

Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 18003

RABIA ALTHANI 9, 1441 AH | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019

6 Almost expired market: A place to bag a great deal



27 Iraq revolution dramatized, written, read, and painted



47 Bahrain beat Iraq 7-5 on penalties after 2-2 draw



Arson suspected as inferno guts electronics warehouse

SEE PAGE 9

Local

Health on wheels



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

Disability is any deficiency in the physical, mental or sensory abilities of the individual, and it takes many forms, such as mental, hearing or visual or physical impairment. Last week the Kuwait Society for Human Rights carried out a humanitarian activity on the occasion of the International Day of Disabled Persons, which falls on Dec 3 every year. The event included sitting in a wheelchair and touring the venue to experience firsthand the suffering of people with disabilities and live their reality and the difficulties they face.

The importance of this activity is that it sends clear and targeted messages about the role of the community and its members towards people with disabilities that force them to use wheelchairs, and that they are no less or different.

I agree with these campaigns because I believe that in Kuwait people who use wheelchairs suffer a lot, whether due to disabilities or old age, especially when moving from one place to another, as not all places are equipped with wheelchair ramps. Worse, some healthy people use the parking spaces for disabled people, or ATM machines in some local banks that are allocated for people on wheelchairs.



Another form of suffering for people with disabilities is a lack of signs and walkways for pedestrians. I don't know of any street people with wheelchairs can use safely, except a few places near the beaches. I am often surprised to find emergency exits do not have a ramp for people on wheelchairs, as most of these exits only have stairs. I wonder how those people can get out in case of fire or necessity.

In April, the Kuwait Society for Disabled Persons organized a seminar on wheelchairs to highlight the problems experienced by a large number of people with motor disabilities - the lack of suitable wheelchairs for them. The participants pleaded for a new wheelchair every year. So, not only the problems of people with disabilities here is the difficulty in mobility, but even the possibility of obtaining a new wheelchair every year is difficult, and I hope that this problem is resolved once and for all.

The chairman of the Kuwait Society for Human Rights said persons with disabilities face obstacles that may seem very easy and simple to others, but constitute a barrier that may lead to isolation and a desire to not go to public places to avoid these difficulties, which is psychological suffering for them. I really believe that we need an activity like this every month throughout the year to remind healthy people that people with disabilities are no less or different and we need to support them, because anyone can become disabled at any time for any reason.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Almost there. A bridge over the 6th Ring Road reaches the final stage of construction. — Photo by Thomas Joseph

Ready for the Beach ??



Kuwait Times
Established 1961

Subscribe or renew your subscription
& get K.D 50

1 Coupon
FREE



P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait | Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7
Fax: 24835620 - 24835621 | E: info@kuwaittimes.net

Desert Camping: Kuwait's favorite winter pastime



PHOTO FEATURE



Kuwait's desert camping season is off to a great start. Desert camping offers a fun, relaxing way for families to gather, enjoy the great outdoors during the best weather of the year. Around 1,000 licenses have been issued by the municipality this season, with each applicant receiving an area of 1,000 square meters.

But there are also many dangers and campers should be aware of their environment, make sure not to leave fires unattended or sleep in sealed

tents with heaters on. Campers are also responsible for protecting the environment and cleaning up after themselves. People should avoid building any structures with cement at their campsites and must not litter or damage the soil. According to environment law no. 42/2016, environmental violations can result in heavy fines – up to KD 5,000.

— Photos by Yasser Al Zayyat



Local

Almost Expired Market: A place to bag a great deal



By Ben Garcia

The rising cost of living has hit everyone, especially lower- and middle-income families. So markets like Souq Turki (Turkish Market) in Shuwaikh have sprung up to fill the gap in family budgets. This market is a legitimate market for food-stuff close to their expiry date. It is located in Shuwaikh Industrial Area behind London Shopping Center off Canada Dry Street. Frozen items include minced chicken/beef, whole chicken and parts, mutton and even fish. Since they are nearly expired, they are sold at half price or even cheaper.

