for the grand coalition.

Even if an immediate collapse of the government was averted, there is the "possible scenario that (the Social Democrats) would set unacceptable conditions to prepare an exit," added the newspaper. The SPD's new leaders have already said they will push Merkel's centre-right alliance for greater investment in climate protection. "They have also questioned the "black zero" no new debt policy - an absolute red line for Merkel and her centre-right alliance.

Merkel herself had just this week branded calls to relook the policy "absurd". Pointing to record levels in investments planned, she told parliament that "one cannot only find investments good when it brings about debt."

Economy Minister Peter Altmaier yesterday also heaped on warnings against touching the black zero. In an interview with the financial daily Handelsblatt he said the promise of "no taking on new debt was one of the most important promises of the (CDU-CSU alliance) during the election campaign." And Holger Schmieding, chief economist at the Berenberg Bank said: "If the two parties cannot agree on the further tilt of German policies to the left which the SPD activists desire, the coalition would end."

That would leave Merkel with the option of a minority government. Merkel has repeatedly ruled this out, but right-leaning Die Welt daily noted that this time round, the conditions were "not so bad" since 2020's budget has already been decided. Ministerial posts vacated by SPD ministers could then be taken up by her conservative alliance. — AFP



International

# Malta premier holds emergency talks as pressure to quit mounts

## Businessman Fenech charged with complicity to murder

VALLETTA: Malta's prime minister convened an emergency meeting yesterday as pressure mounted for him to quit over his handling of the murder probe of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. The meeting came a day after the main suspect in the 2017 car bomb killing, tycoon Yorgen Fenech, was charged with complicity in the murder and had his assets frozen by a court. The investigation has rocked the southern Mediterranean island and reached the highest rungs of politics.

Critics have accused Labour premier Joseph Muscat, 45, of protecting those involved in Caruana Galizia's murder. The scandal has already claimed the scalps of Muscat's top aide Keith Schembri and two ministers. Police sources said Fenech identified Schembri as the "real mastermind" behind the killing. Muscat's departure date was likely to be the focus of yesterday's emergency meeting of ministers and MPs, a senior Labour source told AFP.

"The prime minister has said from the outset that he will leave no stone unturned to solve this despicable murder under his watch and he delivered exactly that with the arraignment of someone who is believed to have commissioned the murder," the source said. "His exit has been on the cards for a while and he feels that now is the best time to bow out and allow fresh blood to take up on the extremely positive results delivered by Joseph Muscat in the six years at the helm."

On Saturday, party insiders told AFP that Muscat would step down at the latest on Jan 18 when the Labour Party is set to hold an election for his successor. Caruana Galizia's family and protesters have taken to the streets and called for Muscat to resign. However, he repeatedly insisted he would remain in power until the case was "closed".

### 'One-woman Wikileaks'

Caruana Galizia, a popular journalist and blogger described as a "one-woman Wikileaks", exposed cronyism and sleaze within the country's political and

business elite. She accused Schembri of corruption along with tourism minister Konrad Mizzi and economy minister Chris Cardona, all three of whom stepped down last week. Leaked emails revealed in court indicated that both Schembri and Mizzi stood to receive payments from a Dubai company called 17 Black, owned by Fenech.

The murder probe gained momentum following last week's arrest of the tycoon whose business interests span the energy, casinos and tourism sectors. His detention came after an alleged middleman in the murder, taxi driver Melvin Theuma, was offered a pardon to identify others who were involved. Schembri, Muscat's former chief of staff, was arrested Tuesday but his release on Thursday sparked accusations of a cover-up.

Anti-government protesters were set to hold fresh rallies outside the parliament in Valletta yesterday. A Maltese court is expected to rule today on a request by Fenech for the chief investigator in the case, Keith Arnaud, to be removed, amid allegations he also had close ties to Schembri and the prime minister.

Fenech, 38, who was until this month chief executive of one of Malta's largest companies, the property-to-energy Tumas Group conglomerate, was taken to court in handcuffs in a police van under a heavy armed police escort almost two years to the day since three other men were charged with having set off the bomb that killed the journalist on Oct 16, 2017. The three have pleaded not guilty and are still awaiting trial.

Dressed in a charcoal suit and dark glasses, shaven-headed Fenech stood up to hear the charges in a hushed courtroom less than a metre away from the three sons of Caruana Galizia, who were also joined in the courtroom by her husband Peter, her parents, Michael and Rose Vella, and her sisters. With music from a nearby bar drifting into the courtroom, the businessman made no application for bail. Fenech said when he spoke to journalists on Friday that the "truth will come out" and, in court filings, he has



VALLETTA: People holding placards and photos of slain journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia stage a protest called by Galizia's family and civic movements on Nov 29, 2019 outside the office of the prime minister. —AFP

made clear he intends to implicate other key members of Muscat's government, in both the murder plot and other corruption.

Sources briefed on the murder investigation told Reuters that police regard Fenech as the mastermind of the journalist's killing. But, in court filings, Fenech has tried to implicate Schembri, who was arrested on Tuesday in connection with the murder but

released without charge two days later. Immediately after the hearing, the family of Caruana Galizia urged authorities to continue to probe into who else was involved in the murder. The family said: "We now expect the Prime Minister to leave office, and parliament, with immediate effect to allow a free and full investigation into his and Keith Schembri's role in Daphne's assassination." —Agencies

## Aegean volunteers battle to turn plastic waste tide

ZAKYNTHOS, Greece: Dressed in her protective wetsuit and scuba gear, Antigone Kouteri jumps into the murky waters of Zakynthos harbor in search of plastics - and promptly snags her arm on a submerged object. "It was a tyre," offers her patrol mate Efthymis, coming up with a discarded beer bottle. "My treat!" he jibes. The Ionian island of Zakynthos is one of Greece's most pristine travel destinations, renowned for its azure waters and fabulous beaches, an environment clean enough to be a major Mediterranean nesting ground sought out by loggerhead sea turtles.

But even here, plastic pollution poses a grave threat to wildlife. Kouteri is one of nearly a dozen volunteers from Aegean Rebreath, a Greek organization formed in 2017 to protect Aegean biodiversity from waste. Within three hours, the team has collected four tyres, two shopping carts, a street lamp, metal boxes, plastic bags, dozens of plastic bottles and several kilometres of fishing line.

"Marine litter is a global issue, so it is (present) in Greece. More than 70 percent of marine litter is plastic in Greece," says Katerina Tsagari, a biologist at the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research near Athens. Tsagari says her team has found litter, most of it plastic, in about 75 percent of loggerhead sea turtles tested. Overall, they have found



ZAKYNTHOS, Greece: This handout picture taken in 2019 and released on Saturday shows volunteers collecting a rusted shopping cart (right) and tyres (left) from the sea during an operation to protect Aegean biodiversity from waste on this Ionian island. —AFP

plastic ingestion in between 20 and 45 percent of the species tested, which include fish and mussels.

With a coastline of some 14,000 km, one of the longest in the south-eastern Mediterranean, Greece attracts tens of millions of tourists every year. It's a regional problem. The Mediterranean, a partly closed sea, accumulates 570,000 tons of plastic annually from surrounding countries, according to the World Wildlife Fund. WWF has reported that Greece produces 700,000 tons of plastic per year, or 68 kilos per capita. Out of that, 11,500 tons end up in the sea, it said.

### 'Junkyard' beneath the waves

"There is a junkyard beneath the blue waters," says Violetta Walczyk, a Greek-Polish lawyer active with Aegean Rebreath. On the Cycladic island of Andros, mounds of waste



from a 2011 hilltop landfill collapse are still to be found in the sea below. In its two years of operation, Aegean Rebreath has amassed 9,000 plastic water bottles, 3.6 tons of fishing net and 289 tyres. The government readily admits that nearly 40 tons of plastic waste end up in Greek seas every day.

It recently started a campaign to phase out single-use plastics such as cups and straws - no small feat in a country with a huge coffee-to-go market. Speaking to AFP last month, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that marine protection was a "key priority" for a country so dependent on tourism. Greece continues to pay millions of euros in fines to the European Commission concerning the operation of illegal landfills.

But recycling efforts are still basic. Greece last year eliminated free

supermarket bags, long after other European countries. "Recycling in Greece is a joke," snorts George Sarelakos, the co-founder of Aegean Rebreath. "Every municipality has its own policy, there is no central strategy," he told AFP.

George Triantafyllou, the HCMR's head of research, says the institute is coordinating a European project, Claim, across 13 EU countries in addition to Tunisia and Lebanon to eliminate microplastics. The project includes developing photocatalytic technology to accelerate the degradation of microplastics in seas and rivers, he notes. The HCMR has also helped develop a floating litter-collection barrier that is currently deployed at the mouth of Kifissos river in Athens. "I believe everybody should change habits. We don't have to use plastics in our everyday life," says George Triantafyllidis. —AFP

## Tunisians march against violence towards women

TUNIS: Several hundred mostly women protesters rallied in the Tunisian capital on Saturday against violence targeting women, urging authorities to act to ensure their rights. Demonstrators marched through the city center, waving brooms to symbolize the sweeping away of violence against women. The march was called for by some 50 local NGOs including the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD).

Some protesters beat on drums and others rapped on pans, chanting "Solidarity with women victims of violence!" The march followed an incident in October in which a newly elected lawmaker was shown in a video that purported to show him masturbating

outside a school. MP Zouheir Makhlof said he is diabetic and had been urinating into a bottle. He walked free after being investigated for alleged sexual harassment and public indecency.

The video went viral and sparked Tunisia's own #MeToo movement, with sex abuse victims breaking taboos under the hashtag #EnaZeda. It was inspired by the huge global movement that emerged in 2017 in the wake of sexual assault allegations against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein.

Demonstrators carried posters bearing slogans such as "Equality between woman and man doesn't kill, violence kills". "We want to see a real mobilization by the authorities to end all forms of violence against women and to be firm with perpetrators of such violence," said protester Selma Bhar. An awareness campaign about sexual harassment on public transport was launched in Tunisia at the end of October.

A law was enacted in July 2017 out-



TUNIS: Tunisian women carry placards and chant slogans as they rally against sexual harassment in the capital on Saturday. —AFP

lawing sexual harassment in public places and laying down a maximum penalty of a year in prison and a

3,000-dinar (\$1,000) fine. But despite this, few women in Tunisia file complaints after such crimes. —AFP

## Geingob: Namibia veteran extending his stint in power

WINDHOEK: Namibia's President Hage Geingob, who was re-elected on Saturday, is still riding on the legacy of his party's role in the liberation struggle almost three decades after the country's independence from South Africa. Before a single vote was cast in Wednesday's general election, the 78-year-old could be almost certain of securing a second five-year term. A member of the SWAPO party, which has governed Namibia since independence in 1990, Geingob's first term was overshadowed by a recession and graft allegations.

He won 87 percent of votes in Namibia's last elections in 2014, more than the 76 percent his predecessor Hifikepunye Pohamba garnered in 2009. Geingob has had to strike a precarious balance between reminding the country of his party's heroics and appealing to Namibia's "born frees" - which represent around a third of the voting population. The man who once lived in exile as a SWAPO representative in Botswana and the United States during South African rule, pledged in his election campaign this time to eradicate poverty by 2022. —AFP

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## International

# EU leadership takes office touting green ambition

## Leaders mark a decade of Lisbon Treaty amid calls for reform

**BRUSSELS:** The EU's new leadership took office yesterday, one month later than planned, promising a more united Europe that would be ready to face major challenges, including fighting climate change. Germany's Ursula von der Leyen became president of the European Commission and marked the occasion in a short ceremony with her top EU official counterparts, including EU Council President Charles Michel who also started yesterday.

The team took the reins as the 28-member union is faced with a mountain of difficulties, including the Brexit divorce with Britain and tense ties with superpowers China and the United States. Von der Leyen said the officials gathered, who also included European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde, must meet a great responsibility as guardians of the EU treaties.

"It is a responsibility towards the European people and towards our founding father and mothers, but it is also a responsibility towards our children," she said. "It is our responsibility to leave a union that is stronger than the one we inherited: ... a continent in peace with rights and liberties (and) a single market with unprecedented economic opportunities," she said.

Former IMF chief Lagarde, who took office last month, stressed that the union had only recently left the damaging debt crisis and must look to the future. "It's a formidable challenge that awaits us, but my hope is that... we may leave this age of repairing (the EU) to one of renovation and hope," she said. Von der Leyen, who replaced EU veteran Jean-Claude Juncker, will lead a 27-strong team of commissioners who also began work yesterday with a clear ambition to make Europe a global powerhouse on green policy. Her mandate was due to start November 1

but was delayed after three of her initial nominees to the commission were rejected during the parliamentary confirmation process in an unprecedented snub.

European Parliament President David Sassoli said the MEPs would hold an extraordinary session on December 11 - the eve of an EU leaders summit - to receive the commission's first climate proposals, dubbed the "Green New Deal". The ceremony yesterday was officially the 10th anniversary of the latest European treaty that simplified EU governance, which remains complicated and often criticized as too removed from the continent's 500 million citizens.

Ten years after the Lisbon Treaty came into force, a bloc conceived to forge unity from the ashes of World War Two finds itself beset by divisions. Germany and France, long the EU's main axis, last week called for a "Conference on the Future of Europe", reporting by mid-2022, to make the EU "more united and sovereign". The Lisbon Treaty simplified decision making in a union recently expanded to 28 members with the inclusion of 12 states from the former Soviet bloc.

It strengthened the role of the elected European Parliament and reduced governments' veto powers over legislative changes, but still left several areas such as foreign policy and tax requiring unanimity - and thus vulnerable to veto from a single member state. In 2015, the bloc embarrassingly failed to apply a common asylum policy to tackle an influx of refugees from the Middle East - its worst migration crisis since World War Two. It is also divided about economic reform, raising fears that the euro currency, shared by 19 of its member states, may not be strong enough to withstand a future financial crisis. — Agencies



**BRUSSELS:** (From left) President of the European Central Bank (ECB) Christine Lagarde, European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel and European Parliament president David Sassoli pose for a picture after a press conference at the House of European History to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Lisbon Treaty yesterday. — AFP

## Irish PM suffers defeats ahead of national vote

**DUBLIN:** Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar's Fine Gael party failed to win any of the four by-elections held to fill parliamentary vacancies on Saturday, a blow ahead of a general election he plans to hold in the next six months. The governing centre-right party had held one of the seats left empty after four lawmakers successfully ran for European elections in May.

Its main rival Fianna Fail captured two of the seats, a gain of one, while left-wing Sinn Fein and the Green Party

added a lawmaker each in the 158-seat Irish parliament. The Fine Gael-led minority government has ruled through a cooperation deal with Fianna Fail that they extended last year as the uncertainty created by Britain's protracted exit from the European Union kept either side from calling an election. Both have identified the second quarter of 2020 as their preferred date to go to the polls again and, with the two dominant parties of Irish politics closely matched in most opinion polls, whoever edges it will likely lead another minority government.

While a gain was good news for centre-right Fianna Fail, Sinn Fein's win in one of two Dublin contests was also a welcome boost for Ireland's third-largest party whose political ascent suffered a major setback at local elections in May. Fine Gael and Fianna Fail both refuse to govern with Sinn Fein, the former political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), meaning the resurgent Greens

could decide whether Varadkar or Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin heads up the next minority administration if little divides their parties.

The Green Party's first-ever by-election win followed a strong showing at European and local polls in May, part of a growing trend for environmental parties around many parts of Europe with climate change becoming a top concern. "All round it's probably not a good day for the government but not fatal, governments do tend to lose these by elections but it does call into question the wisdom of having four by-elections possibly just a few months before a general election, because the momentum is with other parties now," said Theresa Reidy, a politics lecturer at University College Cork. "In a general election, though, we will still be looking at Leo Varadkar versus Micheal Martin for who will be Taoiseach (Prime Minister)." — Reuters

## US Supreme Court weighs challenge to gun transport limits

**NEW YORK:** The US Supreme Court will hear its first major gun rights case in nearly a decade today in a challenge backed by the National Rifle Association over a now-amended New York City handgun regulation that had prevented licensed owners from taking their handguns outside the city. The nine justices will hear arguments in an appeal by three handgun owners and the New York state affiliate of the NRA - the gun rights group closely aligned with President Donald Trump and other Republicans - who say the regulation violates the US Constitution's Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.

Gun control advocates have said that if the justices choose to issue a broad ruling expanding gun rights, it could jeopardize a variety of firearms restrictions passed in recent years by state and local governments across the country, including expanded background checks and confiscations of weapons from individuals who a court has deemed dangerous.

Gun control is a contentious issue in the United States, which has experienced numerous mass shootings. Since 2013, 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted more than 300 gun control laws, according to the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. Republican opposition in Congress has been instrumental in thwarting passage of new federal laws. "The future of life-saving gun safety laws across our country is very directly on the line with this case," the center's litigation director Hannah Shearer said.

The court has a 5-4 conservative majority. Its ruling is due by the end of June. "I believe it will change the way the Second Amendment is applied to everyone who owns a gun in the country," said Staten Island resident Romolo Colantone, one of the plaintiffs. The dispute centers on New York's handgun "premises" licenses that allowed holders to transport their firearm only to a handful of shooting ranges within the city, and to hunting areas elsewhere in the state during designated hunting seasons.

The transport rule was amended in July to specifically allow for a gun to be taken to a range or other residence outside the city. The city unsuccessfully asked the Supreme Court to cancel the arguments and drop the case because the amendment removed the provision being challenged. The New York State Rifle and Pistol Association filed the lawsuit in 2013 along with three city residents who were told by authorities they could not participate in a shooting competition in New Jersey or bring their guns to a home elsewhere in the state.

The plaintiffs are appealing a 2018 ruling by the Manhattan-based 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals that the regulation did not violate the Second Amendment and advanced the city's interest in protecting public safety. The Supreme Court has avoided taking up a major firearms case since 2010, when it extended to state and local regulations a 2008 ruling that recognized for the first time that the Second Amendment protects a person's right to keep a gun at home for self-defense.

That has left open questions such as whether that right extends outside the home. The challengers also are asking the Supreme Court to require lower courts to more strictly review gun curbs, with an eye toward striking them down. — Reuters

## Dad of London victim says son 'beautiful spirit'

**LONDON:** The first victim of the London Bridge terror attack to be named has been praised by his father as "a beautiful spirit". Jack Merritt, 25, was one of two people stabbed to death by Usman Khan during the convicted terrorist's rampage on Friday. Khan, 28, was shot dead on the bridge while wearing a fake explosives vest by police. Merritt, a course coordinator at Cambridge University's criminology institute, was killed as he helped host an event near London Bridge to mark five years of a prisoner rehabilitation program.

It was targeted by Khan, a former participant, who arrived armed with two knives. "I am sad beyond words to report that a course coordinator, Jack Merritt, was killed," Stephen Toope, Cambridge University vice-chancellor, said in a statement. "Our University condemns this abhorrent and senseless act of terror." He added a woman also killed in the stabbing spree who has yet to be named was a former student, while one of three people injured was a member of its staff. Merritt was reportedly a Cambridge University graduate who was working for its "Learning Together" initiative run by the Department of Criminology to promote prison-based education. "He was an exceptional young man, and I'm only finding out the half of it now he's gone," David Merritt, the victim's father, said in a series of messages on Twitter. "I talked often with Jack about Learning Together & I was inspired by the stories he told me," he added.

Khan had participated in the pro-

gram while serving some of his 16-year sentence for terrorism offences at Whitemoor prison in Cambridgeshire, eastern England. He was conditionally released from jail last December under so-called licensing conditions after serving around half of his jail term. That has caused a political storm in Britain, which is in the grip of election campaigning ahead of voting on December 12.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson - whose Conservatives have been in power for nearly a decade - is now vowing to end the practice and stiffen sentences. David Merritt has criticized that response, writing in one social media message: "We don't need knee-jerk reactions." In another post subsequently deleted, he said his son "would not wish his death to be used as the pretext for more draconian sentences or for detaining people unnecessarily". It also described him as "a beautiful spirit who always took the side of the underdog". — AFP



**LONDON:** A photograph of the first victim to be named, Jack Merritt, is pictured among floral tributes left close to London Bridge in the City of London yesterday. — AFP



**MADRID:** United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres arrives to give a press conference at the 'IFEMA - Feria de Madrid' exhibition center yesterday. — AFP

## 'War against nature' must stop: UN chief

**MADRID:** Devastating impacts of global warming that threaten humanity are a pushback from Nature under assault, UN chief Antonio Guterres warned yesterday ahead of a key climate conference. "For many decades the human species has been at war with the planet, and now the planet is fighting back," he said, decrying the "utterly inadequate" efforts of the world's major economies to curb carbon pollution. "We are confronted with a global climate crisis and the point of no return is no longer over the horizon, it is in sight and hurtling towards us." Guterres flagged a UN report to be released tomorrow confirming the last five years are the warmest on record, with 2019 likely to be the second hottest ever. "Climate-related disasters are becoming more frequent, more deadly, more destructive," he said on the eve of the 196-nation COP25 climate change talks in Madrid.

Human health and food security are at risk, he added, noting that air pollution associated with climate change accounts for seven million premature deaths every year. The Paris Agreement calls for capping global warming at under two degrees Celsius, but recent science has made clear that the treaty's aspiration goal of 1.5C is a far safer threshold.

### Pelosi in Madrid

A UN Environment Program report last week concluded that CO2 emissions would need to drop a vertiginously steep 7.6 percent per year over the next decade to stay within that limit. But Guterres insisted that

the 1.5C goal is doable. All that is missing, he said, is political will. "Let's be clear ñ up to now, our efforts to reach this target have been utterly inadequate," he said. "The world's largest emitters are not pulling their weight."

Current national pledges ñ if carried out ñ would see global temperatures rise by at least 3C, a recipe for human misery, according to scientists. The UN chief's comments were clearly aimed at the handful of countries responsible for more than half of global greenhouse gas emissions, though he did not call them out by name.

President Donald Trump has set in motion the process that will see the United States withdraw from the Paris deal by year's end. At the same time, a US Congressional delegation going to Madrid will be headed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, listed by the Spanish government among heads of state and VIPs. "We want to give every opportunity to the US to remain within the commitments in the fight against climate change," a spokesperson for the Spanish prime minister's office told AFP.

Other major emitters ñ China, India, Russia and Brazil ñ have given scant indication that they will deepen their commitments in the near term. Guterres did single out the European Union as playing a constructive role. "Europe has an absolutely essential role to play, and must be a cornerstone in the global negotiations leading to carbon neutrality," he said.

The European Commission's new president Ursula Von der Leyen is trying to steer the bloc towards a target of "zero net emission" by 2050, but continues to face resistance from members such as Poland and Hungary. Despite growing public pressure for decisive action, the 12-day negotiating session is likely to remain technical in nature, focused on finalizing the "rulebook" for the Paris Agreement, which becomes operational at the end of next year. — AFP

## Turin center cleared to defuse WWII bomb

**ROME:** More than 10,000 residents of central Turin had to be evacuated early yesterday while experts disarmed a 500-pound British bomb from World War II, local authorities said. Residents living closest to the site were told to leave a "red zone" around Nizza Street in the city's historic district while the experts tackled the bomb, dropped more than 70 years ago. Another 50,000 in an outer perimeter

were advised to either leave or stay indoors from 7:00 am (0600 GMT) until 4:00 pm. But city officials were able to lift the alert at around 2:00 pm after the bomb disposal team announced they had completed their work. The device had contained 65 kilos of dynamite, they said.

Turin Mayor Chiara Appendino was present at the site and planned to also visit those who had been evacuated to buildings at a fairground on the edge of the city. Airspace above Turin was closed during the operation as was the Porta Nuova train station which is located along Nizza Street. Army experts have moved the deactivated bomb to Cirie, about 13 km northwest of Turin. There, it will be permanently destroyed in a disused quarry. — AFP



## International

# Evacuations in Philippines as typhoon cancels sports events

## People urged to leave homes, thousands in evacuation centres

**CLARK, Philippines:** The Philippines has begun evacuating thousands of people, local officials said yesterday, as a powerful typhoon rumbling in from the Pacific forced Southeast Asian Games organizers to cancel or reschedule some events. Forecasters expect Typhoon Kammuri to make landfall today evening or tomorrow morning, packing gusts of 170 km per hour and maximum sustained winds of 140 kph.

The storm entered Philippine territory Saturday evening, shortly before President Rodrigo Duterte and boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao launched the Games with a colorful opening ceremony. This year's Games in Clark, Manila and Subic, which run through to Dec 11, are already particularly complex with a record 56 sports across dozens of venues that are in some cases hours apart by car.

Outdoor events in Subic - on the west coast of the main Philippine island of Luzon in the country's north - were the first to be affected by Kammuri. "The windsurfing has been cancelled until we have a more accurate picture of the weather," Ramon Agregado, the organizing committee's head of the Subic cluster of venues, told AFP. The women's triathlon event was brought forward to Sunday, Agregado said, "so we could take advantage of the good weather".

Duathlon events scheduled for tomorrow will now take place today. Agregado said that venues will not be changed, but in the event of bad weather the equipment will be taken down and put back together once the events are rescheduled.

### Evacuation centres

Some local government units in central Bicol region urged people to begin leaving their homes on Saturday night. By yesterday afternoon, more than 3,000 people were in evacuation centres, mostly in schools and gymnasiums in Camarines Norte, the disaster management office of the province said. Most of them live in coastal areas and low-lying places where flash floods and landslides are possible due to heavy rains that will be brought by the typhoon. No mandatory evacuation has been ordered yet, the disaster management office said.

School classes and government offices in some towns will be closed today and tomorrow in anticipation of the heavy rains. The Philippines, which last hosted the Games in 2005, are aiming to win the most medals, and history is on their side: Seven of the last 11 SEA Games hosts have topped the table, reflecting the tradition of rewriting the sporting program to suit local strengths.