Products being sold at the Turkish Market usually come from supermarkets and grocery stores across Kuwait. "In supermarkets and hypermarkets, items that are nearly expired must be discarded before municipal inspectors see them. If they are displayed on shelves, grocery stores are told to remove them or they will be penalized," said a salesman at the Turkish Market who asked that his name be withheld.

There are approximately 20 stores in the area buying and selling nearly expired items.

The relatively compact area is frequented mostly by low- and medium-income families and people searching for a better deal. But according to the salesman, the market is now being visited by customers from all walks of life from as far as Fahaeel and Jahra.

In one store you can find chocolates, candies and nuts, while another store sells a variety of cooking oil, spices, pasta, sugar and salt at a very cheap price. There are plenty of choices - cold cuts, sausages, mortadella, salad dressing, frozen fruit, dry products like rice, shampoos, body soaps, detergents and much more.

"I come to buy items here once in a while, especially items I know I can use right away. These are all consumable items - they're not harmful to health because they are not expired yet and can be consumed immediately," said a shopper. But be warned - all items should be examined carefully and dates studied. If frozen items are not stored properly, they can pose a health hazard. Nonetheless, there is a large selection of food items in the market and it's up to customers to buy them or not.

Kuwait Times

ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED



- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait

Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621

E: info@kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait Owl Team: Unique group in the Middle East



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Owl Team, established in 2016, is one of few groups in the Middle East dedicated to the protection and proliferation of owls in the region. The team, consisting of 30 members with 30 owls of 15 different species, is dedicated to owl rearing. The members import owls from Europe and elsewhere and are devoted to the fight for protecting this bird. The Kuwait Owl Team is eager to spread awareness and educate people on owls and their habits. — KUNA

Kuwait funds projects worth \$4bn in Africa

KUWAIT: Senegalese Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulahad Mbacke yesterday lauded the vital role of Kuwait in supporting Africa via the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), which has financed 324 projects worth around four billion dollars. Mbacke said at a press conference held on the occasion of the Africa Day that KFAED established strong ties with Africa under the wise directives of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah by financing projects and programs according to the 2063 plan. He expressed hope for more cooperation for the Kuwaiti private sector to invest in Africa.

The African Union has witnessed many challenges and changes since its inception, although Africa survived to prove to the world that the people on their own could achieve much, added Mbacke. He pointed out that Africa is rich in resources, such as agriculture and natural resources; however, it suffers from living conditions, where nearly 60 percent of youth are forced to migrate in search for better living conditions.

The African Development Bank and the Arab African International Bank as well as number of committees have helped with security and development advancement of the continent, said ambassador. In addition, during the 50th anniversary



KUWAIT: African ambassadors hold a press conference yesterday. — KUNA

of the formation of the African Union in 2013, the union adopted the African Development Strategy Vision 2063, which includes seven aspirations for a better future for younger generations.

Kuwait is in constant steps to achieve 2035 agenda, under the directives of HH the Amir in 2017, he noted. The African Agenda 2063 aspires in implementing vast projects, such as integrated network of high-speed rail, virtual African university and the establishment of a market for air transport, along with the establishment of the free trade zone of Africa to establish the world's largest free trade area since the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1995.

Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Tariq Al-Qouni said that the celebration of Africa Day this year

has a special impact on every Egyptian especially that the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi officially take over the post of ceremonial head of the African Union. The African Union has witnessed a number of regional and international achievements that have contributed to the development within the framework of Egyptian President directives' to continue to expand cooperation between world and Africa, he added.