The hosts got off to a flying start on Sunday, scooping golds at the dancesport competition and triathlon, and topped the table with 17 medals by the afternoon. Around 8,750 athletes and team officials are expected at this year's 30th edition - the biggest ever - and there are some 12,000 volunteers. Organizers hope more than 500 million viewers will tune in on TV. In an eclectic program, Olympic sports like swimming and athletics sit side-by-side with regional favorites such as martial arts amis and wushu, and this year athletes will even battle an obstacle race course in Manila. — AFP



**MANILA:** Demonstrators, some dressed as athletes, take part in a rally against the Philippine government's poor preparations in hosting the SEA Games (Southeast Asian Games) on Saturday, hours before the games' opening ceremony. — AFP

## Aussie believes US made multiple rescue attempts

**SYDNEY:** An Australian man who spent three years in Taliban captivity said yesterday that he believes US special forces tried to rescue him and an American colleague on half-a-dozen occasions. Speaking in Sydney for the first time since he was freed in a prisoner swap deal, 50-

year-old Timothy Weeks said he never lost hope, but the captivity "had a profound and unimaginable effect" on him. Detailing a hellish life spent moving between windowless cells in Afghanistan and Pakistan Weeks said "after almost 1,200 days, our ordeal ended as abruptly as it had begun".

Weeks and American colleague Kevin King were freed on Nov 20 as part of deal between the Taliban, US, Australian and Afghan governments. The pair - both professors at the American University in Kabul - were kidnapped by gunmen wearing military uniforms as they returned home from classes in August 2016. "I struggle to find words to express just how completely this has changed me. At times, I felt as if my death was imminent, and that I would never return to see those that I loved

again," he said. "But, by the will of God, I am here, I am alive and I am safe."

He recalled that in April this year he was woken "at around 2:00am and we were taken down into the tunnels". He was told at the time that it was the Islamic State group's local affiliate. "I believe now that it was the Navy SEALs coming in to get us. And the moment that we got into the tunnels, we were just one or two meters underground. There was a huge bang at the front door. Our guards went up and there was a lot of machine-gun fire," he said. "I believe it was the Navy SEALs right outside our door. I think they came in six times to try to get us. And that a number of times they missed us only by hours." — AFP



**GOMA, DR Congo:** Members of LUCHA (Struggle for change) protest in front of the MONUSCO compound on Saturday. — AFP

## Crowd in DRC lynches two as UN envoy visits

**BENI, DR Congo:** A crowd in eastern DR Congo on Saturday lynched two people they suspected of being members of a militia blamed for the killing of more than 100 civilians over the past month, an AFP journalist said. The army however said the pair were a sergeant and his wife. The killings came on the same day that the United Nations peacekeeping chief visited eastern DR Congo where anti-UN protests have erupted since the militia attacks.

Munitions were found in the bags of the two people, a man and a woman dressed in civilian clothes, in the town of Beni. The crowd of several dozen people accused them of being members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a shadowy armed group with links to Ugandan Islamists, the journalist said. "They didn't have ID and when we checked their bags we found ammunition, military garb and cartridge clips," said Fabrice Muhindo, who works at the car park where the lynchings took place.

### Anti-UN protests

"They are ADF members who were on their way to an operation against the population. We neutralised them," he told AFP. The two were actually an army sergeant and his wife, the army said late Saturday. Sergeant Bahati Sisimbume was heading to his duty station in Ituri province, north of Beni, army spokesman Mak Hazukai told AFP. The killings came after another soldier was lynched in Oicha, 30 km north of Beni, on Friday by civilians who mistook him for an ADF member.

The visit to Beni of UN Under-Secretary General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix came several days after a mob stormed a UN base in the town in protest over a perceived failure

of peacekeepers to stop militia violence. "Make no mistake about who the enemies are," Lacroix said during his brief stay in the city before leaving for the neighboring Ituri province. "The enemies are those who attack and kill the population. It is also they who attack those who help the inhabitants of this region fight against Ebola," he said.

At least seven people have been killed in clashes during the anti-UN protests this week. The east of the Democratic Republic of Congo has been troubled for years by militia violence, but most recent attacks are blamed on the ADF. DR Congo forces launched operations against the ADF in the restive eastern region at the end of October. In response the ADF has carried out massacres, in an apparent bid to discourage civilians from helping the military.

### Hacked to death

Another 27 people were hacked to death on Wednesday, bringing the number of people killed in militia violence to 107 since November 5 in and around Beni. The European Union has also condemned the "cowardly attacks" by armed groups and called for perpetrators to be brought to justice. "Closer cooperation is needed between the FARDC (Congolese armed forces) and MONUSCO to reinforce protective measures for civilians," the European Union spokesman said in a statement on Friday.

MONUSCO, one of the biggest UN peacekeeping operations in the world, today comprises more than 16,500 military personnel and observers, 1,300 police and at least 4,000 civilians. But it has struggled to make progress in a vast country beset by armed groups as well as an Ebola epidemic, poverty and poor governance.

Responding to criticism of inaction, MONUSCO says its troops are unable to deploy in combat without the approval of the host country and in coordination with national forces. The DR Congo presidency earlier this week announced joint military operations with the UN to reestablish security in the Beni area. — AFP

## Mandatory face scans for phone users

**BEIJING:** China will require telecom operators to collect face scans when registering new phone users at offline outlets starting yesterday, according to the country's information technology authority, as Beijing continues to tighten cyberspace controls. In September, China's industry and information technology ministry issued a notice on "safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of citizens online", which laid out rules for enforcing real-name registration.

The notice said telecom operators should use "artificial intelligence and other technical means" to verify people's identities when they take a new phone number. A China Unicom customer service representative told AFP that the Dec 1 "portrait matching" requirement means customers registering for a new phone number may have to record themselves turning their head and blinking. "In next steps, our ministry will continue to...increase supervision and inspection...and strictly promote the management of real-name registration for phone users," said the September notice.

## Indonesians pay high price to shield homes

**TAMBAKLOROK, Indonesia:** Indonesian fisherman Miskan says the once-abundant catches he used to enjoy have been dwindling in recent years on this stretch of the Java Sea. His meagre income is being further strained by having to borrow cash to shore up his home against lapping waves coming further inland on this vulnerable coastline. "If you have a house on land and then work at sea, it's hard. But now I work at sea and I live at sea," said Miskan, 44, who uses one name, speaking outside his small home, where a caged songbird hangs from the rafters.

His community's battle against inundation, blamed on both man-made environmental destruction and the impact of climate change, reflects the risks posed to millions of people by a sinking coastline on Indonesia's most populous island of Java. The flooding in Tambaklorok in Central Java province is now so bad that Miskan uses a window to enter his home since his door is half blocked by dirt piled up to keep out the sea. "It's hard to save money when you're a fisherman," he said.

Miskan had to borrow from neighbors to pay roughly 7.2 million rupiah (\$500) to hire workers to truck in earth. Thousands of people in Asia and Europe joined rallies demanding more action on climate change on Friday, aiming to force political leaders to come up with urgent solutions at a United Nations conference that starts on Monday. Indonesia, an archipelago of

thousands of islands, has about 81,000 km of coastline, making it particularly vulnerable to climate change along with neighbours like the Philippines.

It is also home to more than a fifth of the world's mangrove forests, which naturally help keep out high tidal waters. But for years, coastal communities have chopped down mangrove forests to clear the way for fish and shrimp farms, and for rice paddies. The government has scrambled to work with environmental groups to replant mangroves, build dykes and relocate threatened villages. But many residents, often poor fishermen, are either reluctant to leave their homes or simply have nowhere to go further inland on Java, home to around 140 million people.

"It is impossible for us to move due to economic reasons, so even though there's tidal floods, I'll stay," said Abdul Hadi, whose house in Tambaklorok is now below sea levels and the road. Another villager, Solihatun, 51, regularly needs her roof removed so that the height of the walls can be raised as earth is spread in and around her house. She says the flooding is sometimes so bad her grandchildren can swim in the living room. "Thank God for bank loans, so it's easier to pay off the debt every month," she said, adding she had spent over 5 million rupiah for the last renovation.

Feri Prihantoro of the Bina Karta Lestari Foundation, a non-government organization (NGO) focused on sustainable development, said the area's coastline was particularly vulnerable to flooding and high tides due to land subsidence because of the extraction of underground water and higher sea levels. Further along the Java coast, Jakarta is also prone to flooding with two-fifths of the city lying below sea level. — AFP

## Bangladesh jails 3 over crash that sparked protests

**DHAKA:** A Bangladeshi court yesterday sentenced three transport workers to life for a road crash last year that killed two students and triggered major anti-government protests. Hundreds of thousands of students across the country took to the streets after the two teenagers were hit by an out-of-control bus that had been illegally racing through the streets of Dhaka in July 2018.

The three workers, including two drivers, were found guilty of culpable homicide, prosecutor Tapash Kumar Paul told reporters. "We are happy with the verdict," he told AFP. The rallies, which began over anger at road safety but soon morphed into opposition to the government, lasted more than a week and paralyzed the capital's traffic.

As the demonstrations spread across the country, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched a heavy crackdown and more than 150 people were left injured after police fired tear gas and rubber bullets. Pro-government groups allied with the government also attacked demonstrators, as well as journalists. Traffic accidents have spiked in Bangladesh with at least 7,500 people - over 20 a day - dying on the road in 2018, according to the Passengers Welfare Association, a private watchdog.

Following the protests, the government passed a tough traffic law in the country of 168 million, drawing a backlash from the strong and well-organized transport workers' unions. Reckless driving and unfit vehicles - even in major cities - are common sights in Bangladesh, but the unions have frequently stopped authorities from taking action against drivers or vehicle owners. Drivers are often half-trained or ignorant of traffic rules as driving licenses can easily be acquired with bribes. — AFP

## No sign of terror motive in Hague stabbings: Police

**THE HAGUE:** Dutch police said yesterday they had found no indications of a terrorist motive after arresting a homeless man for stabbing three teenagers in The Hague. The 35-year-old man was detained on Saturday after the assault, which happened as shoppers hunted Black Friday bargains in the city's main commercial street. "The precise circumstances of the stabbing incident are still unclear. No indications have yet been found to show that there was a terrorist motive," police said on Twitter. "The motive for the stabbing incident is still being investigated."

Police said the suspect had no fixed abode and was "arrested at a homeless shelter in the centre of The Hague" before being taken to a police station for questioning. They had previously said they were investigating "several scenarios". The attack happened just hours after a terror suspect stabbed two people to death in London.

The victims were a 13-year-old boy and two 15-year-old girls, none of whom knew each other, police said. They were all treated in hospital but released overnight. The Netherlands has seen a series of terror attacks and plots, although not so far on the scale of those in other European countries. In March four people were killed when a Turkish-born man opened fire on a tram in the city of Utrecht. In August 2018 an Afghan man stabbed and seriously wounded two American tourists at Amsterdam's central station, saying he wanted to "protect Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)". He was jailed for 26 years in October this year. — AFP



## Analysis

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## Nothing can stop bacterium decimating Florida's oranges

Peter Spyke has two types of oranges in his groves: Those that are the color orange - and those that are green, unsalable and responsible for the collapse of Florida's orange crop over the past 15 years. Florida farmers have observed, almost powerless, the spread of the huanglongbing bacterium ("yellow dragon disease" in Chinese), known worldwide as "HLB" and native to China. It was first reported in Florida in 2005, and has been conquering groves ever since.

The bacterium causes one of the most devastating citrus diseases called "greening": The leaves of the infected trees turn pale, the fruit fail to ripen and remain green, and eventually fall to the ground. The bacterium is transmitted by a small insect called citrus psyllid. Compared to the 2003-2004 season, Florida's orange production will be down by 80 percent this season (harvests last from November to April depending on the citrus variety). Grapefruits are the most affected.

"We've lost a great deal of our productive capacity and along with that we've lost juice plants, we've lost jobs, we've lost packing houses," said Spyke, a third-generation citrus farmer. "At this point we haven't identified any way to make the trees immune to HLB," he said during a tour of his orchard. Florida citrus farmers have generally been reluctant to destroy contaminated trees, and as a result 90 percent of their groves are infected - compared to only 19 percent in Brazil, while Europe so far has been spared the blight. Sprays used to treat trees in Florida have been ineffective.

Of 7,000 citrus growers in the state in 2004, 5,000 have thrown in the towel, according to The Washington Post. Spyke is taking a long-term approach to the problem by searching for citrus varieties that are naturally more resistant to HLB. On his 30-acre farm he has planted two dozen varieties of citrus including lemons, oranges, mandarins and grapefruit. The 68-year-old farmer knows it will take years, but is resigned to the idea that there is no miracle solution. He has also changed the way he looks after the trees.

"We have to use appropriate cultural practices that will help it deal with the disease," he told AFP. One solution is to feed the plants "slow release" fertilizer, so that the nutrient supply is regular and continuous. This apparently helps some trees fight against the effects of HLB, which literally "starves" them to death. This is one of the recommendations given by a research laboratory that focuses on citrus just a 10-minute drive from Spyke's farm.

### GMOs to the rescue?

The University of Florida's research center employs 40 scientists including researcher Johnny Ferrarezi. "Everyone really wants to see a deadline for solving that, unfortunately we scientists don't have it," Ferrarezi said. "What's very important to say is that - after 15 years handling this disease in Florida, we did acquire a lot of knowledge that can allow us to manage the groves in a way better way."

The laboratory, under pressure from the industry and based on their research, has made available new varieties of oranges and mandarins that can produce more fruit despite the bacteria. The lab has even suggested a simple and effective but expensive solution: covering the citrus trees with huge protective nets that block HLB-carrying insects, called Citrus Under Protective Screen or CUPS.

In an industry already suffering from a downturn, the question of dollars often comes up, as was the case at a late November meeting organized by the state. "We still need the research dollars to go towards research and development of future developing new products, the big word, GMOs," said a citrus grower named Frank Youngman. Researchers are hard at work searching for a genetically modified alternative, but these mutant oranges are far from being ready to be planted. — AFP



68 year-old citrus grower Peter Spyk holds a halved orange at Arapaho Citrus Management grove in Fort Pierce, Florida on Nov 21, 2019. — AFP

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Mercedes Viricochea



Grover Cardozo



Esteban Guillen

## Bolivians face upheaval and uncertainty

Weeks of protests, blockades and food shortages rocked Bolivia's sprawling cities of La Paz and El Alto, making daily life difficult and dangerous. The country's worst political crisis in more than a decade was ignited by a disputed October 20 election. Incumbent president Evo Morales claimed victory, but opposition groups accused him of rigging the results. He ended up resigning and moving to Mexico.

Dozens of people were killed in the ensuing violence, deepening divisions between indigenous people loyal to Morales and Bolivia's mostly urban middle and upper classes. As the Andean country prepares to hold new elections, AFP spoke to three people about the unrest.

### Mercedes, the retiree

Armed with a metal pipes and shovels, Mercedes Viricochea and her neighbors spent several nights defending their homes in El Alto, a stronghold of the ex-president. Viricochea, a critic of Morales and his Movement for Socialism (MAS) party, says "terrorists" had threatened to burn down their houses if they did not join demonstrations against right-wing interim President Jeanine Anez, who took power after Morales stepped down on November 10.

Around 100 neighbors blocked off their wide streets with wire and burning tires. Anyone wanting to enter had to be physically checked. "We had to go out and stay there

until three in the morning, almost the entire night, in rain and everything," Viricochea, 57, tells AFP at her modest home. "It has really taken a toll on me psychologically. I felt really bad, locked up in my house." Viricochea, who worked as a secretary in the La Paz local government until she retired this year, favors new elections. "After a lot of struggle, we have achieved democracy and we feel very calm," she says.

### Grover, the entrepreneur

Grover Cardozo, who runs a video production company in La Paz, is a staunch supporter of Morales. He worked on the ex-president's 2005 campaign and now worries that the indigenous leader's achievements over the past 14 years could be eroded by the next government. Cardozo wants Morales, who fled to Mexico after losing the support of the security forces, to return to Bolivia and take on an advisory role for the next generation of MAS leaders. "We cannot be ungrateful and ignore what they (the old guard) have done for Bolivia," Cardozo, 57, tells AFP in his cramped office. Protests and blockades since the ballot have disrupted daily life in the seat of government, which has been plagued by food and fuel shortages. "The past three or four weeks have been terrible. We have had to totally change our work routine, life routine," Cardozo says. Cardozo fears for the future of

Bolivia. "I'm very worried, almost anxious, about what's coming," he says.

### Esteban, the student

After voting for the first time, Esteban Guillen, 19, was furious when Morales - who had ruled Bolivia for most of his young life - claimed victory without going to a second round. Opposition groups accused Morales, who had been seeking a fourth term, of cheating to avoid a runoff, sparking weeks of protests. Guillen and other students from the private Bolivian Catholic University in a middle-class neighborhood of La Paz were among them. "I wasn't trying to topple the government," Guillen tells AFP. "We went with the idea of defending our vote. We were very angry, but also frustrated, furious and sad." Night after night Guillen and his group joined thousands of protesters outside the electoral tribunal. They were tear gassed in confrontations with police. "Another thing that made us mad was how they underestimated the youth," says Guillen, during a break at the leafy university campus. "Perhaps they thought because this was our first election, we would let it go. It wasn't like that." While the future of Bolivia is uncertain, Guillen is sure about one thing: Anez was right to fill the power vacuum left by Morales. Guillen has a warning for politicians planning to contest the next election. "If they decide to do what Morales did, we will be there and active," he says. — AFP

## SPD's new leaders: An 'anti-Merkel coalition' duo

Relative unknowns just days ago, Nobert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken were elected Saturday by their centre-left SPD as leaders of the party, junior partner in German Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition government. The duo, branded by German media as the "anti-Merkel coalition" pair, soundly beat Finance Minister Olaf Scholz and his running mate Klara Geywitz. Here is a look at the pair:

### 'Robin Hood'

A former finance minister for the North Rhine-Westphalia region, Walter-Borjans is referred to in German media by the nickname "Nowabob". The 67-year-old is also often called the "Robin Hood of taxpayers" for a spectacular move against tax evasion. In 2011, he arranged the purchase of data on German tax evaders

in Switzerland. The repatriation of their assets swelled government coffers by billions.

Walter-Borjans started out in politics in 1984 and quickly rose through the ranks of regional government. Between 2010 and 2017, he served as the region's finance minister with the support of the party's more leftist youth wing. He has said he is a "staunch social democrat" but has not openly called for an end to the coalition.

### Anti-far-right campaigner

Esken, 58, is best known for her campaigns in favor of equal opportunities and digital access and against the far right. She was first elected to parliament in 2013 and is on the left of the party. She favours state intervention in the fight against climate change. Born in Stuttgart, Esken joined the SPD in 1990 and held various roles in the regional administration of Baden-Wuerttemberg.

In 2009, she set up an "Alliance Against the Right" in the town of Calw, where the neo-Nazi NPD was planning to set up its regional headquarters. She has been critical of the coalition and its "politics of small steps". Esken, who enjoys the support of the climate strike movement Fridays for Future, has demanded new



Newly elected co-leaders of Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) Saskia Esken and Nobert Walter-Borjans celebrate on stage at the Willy-Brandt Haus, the SPD headquarters in Berlin on Saturday. — AFP

investments on the climate. She has also warned Merkel's CDU that if it categorically refuses to negotiate, she would "recommend that the party leaves the grand coalition". — AFP

## Tories' outcasts take on Johnson as independents

Only a few months ago, David Gauke was a Conservative minister. Now he's standing in Britain's upcoming election as an independent, hoping to deprive the party and its prime minister of victory. "With a majority, Boris Johnson would be able to proceed with a reckless course of action over Brexit," Gauke told AFP he handed out leaflets on a damp afternoon in Tring, a market town in southern England.

Gauke quit as justice minister in July when Johnson became Conservative leader, in protest over his threat to leave the European Union without a deal with Brussels. Two months later, Johnson expelled him and 20 other MPs from the party for trying to block him in parliament, in the process losing his majority in the House of Commons. Most of the rebels have since been readmitted or retired, but Gauke and two others are now standing against the Tories in their old constituencies on December 12.

### 'Admire his courage'

Gauke admits he is in a "very strange" position, but it reflects the turbulence in British politics since the historic 2016 Brexit referendum. Both the Conservatives and main opposition Labour party have been split over their EU strategy, and several MPs from both have defected to the anti-Brexit Liberal Democrats in recent months. Gauke backed a previous exit deal but now believes a new EU referendum is the only way to address the divisive issue - and hopes the majority of his constituents who opposed Brexit in 2016 will support him.

Having been a Tory MP for 14 years and campaigned for the party in every election since 1987, he has no time for Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who also wants a new referendum. As he pounds the pavements in South West Hertfordshire, a seat he won with 58 percent of the vote in 2017, he emphasises that he would be an independent voice. One woman swears as she walks past on Tring's High Street, but most people are polite and several stop to chat, despite the drizzle. "I admire his courage," said Carole Niven, a 66-year-old photographer, fixing a campaign sticker to her coat. Gauke admits the election is longer hours and more work than before, when he was



Former conservative MP David Gauke canvasses for support to become an Independent MP in the constituency of South West Hertfordshire in Tring, northwest of London, on Nov 26, 2019. — AFP

backed by the Conservative party machine and took his seat for granted. Today, he is accompanied by just one local volunteer, a member of the local Lib Dems. "I'm the underdog," he concedes - polling indicates he will not keep his seat. But he adds: "I'm loving every minute of it!"

### PM 'wholly unsuitable'

A few miles south, through the glorious autumnal woods of the Chiltern Hills, Gauke's former Tory colleague Dominic Grieve is also upbeat about running as an independent. "I have no idea if I'll win. But it might just happen," the former attorney general told AFP in the picturesque town of Marlow, on the banks of the River Thames. The weather here is even worse, the pouring rain dripping off his flat cap and waxed cotton jacket, but Grieve is a man on a mission.

Johnson "is wholly unsuitable to hold high office, and whose character and temperament suggest to me that he is I'm afraid inherently dishonest", he said. Grieve has led highly successful efforts in parliament to block a "no deal" Brexit, and like Gauke, hopes his call for a second referendum will appeal in his Remain-backing seat. "I'm not mad.

I'm not going to facilitate an extremist left-wing politician taking power," he said, referring to accusations he will let in Corbyn's Labour. But he wants to "moderate" Johnson's plans for Brexit, which he described as "the worst piece of self-harm this country has engaged in in peacetime".

### 'Traitor to the party'

Grieve admits many Tory voters are unhappy with him in Beaconsfield, a semi-rural seat which he has held since 1997 and where he won 65 percent of the vote two years ago. "Traitor. He's a traitor to the party," said Kerrie Kozak, 65, a retired painter and decorator, when asked his thoughts about his local MP. "I voted to get out (of the EU) and a lot of people voted to get out. It's not democracy if it goes back again."

But Grieve is something of a celebrity for his Brexit campaign in parliament, and his race has a buzz about it that has drawn in volunteers and donations aplenty. James McKinlay, a 22-year-old university graduate, has come from a neighboring seat to hand out leaflets. "The whole idea of putting the country before the party, I think a lot of people like that," he said. — AFP



# Business

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KODO, Nigeria: Woman spread out roasted and grounded shea nuts on the floor so that they can dry out at the Talba Shea Butter Village in Kodo. —AFP Photos

## Nigerian farmers spread butter wealth

Global shea butter market is expected to hit \$3.5 billion

**KODO, Nigeria:** Surrounded by four children, Ladi Usman scoops shea nut paste from a plastic container into a metal pot on the stove in her cramped kitchen. Squinting to keep charcoal fumes out of her eyes, she stirs it with a bamboo stick, completing the final stages of eking out the valuable shea butter oils. For the past two decades Usman, 39, has relied on shea nuts - and the oil they contain - to provide a livelihood for herself and her family in central Nigeria. "I cook with it, I sell it and the money I get from it I use to take these children to school, to hospital and everything else," she said.

Together with 50 other women in a cooperative in the village of Kodo she extracts value from shea nuts that grow abundantly in Nigeria. Shea butter is consumed worldwide in chocolate, margarine and cooking oil, and cosmetic giants are using it more and more as a natural moisturizer. The global shea butter market is expected to be worth \$3.5 billion by 2028, according to Transparency Market research. Experts say the huge number of shea trees in Nigeria could be a major source of income.

But potential profit is being lost as it exports just 10 percent of the 350,000 tons of shea nuts produced annually as finished products to lucrative world markets. Nigeria could satisfy up to 60 percent of global demand for shea, "and with many companies in Europe and America using shea butter as an alternative to cocoa butter the potential is enormous," said Aderemi Akpatira of the National Shea Products Association. "We as a nation just need to get ourselves organized and take that leadership place."

### 'Middle men'

For women working in the Kodo collective, extracting oil from shea nuts takes several stages and a lot of work. First Usman and the other women collect the nuts and remove the sweet pulp either to be eaten or fermented into a wine that is consumed locally. The nuts are then washed and boiled to prevent germination before being roasted on charcoal ovens.

Most of the nuts are sold at that point by Usman and the rest of the collective for the oils to be extracted industrially. It

makes sense to the small-scale farmers as it avoids the long hours and fuel needed for extraction, but it precludes profits they could be making. Distance to markets is another major problem as farmers have to offload what they produce to middle men who buy low and sell high in other towns and cities.

"The middle men come to buy from us and go to sell in other towns. They buy from us at one dollar and sell at five dollars," Maryam Aliyu, chairwoman of the Alheri cooperative said. "We feel like we are just working for the middle men." Farmer Mustafa Umar, 35, agreed as he surveyed the shea trees on his farm in Kodo. "People are coming from different areas to buy shea butter, and when they buy it cheap here they will go back and double it two times and make their own profits," he said. "We want to invite the foreigners to come and buy the shea nuts here from us."

### 'Exploit the potential'

Nigerian authorities are desperate to diversify the country's oil-dependant economy and have made boosting domestic agriculture a priority. Proponents say that tapping into the value of millions of Nigerian shea trees could provide a crucial source of income.

Since June, The Nigeria Agribusiness Register market monitor has been facilitating investment it hopes can help Nigeria gain a bigger share of the world's shea butter market. "It is estimated that Nigeria could make up to \$2 billion from the export of processed shea kernel" if it was done domestically, said Roland Oroh, director of the organization that tracks the agricultural sector. But despite the ambitious targets, Nigeria remains a long way from cashing in on its shea wealth.

Industry experts say a first step to targeting foreign markets would be to improve quality at the first stages of production. "We need to get more educated especially in the scientific aspect, some of our finished products that went to Europe were rejected because they didn't meet import standards," said Christopher Chuwkuemeka, 62, a shea butter processor in the Jos, central Nigeria. "Poor practices reduce the quality of the shea butter even before it reaches us," he noted. —AFP



KODO: Photo shows a vehicle used to transport the shea nuts to the Talba Shea Butter Village where they will be processed into shea butter in Kodo.



KODO: Mayram Aliyu, chairwoman of the Alheri cooperative, poses for a portrait at the Talba Shea Butter Village in Kodo.



KODO: Processed shea butter is seen near metal pots and plastic containers at the Talba Shea Butter Village in Kodo.



Business

# From armchairs to iPhones, India's millennials rent it all

## Tens of thousands of young Indians are switching from buying to renting

MUMBAI: At 29, Spandan Sharma doesn't own a flat, a car, or even a chair - one of a growing number of Indian millennials bucking traditional norms and instead opting to rent everything from furniture to iPhones. "Millennials in my age bracket want freedom and earlier what was seen as stability is now seen as a sign of being tied down," Sharma said. "My parents don't understand the concept of renting furniture at all. They have never been completely on-board with the idea," he said. "They said it would be much better to buy rather than rent furniture in the long term."

For 4,247 rupees (\$60) a month, the Mumbai-based executive furnished his entire home, sourcing furniture for his bedroom, living room and dining area as well as a refrigerator and microwave. Sharma isn't alone. Tens of thousands of young Indians are switching from buying to renting so they can live life with few strings attached. Even businesses are renting their office furnishings, said budding entrepreneur Vandita Morarka.

When Morarka set up her feminist non-profit One Future Collective in 2017, she rented nearly everything she needed and funneled the savings from not having a one-off outlay into paying salaries to her staff of 25. "From study tables and chairs to even a laptop, I have rented them all as the prices are reasonable," the 25-year-old said. "This system allows me to take more risks... And in case things go south, we can wrap up without losing a large tranche of investments and begin elsewhere."

### Investing in experiences

From ride-hailing apps to communal office spaces, the sharing economy is a global phenomenon that is expected to generate annual revenues of \$335 billion

by 2025, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. In the US, websites such as Rent the Runway and Nuuly offer fashion-conscious customers the option to try rather than buy clothing, while in China, consumers can rent BMWs via a tap on their smartphone. In India, the boom has fuelled the rise of new furniture and appliance-renting businesses such as Furlenco, RentoMojo and GrabOnRent - and even jewelry rental apps - in recent years. The sector is a bright spot amid a severe slowdown as weakening consumer demand has led to tumbling sales including in the bellwether auto sector.

The country's furniture rental market alone is expected to be worth \$1.89 billion by 2025, according to consulting firm Research Nester. "We expect to grow by a million orders in under 30 months," RentoMojo founder Geetansh Bamania said. The Bangalore-based firm rents out furniture as well as appliances, gym equipment, iPhones and smart home devices such as Google Home and Amazon Echo. "Renting smartphones works out well for the youngsters as they can keep upgrading to the latest

launch at a cheaper price without burning through their finances," Bamania added.

Launched in 2012 by former investment banker Ajith Karimpana, Furlenco has catered to more than 100,000 customers and expects revenues to cross \$300 million by 2023. "Overall consumer behavior is shifting from owning to renting among millennials due to the flexibility and non-commitment it offers," Karimpana said. In an indication of the trend's staying power, Swedish furniture giant Ikea has said it plans to test a subscription-based model in 30 markets in



MUMBAI: Vandita Morarka, 25, interacts with her colleagues as they sit around rented furniture in Mumbai. Growing number of Indian millennials bucking traditional norms and instead opting to rent everything from furniture to iPhones. Tens of thousands of young Indians are switching from buying to renting so they can live life with few strings attached. —AFP

2020. For many millennials, choosing the rental option is as much about taking a road less travelled as it is about saving money.

When Sharma's father was 29, he was married, working in a public sector bank and setting aside funds to purchase a flat and buy a car. Sharma envisions a different life for himself, one focused on

"investing in experiences". "Living in five different cities in two countries over a span of seven years would be unthinkable for my father... but it is my reality," Sharma said, adding that some furniture rental apps offered free relocation services. "It is a badge of pride for millennials that we can pack up and move within weeks." —AFP



A growing number of millennials bucking traditional norms

## China's Trip.com chief on journey to boost working mothers

BEIJING: The head of Chinese travel giant Trip.com, Jane Sun, is on a mission to propel women through her workforce, spearheading novel approaches such as encouraging babies on business trips and free egg freezing. As a working mother, she understands the challenges faced by many women in China, whose participation in the labor force has been falling for decades. She runs China's largest online tourism agency and is one of the country's business elite: a Silicon Valley returnee who moves in friendship circles with the likes of Alibaba founder Jack Ma and has the ear of the government.

But as well as moving the business to new markets globally, Sun is also looking closer to home for growth. She wants to drive female representation across the 45,000-strong Trip.com workforce, including efforts to accommodate breastfeeding mothers by inviting them to take their babies along on work trips and introducing nursing rooms.

Staff benefits include flexible working, free taxis for pregnant employees, and offering staff the option of freezing their eggs - funded by the company. "I think we are really taking the leadership, and that pays off," she said, with female representation at middle management level now 40 percent and one-third at executive level. "That number is even better than most of the companies in the Silicon Valley," Sun said in an interview with AFP.

### 'Friendly China'

Sun became chief financial officer at Trip.com - then known as Ctrip - in 2005, and chief executive officer in 2016. In that

time the group has morphed into an international site in 19 languages with 300 million registered members. The company's gross revenues grew 30 percent year-on-year in 2018 to 725 billion RMB (\$103 billion), tapping into the appetite for travel among millions of China's newly-rich middle classes.

Chinese tourists made 149 million overseas trips in 2018, with total spending of \$130 billion, according to the China Tourism Academy. Trip.com is also working with the government on how to improve China's appeal for tourists so they don't just think of "pollution and piracy". Sun said an official, coordinated campaign akin to regional neighbor's "Incredible India" could be in the works. "Perhaps we can say 'Friendly China' with a panda - something that speaks to people," she said.

### 'Start with the top'

A law major from one of the country's top universities, Sun was among the first students to be given passports and sent abroad to study in the late 1980s amid paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's opening of China. "My father's generation didn't even know what passports were - we were very lucky," she said. After graduating, she headed to an emerging Silicon Valley where she worked for two decades, along with her husband, John Wu, one of the architects of Yahoo's search engine.

They decided to return to China in 2000 after Wu was offered a role as chief technology officer at "a very small company called Alibaba" - the tech giant that just listed in Hong Kong for at least \$11 billion. Accustomed to battling for senior positions herself, she has turned her attention to encouraging female staff at Trip.com to "be more confident". "At the year end (the staff) who come into my office asking for a raise and a promotion are always male," she said. "But (for women) I have to go out to them and say, you did a wonderful job, I think you should go through this process."



SHANGHAI: Travel services company CEO of Trip.com Jane Sun speaks during an interview with AFP in the facilities of Ctrip in Shanghai. —AFP

Despite early commitments to gender equality, women's role in the labor force has been declining in Communist China since the 1990s. Equality organization Catalyst says China's economic reforms led to a variety of setbacks for women - including diminished employment opportunities, a widened gender wage gap and a resurgence of traditional stereotypes. Human Rights Watch says both civil and private sector jobs often specify a requirement for men.

Just over nine percent of directors in listed companies in mainland China are women, according to Deloitte's 2019 Women in the Boardroom report, while only 10 women are part of the 204-strong Communist Party central committee. Sun said part of the challenge is getting more women in decision-making roles. "I think you always start with the top," she said. "If in the management team or on your board there is no female representative, it's very hard for male leaders to be aware of lots of challenges females are facing." —AFP

## Al-Tijari announces Al Najma and 'Salary & Cash on Top' winners

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly and monthly draws on Al Najma Account and the weekly draw on the "Salary and Cash on Top" campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Saleh Al-Ruwaiie. The results of the draw were as follows: (1) Al Najma monthly account - the prize of 20,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars was for the share of Fedhah Ibrahim Al-Marzouq. (2) Al Najma weekly account - the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars was for the share of Yousef Mukhtar Abul. (3) The "Salary & Cash on Top campaign" prize of 1,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars was for the share of Khaledah Ghareeb Mohammad Fathallah.

The Bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

As regarding "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees as well as the retirees and which is valid until 31 December 2019 and the mechanism of joining this campaign for availing its benefits, the Bank explained that Kuwaiti employees with a salary of KD 500 & above whether newly recruited or in service can transfer their salary to the Bank and avail the benefits of this campaign by getting instant cash gift of KD 250 or an interest free loan 5 times the salary up to KD 10,000 add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000. As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD of 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift.

The retirees with pension KD 1,000 & above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private & public sector as well as the retirees. Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced & unrivalled services & products the Bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.

Customers can obtain further information on Al-Najma Account by either calling the Service Center on 1888225 or by visiting the Bank's website www.CBK.com and they can also visit their nearest CBK branch where the Bank staff will be ready to serve them and respond to their queries. Furthermore all details & information related to the latest offers & services launched by the Bank is also available on the Bank's social sites.

## EXCHANGE RATES

### Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.600
Euro	338.870
Sterling Pound	397.350
Canadian dollar	231.460
Turkish lira	54.200
Swiss Franc	308.460
US Dollar Buying	297.150

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.782
Indian Rupees	4.250
Pakistani Rupees	1.969
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.678
Nepali Rupees	2.650
Singapore Dollar	224.800
Hongkong Dollar	38.909
Bangladesh Taka	3.553
Philippine Peso	5.999
Thai Baht	10.098
Malaysian ringgit	77.903

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.281
Qatari Riyal	83.716
Omani Riyal	791.683
Bahraini Dinar	809.350
UAE Dirham	82.986

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.350
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#### Egyptian Pound - Transfer

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	18.938
Tunisian Dinar	1.223
Jordanian Dinar	111.170
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	430.070
Syrian Lira	0.203
Morocco Dirham	0.000
	32.199

#### Rate for Transfer

US Dollar	304.240
Canadian Dollar	229.785
Sterling Pound	394.795
Euro	336.750
Swiss Frank	3,041,530
Bahrain Dinar	809.085
UAE Dirhams	83.235
Qatari Riyals	84.475
Saudi Riyals	82.025
Jordanian Dinar	430.395
Egyptian Pound	18.916
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.681
Indian Rupees	4.241
Pakistani Rupees	1.958
Bangladesh Taka	3.537
Philippines Peso	5.995
Cyprus pound	18.100
Japanese Yen	3.775
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.656
Malaysian Ringgit	73.690

#### Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

#### Chinese Yuan Renminbi

Thai Bhat	43.720
Turkish Lira	11.055
Singapore dollars	53.345
	223.412

#### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

#### CURRENCY

CURRENCY	BUY		SELL
	Europe	Asia	
British Pound	0.387354	0.401254	
Czech Korune	0.005130	0.014430	
Danish Krone	0.040864	0.045864	
Euro	0.328658	0.342358	
Georgian Lari	0.121560	0.121560	
Hungarian 0.001148	0.029170	0.034370	
Norwegian Krone	0.065285	0.082135	
Romanian Leu	0.004775	0.004775	
Russian ruble	0.009109	0.019109	
Slovakia	0.027867	0.032867	
Swedish Krona	0.298662	0.309662	
Swiss Franc			
Australian Dollar	0.198196	0.210196	
New Zealand Dollar	0.189864	0.199364	
Canadian Dollar	0.224272	0.233272	
US Dollars	0.300500	0.305800	
US Dollars Mint	0.301000	0.305800	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003002	0.003803	

#### Chinese Yuan

Hong Kong Dollar	0.041883	0.045383
Indian Rupee	0.036962	0.039712
Indonesian Rupiah	0.003624	0.004396
Japanese Yen	0.000017	0.000023
Korean Won	0.002698	0.002878
Malaysian Ringgit	0.000248	0.000263
Nepalese Rupee	0.069229	0.075229
Pakistan Rupee	0.002627	0.002967
Philippine Peso	0.001296	0.002066
Singapore Dollar	0.005962	0.006262
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.217637	0.227637
Taiwan	0.001320	0.001900
Thai Baht	0.010030	0.010210
Vietnamese Dong	0.009743	0.010293
	0.000013	0.000013

#### Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.801807	0.809865
Egyptian Pound	0.018953	0.021694
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.423633	0.432633
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021213	0.045213
Omani Riyal	0.786039	0.793938
Qatar Riyal	0.083010	0.083844
Saudi Riyal	0.080140	0.081440
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.102671	0.110671
Turkish Lira	0.046316	0.056161
UAE Dirhams	0.082298	0.083126
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070



Business

# 'The Big Short' investor says next crisis tough to predict

## Cause of the next recession is up in the air

**NEW YORK:** Could it be the trade war? What about next year's US presidential election? For famed investor Steve Eisman, the cause of the next recession is up in the air. "It's too hard to predict at this point," said Eisman, who anticipated the 2008 financial crisis and served as the basis for Steve Carell's character in "The Big Short."

"What happened in 2007, 2008, 2009 was a systemic crisis," said Eisman, who was one of the earliest investors to correctly read the subprime mortgage problem and invest accordingly. "Planet Earth almost burned," he said. "And that was because of too much leverage in the banks, and a very large asset class subprime that blew up."

"That risk doesn't exist anymore. Leverage in the US and in Europe is much lower. The banks are better regulated," Eisman, a senior portfolio manager who manages the Absolute Alpha fund at Neuberger Berman, said a less severe crisis was still possible in the near-term, although such a slowdown is not a given. "We'll know more, maybe in six months,

whether a recession is on the horizon or not, or whether it's just continued slow growth," he said.

If a crisis hit, Eisman isn't worried about households, saying credit quality today is "very good" in the United States, especially on the consumer side. "The biggest pain" will be felt in the corporate bond markets, in part because of post-crisis restrictions on banks that will limit their ability to provide liquidity if the bond market comes under pressure. Eisman criticized the easy-money policies of central banks, saying that "one hundred percent, it's a mistake."

### Central bank misfires

He said the first round of US quantitative easing in March 2009 succeeded in bringing more liquidity to fixed income markets, but there was less benefit to the overall economy from subsequent rounds of stimulus. "All that really happened, in my view, is that the money went into the stock markets and it gave companies liquidity to buy back stock," he said. "It makes rich people richer because they own securities," he said. "I

kind of nickname quantitative easing 'monetary policy for rich people.'"

Eisman, who prides himself on having read the entirety of Thomas Piketty's dense economics tome, "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," attributes the debacle of 2008 to a concentration of wealth that began in the 1980s. Inequality has worsened, but "rather than deal with that problem head on, the policymakers consciously or unconsciously decided that they would democratize credit, meaning people who before couldn't get credit, would now get credit," Eisman said.

"To deal with that, leverage in the banking system had to go up a lot. At the end of the day, I think that's what caused the financial crisis." While consumer debt is not as bad today, inequality "is one of the reasons why growth is so slow," because rich people spend a far smaller percentage of their income than those with less money, he said. "If the distribution of income was much more equal, people would be spending more and therefore the economy would grow faster," he said. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** Steve Eisman, one of the investors who spotted the subprime bubble that caused the latest financial crisis is seen in his New York office. Eisman now works as a portfolio manager at Neuberger Berman. — AFP

### NBK Weekly Report

## Quiet week ahead of US Fed meeting and UK elections

**KUWAIT:** Last week was a quiet one in FX markets with lower volatility being the theme ahead of the Thanksgiving Holiday. Nevertheless, with the Federal Reserve having its final policy meeting of 2019 in just two weeks, Fed Chairman Jerome Powell signaled that interest rates are unlikely to rise soon. He continued saying that the Fed is "strongly committed" to the 2% inflation goal. The Fed considers a 2% inflation rate to be a sign of sustainable growth and a level that maintains interest rates high enough to allow for flexibility in the event of an economic downturn.

However, inflation has run well below that level for 2019 despite three interest rate cuts over the past four months. The futures market is showing little support for a change in interest rates in the US going well into 2020. President Donald Trump said last week that the United States and China are close to agreement on the first phase of a trade deal. The announcement came after top negotiators from the two countries spoke by telephone and agreed to keep working on the remaining issues. "We're in the final throes of a very important deal, I guess you could say one of the most important deals in trade ever. It's going very well but at the same time we want to see it go well in Hong Kong." Trump told reporters at the White House. A completion of a "phase one" deal was expected in November, but both trade experts and people close to the White House said that it could slide into the new year.

### US GDP rises

The US economy has picked up in the

### Rates -1<sup>st</sup> December, 2019

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1026	1.0981	1.1028	1.1018	1.0820	1.1115	1.1091
GBP	1.2845	1.2827	1.2951	1.2925	1.2730	1.3125	1.2986
JPY	108.97	108.60	109.66	109.51	107.55	111.55	108.72
CHF	0.9972	0.9960	1.0023	1.0001	0.9800	1.0200	0.9918

second half of the year, with data showing that gross domestic product rose in the third quarter by more than initially forecasted. The second estimate of GDP from the Bureau of Economic Analysis showed the economy expanded at a 2.1% annualized rate in the three months leading to September 30, up from the initial estimate of 1.9% and an increase from the 2% clocked in the second quarter.

A higher estimate combined with a bigger than expected rebound in durable goods orders in October, could help relief some concerns about the health of the US economy. The positive data gave support to US stocks, with the S&P 500 rising near its all-time-highs. US new home sales dropped by 0.7% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 733,000 units in October. The median new house price fell 3.5% to \$316,700 in October from a year ago. Sales last month were concentrated in the \$200,000-\$400,000 price range.

### US dollar and commodities

On the FX front, the dollar index traded in a narrow range this week as the index opened the week at 98.256 and reached a low of 98.174 before closing the week at 98.273. In the commodities complex, oil prices dipped last week after official data showed US crude and gasoline stocks rose against expectations. Crude stockpiles swelled by 1.6 million barrels last week as production hit a record

high of 12.9 million barrels per day (bpd) and refinery runs slowed.

### German data deteriorate

German retail sales fell in October; data showed on Friday, suggesting that private consumption in Europe's largest economy took a pause for breath before the Christmas shopping season. Retail sales in Germany dropped by 1.9% on monthly basis, the biggest drop since December of last year, however retail sales rose by 0.8% on yearly basis. Euro area annual inflation is expected to be at 1.0% up from 0.7% in October as per the flash estimate from Eurostat. A similar story when it came to inflation. The inflation rate in Germany as measured by the consumer price index is expected to be 1.1% in November 2019. Based on the results available so far, the Federal Statistical Office also reports that the consumer prices are expected to decline by 0.8% on October 2019.

### UK general elections

As we get closer to the election date of December 12th, polls and markets seem to have favorite Boris Johnson's party, the conservative party, to get re-elected and have control over the government. As such, the Sterling levels have jumped from 1.2845 to reach 1.2951 showing a more relaxed view from markets with less uncertainty on the outcome of the elections and the Brexit delivery.

## NBK named 'The Bank of the Year in Kuwait' for 2019

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been named "The Bank of the Year in Kuwait" for 2019 by the leading and internationally-renowned Financial Times magazine 'The Banker', in acknowledgment of its exceptional performance. The prestigious award highlights NBK's well-established presence among the global banking consortiums, its strong financial position, robust asset quality in addition to its innovative initiatives as well as banking solutions over the past 12 months.

The award underpins NBK's solid business model, prudent as well as disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. The award was presented to Fawzi Al-Dajani, NBK London General Manager, on behalf of NBK at a glittering awarding

ceremony especially held in London for the occasion and attended by host of international and regional senior bankers and executives.

Founded in 1926, The Banker is a financial intelligence magazine, which selects one winning bank for each of the 120 countries judges. Over 1,000 applications are collected and judges select winning banks based on which ones they believe have made the most progress over the past 12 months. NBK continues to enjoy collectively the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings, and Standard and Poor's. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for 14 consecutive times.

NBK has an extensive local and global presence. It has boosted its foothold in a number of international hubs in London, Paris, Geneva, New York, Singapore, and China (Shanghai), in addition to a number of MENA countries including Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkey. For more information on The Banker magazine's The Bank of the Year in Kuwait for 2019, please visit: <https://www.thebanker.com/Awards>



## No clear flight plan for Alitalia after rescue stalls

**ROME:** Efforts to save loss-making Alitalia have reached an impasse after months of unsuccessful negotiations with potential buyers, leaving Italy's government undecided on the next move. The struggling carrier, which has been under special administration since 2017 and continues to burn through cash, is now at a standstill after a consortium of potential buyers failed to make an offer, and with little hope for one in sight.

"It's evident that right now a business solution doesn't exist," Economy Minister Stefano Patuanelli said this week, addressing a Senate commission. The company "has a dimension that the market has difficulty accepting," he said. The government has reportedly said it will provide a 400 million euro (\$440 million) bridge loan to the struggling company - at the risk of running afoul of European Commission rules on state aid, after the 900 million provided already in 2017.

Patuanelli brushed off such concerns Friday, saying he was "not worried". The government, he said, was exploring its options, which media reports said include replacing the commissioners running the airline, or outright nationalization. The minister has said placing the beleaguered carrier in the state's hands "would not necessarily be negative". Alitalia has been losing money for years, its business squeezed by competition from low-cost carriers, fuel price rises, and luxury airlines from the Middle East.

After months of negotiations and the expiration of the latest deadline for a binding bid, plans for a consortium of investors to save the airline fell through last week after Atlantia said the conditions had not yet been met to participate. Atlantia, a major operator of toll expressways and airports controlled by the Benetton family, operates Rome's airports and had already twice taken stakes in Alitalia. Others making up the potential partnership were state railway Ferrovie dello Stato (FS), US airline Delta and the Italian treasury. — AFP

## Berlin airport to open in 2020 after nine-year delay

**BERLIN:** Berlin's new international airport is set to open on October 31, 2020, its operating company said, after an embarrassing nine-year delay owing to structural problems and corruption. "The date is set," said Engelbert Luetke-Daldrup, chief executive of the Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg (FBB) group.

"We still have 11 months of hard work ahead of us," he added during a press conference. If all goes well, companies including low-cost carrier EasyJet are to transfer their operations to the new site, known by its international initials BER, on October 31, with a second wave of airlines to follow on November 3-4. Mismanagement of the project in the Brandenburg region that surrounds Berlin has

denied Germany's pride in its engineering prowess and reputation for honesty in business.

The airport was planned in the 1990s and construction began in 2006. It was originally to open in 2011 but the date has been repeatedly pushed back over a series of issues, including fire safety. In 2016, a former manager was jailed for accepting a bribe. Meanwhile, the airport's initial budget of 1.7 billion euros (\$1.9 billion) has swollen to around 6.5 billion as the delay dragged on. Brandenburg regional chief Dietmar Woidke hailed Friday's announcement, saying "this time it's going to work".

Green leader Anton Hofreiter was more cautious, saying: "The date announced is very ambitious if you consider the problems that must still be resolved." The airport is intended to replace Berlin's two existing airports - Schoenefeld and Tegel. But, in a referendum in 2017, Berliners voted to keep Tegel, arguing that with the growing number of arrivals the new airport may already be too small when it opens. Berlin officials nonetheless maintain that BER will be at term the capital's only airport. — AFP



**BRANDENBURG:** Photo shows the entry hall to the Berlin-Brandenburg Willy-Brandt international Airport in Schoenefeld, near Berlin. — AFP

## Burgan Bank announces Yawmi account winners

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000. The lucky winners are: Ibrahim Taher Albaghli; Mubarak Mohammad Alsayer; Othman Ali Al-Najdy; Saeed Abdulhafiz Alhaj and Galina Anatolievna Mokharib.

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

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win. For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080. Customers can also log on to Burgan Bank's [www.burgan.com](http://www.burgan.com) for further information.



## Business

# Malawi tobacco pressured as US butts in over labor abuses

## US restricts imports over allegations over exploitations

**BLANTYRE:** Malawi is being forced to confront child and forced labor practices after the US restricted tobacco imports from the impoverished southeastern African nation over allegations workers including children were being exploited. Although exports to the United States make up only a small part of Malawi's total, the US move could make it harder selling its tobacco elsewhere and has sparked anxiety among farmers who fear they will be forced to accept lower prices.

As tobacco, known locally as "green gold", is Malawi's top crop in terms of employment, foreign exchange earnings (60 percent) and tax revenue (25 percent), any trouble the sector runs into could quickly reverberate throughout the economy. The US decision piles even more pressure on the tobacco sector, already confronted with global anti-tobacco campaigns. The trouble began in late October. British law firm Leigh Day announced it was preparing a landmark class action case against British American Tobacco (BAT) on behalf of 2,000 Malawian farmers, including hundreds of children, for forced labor and poverty wages.

BAT, which says it "takes the issue of child labor extremely seriously", has denied any wrongdoing and noted that it buys tobacco from Malawi via international

dealers who are required adhere to a code of conduct that does not tolerate child and forced labor. The US suspended imports of tobacco from Malawi, saying it had information that reasonably indicated it was being produced using forced labor and forced child labor.

### Third of children work

According to a survey conducted in 2017 by the country's statistics agency the use of child labor in Malawi is extensive. It found that 38 percent of the country's children aged between five and 17 were working. Although the survey did not provide specific information about the tobacco sector, it is widely acknowledged that child labor is a problem.

Betty Chinyamunyu, who heads an association of smallholder farmers, said incidents of child labor occur despite efforts to eliminate the practice. "In some cases, farmers may think that that is the way things are supposed to be without knowing that they are engaging in child labor," she said.

Tobacco and Allied Workers Union general secretary Raphael Sandram accused the government of dithering in addressing child labor in the industry. "In our labor report in 2015, we raised the issue that there were some irregularities in the industry that govern-

ment needed to address," he said. "The fact that the government did not respond according to the requirements of the US government means that they delayed to act on these issues. But these issues have been there for a long time," he said.