Egypt has supported infrastructure projects in Africa, especially the Cairo-Cape Town Highway and seeks to rehabilitate the Nile to increase trade volume with the Nile river basin countries, he noted. In the medical field, Qouni said that numerous initiatives have been launched to promote public health in Africa. — KUNA

News in brief

Winter is coming

KUWAIT: Astronomer and historian Adel Al-Saadoun said the winter Marbaaniya season (40 days) will start tomorrow and end on Feb 14, adding it has the name Marbaaniya because it is 40 days long. Marbaaniya is one of the year's 12 seasons, starting with Suhail and ending with "Kalbain. Saadoun said Marbaaniya is divided into two periods - the first is of 20 days and continues till Dec 27, and the second from Dec 28 until Feb 14, adding the second period sees colder weather and temperatures may reach zero degrees Celsius. — A Saleh

Fintas clean-up

The Municipality's public relations department said its Ahmadi branch carried out a field campaign to clean Fintas as part of the "Keep it Clean" drive. Director of Public Cleanliness and Road Occupancy in Ahmadi Faisal Al-Otaibi said 161 cu m of rubbish was removed, in addition to removing 10 abandoned cars. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

Arson suspected as inferno guts electronics warehouse

Nine teams control fire in Rai industrial area

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The public relations and information department at Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said an investigation team conducted technical inspections immediately after extinguishing a massive fire in an electronics workshop in Rai. There is a suspicion of criminal intent in the incident, which means it was caused deliberately. After the completion of all investigation procedures, the technical report on the incident will be sent to concerned authorities in the ministry of interior and the public prosecution, supported by evidence indicating criminal suspicions.

The fire had spread to eight industrial lots of around 10,000 sq m. Industrial Shuwaikh, Ardiya, Hilali, Mishref, backup, Salmiya, Subhan, Mina Abdullah and Sulaibikhat centers participated in fighting the fire under the command of Director General Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad and his acting deputy Brig Mohammad Al-Mahameed. No one was injured but material damage is extensive.

Meanwhile, Subhan firemen succeed in rescuing an Asian worker who was trapped under a construction crane which had flipped over. The worker was taken by paramedics for treatment for leg injuries. Also, Sulaibikhat and Ardiya fire centers rushed to put out a fire in Andalus. The fire was in a ground floor room and smoke had spread throughout the house. Firemen evacuated the house and put out the fire in record time.



KUWAIT: Firemen douse a huge fire in an electronics warehouse in Rai yesterday. — KUNA

Kuwaiti commander awarded US Order of Saint Barbara

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti army announced yesterday Artillery Commander Brig Gen Khaled Al-Shaala was awarded the US military's Order of Saint Barbara medal. A statement issued by the directorate of moral guidance and public relations of the Kuwaiti army said in a statement that Shaala is the first officer in the Middle East to receive this US order.

It added that the awarding of Brigadier Shaala came during the conclusion of the joint exercise Spartan II. The exercise, which took place between the artillery of the Kuwaiti ground force and its American counterpart from Dec 1-5, was aimed at enhancing and developing joint planning, unifying concepts and coordinating fire against hostile targets. This exercise was also designed to raise the level of training and combat readiness of the participants. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Artillery Commander Brig Gen Khaled Al-Shaala is awarded the US military's Order of Saint Barbara yesterday. — KUNA

Japan to send 270 sailors to guard ships

TOKYO: Japan is working on a plan to send about 270 seamen to the Middle East to guard ships supplying Japan under a law that allows military deployments for research and intelligence gathering, the Nikkei business daily said. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering a January visit to the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the paper added.

Japan maintains friendly ties with both the United States and Iran, and has said it would not join any US coalition to protect merchant vessels in the region. The Nikkei said the government would propose deploying one escort ship and a patrol aircraft from the Maritime Self-Defense Force on a one-year mission that could be renewed annually. It plans to finalise the plan by year-end, the Nikkei said.

Global commodity trading has been rocked this year by attacks

on international merchant vessels that Japan's Western allies have blamed on Iran. Tehran denies involvement. Tensions have heightened between Tehran and Washington since last year, when President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with six nations and re-imposed sanctions on the country, crippling its economy.