### Pushing for compliance

Agriculture Minister Kondwani Nankhumwa acknowledged pockets of child and forced labor in Malawi, but downplayed the US action saying it "is not a ban, they are just pushing for compliance". US authorities said firms wishing to import Malawi tobacco into the country will need to demonstrate it was not produced with forced labor. But what will be needed to convince US authorities and how much effort firms will be willing to take is unclear.

Nankhumwa said 80 percent of Malawi's tobacco was grown under a special scheme which is free from child or forced labor. "So, we are only grappling with the 20 percent within which there is also some kind of compliance," he said. The law firm Leigh Day described a tobacco farming system that puts farmers under extreme pressure.

Leaf buyers who sell to multinational tobacco firms make contracts with landowners who then engage ten-

ant farmers who spend 10 months on the plantations. Each tenant farmer is allotted around a hectare but needs four workers to work that amount of land. "However, the amount the tenant farmers are paid for their crop is too low for them to be able to afford to employ workers to help on the farms. As a result, they have no option but to rely on their children to work on the farms," said Leigh Day in a statement.

### Bone of contention

Nankhumwa pledged Malawi would conduct the necessary policy reviews to protect the tobacco industry and bring the country into compliance with global standards. "The government is reviewing the tenancy system, which is a bone of contention but also perceived to be catalyst for child and forced labor," he said.

Farmers — who are starting to prepare their fields for the next planting season — are distraught at the prospect of being squeezed further by falling prices. "We are baffled and confused," said Alick Yagontha, a small farmer in the northern Rumphi district who has been growing tobacco for two decades and harvested 28,000 kilograms this year. He fears there will be "no future for tobacco farming in Malawi" if prices fall. —AFP

### KAMCO's GCC Markets Monthly Report

## Kuwait, Saudi, Oman drive broader GCC index into the green

**KUWAIT:** After three consecutive months of decline, the broader GCC gauge (MSCI GCC Index) saw gains during November-19 primarily on the back of Kuwait, Saudi and Oman that showed low single digit gains. These gains were partially offset by declines in the UAE and Qatar benchmarks. The 3.7% gains in Kuwait's All Share Index once again pushed the Kuwaiti market to the top spot in terms of YTD-19 gains at 16.7% followed by Bahrain at 14.2%.

On the other hand, the decline in UAE and Qatar came mainly on the back of the rebalancing in MSCI's EM index that led to an outflow of passive funds during the last week. In terms of sector performance, gains were mainly driven by the Materials sector that witnessed a growth of more than 2% during the month. The Banking and the Energy sectors closely followed with monthly gains of around 1.7%.

Gains in the Materials sector was led by regional cement stocks in addition to SABIC that gained 3.8% during the month while, Saudi Arabian Mining, the second biggest stock in the sector, gained 1.3%. In the Banking sector, Saudi and Kuwaiti banks featured as top performers during the month with double to high single digit gains during the month.

Meanwhile, Bahri and Naqilat were prominent large-cap gainers in the Energy sector. On the decliners side, Real Estate and Financial stocks underperformed with declines of around 2.5% for the two sectors. Trading activity in the GCC continued to decline for the third consecutive month and reached a nine month low of USD 20.3 billion in Nov-19 primarily led by a 10% decline in value traded in Saudi Arabia.

Globally, equity markets were largely positive during November-19 following the trends seen during the previous month. The MSCI World Index gained more than 3% during the month supported by positive performance recorded in almost all major stocks markets. In the commodities space, oil prices gained during the month by more than 6% taking cues from the US-China trade talks. After recording marginal gains during October-19, Kuwaiti benchmarks recorded the best monthly return in the GCC during November-19. Kuwait was also one of the best performing market globally during the month closely following the US stock market. Gains during the month came solely on the back of large-cap stocks as seen from the disparity between returns for the Premier market index and the Main Market Index.

The Premier Market benchmark gained 5% during the month pushing its YTD-19 gains to 23.8%, one of the highest globally. On the other hand, the Main Market index remained almost flat with a marginal gain

of 0.2% resulting in a YTD-19 gain of 0.6%. The net impact on the All Share Index came in at 3.7% during November-19 with YTD-19 gains now recorded at 16.7%, the highest in the GCC, overtaking last month's top performer Bahrain.

Monthly gains came primarily on the back of large-cap sectors like Banks, Real Estate and Telecoms. The Banking sector index topped the sector performance chart with a gain of 5.1% led by gains recorded by 9 out of 10 Kuwaiti banks during the month. Warba Bank recorded the biggest monthly gain of 8.2% followed by NBK and KFH at 7.4% and 6.6%, respectively, while ABK was the only decliner with a fall of 7.6%.

Decline in the shares of ABK came after the bank recorded a net loss of KD 7.1 Million during Q3-19 led by higher provisions that more than doubled q-o-q to KD 32.0 Million. The Bank also announced the sale of its entire stake of 8.05% in KFIC. Meanwhile, gains in the Real Estate sector came after large-cap stocks in the sector recorded gains including Mabaneer (+9.5%), Sahlia Real Estate (+4.4%) and Al Tijaria (+2.5%). For the Telecom sector, gains came on the back of 4.3% and 3.9% gain in shares of Ooredoo and Zain, respectively, while shares of Viva declined by 2.7%.

Trading activity saw marginal gains during the month with gains in both monthly volume and value traded. Monthly value traded increased by 2% to reach KD 514.1 million in November-19 as compared to KD 503.8 million during the previous month. Monthly volume also gained at almost the same pace of 1.9% to reach 3.0 billion shares as compared to 2.9 billion shares during October-19.

NBK topped the monthly value traded chart with KD 103.4 Million worth of trades followed by last month's top performer KFH at KWD 68.5 billion. On the monthly volume chart, Arzan Financial Group topped with 247.5 Million shares changing hands during the month followed by A'ayan Leasing and Abyaar Real Estate at 209 Million shares and 192.5 million shares, respectively. In terms of monthly performance, Arabi Holding Group topped with a return of 52.2% followed by Educational Holding Group and Manazel Holding with gains of 34.4% and 33.1%, respectively. On the decliners side, Al Masaken Intl. Real Estate topped with a decline of 33.8% followed by Kuwait Syrian Holding and Tahsilat with declines of 26.4% and 22.9%, respectively.

### Monthly value traded

Saudi Arabia was the third-best performing market in the GCC during November-19 with a monthly gain of 1.5%. The index witnessed a five day winning streak during the third week of the month in which the benchmark breached the 8,000 mark to reach 8062.6 points but declines after the MSCI rebalancing pulled down the index to close the month at 7,859.06 points. Gains during the month also pushed YTD-19 returns in the positive territory, albeit marginally, at 0.4%.

Sector performance during the month was mixed with the Food & Staples Retailing index topping with a

gain of 8.0% followed by Banks and Capital Goods indices with gains of 4.0% and 3.7%, respectively. On the other hand, the Software & Services sector was the top decliner during the month with the sole stock in the index declining by 12.6%. The Diversified Financials and Real Estate sectors also declined during the month by 4.8% and 3.4%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange declined for the third consecutive month in November-19. Total value traded reached a 9-month low level of SAR 55.3 billion, a decline of 10.3% as compared to previous month's SAR 61.7 billion. Volume of shares traded also declined but at a slightly smaller pace of 9.4% to reach 2.2 billion shares in November-19 as compared to last month's 2.46 billion. The weekly trading data for the first three weeks of the month showed that local Saudi retail investors have been net sellers this month while foreign institutional investors were net buyers.

In terms of individual companies, Alinma Bank topped the monthly volume traded chart with 210 Million shares traded during the month followed by Al Rajhi Bank and SABB with 127.2 Million shares and 108.8 Million shares, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Al Rajhi Bank topped with SAR 7.9 billion worth of shares changing hands during the month followed by Alinma Bank and SABIC at SAR 4.6 billion and SAR 4.0 billion, respectively.

The monthly stock performance chart was topped by Al Kathiri Holding, which moved from the Nomu Parallel Market into the main market during the month, with a gain of 62.3%. Gains came after the company reported more than 30% increase in Q3-19 revenues and 20% increase in net profits. Saudi Ceramic was next on the gainers list with 28.2% gain followed by City Cement and Raydan Food with monthly gains of 15.3% and 12.0%, respectively.

Shares of Saudi Ceramic gained after the company reported higher revenues during Q3-19, and the bottomline came in at a positive SAR 34.5 Million as compared to loss of SAR 38.5 Million during Q3-18. On the decliners side, Al Ahlia Insurance topped with a fall of 19.3% after the company recorded a loss of SAR 19 Million during Q3-19 as compared to a profit of SAR 4.5 million during Q3-18. Salama Coop Insurance was next on the list with a decline of 17.8% after the company reported a loss during Q3-19 followed by Saudi Company for Hardware and Al Moammar Information Systems with declines of 13.6% and 12.6%, respectively, after both the companies reported a y-o-y decline in net profits during Q3-19.

The Q3-19 earnings of Saudi-listed companies showed a 25.4% y-o-y decline during the quarter. Total quarterly profits reached USD 6.4 billion during Q3-19 as compared to USD 8.6 billion during Q3-18. The decline came after a 73.4% decline in profits for the Materials sector and 45.3% decline for the Utilities sector. These declines were partially offset by 3.7% y-o-y rise in profits for the Banking sector and 10.6% increase in profits for the Telecom sector.

## Jazeera Airways takes delivery of Airbus A320neo



**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, took delivery of a new Airbus A320neo aircraft which landed at Kuwait International Airport on the evening of Saturday, November 30. This is the third A320neo to join the airline's fleet and the second to be delivered in 2019. The airline has one more A320neo on order to be delivered before the end of the year.

As its predecessors, the latest A320neo incorporates the CFM LEAP-1A engines, fuel-saving wingtip devices known as Sharklets, and significant reduction in engine noise and CO2 emissions below the current industry standard. Jazeera Airways today operates a fleet of 12 Airbus aircraft, nine of the A320 model and three of the A320neo model.

### About Jazeera Airways

Jazeera Airways flies to 34 popular destinations across the Middle East, India and Europe comprising high-demand business, leisure, family and weekend destinations including London, Dubai, Bahrain, Doha, Beirut, Amman, Alexandria, Cairo, Sharm El Sheikh, Assiut, Luxor, Sohag, Jeddah, Riyadh, Taif, Najaf, Mashhad, Kochi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Lahore, Istanbul, Bodrum, Baku, Tbilisi, Osh, Kathmandu and Karachi.

The Jazeera Terminal T5 provides passengers with the ease and comfort of traveling with 12 check-in counters, eight self-check-in kiosks, dedicated passport and security control procedures, duty free shops and restaurants, as well as free WiFi internet service available for passengers when boarding at the T5 gates. T5 also has a dedicated number at 176 and Help Team on-ground to respond to passengers' queries and guide them through the Terminal.

## The new generation HUAWEI WATCH GT 2

**KUWAIT:** The definition of 'classic' is something that has a high quality or standard against which other things are judged. Classic design never goes out of style and the new generation HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 continues the stylish aesthetic of its predecessor with bold and chic curves that highlight its modern look. The HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 carries on the classic exterior of the first-generation HUAWEI WATCH GT with a flatter field of view touching on the boundless experience upgrade. It employs an integrated 3D glass design, a perfect interpretation that is at once mainstream, concise, refined and fashionable.

### Classic craftsmanship

The HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 is available in 46mm and 42mm sizes making it the perfect fit for any wrist and any occasion. The 46mm series is designed with the concept of "engraving aesthetics". The mirror is designed with beveled sculpture and the casting is tough yet wearable, creating an atmosphere that is excellent and enduring. The glass mirror uses the intaglio moment character craftsmanship, which is delicate and exquisite. At the same time, the 3D curved glass created by the gemstone processing technology is meticulously engraved one by one on the concave surface of the glass mirror, so that each character can be vividly displayed in the public eye.

It can be said to be ingeniously created. The curved surface of the 42mm series has undergone artisanal polishing. Warm and feminine, standing still, the form is elegant and flows everywhere. The very thin metal frame with slender lugs and 9.4mm thinness is beautiful and classic. The all new HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 46mm and 42mm Series combines strength and gentleness, with a simple and modern aesthetic that is extremely suited for people seeking a quality digital lifestyle.

### A high definition

Huawei is known to have a deeply-rooted strength in innovation. It manages to avoid visual aesthetic fatigue and maintain the design basis of the previous generation while showing the results of optimizing design in their new product. Its 1.39-inch precise HD touch screen reaches up to 454x454 resolution for a clearer image. Because the HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 uses an HD OLED screen, which possesses a wider color range and a thinner design than an LCD screen, it has contrast and color fullness that surpasses what's typically seen on a TV. The improved color display provides users with the ultimate visual experience.

### Eye-catching watch face design

A watch face market has been added in order to satisfy users' increasing demand to customize and personalize their watch faces to match their individual tastes. Users can choose their new watch face from a wide range of themes and styles to meet the needs of different scenarios and stand out from the masses. There is also support for third-party watch faces and watch faces will be continuously



updated and added for users to download.

### More than a pretty face

The HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 builds upon the previous generation with even more impressive battery life. This is made possible with Huawei's proprietary Kirin AI chipset, which integrates an advanced Bluetooth processing unit, a powerful audio processing unit, an ultra-low power consumption application processor and a separate power management unit. It makes it the perfect combination of high performance and efficient power consumption allowing the HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 to meet the demands of daily usage

while still having an even longer battery life.

The stylish aesthetics combined with powerful performance makes the HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 the ideal companion for users pursuing an active lifestyle. In the sports mode, the device is compatible with 15 sports, including eight outdoor sports (running, walking, climbing, hiking, trail running, cycling, open water, triathlon) and seven indoor sports (walking, running, cycling, swimming pool, free training, elliptical machine, rowing machine). HUAWEI TruSleep 2.0 monitors sleep quality rates sleep quality. The HUAWEI TruRelax feature, which helps users relieve stress by recording HRV (heart rate variability) values and providing feedback on the user's stress index.



What's On

# Burgan Bank holds conference for people with disabilities



**B**urgan Bank, one of the leading contributors to the welfare of the community, concluded its participation at the conference which advocates the advancement of people with disabilities in line with the Kuwait 2035 Vision. Organized by the Training Gate International at the JW Marriott Hotel, for 3-days in participation with a number of governmental and non-governmental entities, and public associations. Burgan Bank's participation in the conference falls under its sponsorship of the "D Partners 5" development program.

Some of the pillars of the conference included enhancing health services for people with disabilities, a live debate for program graduates, the role of public associations and the public sector in the health field, evolution of education system, government entities announce their plans for short and long term and

many other topics.

Continuously striving for inclusion of people with disabilities into the community, Burgan Bank was the first to dedicate a special platform namely the 'Al Mass Awards' that lasted 11 years. It was held every year in recognition of those talents who were able to challenge their respective disabilities, overcome difficulties and make outstanding achievements.

The Bank has equipped 6 branches to meet the needs of people with disabilities, and facilitate their banking transactions. People with visual and hearing impairments will be able to carry on their transactions in a smooth and independent setting, where trained staff and branch managers are capable of communicating in sign language.

Burgan Bank will continue to work hand in hand with different associations and governmental and

non-governmental organizations that have been established to ensure their rights and needs are met. The Bank will maintain its sponsorship and support of similar events and activities with an aim to guarantee their equal place in the society under several fields like education, health, cultural and other professions.

The Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

# Sheikh Mubarak holds fundraising ceremony for Ahl Masr Burns Hospital

**U**nder the auspices of Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and with the attendance of the Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait, Tareq Al-Qouni the Ahl Masr (Egypt People) Development Establishment yesterday held a special ceremony at the Kuwait Four Seasons Hotel to highlight its projects and boost public awareness concerning the dangers of fires and burns. The ceremony was also attended by a number of artists, diplomats and media figures.



Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Sabah

Speaking on the occasion, Ahl Masr founder and head of board of trustees, Heba Al-Sowaidi said that the event is held in Kuwait to highlight the historic role model of Kuwait-Egyptian relations.

Further, Al-Sowaidi thanked Sheikh Mubarak for his support to the Ahl Masr Hospital for burns treatment for free adding that the hospital perceives burns from a humanitarian, legal and social perspective to preserve people's right in decent safe life regardless of their financial statuses.

In addition, Al-Sowaidi stressed that Ahl Masr foundation was established in 2013 to be the first Non-Profit Organization in Egypt and the Middle East to focus on Burn Prevention and Treatment adding that, with its focus on building one of Egypt's and the Middle East's largest projects ever, Ahl Masr Non-profit Burn Hospital will be the world's largest non-profit burn hospital located in Egypt and serving the Middle East and Africa to be built at New Cairo city on a built area of 45,500sq m, all fundraised and managed by Ahl Masr to face the growing need of specialized burn care in Egypt.

## Media bias workshops at AIS



**K**uwait Times Managing Editor Jamie Etheridge gave a series of workshops to eighth grade students at the American International School recently on media bias. Students learned techniques for identifying media bias through interactive and engaging activities. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## LOYAC honors volunteers



**L**OYAC recently honored a number of its outstanding volunteers who had taken part in its third training program. The honoring ceremony was held at the Elevation Restaurant with the presence of LOYAC's general manager, Al-Razi Al-Bedawi and TABCO catering company's CEO, Abdul Aziz Al-Turaiji.

## KAICO holds training session for KAEFER

**K**uwait Automotive Imports Company AlShaya AlSagar (KAICO), the sole distributor of Michelin Tyres in Kuwait recently conducted a tyre training session for KAEFER Kuwait, a global market leader for plant integrity services and solutions in Industry, Marine & Offshore and Construction.

KAEFER in Kuwait recently cooperated with Michelin Tyres team at KAICO for a comprehensive training program to ascertain gaps and impart tyres safety industrial knowledge for its employees. Road Safety is a global commitment of Michelin Tyres. The company regularly undertakes awareness program for its stakeholders for proper conduct on roads to reinforce the message of everyday road safety practices.

Relin Mathew Thomas, Asst. Manager-Tyre Division, at KAICO initiated the training which talked about tyres basics and safety including:

- A brief about MICHELIN TYRES history
- Tyre manufacturing process
- Tyre markings, functions and differences
- Tyre selection
- Tyre safety and maintenance

Upon the successful training for its employees, KAEFER Kuwait General Manager (Anoop Ramakrishnan), Senior Manager-HR, Admin, Assets & Facility (Mr. George Michael Dsilva), appreciated KAICO management for their immense contribution in knowledge sharing on tyres and its safety-related aspects.





Health & Science

# HIV campaign tackles sex taboos in S Sudan

**JUBA:** In Andrew Makech's home village near Rumbek in central South Sudan, few have ever heard of a condom, and broaching the topic of its use would be considered taboo. However the 35-year-old on Saturday joined hundreds in the capital Juba to get tested for HIV/Aids and learn about the use of condoms to combat the disease, in a rare public sex education campaign in the country wracked by six years of war.

The campaign, launched by the Okay Africa Foundation NGO in partnership with government, came ahead of World Aids Day yesterday, and highlights that despite great strides made in raising awareness about the disease around the globe, many are still at risk.

In South Sudan, HIV rates are currently believed to be low, at around 200,000 people infected in a population of around 12 million, however few protect themselves or get themselves tested, and only 10 percent of those infected are receiving anti-retroviral treatment, according to the World Health Organization. Makech told AFP that in his village anyone using a condom would be considered a prostitute and that asking someone to use one would probably insult them.

At the campaign launch at the Kampala University College in Juba, demonstrations were carried out on how to use both male and female condoms — as students listened attentively and took photos with their phones — and around 5,000 condoms were distributed.

Data Emmanuel Gordon from the Okay Africa Foundation said the campaign was motivated by a lack of awareness on how to stop the spread of HIV/Aids. In South Sudan "the use of condoms is attributed to immorality. When you use condoms you are immoral. People think the use of condoms is for... going outside your marriage to have sex with someone," said Gordon.

Chris Isa, who works on HIV prevention at the South Sudan Aids Commission said there was a perception that educating young people about sex exposed them to immorality. "The fact that we don't talk about sex in this



JUBA: University students watch a demonstration during a sexual health awareness course at the Kampala University on Nov 30, 2019. — AFP

country doesn't mean it is not happening so we really need to accept that we need to condomize and not compromise," said Isa.

South Sudan plunged into war in 2013, two years after achieving independence, and the conflict has devastated health infrastructure in the country. A peace deal was signed in September 2018 which largely stemmed fighting,

but a power-sharing government has yet to be formed.

Isa said HIV prevalence was particularly high in the military, with five in every 100 soldiers testing positive. He said that if testing was more widely carried out, many more than the almost 200,000 currently recorded could be infected because "all the ingredients and the factors for the spread of the virus are evident in our society." — AFP

## Rescued tigers leave Poland for Spain

**WARSAW:** Five of nine tigers that narrowly survived a gruelling journey across Europe set off on Saturday for their new home at a Spanish animal refuge after weeks of recovery at a Polish zoo. "The tigers have left. We're very happy that in just 24 to 30 hours they will arrive," said Malgorzata Chodyla, spokeswoman for the zoo in Poznan, western Poland. Their destination is the Primadonus Wildlife Refuge in the southeastern Spanish town of Villena. Chodyla said there was a brief scare, as two of the tigers did not want to sleep, despite the sedatives they were given. "When the whole team has to enter the enclosure to carry out the tiger and it suddenly lifts its head up, those are some tense moments. But everything happened safely," she told AFP. She added that the vehicle had heating and the tigers had enough room to switch positions.

In late October, Polish border authorities found 10 emaciated and dehydrated big cats in the back of a truck taking them from Italy to a zoo in Russia's Dagestan Republic. Polish prosecutors charged two Italian truck drivers and a Russian man believed to have organized the journey with animal abuse after the truck got stuck for days on Poland's border with Belarus.

Prosecutors also charged a Polish border service veterinarian for failing to properly examine the tigers when they first arrived at the Koroszczyzn crossing, where one of them died. The surviving nine tigers were taken to two Polish zoos. The Poznan zoo described them as "emaciated, dehydrated, with sunken eyes, excrement stuck to their fur, urine burns, in a total state of stress, without the will or desire to live" when they were first discovered. — AFP

CLINIC  
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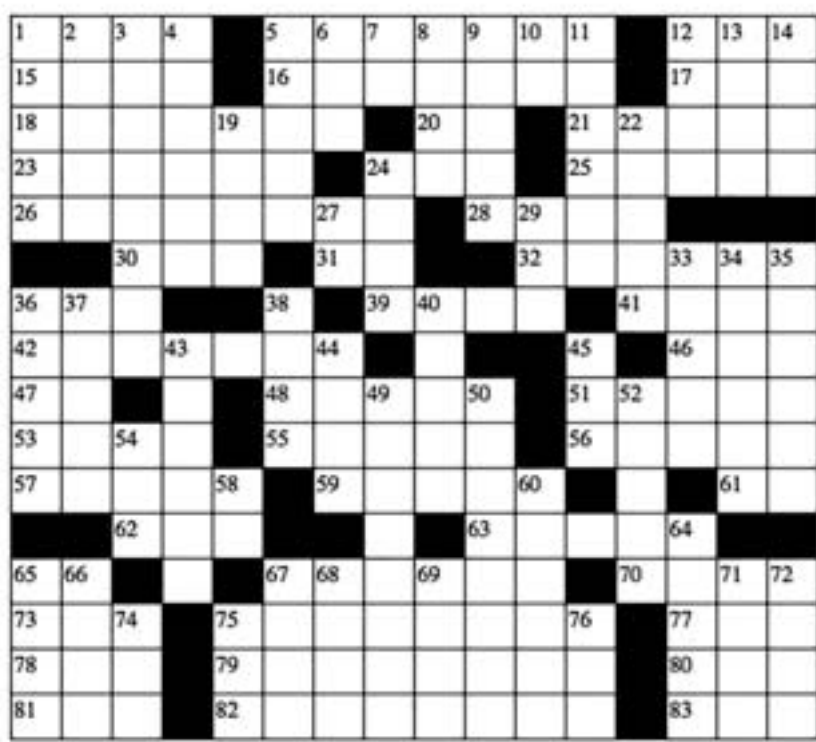
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2374



ACROSS

1. An impudent or insolent rejoinder.
5. A stronghold into which people could go for shelter during a battle.
12. Top part of an apron.
15. Any of several trees producing edible oval smooth-skinned fruit with a single hard stone.
16. Small genus of South American epiphytic or lithophytic cacti.
17. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
18. Type genus of the family Aplysiidae.
20. A doctor's degree in religion.
21. God of wealth and love.
23. United States broadcast journalist who was in Berlin at the outbreak of World War II (born in 1904).
25. Established by or founded upon law or official or accepted rules.
26. Having unnatural mannerisms.
28. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
30. An informal term for a father.
31. A public promotion of some product or service.
32. In the same place (used when citing a reference).
36. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
39. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
41. A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
42. Used of riotously drunken merry-making.
46. A type of submachine gun that is designed and manufactured in Israel.
47. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
48. United States naval officer and historian (1840-1914).
51. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
53. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
55. Lower in esteem.
56. Expletives used informally as intensifiers.
57. A port in northwestern Israel on the Bay of Acre.
59. A set of clothing (with accessories).
61. An associate degree in nursing.
62. A light touch or stroke.
63. Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
65. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
70. (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
73. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
77. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
78. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
79. The act of taking something back.
80. An adherent of any branch of Taoism.
81. Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.
82. An investigation of the component parts of a whole.
83. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

DOWN

1. A painful and involuntary muscular contraction.
2. First in order of importance.
3. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Clinoril).

4. A port city in western Turkey.
5. Make a vibrant noise, of grasshoppers or cicadas.
6. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
7. (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.
8. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
9. An elaborate or deceitful scheme contrived to deceive or evade.
10. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
11. 1 species.
12. (informal) Exceptionally good.
13. Any tree or shrub of the genus Inga having pinnate leaves and showy usually white flowers.
14. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
19. A small hard fruit.
22. Relating to or containing or affecting blood.
24. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
27. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
29. Small cubes with 1 to 6 spots on the faces.
33. Sorghums of dry regions of Asia and North Africa.
34. Generic term for inflammatory conditions of the skin.
35. Serving to set in motion.
37. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
38. A member of the North American Indian people living in southern Arizona and northern Mexico.
40. A living organism characterized by voluntary movement.
43. An informal conversation.
44. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
45. The month following January and preceding March.
49. Relating to the blood vessels or blood.
50. Inflammation of a nerve accompanied by pain and sometimes loss of function.
52. Primitive eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
54. A resource.
58. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
60. Indian grammarian whose grammatical rules for Sanskrit are the first known example of descriptive linguistics (circa 400 BC).
64. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
66. A small cake leavened with yeast.
67. A primal personification of air and breath.
68. Evergreen tree of eastern Asia and Philippines having large leathery leaves and small green-white flowers in compact cymes.
69. Wasting time.
71. Wearing or provided with clothing.
72. An aggressive and violent young criminal.
74. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
75. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
76. System of measurement based on centimeters and grams and seconds.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is a day you may find yourself extremely understanding and sympathetic to others. There have been many times in your life you have made decisions that others didn't understand and didn't seem to agree with. You know that there are reasons people do the things they do that might be obvious to others. Becoming the friend to others you have always desired that someone be to you is helping you see beyond the surface of other's actions. You may find taking the time to be a true friend and getting to the root of other's problems draws people closer to you. You may find yourself taking more time to get to know your co-workers, peers, and friends on a much more intimate level. This seems to help you come to grips with a much more spir-



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This may be a time to keep to yourself. A cool front seems to have moved in. Your usual warm caring personality seems to have been cooled off. Cold and hard have taken the place of the usual warm and loving side of you. This is not a good day to present yourself to others. First impressions last a lifetime and you would not make a good one today. This would be a day to skip any job interview or first date. Spend some time to yourself and find your happy place. The old you will emerge when you bring peace and happiness back into your world.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time for imagination and creativity when it comes to the thoughts that are going through your head. You are able to eloquently put your thoughts into words. Others will find you captivating and be eager to hear all you have to say. This is a great time to escape by reading a book or watching a movie too. Great things are happening in your life. Your future depends on your ambition and drive. This is a time to follow your gut feelings about things. You should be able to use your intuition to know what trends are coming. Make a move now and you will be ahead of the game. You should find this is a time to make some very profitable decisions. Take action now, Gemini, and you will be ahead of the game.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Watch out! You are ready to make a change. You feel like trying something new and stepping out of your comfort zone. This may be anything from a new hairstyle to a new wardrobe. Chances are whatever you choose will be on the wild side. This is a great way of expressing yourself to others. You are ready to show the world a new you. A positive attitude and high energy fill your world this week. Enjoy a fun time.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have a desire to make a lasting first impression on everyone new you meet. You take care of yourself and have been paying extra attention to how others may see you. Your appearance and style are a focal point in your life now. You want to be a head turner. Romance becomes a focus for you and probably a driving factor behind the way you are taking care of yourself. It is a time you may find yourself indulging in the finer things life has to offer. You feel good about spoiling yourself.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The more unique or unusual it is, the more you are drawn to it today. A shopping trip may find you coming home with a new style. You have taken a giant leap out of your conservative comfort zone. The wilder the better. The evening may find you all dressed up and heading to a new hangout. New friends could be made. You may find yourself at odds with your usual crowd. You have caught others off guard with this big change.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Have you ever wanted something so bad you could taste it, feel it, or imagine yourself already having it? This goes beyond a want. This is a borderline obsession. That is the what you are feeling about something or someone right now. Your thoughts and energy have one focus. You will make this yours. You have never had a lack of determination and today is no exception. Your goal is set. You are focused on doing whatever you can to achieve it and will let nothing stand in your way. Go for it.



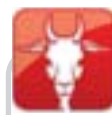
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find your thoughts are very intense now. You may feel as if you are under a tremendous amount of pressure. If decisions are made now you may find you will regret your choices later. You are full of nervous energy and may find yourself acting in haste without putting the necessary thought into the choices you make. You may find someone close to you seems to challenge your taste or choices. This seems to be a stressful and unpleasant time for you. Take a step back and take a deep breath. Scorpio. Take your time and things will work out in your favor.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you have a "gut feeling" about someone today, heed it. Your instincts are usually good. Don't act hastily, but be alert. Avoidance is sometime the best response. Don't give anyone an opportunity to cause a problem for you or a loved one. A little awareness could save you a lot of regret.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are ambitious, secure and responsible. All these qualities seem to combine to help you excel in any area you apply yourself. You are strong willed and have a desire to conquer the world and all that comes your way. You are taking time to reflect on any of your past short comings. This time of reflection is a guiding light for you now and will prevent you from repeating any of your past mistakes. Knowledge is power and the wisdom you have gained from past experience has you on the right track. You may feel as though you are on this journey alone. Not much support is felt from your peers. Do not worry. You will find this to be a very profitable time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is time that you may feel more inward. You find satisfaction in spending time with the ones you love and the feeling you get from being surrounded by their kindness towards you. You tend to be strong and independent and want others to always see you in this light. You are a rock to many but there are times you need someone to lean on. This is one of those times and you need to realize you do always have to be strong. It is ok to turn to others with your problems. You may find these close friends jump on the opportunity to be able to give back to you. Your mood seems to be much more reflective rather than expressive now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are experiencing a strong clarity. Your mind is sharp and so is your tongue. You may want to hold back a bit and bite your tongue to avoid conflict and confrontation today in the workplace. You are known for your quick wit and today you seem to be on a roll. You may feel as if though you are at odds with someone close to you. Use this time to clear the air and work on exiting this conflict with a stronger bond than the two of you previously had. Exercise fairness and take responsibility for your actions today. This will help keep your conscience clear and your mind at peace.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Photography

Find and circle all of the Photography terms that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a type of camera.



- |           |              |               |                |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| APERTURE  | ENLARGEMENT  | OVEREXPOSURE  | SATURATION     |
| BALANCE   | ENLARGER     | PANNING       | SHUTTER        |
| BELLOWS   | FILTER       | PANORAMA      | SLIDE          |
| BLOWUP    | FIXING BATH  | PARALLAX      | STOP BATH      |
| CAMERA    | FLASH        | PHOTOFINISHER | TELEPHOTO LENS |
| CLOSE UP  | FOCAL LENGTH | POSITIVE      | TINT           |
| COLOR     | FRAME        | PRINT         | TOPE           |
| CONTRAST  | HOT SHOE     | PROCESSING    | TRIPOD         |
| CROPPING  | LIGHT METER  | RANGEFINDER   | UNDEREXPOSURE  |
| DARKROOM  | LIGHTING     | RETOUCHING    | VIEWFINDER     |
| DEVELOPER | NEGATIVE     | SAFELIGHT     | ZOOM LENS      |

Yesterday's Solution

Phonetic Alphabet



- |         |        |        |         |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|
| ALPHA   | HOTEL  | OSCAR  | UNIFORM |
| BRAVO   | INDIA  | PAPA   | VICTOR  |
| CHARLIE | JULIET | QUEBEC | WHISKEY |
| DELTA   | KILO   | ROMEO  | X-RAY   |
| ECHO    | LIMA   | SIERRA | YANKEE  |
| FOXTROT | MIKE   | TANGO  | ZULU    |
| GOLF    |        |        |         |

The hidden word is: NOVEMBER

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Lifestyle

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2019



A Gento penguin (Pygoscelis Papua) swims on Half Moon island, Antarctica. — AFP (See Page 21)

## GLITZ AND GLAMOUR AS DANCESPORT WALTZES INTO SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES

Costume changes, last-minute makeup touches and air kisses - dancesport made a flamboyant entrance yesterday as the Southeast Asian Games got off to a sparkling start in the Philippines. The ballroom competition picked up the baton from the color, music and glamour of the previous night's glitzy opening ceremony, with all the coiffed hairstyles and high tension of a Dancing With the Stars episode.

A small but raucous crowd - mostly Philippine - waved flags and cheered on the local couples in the function room of Clark's Royce Hotel, with some in the audience giddily fanning their faces with their hands in nervous anticipation. Backstage the atmosphere was tense as dance partners from Vietnam, Singapore and elsewhere around the region psyched themselves up for performances years in the making. Some ran through their routines, said prayers together or did breathing exercises to tamp down their fraught nerves. One determined contender stared into middle distance, preparing his game face.

Wearing elaborate gowns in their national colors, the women dazzled in costume jewelry and customized nail varnish, while their male partners sported immaculate tuxedos with tails, shiny black shoes and slicked-back hair. Once called through the stage curtain and into the spotlights, the couples twirled and shimmied across the dance floor as the capacity crowd roared, raising the roof when the Philippine couples strutted their stuff.

### 'Wonderful feeling'

Partners glided over the stage in 90-second routines to the tune of Justin Bieber, The Beatles and Bruno Mars before turning to face the judges. The crowd hushed as all eyes in the room trained on the stony-faced panel. When the results appeared on the big screen one-by-one, some in the audience gasped, while others shrieked with joy as their dance idols went to the top of the scoreboard.

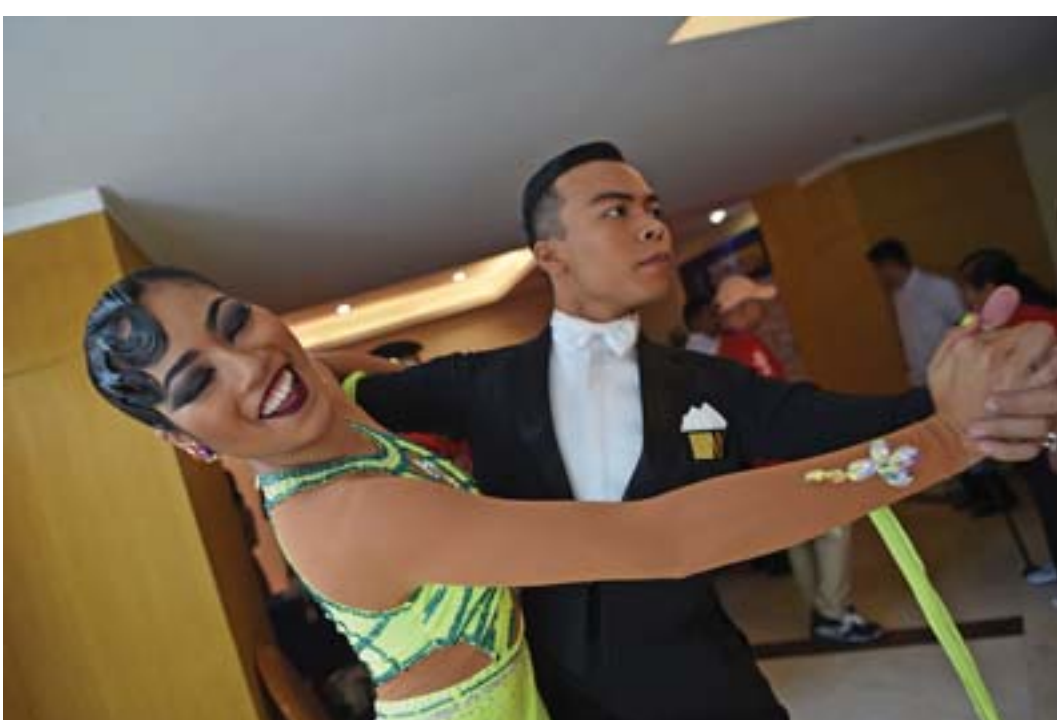
Performers crowded around the television by the stage entrance to see the scores rolling in, hugging each other and exchanging high-

fives. It was the Philippine couples who cleaned up on the dance floor yesterday, the first time competitive ballroom dancing has been staged at the SEA Games in 12 years. Home favorites Sean Misha Aranar and Ana Leonila Nualla won three golds for the tango, Viennese waltz and five dance events, while compatriots Mark Gayon and Joy Renigen snared the top prizes in waltz and foxtrot along with a silver in quickstep.

"It's a really wonderful feeling being here and having these medals after all the hard work and the stress and the sleepless nights," Renigen said. "It's all worth it. We're really happy." The duo have been dance partners for five years, and a couple for four. "The relationship really helps," said Renigen. "Of course with the performance, with the love, with the dancing you don't have to produce it, you don't have to fake it, because it's already there." — AFP



Vietnamis Vu Hoang Anh Minh (left) and Nguyen Truong Xuan practice backstage before competing in the dancesport event in Clark, Capas town.



Thailand's Issarapong Duangkaew and Thanawan Yananun (left) practice backstage as they wait to perform in the dancesport event in the SEA Games (Southeast Asian Games) in Clark, Capas town, Tarlac province north of Manila yesterday.



Philippines' Ana Nualla interacts with Ella Jamili while waiting backstage before performing in the dancesport event yesterday. — AFP photos



## Jay-Z suing a children's bookstore



**T**he 49-year-old rap star - who is one of the wealthiest people in the music business - has decided to take legal action against the store in Sydney, Australia, for using his image and lyrics, according to the New York Times newspaper. It's claimed that the row centers on a book called 'A B to Jay-Z', which re-jigs a line from the rapper's chart-topping hit '99 Problems'. The reworked line from the record reads: "If you're having alphabet problems I feel bad for your son, I got

99 problems but my ABCs ain't one." What's more, the book features Jay's likeness, as well as other well-known hip-hop stars like Eminem and the Notorious B.I.G. Lawyers acting on behalf of Jay have sent several cease-and-desist letters to the store over the last two years, and they have described the product as a "deliberate and knowing attempt to trade off the reputation and goodwill" of Jay's image.

## Paul Newman's daughter feels 'close to him'

**T**he late Hollywood star - who sadly passed away in 2008 aged 83 - gifted Clea Newman a luxury Rolex Daytona signature navy-faced timepiece, and she still often wears the accessory to remember her father. Speaking to HELLO! magazine, she said: "It makes me feel close to him. He was also very supportive, a great listener and teacher, and incredibly patient. "One of the best pieces of advice he gave me was that I should never let anyone hold me back from what I want to do with my life." Despite her famous par-

ents - Paul and his actress wife Joanne Woodward - Clea, 54, and her sisters Nell and Lissy had an ordinary childhood "away from the hubbub of Hollywood". Reflecting on those early years, she said: "We'd play outside and get dirty. Our house was full of friends and animals. It was a great way to grow up. "My parents were great role models and very hands-on. My dad loved having fun. What I miss most about my dad is his playful sense of fun.



## Sir Elton John once wore diaper during a Las Vegas show

**T**he 72-year-old star had to wear a diaper onstage under his outfit during the show in 2017, as he'd recently undergone an operation for prostate cancer. During an appearance on 'The Graham Norton Show', Elton joked: "If only [the audience] knew at that moment I was p\*\*\*ing myself." Elton recently opened up about his health issues in 2017, revealing he had to "learn to walk again" after falling ill. The iconic singer suffered a major infection after undergoing prostate cancer surgery and admitted it left him

"24 hours from snuffing it" and feeling "lucky" to have survived. He said: "I literally had to learn to walk again. I was extremely sick. "I said: 'Don't let me die, I want to see my children grow up.' "Luckily I survived it. Now I am fine." The 'Crocodile Rock' singer also joked he is "like the Bionic Woman" as there are "very few bits" of him left following various operations over the years.

## Nicole Scherzinger thinks The Pussycat Dolls are 'sisterhood'

**T**he 41-year-old singer stars in the recently re-united group alongside Carnit Bachar, Ashley Roberts, Kimberly Wyatt and Jessica Sutta, and she's claimed that in spite of their differences over the years, the band is now "stronger" than ever. Asked about past disharmony within the group, Nicole explained: "We're not famous for that, are we? We get along, it's a sisterhood, we love each other, we have the best chemistry. "We feed off each other, and if we ever have an issue, we've always been open about communication and talking it through. "Naturally, when you're so close, there may be some disagreements, some arguments. But that's the beauty, what makes you stronger. We've evolved so much. Like, bye drama! We want this to be really enjoyable for us." Nicole also revealed the band plan to "bring fashion forward" when they embark on their upcoming tour, which will include nine live UK shows in April 2020.

## Being biracial gives Gugu 'interesting perspective'



**T**he 36-year-old actress' father is a black South African doctor, while her mother is a white British nurse and Gugu believes her heritage helps her to "bring people together". She told The Guardian newspaper: Being biracial is an interesting perspective, because you can see every side of that conversation. I definitely relate to the idea of bringing people together. My first trip to South Africa [in December 2013] to see my family there, they jokingly called me The Unifier: that's what they called Nelson Mandela at one point. But I feel like it's my responsibility to unite the dif-

ferent parts of my life. And I think that it's my responsibility to do that in my work." Gugu also revealed she is a Time's Up activist and has been heavily involved in the movement since its inception. She said: "I went to the first meeting in LA about it before the 2018 Golden Globes. I've been to several meetings and been part of both the British and the American gestation of the movement. Gathering together and strategising."



## Kylie Jenner and Travis Scott reunite

**T**he 22-year-old make-up mogul and Travis, 28 - whose daughter, Stormi, was born in February 2018 - came together for the annual holiday, with Travis being invited by Kylie's family on a trip to Palm Springs. An insider told E! News: "They all stuck together at one table before Khloe [Kardashian] went over to join her friends for a game. "Kylie and Travis then got up together and got drinks. They were strolling slowly, watching some of the table games, and were followed by Kylie's security." Kylie and Travis split in October - but rumors have subsequently suggested that the high-profile duo may be about to rekindle their romance. The eyewitness added: "They seemed very close. There was no PDA or anything romantic, but they seemed happy to be together. They whispered in each other's ears a lot and laughed. "They were having a good time. They all headed back to Kris's house for the night."

## Michael Sheen spent his life ignoring his parents advice

**T**he 50-year-old actor has admitted that, during his young years, he was keen to create his own path in life - though he's subsequently followed in their footsteps. Michael - who plays an active role in various charitable organizations - told the Times newspaper: "Pretty much everything my parents told me to do, I didn't. But as I've got older, I've ended up doing what they did, like community activism." The Hollywood star was an avid soccer player during his childhood and he initially dreamed of becoming a professional sportsman. But ultimately, he's glad his parents didn't relocate to London, where he was supposed to join Arsenal Football Club. He recalled: "I was a keen footballer and when I was 12 I was offered a place with Arsenal's youth team, but my parents didn't want to relocate to London. "I was upset, but the chance of playing professional football in the Premier League is so slim. Ultimately, I was grateful to them."



## Gina Carano feared she'd look like 'big buff refrigerator'

**T**he 37-year-old actress - who plays Cara Dune in the new space Western TV series - has revealed she initially worried she'd have to compromise her femininity in order to convey the toughness of the character. Reflecting on the physical transformation she went through, Gina shared: "How do you put basically football padding on a busty curvy female? "I didn't want to be a block. I didn't want to just be this like big buff refrigerator." Gina also feels as though she can relate to her on-screen character. She told Vanity Fair magazine: "This dia-

mond, this cool character ... I have so much in common with her." What's more, the actress revealed she didn't initially appreciate the size and importance of her role in the series. She said: "I thought I was going to be like the female Chewbacca. "I was ready to put on the fur outfit and be the female version of that. That's what I thought. "I was surprised to find that I was one of the few people that you were actually going to see her face - and in a lot of scenes, sometimes the only face, which is pretty incredible."







View of glaciers at the Torres del Paine National Park in Magallanes region, Chile. — AFP Photos

Tourists visit Yankee Harbor in the South Shetland Islands, Antarctica.

## In Antarctica, tourists swim among penguins

“It’s like getting stabbed,” a tourist exclaims, as he plunges into the three-degree Celsius (37-Fahrenheit) water, all under the intrigued gaze of a group of penguins. All around Half Moon Island, off the Antarctic Peninsula, blocks of ice of all sizes float by on a calm sea, their varying forms resembling weightless origami shapes.

To reach the Antarctic destination the 58-year-old Norwegian, Even Carlsen, travelled 14,000 kilometers, and spent thousands of euros. Mostly indifferent to the bipeds donning neon-colored windbreakers, wildlife

abounds in the deafening silence of the icy landscape. The penguins are as awkward on land as they are agile in water, while massive and majestic whales slip through the waves, and sea lions and seals laze in the sun.

Antarctica, a land of adventure without rulers, is “like the heart of the Earth,” according to Marcelo Leppe, director of the Chilean Antarctic Institute. He said it expands and contracts like a beating heart, while the mighty current which revolves around the continent is like a circulatory system absorbing warm currents from other oceans and

redistributing cold water. But this long tongue of land that stretches towards South America is warming rapidly. Its glaciers are melting and its ecosystem has been invaded by microplastics carried by currents.

### ‘Keep nothing but memories’

Tourists are also flocking to the area in greater numbers. This season nearly 80,000 visitors are expected, a 40-percent increase compared to last year. Antarctic tour operators insist they are promoting responsible tourism. “Take nothing but photographs,

leave nothing but footprints, keep nothing but memories,” is their motto.

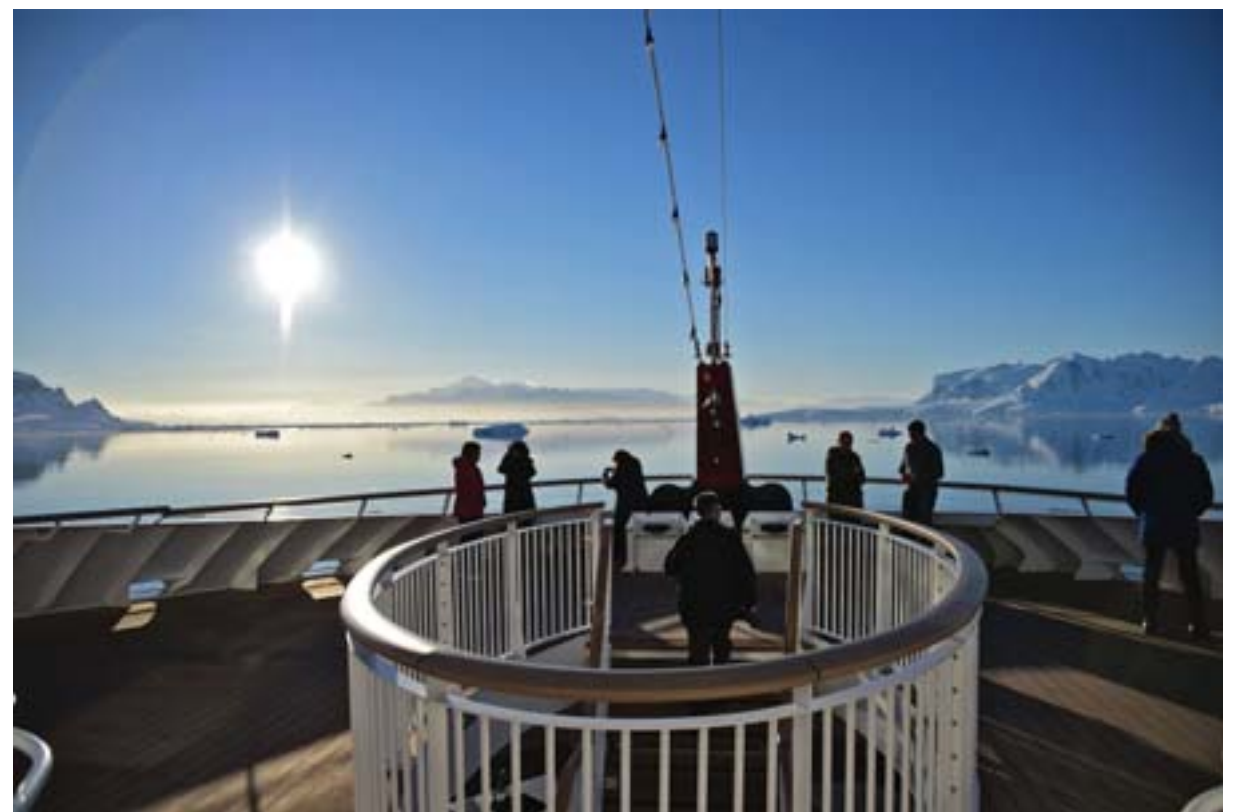
It is Antarctica’s very vulnerability that is a draw, with tourists hoping to catch a glimpse of what one day might be gone. But critics question this sort of tourism, as the emissions from world-crossing flights and soot or black carbon in the exhaust gases of cruise ships are part of what is putting the region under threat.

On Half Moon Island, chinstrap penguins - named for the black stripe on their chin - strut about in the spring breeding season,

raising their beaks and screeching from their rocky nests. “This is to tell other males ‘this is my space’ and also, perhaps, ‘this is my female,’” ornithologist Rebecca Hodgkiss said. The colony of 2,500 penguins has been gradually declining over the years. It is not known if it is the fault of humanity. — AFP



Night view of glaciers at Chiriguano bay in the South Shetland Islands, Antarctica.



Tourists look at the sunset from a ship at Chiriguano bay in the South Shetland Islands, Antarctica.

### British YouTuber and youngest BAFTA award winner fights prejudice

Nikki Lilly used to wish the marks on her face were just make-up. Born with arteriovenous malformation, a life-threatening medical condition which causes dangerous nose bleeds, facial swelling and migraines, she sometimes found it difficult to fit in. “Some nights I used to get a flannel, and wet it and scrub my face,” she recalled. “I couldn’t believe it was not going to come off.” Now the 15-year old is using her popular YouTube channel to de-stigmatise her condition. On Dec. 1, she will be honoured for her work as a mental health advocate, becoming the youngest person to receive a British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Special Award.

Today over a million subscribers tune in to watch Lilly’s upbeat “vlogs”, in which she talks about teenage interests like school, make-up and baking, as well as weightier topics including disability, cyber bullying and mental health. Growing up online, Lilly is acutely aware of the possibilities and pitfalls of social media. Although the internet has given her a voice, it has also pitted her against an unforgiving influencer culture.

“When you’re having a good day, if you go on social media and you scroll for too long it does affect your mood,” she said. “It totally affects how you view yourself.” The airbrushed quality of

Instagram, especially, can take a toll on young women, Lilly said. “They can’t help but to look at those images and feel less worthy. “Although I look different, I still do worry about the same things every teenager does,” she said. “I used to feel pressured to wear make up to school.”