Japan, which has stopped buying oil from Iran because of US sanctions, is eager to see stability in the Middle East, where it gets the bulk of its oil imports. Abe has tried unsuccessfully to ease tensions between the two countries. Iran has criticized US efforts to build an alliance to protect shipping in the Gulf, and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Japanese public broadcaster NHK this week after meeting with Abe that Tehran was opposed to any foreign forces in the region.

Iran has also proposed a visit to Japan by President Hassan Rouhani try to resolve Iran's nuclear impasse with Washington, Kyodo news reported. Japan's pacifist constitution bans a standing military but allows self-defense forces. The prospect of deploying navy personnel to the region has sparked calls for caution from liberal media and other critics. — Reuters

Pentagon denies US mulling 14,000 more troops for Mideast

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon on Wednesday denied a report that the United States was weighing sending up to 14,000 more troops to the Middle East in the face of a perceived threat from Iran. The Wall Street Journal reported that the possible deployment would include "dozens" more ships and double the number of troops added to the US force in the region since the beginning of this year, citing unnamed US officials. The paper said President Donald Trump could make a decision on the troop boost as early as this month.

But the Pentagon disputed the accuracy of the report. "To be clear, the reporting is wrong. The US is not considering sending 14,000 additional troops to the Middle East," spokeswoman Alyssa Farah tweeted. The region has seen a series of attacks on shipping vessels and a drone and missile attack on Saudi oil installations in September blamed on Iran. Washington has already ratcheted up its military presence in the Gulf and expanded economic sanctions on Tehran, elevating tensions across the region.

In mid-November the US aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln sailed through the Strait of Hormuz in a show of force aimed at reassuring allies worried about the Iran threat. In October Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced that two fighter squadrons and additional missile defense batteries were being sent to Saudi Arabia, for a total of about 3,000 new troops.

Earlier Wednesday Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the country was willing to return to the negotiating table over its nuclear program if the United States first drops sanctions, which have hampered the country's economy and may have contributed to recent domestic turmoil sparked by fuel price hikes.

Speaking at a defense conference in Manama, Bahrain on Nov 23, General Kenneth McKenzie, commander of US Central Command, said the US does not have all the resources it needs to cover the Middle East region. "There is a lot of water to cover. Simply put, we don't have sufficient resources to be where we want to be in the right numbers all the time," he told the annual Manama Dialogue on regional security. —AFP



India rape victim set ablaze on way to court

Trump on quest for foreign wins - and drama

Page 15

Page 18



WASHINGTON: Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi announces that the House will proceed with articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump at the Speaker's Balcony in the US Capitol yesterday. —AFP

Dems to draft impeachment articles

Pelosi says no one is above the law as Trump fumes

WASHINGTON: US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told congressional leaders yesterday to draft articles of impeachment against Donald Trump, saying the president's abuse of power "leaves us no choice but to act". By asking the House Judiciary Committee chairman to draw up the charges, Pelosi, the top congressional Democrat, signaled that a formal impeachment process against the 45th president is all but assured.

With a majority of members in the Democratic-controlled chamber already expressing intent to back the deeply divisive procedure, Trump is likely to become just the third president in US history to be impeached by the House of Representatives. "Sadly, but with confidence and humility, with allegiance to our founders and a heart full of love for America, today I am asking our chairman to proceed with articles of impeachment," Pelosi said in a short, somber televised statement.

Trump "has engaged in abuse of power, undermined our national security and jeopardized the integrity of our elections," she said, adding that "the president leaves us no choice but to act." Pelosi did not announce the charges, but Trump could face impeachment for abuse of power, obstruction of Congress and obstruction of justice.

Trump 'abused his power'

She said that "the president abused his power for his own political benefit" by withholding military aid to Ukraine and a White House meeting in

exchange for Kiev's commitment to investigate Trump's political rival Joe Biden. "If we allow a president to be above the law, we do so surely at the peril of our republic," added the speaker, Trump's chief nemesis in Congress.