Although she says she has never experienced bullying at school, Lilly has had to contend with hateful comments on her YouTube and Instagram channels. In one video, she lists some of the insults: “freak”, “disgusting”, “monster”. The platforms could be doing more to combat cyber-bullying, she said. “I don’t feel that they are very proactive. I have to remove a lot of (the comments) and they don’t really see them.” Lilly said platforms should consider trialling a 24-hour text service for teens to access counselors. Strengthening their policies on abusive behavior and removing offending accounts should also be a priority, she said.

“It is hard because there are so many accounts out there,” she said. “But I think that there is a long way to go, especially for YouTube and Instagram.” Lilly has been the subject of two documentaries, and last year began presenting her own show on Britain’s public broadcaster, the BBC. She plans to expand her advocacy work, educating teens on issues such as body image and climate change, and to keep spreading the message that “you’re enough, and you’re not alone.” “I’m the way I am for a reason,” she said. “I hope I can uplift people and ... bring them a bit of hope when they’re going through hardships.” — Reuters



Norwegian chef Freddy Bruu of the Hurtigruten hybrid expedition cruise ship, MS Roald Amundsen, poses for the photo after an interview with AFP at sea.

### In Antarctica, tour operators police themselves

As a vast expanse belonging to no one nation, Antarctica has unique rules of governance that allow tour operators - one of the few commercial activities permitted - to largely police themselves. The Antarctica Treaty was signed 60 years ago by 12 countries - it now has 54 signatories - including the United States and Russia, a notable feat during the Cold War.

It declares the continent is dedicated to science and peace, and freezes any territorial claims. Other agreements have since been added to the treaty, including the 1991 Madrid Protocol on environmental protection. Declaring Antarctica a “nature reserve” where the mining of mineral resources is banned, the Protocol says human activities may only be undertaken after environmental impact studies. The text bans the voluntary introduction of plant and animal species, and the discharge into the sea of oil and gas, waste and untreated water.

It requires visitors to take their rubbish away with them when they leave. As such, it provides a general framework for tourism. In the same year, the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) was founded by seven tour operators to agree on ship scheduling, safety and environmental protection. It now groups almost all tour operators in the region and is invited to the Antarctic Treaty signatories’ annual meetings to discuss developments in tourism and propose new regulations.

Under existing rules, only ships carrying fewer than 500 passengers are allowed to make landings at approved sites and only 100 people allowed ashore at a time. Visitors must clean their personal effects before going ashore, be accompanied by guides with a ratio of 1:20, must not bring food, leave anything behind or take anything back. — AFP



## Rapper Tijoux gives the beat to Chile's street revolt

Chilean singer Ana Tijoux says she is scared of cameras. Yet it is hard to think of anything as fearless as her latest hit "Cacerolazo", which has become an anthem of the street revolt in her homeland against its billionaire president Sebastian Pinera. Latin America's richest country has been rocked by more than six weeks of protests sparked by a 30 peso (four US cents) rise in metro fares. Demonstrations often start with people banging pots and pans, an action known as a "cacerolazo", after the Spanish word for a casserole. Tijoux—who Rolling Stone magazine has hailed as the "best rapper in Spanish"—is just as angry as the protesters at the inequalities in her country.

And she says she is totally behind their calls to end privatization and rewrite its

constitution, which dates from the 17-year dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. "It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years," she raps in the song, referring to the fare rise. "The constitution and the tax breaks for the rich / With our fists and spoons we are bashing the establishment / and the state, cacerolazo!" Tijoux said she had long expected an explosion of anger from the poor and middle classes.

### 'Union of rage'

"There was always a lot of popular discontent but before they weren't aligned there was not this union of rage which is real and totally valid," she said in Paris, where she was born after her parents fled Chile during the dictatorship. The 42-year-old, who had moved back to France

with her two children before the protests erupted, wrote the song after bumping into a Chilean neighbor and film-maker who had returned from shooting the protests.

"We said to each other that we had to do something," she said, and the rap poured out. Her music has since featured in the US television series "Breaking Bad" and even the Fifa 11 video game. Tijoux said she was in awe of the students leading the protests, which have also focused on the paucity of education and healthcare provided by the state in Chile, a longtime laboratory for neoliberal economics.

### 'Open wound of justice'

The students are "much more politicized" than their parents, she said, and

insisted that "political consciousness is the most beautiful thing that can happen to each and every one of us". "They are not contaminated with the fear we had of the dictatorship," she said, adding that the impunity enjoyed by the military for crimes committed under Pinochet helps keep this fear alive.

"There is an open wound in Chile. There is a pending debt with respect to justice," Tijoux said. But she also said the unrest is a part of "global discontent about inequality", many people living in societies where "the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer". Mounting anger across the world was a "response to a political and economic system that does not respond to people's needs", she added.

Tijoux is reluctant to claim her song as an anthem of revolt, saying its real hymns are the protest songs of legendary artists like Victor Jara, who was tortured and killed by Pinochet's henchmen in 1973. Jara later became an icon for protest movements across Latin America. "We are the grandchildren of this wave of people we have heard all our lives, and who are part of our political and cultural history," she said. Latin Americans, she said, "have always lived under the yoke of colonialism", adding: "It is a continent but it is like one great homeland that has always had a very strong political response." — AFP



The portrait of late K-pop star Goo Hara is seen surrounded by flowers at a memorial altar at a hospital in Seoul. — AFP

## K-pop star jailed for gang rape and spycam crimes

South Korean singer-songwriter Jung Joon-young was convicted Friday of gang rape and distributing videos of the assaults and other sexual encounters, and was jailed for six years in a scandal that has rocked K-pop. Jung and Choi Jong-hoon, a former member of boy band FT Island, were found guilty of gang-raping two different victims on two occasions in 2016. Separately, 30-year-old Jung was also convicted of filming himself having sex with other women without their knowledge and sharing the footage without their consent.

It is the highest-profile example of an epidemic of spycam crimes in South Korea, which have prompted widespread anger and seen women demonstrating in Seoul, chanting: "My life is not your porn". Jung distributed his videos in mobile chatrooms with recipients including fellow K-pop star Seungri of BIGBANG, who has been accused of illegal gambling in connection with a sex and drugs scandal. Jung was jailed for six years and Choi, 29, for five, the Seoul Central District Court said.

"Jung and Choi took part in gang rape of victims who were intoxicated and unable to resist," Yonhap news agency cited the verdict as saying, rejecting the defendants' claim the sex was consensual. "It is hard to fathom the extent of suffering the victims must have gone through." The two singers had been hugely popular but had perceived the victims only as "sexual objects" to be exploited, it went on, adding: "They should assume social responsibility in proportion to their fame and wealth."

Both men wept when the sentences were announced. But while the minimum sentence for rape in South Korea is three years most online commentators said the penalties were too lenient. "The victims have to live in agony for the next 60 years, not just six," one poster wrote on the country's largest portal site Naver. Another added: "I hear they burst into tears at sentencing. The victims will live in tears for the rest of their lives."

### 'Cannot be forgiven'

Jung rose to fame in 2012 when he came third in the audition show "Super Star K" and had a number of solo hits before the video scandal broke in March, when he announced his retirement. At the time the rape accusations had yet to emerge, but he said he had "committed crimes that cannot be forgiven". "I apologize to the women victims who are suffering because of me," and his fans, he said, adding he would "spend the rest of my life reflecting on my wrongdoings". There was no immediate statement from his lawyers or his record company Friday.

Known as "molka", South Korean spycam videos are largely made by men secretly filming women in schools, toilets and elsewhere, although the term can also be applied to clandestinely-shot footage of consensual sex. Friday's verdict came just days after the death of Goo Hara, a former member of girl group Kara, in an apparent suicide after she was blackmailed over "revenge porn" — private sex videos made with or without consent but shared without permission by disgruntled former partners or malicious acquaintances. Goo's ex-boyfriend last year threatened to "end her entertainment career" by leaking the footage after they split up last year, and a CCTV clip showed her kneeling before him apparently begging him not to. — AFP

## Costly holiday tree scandalizes Russian coal town

An expensive holiday tree installed in the centre of an industrial Siberian city has been ridiculed online and on national media as a symbol of corruption, though authorities defended the high-tech purchase. The 25-metre (80-foot) artificial tree in Kemerovo, a city surrounded by coal mines, cost 18 million rubles (\$280,000), three times more than the country's main tree installed in the Kremlin.

Russian comedian Ivan Urgant, who hosts a show on popular Channel One, ridiculed the Kemerovo tree as having "very expensive ornaments - real rabbits, bears, cars and planes" and hinted at corruption in the city hall. The city made national headlines last winter when residents reported seeing black snow due to large amounts of coal dust, while a town nearby covered a snow hill used for sledding with white paint to hide the coal residue.

"Here people don't really live, they survive. And they are spending 18 million on a tree!" local resident Roman Khabibulin wrote angrily on social network VK. "It's as stupid as buying the latest iPhone when your children have nothing to eat," wrote another VK user, Ivan Lebedev. Online commentators suggested that authorities

direct the money toward children with cancer or subsidized housing instead.

Kemerovo's mayor defended the purchase, saying it was a "mid-range" technological tree that would replace an old tree which became too expensive to repair. The new tree is made of steel and has 239,000 LED lights, he boasted. The company that supplied the tree, Sibevrostroy, denied the price was inflated. "This product cannot be called a tree," director Andrei Zorin told news agency Interfax. "It's a high-tech multimedia complex which happens to look like a tree."

Communist Party spokesman Alexander Yushchenko said the tree was "just an element of the whole system, our national problem, corruption." Russians put up trees to celebrate New Year, which is the country's biggest holiday of the year and sees cities spending significant sums on decorations and fireworks. Celebration of the Russian Orthodox Christmas, which falls on January 7, was discouraged during the Soviet era and remains less popular than New Year's. — AFP



People walk past a New year tree in central Kemerovo. — AFP

## Disney's 'Frozen 2' thrills Sami people in northern Europe

The sequel to Walt Disney Co's 2013 hit animated musical "Frozen" is generating excitement among indigenous Sami people in northern Europe, whose culture the movie has taken inspiration from. "Frozen 2" debuted in US cinemas on Nov 22 and is progressively rolling out worldwide. On its debut weekend, it grossed \$350 million, making it "the biggest opening ever for Walt Disney Animation (not including Pixar)", according to Hollywood trade publication Variety. The movie opens in Norway on Christmas Day.

Norway inspired many elements of the first "Frozen" movie, such as character Anna's dress or the architecture of the fictional kingdom of Arendelle. The second film takes inspiration from the culture of the Sami, an indigenous minority living across Norway, Sweden, Finland and northern Russia, who have faced discrimination against their language and culture.



Photo shows a shopping cart with Frozen 2 toys in Walmart in King of Prussia, United States. — AFP

In Norway, a state-appointed truth and reconciliation commission is investigating the discrimination perpetrated on minorities including the Sami and Kven peoples. "I am planning to see the movie again with my whole family," said Aili Keskitalo, president of the consultative Sami Parliament in Norway, who attended the film's world premiere in Los Angeles with her 11-year-old daughter and set a scene from the movie as her Facebook profile picture.

"Frozen 2" sees Anna and sister Elsa head north of Arendelle to find out the truth about a mystery. They meet the Northuldra, who live closely with the reindeer. Reindeer herding is a traditional Sami activity. "Some of the beautiful costumes in the film took inspiration from our gakti. They also took inspiration from the guksi, our traditional wooden cup," said Anne Lajla Utsi, a member of a Sami advisory group that collaborated with the filmmakers.

"We felt they really listened and that it was very important to them to do this right," Utsi, managing director of the International Sami Film Institute, told Reuters. Disney signed a contract with Sami representatives to commit themselves to portray their culture respectfully. That included supporting the dubbing of the movie in North Sami, the most spoken of the Sami languages, and release it at the same time as the Norwegian version.

When Utsi posted a picture of the "Frozen 2" poster on Facebook with its Sami title, "Jiknon 2", it went viral. "My youngest daughter is really looking forward to watching the movie again in her language," said Keskitalo. "My elder daughters, who are 22 and 25 years old, are also very excited about seeing the movie. It is not often that we see a movie in North Sami. I think a lot of adults will see the movie too." — Reuters



Photo shows a bronze statue of a cockerel - one of what are known as the Benin Bronzes, which were looted from the former kingdom of Benin by the British in the 19th century, at Jesus College at Cambridge University in Cambridge, north of London. — AFP

## Cambridge to return looted Benin statue

Cambridge University college has said it will return a bronze cockerel statue looted from Nigeria, which formed the focus of protests over symbols of Britain's colonial past. The statue known as "Okukor" was taken in 1897 from the former kingdom of Benin, which is now part of southern Nigeria, and given to Jesus college in 1905 by the father of a student.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the college said the recommendation to return it was made by a working group investigating the legacy of slavery. "This royal ancestral heirloom belongs with the current Oba (king) at the Court of Benin," it said, adding that the details of how and when it would be returned had yet to be resolved. The statue was removed from display in 2016 following protests by students, who said it was looted by British troops during a "punitive expedition" as revenge for the killing of officers.

Around the same time, Oxford University faced an angry but unsuccessful campaign to remove a statue of 19th-

century British imperialist Cecil Rhodes. Nigerian royals in Benin City have repeatedly called for the return of hundreds of ancient artefacts, known as the Benin Bronzes, which were looted by the British in the 19th century. The highly decorative pieces, depicting the oba and his courtiers from centuries earlier, are still housed at leading museums around the world, including the British Museum in London.

There has been resistance to any return from western institutions, primarily because of concern about how the treasures would be maintained. But the young brother of the current oba, Prince Edun Akenzua, told AFP in 2016: "If a man stole my car and admitted that he stole it and returned it to me, what is his business whether I have a garage or not to keep the car? "These artefacts belong to our ancestors. They must be returned to us. It's nobody's business how we preserve them." — AFP

## John Lennon's round sunglasses to be sold at auction

A pair of John Lennon's trademark round sunglasses are going up for auction along with a parking ticket given to Beatles drummer Ringo Starr - items kept for half a century by a former driver for the band. Alan Herring, who worked as a chauffeur for Starr and bandmate George Harrison in the late 60s, said Lennon had given him the glasses after leaving them on the back seat of his Mercedes.

"When John got out of the car I noticed that he'd left these sunglasses on the back seat and one lens and one arm had become disconnected," he said. "I asked John if he'd like me to get them fixed for him. He told me not to worry, that they were just for the look." The vintage glasses and the parking ticket - issued on April 25, 1969 in London outside the band's own label Apple Records - will be sold online by Sotheby's with other Beatles memorabilia next month.

Herring said the decision to sell the objects was an emotional one, but that "the memories I have of this very special time in my life working with the Beatles are far more important to me". The brown, creased £2 parking ticket is expected to fetch £1,500 (\$1,900, 1,700 euro), while the sunglasses - which Herring never did get mended - could sell for £8,000. Other items going under the hammer between December 6 to 13 include a cigarette lighter kept in Herring's car, shirts worn by the Fab Four and Harrison's guitar with a predicted price of £60,000. — Reuters



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Monday, December 2, 2019



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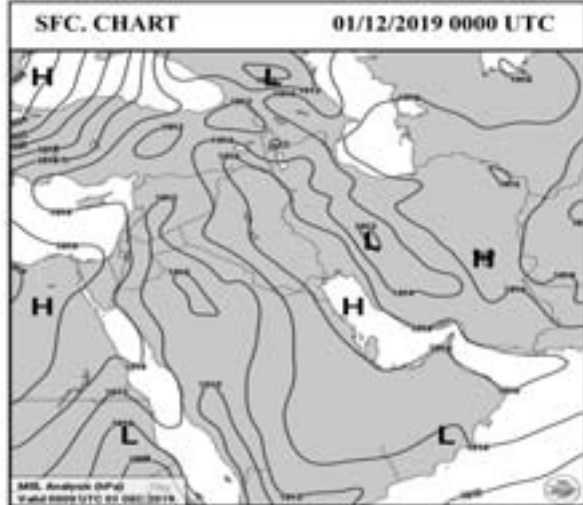


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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Warm with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 10 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 01/12/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	18 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	26 °C	13 °C			
ABDALY	26 °C	13 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	26 °C	16 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	24 °C	20 °C			
AHMADI	24 °C	20 °C			
NUWASIB	26 °C	17 °C			
WAFRA	26 °C	13 °C			
SALMY	24 °C	11 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	12/02	Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	25 °C	15 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h
Tuesday	12/03	Mostly Sunny	24 °C	15 °C	NW	15 - 38 km/h
Wednesday	12/04	Mostly Sunny	23 °C	14 °C	NW-VRB	12 - 35 km/h
Thursday	12/05	Fair and Clouds will increase with a chance for scattered rain later on	24 °C	10 °C	VRB-SE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:01
Sunrise	06:24
Zuhr	11:37
Asr	14:30
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	26 °C
MIN. Temp.	17 °C
MAX. RH	99 %
MIN. RH	49 %
MAX. Wind	N 21 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
Khalidiya	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

**CHANGE OF NAME**

(Old name) Ramachandrolla Bramahaiah S/o R. Ramachandra Res. 16/44 Thimmamudram T Sundupalli Kadapa Dt. AP. Change my name (new name) Ramachandram Brahmaiah S/o R. Ramachandra Old PP. No K4656763. (C 5691)

I Aravind Sethu Kurakunnel holder of Indian Passport No. S2395793 issued at Kuwait on 03/02/2018. Herby declare that my given name is Aravind and Surname is Sethu Kurakunnel.

I Kurakunnel Chellappan Sethu holder of Indian Passport No. P7113495 issued at Kuwait on 19/12/2016. Herby declare that my given name is Sethu and surname is Kurakunnel Chellappan.

I Isaac Jebaraj (F/o Master Joel Harrison Isaac PP No. M6714468) holding Indian Passport No. S2388598 residing in Kuwait at present in Block 2, Street 17, Building No. 22, new Riggae, hereby declare that henceforth my son's name will be read as: given name: Joel Harrison and surname: Isaac Jebaraj. (C 5689) 29-11-2019

## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493

## Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

### Flight Schedule

### DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 2/12/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 2/12/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
PIA	239	Sialkot	00:05	KAC	614	Bahrain	13:50
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
JZR	716	Sohag	00:35	KAC	752	ELQ	14:20
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KAC	774	Riyadh	14:40
KAC	102	London	00:55	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	742	Dammam	14:45
KAC	504	Beirut	01:05	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	KAC	364	Colombo	14:50
KLM	448	Bahrain	01:30	KAC	118	New York	14:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:40	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:55
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	618	Doha	15:00
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:25
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	222	Riyadh	15:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	562	Amman	15:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:55
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	JZR	152	Mashhad	16:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	QTR	212	Jeddah	16:25
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	1072	Doha	16:35
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	KAC	116	Doha	16:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	KAC	502	Beirut	16:45
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50	FDB	051	Dubai	16:45
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	546	Cairo	16:45
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	KAC	516	Tehran	16:50
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	FEQ	341	Sohag	17:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:25
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	214	Bahrain	17:45
JZR	654	OSS	05:25	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
JZR	502	Lahore	05:35	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:15
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	FDB	063	Dubai	18:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:45	JZR	124	Dubai	18:20
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	RJA	306	Istanbul	18:55
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	KAC	640	Amman	19:10
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:20
BAW	157	London	07:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	QTR	1090	Doha	19:35
RBG	213	Sohag	07:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:45
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	KAC	782	Jeddah	19:50
JZR	120	Dubai	07:35	JZR	104	Bahrain	19:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	540	KTM	20:00
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KNE	381	Taif	20:00
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:25	FDB	057	Dubai	20:00
KAC	622	Doha	08:30	KAC	776	Riyadh	20:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:55	QTR	1088	Doha	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:30
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	174	Munich	20:45
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	KAC	674	Dubai	20:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:55
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
JZR	114	Bahrain	10:20	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50
AXB	395	Sohag	10:50	KAC	564	Amman	22:00
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	KAC	620	Doha	22:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	168	Paris	22:00
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
KAC	352	Kochi	11:35	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30
GFA	209	Bahrain	12:05	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	GOW	061	CNN	23:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	QTR	1092	Doha	23:10
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	SVA	502	Jeddah	23:10
				JZR	002	LGW	23:15
				JZR	128	Dubai	23:15
				MSC	411	Asyut	23:15
				FDB	071	Dubai	23:40
				KAC	542	Cairo	23:45





MAAR SHURIN, Syria: Syrians displaced from their homes arrive on the outskirts of Maaret Al-Numan in Syria's northwestern Idlib province yesterday. —AFP

## Nearly 70 dead in Syria regime clashes with militants in Idlib

**SURMAN, Syria:** Two days of clashes between regime forces and armed groups in Syria's last major opposition bastion have killed nearly 70 on both sides, undermining a months-long ceasefire agreement, a war monitor said yesterday. The battles in the northwestern province of Idlib are "the most violent" there since a Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement went into effect in late August, said Rami Abdul Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Residents of affected villages fled north to escape the fighting, adding to the hundreds of thousands who have already flooded out of the province's violence-plagued south since fighting escalated earlier this year. "I don't want to see my children trapped under rubble," said one of those driven from his home, Hafez, who escaped the flashpoint area along with his wife and three kids two days earlier.

Yesterday morning, clouds of smoke rose over the Maaret Al-Numan region as warplanes pounded jihadists and allied rebels in positions they had recently recaptured from regime forces, said an AFP correspondent. The Britain-based Observatory yesterday put the

death toll from fighting at 69 combatants since battles started the previous day. At least 36 regime forces were among those killed.

### 'Ceasefire'

The Observatory said an attack led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate on several regime positions had initially sparked the fighting. Overnight, the Syrian army backed by Russian warplanes launched a counter-push to reclaim territory it had lost in the battles, the war monitor said. Regime forces have since regained lost ground but violent clashes are ongoing, the Observatory and an AFP correspondent said.

Air strikes yesterday afternoon hit jihadist-run areas dozens of kilometres away from the main frontline, signalling a potential escalation, the correspondent said. The Idlib region, home to around three million people including many displaced by Syria's eight-year civil war, is controlled by the country's former Al-Qaeda affiliate. The Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham jihadist alliance also controls parts of neighboring Aleppo and Latakia provinces, with battles also currently taking place in the

latter, according to the monitor.

The region is one of the last holdouts of opposition to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad who controls more than 70 per cent of the country, according to the Observatory. Assad has repeatedly vowed to reclaim all of Syria, including Idlib, which he views as a "terrorist" holdout. In August, government troops began a ground offensive that saw them retake several areas in southern Idlib, allowing them their first foothold in the region in years. Assad, during a visit to the area in October, his first since the start of the eight-year war, said that defeating jihadists in the province was key to ending the conflict.

### The other flashpoint

Between late April and the end of August, Idlib was pounded ceaselessly by Syrian soldiers backed by Russian air power. The Observatory estimates that nearly 1,000 civilians were killed in that period, and the UN says that more than 400,000 people were displaced. A ceasefire announced by Russia in late August has reduced fighting, but air strikes and

clashes increased in November.

According to the Observatory, more than 160 civilians and more than 460 fighters, including regime forces, have been killed since the deal went into effect. The Idlib front was the main focus of Syrian regime forces before Turkey in October launched an invasion of swaths of northeast Syria. The operation against Kurdish forces who had controlled the region since 2012 paved the way for mass regime deployments in the area for the first time in seven years.

Syrian troops arrived in positions bordering Turkey as well as other parts of the northeast under a deal with Kurdish forces seeking protection from Ankara and its Syrian proxies. An agreement between Russia and Ankara in October further cemented the deployment, tasking regime forces with ensuring the withdrawal of Kurdish fighters from the border region. Turkey last month accused Russia and Damascus of failing to secure that objective, threatening further action against Kurdish groups. The war in Syria has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it erupted in 2011. — AFP

## Israel plans new Hebron...

Continued from Page 1

The market area is on Hebron's once-bustling Shuhada Street, which leads to a holy site where the biblical Abraham and his wife Sarah are believed to be buried. The street is now largely closed off to Palestinians, who have long demanded that it be reopened.

A statement from a settlers' organisation in Hebron hailed Bennett's decision to "bring Jewish life back to Jewish property in Hebron", labelling it a "historic act of justice" for the Jewish people. Senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat said the new project was a result of the US' Nov 18th decision to no longer consider Israeli settlements illegal. That move broke with decades of international consensus that settlements are seen as illegal under international law and a major obstacle to peace, as they are built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state.

The Bennett plan, Erekat wrote in English on Twitter, "is the first tangible result of the US decision to legitimize colonization". Israeli anti-settlement group Peace Now condemned the addition to what it called the "ugliest face of Israel's control in the occupied territories". "In order to maintain the presence of 800 settlers among a quarter of a million Palestinians, entire streets in Hebron are closed to Palestinians, denying them freedom of movement," it said in a statement.

Israel seized the West Bank including Hebron, one of the world's oldest cities, in 1967 in a move never recog-

nized by the international community. In the following years, a small community of Jewish settlers moved into the area next to the site believed by both Jews and Muslims to house Abraham's tomb. Israel's West Bank settlements are considered illegal under international law and are bitterly opposed by Palestinians.

Bennett's move comes amid political turmoil in Israel after general elections in April and September ended in deadlock. Neither Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and allies like Bennett, nor their opponents, won enough parliamentary seats to form a viable coalition. Lawmakers now have until Dec 11 to find a solution or see parliament dissolved once again for a third election in 12 months.

Bennett's New Right party draws much of its support from the more than 600,000 Israeli settlers living in the Palestinian territories. At yesterday's weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu also offered good news for the settlers, pledging 40 million shekels (\$11.5 million) for improved security. "We are strengthening the security components in the communities in Judea and Samaria, of the Israeli citizens there," he said, using the biblical terms for the West Bank.

In September Netanyahu visited the settlement in Hebron for the first time since becoming Israeli leader in 2009. The Palestinians condemned the visit as deliberately provocative, but Netanyahu defended it - saying the city was historically important for Jews. "We're not strangers in Hebron. We'll stay in it forever," he said.

In 1994, Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Muslim worshippers in Hebron with an assault rifle before being beaten to death by survivors. Villages close to Hebron are also regularly the scene of unrest. On Saturday, Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian southwest of the city. The army said he was one of three men throwing petrol bombs at a military vehicle. — AFP

Sheikh Sabah over the cooperation of the government and the Assembly in the coming period, and assured him that he will extend all the assistance to ensure the success of the prime minister and the next Cabinet.

Meanwhile, the interior ministry yesterday honored traffic policeman Athbi Al-Bannai for correctly applying the law against the son of MP Majed Al-Mutairi. Press reports said the policeman arrested the son of the lawmaker for committing a flagrant traffic violation, but the lawmaker arrived and forcibly freed his son from police custody. Mutairi has however categorically denied the accusations.

## Iraqi PM bows out; protesters...

Continued from Page 1

departure of the premier, who came to power just a year ago based on a shaky alliance between rival parties, but they demanded far more deep-rooted change. "Abdel Mahdi should go - and so should parliament and the political parties and Iran!" said one young demonstrator in the capital.

Observers said Iraq's fractured political scene will struggle to reach a consensus on a new premier. With the parliament's main Shiite blocs "fragmented, no largest faction exists," wrote Dlawer Ala'Aldeen, president of the Arbil-based Middle East Research Institute. Even if they agreed on a candidate, he or she would also need the backing of the emboldened street. "Demonstrators are hard to please," said Ala'Aldeen. "The carnival goes on and, meanwhile, violence continues."

Just before the parliamentary session began, another protester was shot dead in the capital, medical sources said. But, in a victory for the movement, an Iraqi court sentenced a police officer to death after convicting him of killing demonstrators, the first such sentence in the two months of deadly civil unrest. The Kut criminal court sentenced the police major to be hanged and it jailed a police lieutenant colonel for seven years over the deaths of seven protesters in the southern city on November 2, judicial sources said.

## UN expert warns some expats face...

Continued from Page 1

"North Americans, Europeans and Australians, on the other hand, are presumed superior, and whites in general are presumed to be inherently competent," she said.

But Achiume stressed that while racism and discrimination remained an issue in Qatar, authorities had accepted the issue and made efforts to improve the situation - unlike some other countries. "The existence of

In Mosul, meanwhile, protesters were marching in solidarity with activists elsewhere in the country. "It's the least Mosul can give to the martyrs," said Zahraa Ahmed, a dentistry student. "The protesters are asking for their basic rights so the government should have answered from the beginning." Previously, most Sunni-majority areas had refrained from protesting, fearing that opposing the central government would earn them the labels of being "terrorists" or supporters of Saddam.

For three years, Mosul was the heart of the Islamic State group's ultra-conservative "caliphate", and much of it still lies in ruins today. Another student in Mosul, Hussein Kheder, carrying an Iraqi flag, said the whole country was now in agreement politically and that "now the government needs to heed the protesters' demands".

Abdel Mahdi had resisted protesters' calls for him to step down over the past two months. But a crackdown turned the tide this week when more than 20 people were killed in the Shiite shrine city of Najaf, 40 in the hotspot of Nasiriyah and three in Baghdad. The bloodshed prompted Iraq's influential Shiite spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, to call on parliament to drop its support for the premier.

Iraq's constitution has no provision for the resignation of a premier, and lawmaker Sarkawt Shamsaddin said yesterday that the body did not actually hold a vote. "The speaker said that the Federal Court was consulted and the understanding is that (there is) no need to vote," he said. The speaker had then asked if any lawmaker was against the resignation and "nobody objected". — AFP

racial, ethnic and national stereotypes and discriminatory structures... are, in part, the product of the history of slavery in Qatar," she said. Slavery in the country was abolished in 1952.

Achiume, a law professor at UCLA in the United States, said she had also received reports that "highlighted the prevalence of racial and ethnic profiling by police and traffic authorities". Security guards in parks and shopping centers also engaged in such practices, she said, favoring white and Arab residents while treating others differently. Achiume praised Qatar for the "significant reforms the government has embarked on that stand to make important contributions to combating structural racial discrimination". "Much work remains to be done, however," she said. — AFP

## PM meets Assembly speaker, head of...

Continued from Page 1

The previous Cabinet stepped down following infighting within its ranks and accusations of corruption. Ghanem said he discussed several topics with



Sports

# Pakistan fight to avoid defeat against Australia in second Test

## Yasir Shah smack a dogged maiden Test century

ADELAIDE: Pakistan was battling to stave off defeat in the day-night second Test against Australia yesterday after being forced to follow on, with Tim Paine's men needing seven wickets to clinch the series 2-0.

The visitors, who have lost 13 consecutive Tests in Australia, were in big trouble at 39 for three when rain forced an early end, 248 runs behind with two days left and their top order decimated.

They had resumed on an overcast and cold afternoon teetering at 96 for six in their first innings, in reply to Australia's 589 for three declared, built on the back of David Warner's monumental 335 not out.

Yasir Shah smacked a dogged maiden Test century and Babar Azam hit 97 but they were all out for 302 and still 287 runs adrift, with Mitchell Starc the hero,

taking 6-66. Australian skipper Tim Paine enforced the follow on and it started badly for Pakistan, whose first task was to survive intact for 15 minutes before the dinner break.

They failed with opener Imam-ul-Haq — recalled after being overlooked for the first Test in Brisbane, which they lost by an innings and five runs — out lbw for a duck to Josh Hazlewood.

It was quickly 11 for two with Starc tempting skipper Azhar Ali into a thick outside edge and Steve Smith taking a quality catch just seconds before a shower forced them off. The rain had been threatening all day and when they returned after 30 minutes Hazlewood bagged the key wicket of dangerman Azam for two, caught behind by Paine.

But more rain soon blew in, to Australia's frustration, and the umpires called it a day. Earlier, Yasir and Azam had kept Pakistan's slim hopes alive with disciplined first innings batting. Better known as a spin bowler, Yasir had never gone better than 42 in his previous 36 Tests, making his 113 against one of the world's most fearsome pace attacks even more remarkable.

### GLOOMY CONDITIONS

In a scintillating spell under lights on Sunday night, left-armed Starc snapped up four quick wickets and the omens for Pakistan did not look good. But the gloomy conditions at Adelaide Oval offered little for the bowlers during daylight hours yesterday and Azam and Yasir took advantage.

They put on a 105-run stand and Azam looked destined for a third Test century until Starc pounced again, with the 25-year-old edging an attempted drive to Paine behind the stumps on 97.

Azam — who scored a century in the first Test at Brisbane and is rapidly emerging as his country's top batsman — left the field dejected but to a standing ovation. The very next ball Starc grabbed his sixth,



ADELAIDE: Pakistan batsman Yasir Shah hits out on the way to scoring his century against Australia on the third day of the second cricket Test match in Adelaide yesterday. —AFP

with Shaheen Afridi plumb lbw before Mohammad Abbas fended off the hat-trick ball.

Abbas made a gutsy 29 before he was undone by a Pat Cummins bouncer, caught at gully by Warner. At the other end, Yasir showed composure to compile his first-ever ton, bringing up the milestone off 192 balls, clattering 12 fours and kissing the turf in celebration.

He had a near-miss off the bowling of Marnus Labuschagne on 33. Steve Smith believed he caught him at slip and made a big appeal, but replays showed the ball fell just short of his fingertips.

Yasir was then dropped by Labuschagne off his own bowling on 43. He was finally out hooking a Cummins delivery to Nathan Lyon. —AFP

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard at the end of day three in the pink-ball second cricket Test between Australia and Pakistan at Adelaide Oval yesterday:	
<b>Australia 1st innings 589-3</b> dec (D. Warner 335 n.o., M. Labuschagne 162)	
<b>Pakistan 1st innings 302</b> (Y. Shah 113, B. Azam 97; Starc 6-66, Cummins 3-83)	
Pakistan 2nd innings	
S. Masood not out	14
Imam-ul-Haq lbw Hazlewood	0
A. Ali c Smith b Starc	9
B. Azam c Paine b Hazlewood	8
A. Shafiq not out	8
Extras	0
Total (three wickets: 16.5 overs)	39
Fall of wickets: 1-2 (Imam-ul-Haq), 2-11 (Azhar), 3-20 (Azam)	
Still to bat: Ifthikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan, Yasir Shah, Shaheen Afridi, Muhammad Musa, Mohammad Abbas	
Bowling: Starc 4-10-1, Hazlewood 8-3-15-2, Cummins 4.5-2-14-0.	

## Root, Burns score tons, take England to striking distance of N Zealand total

WELLINGTON: Joe Root ended a poor run of form when he scored his 17th test century and led England to 269-5 before rain ended play early on the third day of the second test against New Zealand at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday.

Rory Burns (101) also scored his second test century and combined with his captain in a 177-run third wicket partnership that resurrected England's first innings. Root, who had not scored a test century since early February and was averaging just 27.10 this year prior to his current innings, was on 114 at stumps with Ollie Pope on four and England within striking distance of New Zealand's 375.

Rain had forced the players off the field at about 5.30 p.m. (0430 GMT) and umpires Kumar Dharmasena and Paul Wilson decided to abandon play 15 minutes later. The final



HAMILTON: England's captain Joe Root (R) watches as New Zealand's wicketkeeper BJ Watling (L) fails to stop the ball and him reaching his century during day three of the second cricket Test between England and New Zealand at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. —AFP

two days of the match are also expected to be affected by rain, increasing the chances that New Zealand will win their fifth successive test series at home in the last two years after they won the first game by an innings and 65 runs.

"I think the game is reasonably even," New Zealand pace bowler Tim Southee told the BBC. "The ball is still reasonably hard. 'Hopefully we can turn up tomorrow, grab some assistance early and knock a couple over ... especially Root - then who knows?'"

### CENTURY RELIEF

Root (84) and Ben Stokes (10) had resumed the final session yesterday on 218-3 and were aggressive against the second new ball, which had been taken just before tea. Stokes, however, was caught by first slip Ross Taylor off Southee for 26 just before Root brought up his century.

The England captain reached the milestone with successive boundaries off Neil Wagner in the next over. He moved

from 95 to 99 with a leg glance and then to 103 with an under edge that bounced over the stumps and past wicket-keeper BJ Watling's head for his 13th four.

Debutant Zak Crawley lasted just six balls, during which he survived a close run out as he scored his first test run. He was caught behind by Watling off Wagner for one.

Burns was the only wicket to fall in the first two sessions when he was run out two balls after he reached his century. He flicked a delivery from Wagner to the leg side and jogged a single but was then called through for a second run by Root and despite almost making his ground he was unable to beat Jeet Raval's flat throw from midwicket.

"I thought when Rooty asked me straight away, I was there," Burns told Britain's Sky Sports. "I thought I had enough in the tank but I wasn't quite there."

"Rooty was giving me a nudge and I thought 'go on then', I thought a big one was there so I was disappointed to miss out." —Reuters

## All Blacks star Savea to miss Hurricanes Super season

WELLINGTON: All Blacks star Ardie Savea is to miss most of the 2020 Super Rugby season after announcing yesterday he is to undergo surgery following an injury suffered in the World Cup semi-final loss to England.

He is the second marquee player to be missing from the Wellington Hurricanes after All Blacks fullback Beauden Barrett transferred to the Auckland Blues. Savea, a finalist for the world player of the year, revealed the extent of the knee injury in an Instagram post when he said he could be sidelined for up to six months.

"Thought I'd let you guys know that I'll be getting surgery on my knee that I injured in the semifinal," Savea said. "Unfortunately will be out for 5-6 months so will miss the majority of the Super Rugby season with my Canes brothers."

"Pretty gutted when I found out even though I thought I'd be sweet if something like this happened. I'm good now just been partying and relaxing and now will wait for surgery."

With the regular super rugby season finishing at the end of May, it means Savea is unlikely to be seen before the play-offs — if the Hurricanes qualify. The bruising loose forward had been seen as a likely All Blacks replacement at number eight for Kieran Read who retired from international rugby after the World Cup. However, a lack of game time may rule him out of the mid-year Tests against Wales and Scotland. —AFP

## Montpellier rout Lyon, Bordeaux down Racing

PARIS: Montpellier romped to a five-try bonus point triumph over French Top 14 leaders Lyon on Saturday as Bordeaux-Begles defeated Racing92 on the road for the first time in 12 years to stay in second place.

Lyon's lead over Bordeaux was cut to just one point after their second loss of the league season which worryingly followed back-to-back defeats in the European Champions Cup to Northampton and Leinster.

As expected, Montpellier were unable to hand a debut to South African World Cup winner Handre Pollard who is still recovering from an eye socket injury,

However, the fly-half star wasn't missed as Montpellier moved up to fourth place after first-half tries from Fiji winger Nemani Nadolo, South Africa hooker Bismarck du Plessis and back-rower Louis Picamoles were followed by further scores from South African lock Nicolaas van Rensburg and replacement hooker Youri Delhomme in the closing 10 minutes.

Benoit Paillaugue, likely to be eventually replaced by Pollard, converted four of his team's tries. In Paris, Bordeaux and Racing ran in four tries each but Matthieu Jalibert's greater accuracy with the boot proved crucial in a 34-30 win.

Fiji winger Semi Radradra grabbed two tries for Bordeaux while New Zealand-born French international flyer Virimi Vakatawa also scored twice. Both men were, however, also yellow carded. Victory was especially sweet for Bordeaux coach Christophe Urios who had described Racing's ultra-modern, multi-sport Paris La Defense Arena,

which has an artificial surface, as a "community hall".

"We prepared for the match with the intention of showing who we are," said Urios. "We had started the season well but there were always good excuses — the internationals, the World Cup."

"But there are no more excuses, everyone is on an equal footing. Both teams played a great rugby match. We were stronger physically. We played to win and today we showed that we knew how to play rugby."

"I dedicate this win to all those rugby incompetents who thought I didn't know how to play rugby." Racing are now 16 points behind Bordeaux in the table, a status which left coach Laurent Travers giving up on a top-two finish. "What we have to (do) is be in the top six (to make the play-offs)," said Travers.

"There are four places to play for and at the moment we are not there. So, yes, it's frustrating and disappointing but we are not dead yet." —AFP



MONTPELLIER: Montpellier's South African lock Nicolaas Janse Van Rensburg (R) runs with the ball during the French Top 14 rugby union match between Montpellier and Lyon at the GGL stadium in Montpellier, southern France. —AFP



## Sports

# Avalanche score seven straight, rout Blackhawks in Rantanen's return

## Driedger, Stralman lead Panthers past Predators

**DENVER:** Joonas Donskoi and Nazem Kadri had two goals apiece, Mikko Rantanen had a goal and three assists in his first game in more than a month, and the Colorado Avalanche beat the Chicago Blackhawks 7-3 in Denver on Saturday night. Nathan MacKinnon added a goal and two assists, Tyson Jost also scored and Philipp Grubauer stopped 26 shots for the Avalanche, who swept the back-to-back set against Chicago. Colorado won 5-2 in Chicago on Friday night. Patrick Kane, Brandon Saad and Dominik Kubalik had goals, and Corey Crawford finished with 13 saves in relief of Robin Lehner for the Blackhawks, who played without defenseman Duncan Keith due to a groin injury. Rantanen missed 16 games with a lower-body injury sustained at St. Louis on Oct. 21. He sat out the third period Saturday for what is believed to be precautionary reasons.

### PANTHERS 3, PREDATORS 0

Chris Driedger earned a shutout in his first NHL start, and defenseman Anton Stralman scored twice, leading host Florida to a win over Nashville. Center Aleksander Barkov also scored for the Panthers, who snapped a three-game losing streak. The win marked a successful start to Florida's nine-game homestand. Driedger made 27 saves in his fourth NHL appearance and his first since Oct. 28, 2016. The 25-year-old Driedger — the Ottawa Senators' third-round pick in 2012 — earned this opportunity because of his stellar statistics in the American Hockey League this season — a 2.09 goals-against average and a .938 save percentage.

### KINGS 2, JETS 1

Joakim Ryan and Nikolai Prokhorin scored first-period goals as Los Angeles started fast and hung on for a victory over Winnipeg to set a franchise record for home victories in November. Jack Campbell made 33 saves as the Kings won for the seventh time at home in the month, but the success was neutralized by an 0-4-1 record on the road. Campbell made a point-blank save on Mark Scheifele as time expired. Jack Roslovic scored a third-period goal for the Jets, who were unable to complete the comeback. Winnipeg went 10-3-1 in November and had to settle for matching a franchise record for victories in a single month.

### FLYERS 4, CANADIENS 3 (OT)

Ivan Provorov's near end-to-end rush in overtime gave visiting Philadelphia a win over Montreal. Provorov's sixth goal of the season gave Philadelphia its second overtime victory over the Canadiens this season, as the Flyers also needed the extra frame in a 3-2 result

over Montreal on Nov. 7. The victory caps an outstanding November for the Flyers, who led the NHL with 24 points in the month by earning points in 14 of 16 games (10-2-4). The Flyers have won four straight games and are unbeaten (5-0-1) over their last six contests.

### ISLANDERS 2, BLUE JACKETS 0

Thomas Greiss and Semyon Varlamov combined for 39 saves in a rare two-goalie shutout for host New York, who snapped a three-game losing streak by beating Columbus. Greiss made the first nine saves before exiting for undisclosed reasons with 5:54 left in the opening period. The combined shutout is the third in Islanders history and the first since April 4, 1998. Greiss, who exited with a 1-0 lead, is the first Islanders goalie to ever earn a win after playing less than one period. Anders Lee scored early in the first period, and Mathew Barzal scored late in the second for the Islanders, who went 0-2-1 on a three-game West Coast road trip. Goaltender Elvis Merzlikins made 25 saves for the Blue Jackets, who have alternated wins with losses over the last six games.

### SHARKS 4, COYOTES 2

Logan Couture scored two goals and Martin Jones finished with 21 saves as San Jose rallied from an early 2-0 deficit to defeat Arizona in Glendale, Ariz. Dylan Gambrell and Timo Meier also scored goals and Tomas Hertl had two assists for San Jose, which tied a franchise record with 11 wins in the month of November. The Sharks also extended their NHL record of winning when allowing two goals or less to 45 games. Nick Schmaltz and Derek Stepan scored goals for Arizona, which had a nine-game point streak against Pacific Division teams snapped. Antti Raanta finished with 26 saves.

### CAPITALS 5, RED WINGS 2

A battle between the best and worst teams in the NHL had the predictable outcome, as Alex Ovechkin notched a hat trick and added an assist to lead Washington past host Detroit. The Capitals lead the NHL with 43 points and have won five of their last seven games. Detroit has a league-worst 17 points and is winless in its last nine, including seven straight regulation losses. T.J. Oshie and Tom Wilson also scored for the Capitals, and Ilya Samsonov made 25 saves. Robby Fabbri and Luke Glendening scored for the Red Wings, and Jonathan Bernier stopped 29 shots.

### BLUES 5, PENGUINS 2

St. Louis got third-period goals from Ivan Barbashev, Mackenzie MacEachern and Jaden Schwartz to win its third straight game, knocking off visiting Pittsburgh,



LOS ANGELES: Mathieu Perreault #85 of the Winnipeg Jets attempts a shot in front of Jack Campbell #36 of the Los Angeles Kings during the third period in a 2-1 Kings win at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

which has lost two in a row. Justin Faulk and Nathan Walker also scored for St. Louis, which is 5-1-1 in its past seven. Jordan Binnington stopped 29 of 31 Penguins shots. Sam Lafferty and Kris Letang scored for Pittsburgh, which lost its second straight. Matt Murray made 22 saves. The Penguins played mostly with five defensemen. Brian Dumoulin was helped off the ice in the first minute after St. Louis' Zach Sanford fell on his right leg as the two pursued the puck behind the Pittsburgh net. There was no information on his status.

### RANGERS 4, DEVILS 0

Mika Zibanejad and Jesper Fast scored short-handed goals in the third period and Alexander Georgiev made 33 saves as New York blanked New Jersey in Newark, N.J. The Rangers improved to 4-0-1 in their last five games and 10-4-2 in their last 16, with Zibanejad missing a significant amount of that stretch with an upper-body injury. New York overcame being penalized for 34 minutes. Zibanejad scored his second goal since returning on Wednesday. Adam Fox and Brady Skjei also scored in Georgiev's third career shutout. Mackenzie Blackwood finished with 19 saves for New Jersey.

### HURRICANES 3, LIGHTNING 2

Sebastian Aho and Jaccob Slavin each had a goal

and an assist and Carolina held off host Tampa Bay's third-period rally to win for the first time in their past 10 trips to Tampa. Jordan Martinook also scored for Carolina, which snapped a two-game losing streak, and Dougie Hamilton had two assists. Goaltender James Reimer made 36 saves. Braydon Point and Tyler Johnson scored for the Lightning, whose winless streak reached three games (0-2-1). Curtis McElhinney stopped 21 of 24 shots. The Lightning also had its 13-game point streak in the series against Carolina snapped (11-0-2).

### FLAMES 3, SENATORS 1

Elias Lindholm's late third-period goal, his first of two goals on the night, came just after his team saw a lead disappear and proved to be the game winner as host Calgary beat Ottawa in Calgary's first game after coach Bill Peters resigned. Goaltender David Rittich made 26 saves for the Flames, who recorded the 1,000th home victory in franchise history. Peters resigned after investigations began regarding claims that he directed a racial slur at a player while coaching in the minors and also kicked one of his players while coaching the Carolina Hurricanes a couple of seasons ago. Saturday was Geoff Ward's first official game as the Flames' interim coach. — Reuters

## Leclerc faces post-race probe on Ferrari fuel irregularity

**ABU DHABI:** Charles Leclerc was at risk of a post-race penalty at yesterday's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix after a fuel irregularity was discovered in his Ferrari during pre-race checks.

In a statement, FIA technical delegate Jo Bauer said: "The fuel declaration of car number 16 was checked before the car left the pit-lane.

"There was a significant difference between the declaration of the team and the amount of fuel inside the car. "As this is not in compliance with Technical Directive (TD)/12-19 I am referring this matter to the stewards for their consideration."

The investigation is scheduled to take place after the season-ending race at the Yas Marina circuit.

Leclerc was set to start Sunday's race from third on the grid for Ferrari.

He is bidding to overhaul Red Bull's Max Verstappen to take third place in the drivers' championship and currently trails him by 11 points. Ferrari have faced cynicism from rival teams in recent months amidst claims that the Italian team had 'cheated' by used a power-boosting system. — AFP



ABU DHABI: Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc celebrates his third place finish on the podium at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, after the final race of the Formula One Grand Prix season, yesterday. — AFP

## Lecce end winless run at struggling Fiorentina

**MILAN:** Lecce recorded their first win in more than two months to stun Fiorentina with a 1-0 Serie A victory at the Stadio Artemio Franchi as the hosts lost Franck Ribery to injury.

Andrea La Mantia's diving header early in the second half earned the visitors a precious victory that moved them up to 14th place, four points clear of the relegation zone.

The pressure is increasing on Fiorentina coach Vincenzo Montella after three consecutive league defeats left his side in 11th place on 16 points.

Fiorentina created the better chances in the first half but failed to take them, and

things got worse when Ribery limped off the pitch just before halftime.

La Mantia latched onto a cross to head the visitors in front five minutes into the second half and goalkeeper Gabriel made some excellent saves before Fiorentina striker Dusan Vlahovic ballooned a finish over when unmarked inside the box.

Lecce substitute Khouma Babacar wasted a glorious chance to wrap up the points with a tame finish, but they held on to record their third win of the season and end an eight-match winless run.

Earlier on Saturday, two goals from Mario Pasalic helped Atalanta to a convincing 3-0 win at struggling regional rivals Brescia.

The Croatian midfielder headed in from close range midway through the first half before adding his second after the break with a neat backheel flick.

Josip Ilicic's strike then wrapped up a comfortable victory in stoppage time at the Stadio Mario Rigamonti to leave Brescia in further trouble at the bottom of the standings.

Pasalic could have had a hat-trick, as his first-half header came back off the

post, while Atalanta substitute Ruslan Malinovskyi was also denied by the woodwork.

Mario Balotelli was restored to the Brescia team after being dropped by coach Fabio Grosso and he had their best chance of the game when he fired a second-half shot against the crossbar.

Yet it was a deserved victory for Gian Piero Gasperini's side which ended Atalanta's four-match winless league run, while condemning Brescia to a sixth consecutive defeat.

The win kept Atalanta sixth in the standings on 25 points while Brescia remain rooted to the bottom of the table with just seven points.

Torino moved into the top half of the table with a 1-0 win away at Genoa thanks to a Bremer header, before they had substitute Simone Edera sent off after he picked up two late yellow cards within seven minutes of coming on.

Genoa were denied by the woodwork twice before going behind inside the final 15 minutes, extending their winless run to five games and leaving them in the relegation zone with 10 points. — Reuters

## Seahawks' Clowney to play against Vikings

**SEATTLE:** Seattle Seahawks defensive end Jadeveon Clowney is expected to play in tonight's contest against the Minnesota Vikings after missing one game with a core-muscle injury. The Seahawks listed Clowney as questionable on their Saturday injury report. Clowney was a limited practice participant for the second straight day, leading to optimism from Seattle coach Pete Carroll.

"We just practiced him very lightly today but he did well yesterday and he's fine," Carroll told reporters. "He should be ready to go." Clowney suffered the injury against the San Francisco 49ers on Nov. 11. The Seahawks had a bye the following week before Clowney missed last week's win over the Philadelphia Eagles.

Ahead of the game, Clowney traveled to Philadelphia to meet with Dr. William Meyers, a core-muscle injury specialist. Clowney said he told the

doctor he wasn't interested in undergoing surgery at this time.

"I told him to hold that off," Clowney said. "So I'm holding that off and trying to finish this season. If it was a lot of games left, it'd be different. But we ain't got many ... I just told him I think I can get through those and try to help this team."

Clowney said Meyers explained to him what he was dealing with and discussed his MRI results with him. Clowney was acquired from the Houston Texans on the eve of the season and has been relatively quiet with 25 tackles, three sacks, three forced fumbles and one interception in 10 games. He returned the interception for a touchdown.

Clowney totaled 18.5 sacks in his final two seasons with the Texans. In other injuries, fullback Nick Bellore (quadriceps) and cornerback Neiko Thorpe (groin) are listed as doubtful. Joining Clowney as questionable are defensive tackles Jarran Reed (ankle) and Al Woods (ankle), linebacker Mychal Kendricks (hamstring) and tight end Luke Willson (hamstring).