Trump's spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham shot back, saying Democrats should be "ashamed" for pulling the trigger on impeachment. Trump goaded his Democrat opponents, saying that if they wanted to impeach him they should press ahead now so that he can have a "fair trial" in the Senate, where his Republican Party holds power. The defiant president continued his online rant, saying Democrats were seeking to impeach him "over NOTHING". "The good thing is that the Republicans have NEVER been more united," Trump tweeted. "We will win!"

The impeachment process is expected to proceed rapidly, with articles likely presented for a full House vote later this month after weeks of hearings. "If you are going to impeach me, do it now, fast, so we can have a fair trial in the Senate, and so that our country can get back to business," Trump tweeted. Trump's re-election campaign weighed in too, saying the Democrats have long pushed impeachment as a way to negate the results of the 2016 election. "They should just get on with it," Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale said in a statement.

Democrats want a timely process too, as they do not want an impeachment to drag into their party's voting process that decides the 2020

presidential nominee. Democrats have been building a case that Trump should be impeached for trying to leverage a White House meeting and military aid to pressure Ukraine for dirt on Biden, Trump's potential rival in the 2020 election.

On Wednesday, three constitutional scholars told the House Judiciary Committee that the

president's actions seeking foreign interference in US elections were clear grounds for removal. A Democrat on the panel, Steve Cohen, said the articles of impeachment will "certainly" include abuse of power and the obstruction of Congress. "It's possible we'll get to obstruction of justice," Cohen told CNN. — AFP

Iraq paramilitary demonstrators flood protest camp

BAGHDAD: Several thousand men backing a paramilitary force close to Iran flooded the Iraqi capital's main protest camp yesterday, worrying anti-government demonstrators who have denounced Tehran's role in their country. The men arrived in Tahrir (Liberation) Square in apparently coordinated marches from different parts of the capital, waving sticks, Iraqi flags and the logo of the Hashed al-Shaabi armed network.

Some carried portraits of Hashed fighters killed in fighting against jihadists as well as pictures of the country's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani. The

Hashed had backed the Iraqi government but after a dramatic intervention by Sistani last week, it dropped its support. The embattled prime minister, Adel Abdel Mahdi, resigned at the weekend. Many units within the Shiite-majority force have been trained or equipped by Iran.

The demonstrators occupying the square for weeks have explicitly criticized Iran for backing an Iraqi political elite they see as corrupt and inept. They have insisted that all current figures in power are tainted with graft and have been wary of political parties seeking to coopt the youth-dominated movement. The new arrivals yesterday mixed in with thousands of other protesters in the square, who appeared worried although no confrontation or skirmishes took place. "They've ruined it," one protester said, as another muttered, "It's going to get messy." — AFP

International

US exchanges ambassadors with Sudan after 2 decades

Washington welcomes new reformist civilian leader

WASHINGTON: The United States said Wednesday it would name an ambassador to Sudan for the first time in 23 years as it welcomed the country's new reformist civilian leader. The United States hailed early steps taken by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok to "break with the policies and practices of the previous regime," whose ties with radical Islamists and brutal domestic campaigns had made Sudan a pariah in the West.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the United States would appoint an ambassador to Khartoum, subject to Senate confirmation, and that Sudan would restore full-level representation in Washington. "This is a historic step to strengthen our bilateral relationship," Pompeo wrote on Twitter. In an accompanying statement, Pompeo praised Hamdok's civilian-led transitional government for launching "vast reforms."

Hamdok has "demonstrated a commitment to peace negotiations with armed opposition groups, established a commission of inquiry to investigate violence against protestors, and committed to holding democratic elections at the end of the 39-month transition period," Pompeo said. Hamdok, a British-educated former diplomat and UN official, is the first Sudanese leader to visit Washington since 1985.