Carroll said he expects Reed to play and that Woods has made progress. He said the statuses of Kendricks and Willson will likely be determined today. — Reuters

## Johnson out of World Challenge

**BAHAMAS:** American World number four Dustin Johnson has withdrawn from next week's Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas but says he will be fit for the Presidents Cup the following week.

Johnson, who has not played since having left knee surgery in early September, announced the decision on Twitter on Saturday. He said Tiger Woods, captain of the United States team to take on the Internationals at the Presidents Cup in Australia, approved of the plan.

Johnson said that while the cartilage in his knee was fully healed, he felt he would be better off spending the week practising rather than playing. "After a lot of careful thought and consultation, I have decided that it is in my best interest

if I withdraw from next week's Hero World Challenge," he wrote.

"I have informed captain Woods of my decision, which he fully supports and understands, and cannot wait to tee it up with him and my teammates next week in Australia." The World Challenge is an exclusive 18-man event which does not count as an official victory on the PGA Tour. The American Presidents Cup team is already missing world number one Brooks Koepka, who is rehabilitating an injured knee. The Presidents Cup will be played at Royal Melbourne from Dec. 12-15.

The Americans, who have lost the event only once in 12 stagings, are favored over an International team that has also been hit by injury. Australian former world number one Jason Day withdrew on Friday due to a back problem, replaced by South Korean An Byeong-hun.

And South African Charl Schwartzel, a mainstay on the International team at the past four events, was unavailable for selection due to a wrist injury. He has not played since April. — Reuters



## Sports

# France, Portugal, Germany drawn together at Euro 2020 as England get Croatia

## 24-team competition being held in 12 cities across Europe

**BUCHAREST:** France face a major hurdle if they are to add the European Championship to their World Cup crown after coming out in the same Euro 2020 group as Germany and reigning European champions Portugal in Saturday's draw in Bucharest.

Neither France nor Portugal were in Pot One for the 24-team competition being held in 12 cities across Europe, making them the dangerous teams to avoid for the top seeds. In the event, they were all put together in a high-calibre Group F alongside Germany, who will play all their group games in Munich. That is where Joachim Loew's team will face France in their first match on June 16 and then Portugal on June 20.

"It is the hardest group, but we must accept it. It means we will have to be ready right away," said France coach Didier Deschamps. Group F will be completed by one of the winners of the play-offs to be played next March, leaving open several possibilities including Hungary, who will play two games in Budapest should they make it.

France beat Germany in the semi-finals of Euro 2016 on home soil, before slumping in the final against Portugal. With the four best third-placed sides all going through, it is very possible all three will progress to the last 16, but Loew is in no doubt France — who followed their 1998 World Cup triumph by winning Euro 2000 — are the strongest team.

"They are the world champions and have been getting stronger for the last three or four years. They are the group favourites," he said.

### HOME ADVANTAGE?

Meanwhile, England were drawn with Croatia and the Czech Republic in Group D, with Gareth

Southgate's team to play group games at Wembley, which will also host the semi-finals and the July 12 final. That group will be completed by the team to emerge victorious from Path C in the play-offs — either Serbia, Norway, Israel and Scotland. The latter have the added incentive of knowing they will play two games in Glasgow in the group stage should they qualify. England faced the Czechs in qualifying, winning 5-0 at Wembley but suffering their only defeat of the campaign in Prague, losing 2-1 in October. England will kick off at home to Croatia on June 14 in a repeat of the 2018 World Cup semi-final, which was won by the Croatians.

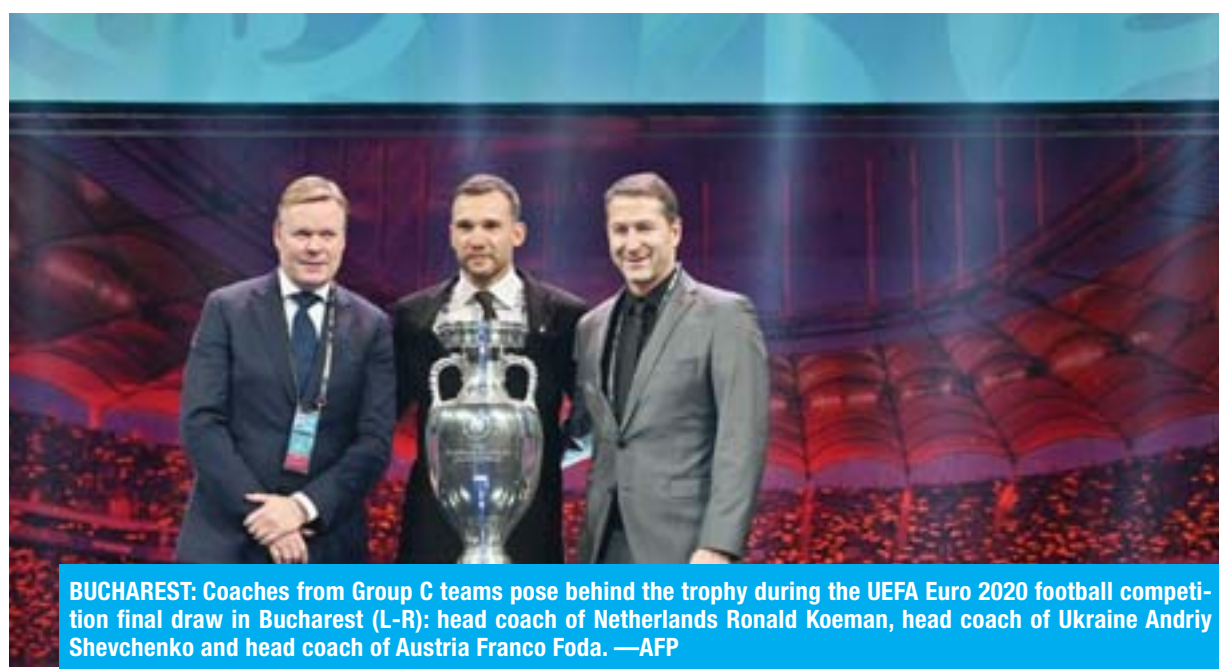
However, should England win their group they will have to play the Group F runners-up, setting up a possible clash with Germany, France or Portugal in the last 16. Even if they win that, the draw is such that they could end up facing Spain in the quarter-finals.

When asked about the advantage of playing at Wembley, Southgate said: "Obviously eight or 10 teams have the advantage of home group matches, and we have only ever been to one semi-final so that doesn't become an advantage unless we get through two very complicated knockout matches as well. That is a long way down the line."

Southgate famously missed a penalty when England lost to Germany in a shootout at Wembley in the Euro 96 semi-finals, the last time they played a match at home in the tournament.

### WALES HEAD TO BAKU

Italy will face Turkey in Rome in the tournament's opening game on June 12, with Switzerland and Euro 2016 semi-finalists Wales also in that section, Group A. Wales will play two matches in far-flung Baku,



**BUCHAREST:** Coaches from Group C teams pose behind the trophy during the UEFA Euro 2020 football competition final draw in Bucharest (L-R): head coach of Netherlands Ronald Koeman, head coach of Ukraine Andriy Shevchenko and head coach of Austria Franco Foda. —AFP

starting with Switzerland on June 13. They played there this month, and won, against Azerbaijan in a qualifier.

"Obviously come the championships it will be six or seven months down the line but we know what to expect, the facilities were fantastic there, and I think it's also great for the fans that they have got two games there," said Wales boss Ryan Giggs.

Spain will play Sweden and Poland as well as a play-off winner in Group E, with Luis Enrique's team

playing in Bilbao. Finland will face two hosts, Denmark and Russia, as well as much-fancied Belgium in Group B at what will be their first Euro.

The Netherlands, on the rise after missing Euro 2016 and the last World Cup, face Ukraine and Austria along with another play-off winner in Group C. Saint Petersburg, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Bucharest and Dublin will also host matches after UEFA decided to spread the Euro across the continent to mark the 60th anniversary of the first tournament in 1960. —AFP

## Messi and Rapinoe expected to take Ballon d'Or honours

**PARIS:** The biggest names in world football will descend on Paris today for the 2019 Ballon d'Or ceremony, with Lionel Messi and USA women's World Cup superstar Megan Rapinoe tipped to leave with the honours. It would be an enormous shock if Rapinoe did not depart the Chatelet Theatre with the women's prize as she returns to the country where she was the driving force on and off the field for the United States as they retained their title.

The suspense surrounds the identity of the men's winner, 12 months after Croatia's Luka Modric claimed the crown thanks to his exploits in dragging his country to

the World Cup final and winning the Champions League with Real Madrid.

That ended a decade in which Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo had won the Ballon d'Or five times each, but the smart money now is on the Barcelona man claiming number six. There are 30 nominees in total for the prize, organised by France Football magazine and voted for by 180 journalists from around the world.

Among the names is Ronaldo, as well as several of the stars of the Liverpool side who won the Champions League, chief among them Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk. At one point he looked like the favourite, but Messi already pipped him to FIFA's The Best title in September. The 32-year-old top-scored in La Liga last season with 36 goals as Barcelona won the title. He did not have a great Copa America with Argentina, but his genius is undeniable. "If you give the Ballon d'Or to the best player of this generation then you should give it always to Lionel Messi. That's how it is," admitted Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp. "But if you give it to the best player of last season, then it was Virgil van Dijk. I don't know exactly

how it will work but that is how I see it." The value of individual honours in football is debatable, and the timing unsatisfactory, coming midway through the European club season.

Yet surely nobody could suggest Rapinoe would not be a deserving winner of just the second women's Ballon d'Or, an award voted for by a panel of 48 journalists. Norway's Ada Hegerberg won it in 2018 but will not retain her title after missing the World Cup.

Among the stars of that tournament to be nominated are England's Lucy Bronze, Netherlands striker Vivianne Miedema, Australia's Sam Kerr and the USA trio of Alex Morgan, Rose Lavelle and Tobin Heath.

However Rapinoe, the 34-year-old feminist icon and outspoken critic of US President Donald Trump, should add this honour to those of Golden Boot winner for top scorer and Golden Ball for best player at the World Cup. Even her supposed rivals seem to be rooting for her. "She does lots of things off the pitch, but I think she is the favourite to win the Ballon d'Or mainly down to her performances during the World Cup," Bronze told France Football. —AFP

## Saudi Arabia beat Bahrain

**DOHA:** Saudi Arabia scored in each half to beat Bahrain 2-0 on Saturday and secure their first victory at the Arabian Gulf Cup. Striker Abdullah Al-Hamdan put Saudi Arabia ahead after 29 minutes and defender Mohammed Al-Khabrani doubled the lead with a 58th-minute header at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium.

Saudi Arabia, who lost their opening match 3-1 to Kuwait, now have three points in Group B along with Kuwait, who lost 2-1 to Oman for whom Abdulaziz Al-Muqbali scored twice from the penalty spot. Defending champions Oman top the group with four points and Bahrain are bottom on one point. Saudi Arabia face Oman and Bahrain play Kuwait on Monday, with all four teams still in contention to reach the semi-finals. —Reuters

## Watford sack manager Flores

**LONDON:** Watford sacked manager Quique Sanchez Flores yesterday less than three months into his reign following a poor run of results in which the club won only one of their 10 league matches with the Spaniard in charge, the Premier League club said.

Flores, who was reappointed in September for a second spell in charge, is the second manager to be sacked by the club this season after they let go of Javi Gracia four games into the campaign.

"With regret, Watford Football Club confirms the departure of Head Coach Quique Sanchez Flores," the club, who are bottom of the standings with eight points from 14 games, said in a statement <https://www.watford-fc.com/teams/first-team/club-statement-qui-que-sanchez-flores>. The club have not announced a replacement but British media reported that former Brighton & Hove Albion manager Chris Hughton was a candidate.

Flores was previously in charge of the club during the 2015-16 season, after which he was surprisingly sacked. He took over from Gracia after his fellow Spaniard won only one point in the first four matches of the season.

Under Flores, Watford's solitary league win came against promoted Norwich City last month while they beat Championship side Swansea City in the League Cup before being eliminated in the fourth round by Everton.

In the league, he oversaw five defeats — including an 8-0 humbling by champions Manchester City — and his last game in charge was Saturday's 2-1 defeat at Southampton where they let their lead slip in the final 12 minutes.

"Quique is a man of great integrity and it was clear how much he wanted to have a positive impact, but ultimately results have dictated our decision," Watford chairman and CEO Scott Duxbury said. —Reuters



**GUANGZHOU:** Guangzhou Evergrande's head coach Fabio Cannavaro (C), players and staff members celebrate after defeating Shanghai Shenhua to win the Chinese Super League (CSL) football championship in Guangzhou in China's southern Guangdong province yesterday. — AFP

## Guangzhou reclaim Chinese title

**HONG KONG:** Guangzhou Evergrande clinched an eighth Chinese Super League title in nine seasons as Fabio Cannavaro's side beat Shanghai Shenhua 3-0 yesterday to reclaim the trophy 12 months after surrendering it to Shanghai SIPG.

Evergrande's run of seven straight titles came to end last season but goals from Wei Shihao, Park Ji-soo and Elkeson ensured the trophy returned to Tianhe Stadium as Guangzhou finished two points ahead of Beijing Guoan. Wei put Guangzhou in front with a deft close-range finish three minutes into first-half stoppage time and Park doubled the advantage 10 minutes after the interval when he side-footed home.

Elkeson, who rejoined Guangzhou in the summer after a three-and-a-half year spell with SIPG, added the third seven minutes from fulltime when he burst into the penalty area following Paulinho's through ball to slot past Shenhua's Chen Zhao. "Today everyone is united and being able to achieve this result is an affirmation of our efforts," said Guangzhou captain Zheng Zhi. "We're very proud of this achievement. This victory is significant. The team has changed and everyone has paid a lot. The new and old players have helped

each other to win this championship."

Guangzhou's victory comes despite a turbulent season for a club that has established itself as the dominant force in Chinese football. Speculation over the future of Cannavaro has been constant since Evergrande were knocked out of the Asian Champions League in the semi-finals and doubts remain over whether the Italian will still be in the post next season.

Beijing finished in second — the club's best finish since 2014 — after fighting back to secure a 3-2 victory over Shandong Luneng. Bruno Genesio's side needed to win today and to have Shenhua defeat Evergrande to win the title, but the club from the capital went two goals down inside 34 minutes when Roger Guedes and Marouane Fellaini netted for Shandong.

Zhang Yuning pulled one back for Beijing and Renato Augusto scored from the penalty spot in first-half injury time to ensure the teams went into the break level. Wang Ziming completed the comeback in injury time as Beijing finished the season on a high.

Deposed champions Shanghai SIPG thrashed already-relegated Shenzhen FC 6-0 as they finished in third while Jiangsu Suning jumped into fourth on the final day when their 2-0 win over Tianjin Tianhai moved them ahead of Shandong Luneng. In the day's other games, Rafa Benitez's Dalian Yifang sealed a 2-0 win over Beijing Renhe and Henan Jianye won 1-0 against Guangzhou R&F. Hebei CFCC beat Wuhan Zall 2-1 while Tianjin Teda took all three points from Chongqing Lifan with a 2-0 win. — Reuters

## Harden scores 60 as Rockets dominate Hawks

**HOUSTON:** James Harden scored 60 points to reach the mark for the fourth time in his career, as the Houston Rockets steamrolled the visiting Atlanta Hawks 158-111 on Saturday night. Harden made 16 of 24 field-goal attempts — the fewest ever in a 60-point game — including 8 of 14 from 3-point range, and connected on 20 of 23 free-throw attempts. He played just 31 minutes due to the one-sided contest and fell one point shy of his career high of 61, accomplished twice. Harden's fourth 60-point outing ties for third in NBA history with Michael Jordan. Only Wilt Chamberlain (32) and Kobe Bryant (six) have more. "That's a great list right there. Those guys are something that I'm trying to get to," Harden said in a postgame television interview. "Hopefully when it is all said and done, I can be mentioned in that group forever." Harden, who also had eight assists, became the fourth player to score 50 or more points on 20 occasions, trailing Chamberlain (118), Jordan (31) and Bryant (25).

### KINGS 100, NUGGETS 97 (OT)

Harrison Barnes scored four of his game-high 30 points in succession to put Sacramento in front in overtime, and Buddy Hield hit two late free throws to help the hosts, after a furious fourth-quarter rally, earn a victory over Denver. Denver, which led by 14 points with 7:21 remaining in regulation, took one final lead on a 3-pointer by Gary Harris in the second minute of the extra session. But the Nuggets, losing for the first time after six straight victories, didn't score again until Harris dropped in two free throws with 14.9 seconds remaining following two free throws and a short-range hoop by Barnes that helped put the Kings on top. Hield's clinching foul shots came with 9.5 seconds left.

### BUCKS 137, HORNETS 96

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 26 points in just 20 minutes of action, leading nine Milwaukee players in double figures in the team's 11th straight win, a rout over visiting Charlotte. The Bucks never trailed, building a double-digit lead less than seven minutes into the first quarter. The Hornets trimmed the deficit to three early in the second quarter, paced by the jump-shooting of guards Terry Rozier and Devonte' Graham, but got no closer. The Bucks quickly pushed the gap to 23 points three minutes out of halftime. Wesley Matthews hit back-to-back 3-pointers early in the period, part of his 3-for-6 shooting from deep and 14 points. Robin Lopez knocked down three 3-pointers and finished with 13 points. The Bucks hit 20 of 44 (45.5 percent) from long range as a team.

### 76ERS 119, PACERS 116

Joel Embiid had 32 points and 11 rebounds while hitting all 15 of his free throws to lift host Philadelphia past Indiana. It was Embiid's 12th double-double as the Sixers improved to 9-0 at home. They also won their third in a row overall. Tobias Harris scored 22 points, Al Horford added 15 and Ben Simmons (7-for-7 from the free-throw line) had 15 points, 13 assists, six rebounds and four steals. T.J. Warren led the Pacers with 29 points, while Malcolm Brogdon added 28. Jeremy Lamb scored 15 points, and Domantas Sabonis had 13 points and 10 rebounds for the Pacers, who had their five-game winning streak snapped. —Reuters



**25** Pakistan fight to avoid defeat against Australia in second Test

**26** Avalanche score seven straight, rout Blackhawks in Rantanen's return

**27** France, Portugal, Germany drawn together at Euro 2020 as England get Croatia



## Man Utd lose more ground on top four

Iheanacho the hero as Leicester close gap on Liverpool



LEICESTER: Everton's Colombian defender Yerry Mina heads the ball clear during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Everton at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England yesterday. — AFP

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United are eight points adrift of the Premier League top four after throwing away a second half lead to draw 2-2 with Aston Villa at Old Trafford yesterday. Jack Grealish shot Villa into the lead with a superb solo effort midway through the first half, but United levelled before the break when Marcus Rashford's header hit the post and came off Villa goalkeeper Tom Heaton into his own net.

Victor Lindelof then headed United in front, but the lead lasted just two minutes before Tyrone Mings secured a deserved point for Dean Smith's visitors. Villa remain just three points behind United in 15th, but edge three points clear of the relegation zone.

Grealish's excellent season continued when he shot the visitors into the lead after 11 minutes. Anwar El Ghazi burst down the right wing before crossing through the United area for Grealish to gather the ball on the left-hand side and take advantage of Andreas Pereira's decision to back off by curling a precise shot into the top corner of David de Gea's goal.

It was the 24-year-old's third goal of the season and, when combined with four assists, means that the seven goals in which he has been involved are the most of any English midfielder in the Premier League this season.

Villa had the ball in the United goal for a second time on

the half hour, from another excellent Grealish contribution, only for Trezeguet's effort to be ruled out for offside. It was a near miss for United which finally prompted them into new-found urgency in their attacking play with Juan Mata soon teeing up Rashford for an untidy shot which the England forward scuffed wide. There was another chance for Rashford, which Heaton did well to save at point-blank while conceding the 42nd minute corner from which he was unfortunate to be credited with an own goal.

Fred and Mata moved a short corner onto Andreas Pereira whose hanging cross towards the far post was headed off the post by Rashford and the ball ricocheted in via Heaton. Grealish and Trezeguet remained a threat, with De Gea forced to tip a shot from the latter onto his bar before the interval although, in an increasingly entertaining and open contest, United finally looked as threatening as their visitors.

United appealed for offside but VAR showed that Brandon Williams had clearly played the England defender on. In another match, Kelechi Iheanacho struck deep into stoppage time as Leicester beat Everton 2-1 to close the gap on Liverpool at the top of the Premier League to eight points. Richarlison had given the visitors a shock lead at the King Power as Everton produced a performance that may do

enough to save manager Marco Silva's job ahead of the Merseyside derby on Wednesday.

But the introduction of Iheanacho just after the hour mark changed the game as the Nigerian set up Jamie Vardy to equalise and then dramatically scored the winner, which was initially ruled out for offside before a VAR review overturned the decision.

A sixth straight Premier League win sends Brendan Rodgers's men three points clear of defending champions Manchester City in second. Silva was reportedly on the verge of losing his job earlier in the week after a run of just two wins in 10 league games that has left the Toffees hovering just above the relegation zone.

The Portuguese responded with a change of formation and his switch to a 3-5-2 worked to perfection for the opening goal. Djibril Sidibe broke upfield from right wing-back and his cross was bulletted home by Richarlison with a diving header. Leicester had already seen two half-hearted appeals for a penalty waived away for challenges on Ayoze Perez by the time that referee Graham Scott did point to the spot for Mason Holgate's apparent trip on Ben Chilwell.

However, a lengthy VAR review concluded no contact had been made and the Foxes were frustrated once more. Leicester laboured in the search for an equaliser, but the

introduction of Iheanacho as a substitute just after the hour mark provided the much-needed spark.

Vardy had been quiet for the first 68 minutes, but came alive in the final quarter. James Maddison should have done better from his cross as his finish was straight at Pickford before Vardy rose highest in the box but just planted his header from Youri Tielemans's cross too high.

Earlier, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang once again rescued Arsenal as his brace earned them a 2-2 draw at Norwich City in Freddie Ljungberg's first game as caretaker manager yesterday.

The Gabonese striker took his away league tally to six this season as he twice levelled after an impressive Norwich side led through goals by Teemu Pukki and Todd Cantwell.

While Arsenal showed some backbone to return to London with a point two days after Unai Emery was sacked as manager they are now without a Premier League win for six games — their longest streak within a season since 1994. They are eighth, seven points adrift of fourth-placed Chelsea, while Norwich remain second from bottom. Aubameyang fired in from close range following a corner to level again in the 57th minute but it was Norwich, eyeing a second successive league victory, who looked the more likely winners with Leno making several good saves. — Agencies

## Hamilton wraps up season with 'master-class' in Abu Dhabi

**ABU DHABI:** Lewis Hamilton delivered sumptuous confirmation of his title-winning supremacy yesterday when he claimed his 84th career victory and 11th in 21 races this year by dominating the season-ending 'twilight' Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Starting from a record 88th pole position, the 34-year-old Briton was unchallenged from lights to flag as he cruised to an untroubled triumph 16 seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc of Ferrari, who faced a post-race investigation for fuel irregularities.

The six-times world champion's success extended his points-scoring run to a record-equaling 33 races, levelling with his own record, and brought him his 50th victory from pole position.

"That was an absolute master-class," Hamilton's race

engineer Peter Bonnington told him on team radio. "You didn't even break into a sweat!" The winner, who secured title number six with two races to go in Texas last month replied: "I can assure you, I am definitely sweating."

His fifth win at the Yas Marina circuit drew him level with Ayrton Senna in claiming a 19th start-to-finish triumph. Hamilton's Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who had started from the back of the grid after taking a new engine, came home fourth ahead of four-time champion Sebastian Vettel in the second Ferrari and Alex Albon in the second Red Bull.

It was a welcome morale boost for the competitive Finn, three days after announcing the end of his three-year marriage to Emilia. Sergio Perez took seventh for Racing Point on the final lap, Lando Norris was eighth for McLaren, Daniil Kvyat of Toro Rosso ninth and Carlos Sainz, in the second McLaren, took 10th.

The race was preceded by drama for Ferrari when Leclerc's car was discovered, during a pit-lane inspection, to have a fuel irregularity that revealed "significant discrepancies" and required a planned post-race stewards investigation.

It was embarrassing for the team, in one of Ferrari's key markets and close to the Ferrari World theme park, but this seemed to have no effect on the Monegasque who made a strong start and passed Verstappen for second at Turn Eight on the opening lap.

Hamilton made a perfect start to his 250th F1 race and was 1.6 seconds clear after one lap and 3.3 by lap six as Leclerc launched his pursuit, moving two seconds clear of the Dutchman in a bid to overhaul him and take third in the drivers' championship.

After a typically hot day, the sun went down and the floodlights came on around the track. Verstappen pitted on lap 26, re-joining third behind Leclerc before, a lap later, Hamilton came in to take 'hards' in 3.2 seconds and retained his lead.

He was six seconds clear of Leclerc with Verstappen adrift by 4.6 and complaining of power problems. Bottas came in on lap 30 for an impeccable stop, returning in sixth as Hamilton, in supreme form, clocked a fastest lap in 1:41.070 to go 12 seconds clear of Leclerc. Despite his complaints, Verstappen had great speed and he passed Leclerc with a dazzling move at Turn Eight, which he defended stoutly, to take second and delight his 'orange army' in the grandstands.

Bottas then broke the track lap record, set by Vettel for Red Bull in 2009, with a 1:39.715. He was sixth and chasing down Albon with 19 laps to go. On lap 39, Leclerc and Vettel pitted again, without problem this time, as Bottas took fourth from Albon. Verstappen, in radio conversation with his team, chuckled as he said: "Are both Ferraris on a two-stop? I can hear it behind you!" The closing stages were punctuated by drama as Bottas closed down Leclerc



ABU DHABI: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates his win at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, after the final race of the Formula One Grand Prix season, yesterday. — AFP

to fight for third and Hamilton, on cue, clocked a new lap record in 1:39.283, setting himself up to claim another clean sweep of pole position, fastest lap and race victory. It was the third time Hamilton had scored 11 wins in a season, equalling his records set in 2014 and last year. — AFP