However, he had a low-key welcome, meeting the State Department number-three, David Hale. Both Pompeo and President Donald Trump were away on foreign travel. Hamdok also met with senior lawmakers and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who said he welcomed the new government's "stated commitment to respecting human rights, fighting corruption and reforming Sudan's economy." Hamdok took charge in August after months of demonstrations led by young people that brought down veteran strongman Omar al-Bashir and then a military council that had tried to stay in power. The protests were triggered by discontent over the

high cost of bread and other economic concerns.

Still seeking removal from terrorism blacklist

The United States had tense relation with Bashir, who took power in 1989 and embraced Islamism, including welcoming Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. After the 1998 attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the United States fired a missile that destroyed a major pharmaceutical factory in Sudan over allegations, fiercely disputed since, that it produced a nerve agent. In one legacy that still tarnishes relations, the United States classifies Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism, a designation that the new government calls a severe impediment to foreign investment.

US officials, while voicing sympathy for Sudan's appeals, say that removal of the designation is a legal process that will take time. In talks at the US Congress, lawmakers pledged support for the new government but said Sudan must reach a settlement with families of the victims of the embassy bombings as well as the 2000 attack on the USS Cole, allegedly backed by the then-regime.

Lawmakers "raised lingering concerns about the need for financial transparency within the security sector and about remaining elements of the old regime who may still support international terrorism," said a statement by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Hamdok addressed the issue in a statement from his office. "A key program of the new transitional government is to fight terrorism, and in order to have stability in the region there has to be a regional and international program to fight terrorism," he said.

Mnuchin meanwhile spoke to Hamdok about combatting money laundering and terrorism financing, the Treasury Department said. Tensions also soared over Bashir's scorched-earth crackdown in the parched western region of Darfur, a campaign



WASHINGTON: Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok (right) meets House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. — AFP

that the United States described as genocide as it pressed for the prosecution of Bashir. The United Nations estimates that about 300,000 people were killed and 2.5 million displaced in the conflict, as Sudanese troops targeting ethnic groups suspected of supporting rebels raped, killed, looted and burned villages. Hamdok last month traveled to Darfur where he met hundreds of victims of the conflict and assured them that he was working on their demands for lasting peace. — AFP

Khamenei orders Iran unrest victims treated as 'martyrs'

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader has agreed that people killed in nationwide unrest last month who had no role in fomenting it should be treated as "martyrs" with their families compensated. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's decision marked a significant softening of position by the Iranian authorities towards those killed during the protests that erupted on November 15 following a surprise hike in fuel prices. He was responding to a report on the protests he commissioned from Iran's Supreme National Security Council, his official website said Wednesday. He ordered that its recommendations "be implemented as soon as possible".

Iran has yet to give overall figures for the number of people killed or arrested when security forces moved in to quell the unrest that saw buildings torched and shops looted. London-based human rights group Amnesty International said on Monday that at least 208 people had died. But Iran has dismissed the high death tolls reported by foreign sources as "utter lies" and has so far confirmed only five dead - four security force personnel killed by "rioters" and one civilian.

Khamenei agreed that "ordinary citizens with no role in the recent protests and riots who died in the clashes" should be treated as "martyrs" with their families eligible for support from the Martyrs and Veterans Foundation. Iran usually grants the title of martyr to soldiers killed on duty and the foundation is tasked with providing their families with financial benefits and better housing, employment and education opportunities.

Khamenei said that families whose loved ones "lost their lives in any way during the demonstrations" would be "paid their blood money as restitution". Blood money is an Islamic legal term for financial compensation payable by law to the families of murder victims. Even the families of those "killed while armed and in clashes with security forces" would not be held accountable for their loved ones' actions but would be shown "Islamic clemency" and "compensated proportionally", Khamenei's statement said.

'Innocents'

The recommendations contrast with the firmness shown by the government from the very beginning of the unrest, during which they ordered a near-total internet blackout that lasted for more than a week. Iran has blamed the violence that broke out during the protests on "thugs" backed by its foes the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia. It has singled out exiled royalists and the People's Mujahedeen of Iran (MEK), an exiled former rebel group which it considers a "terrorist" cult.

"The people foiled a deep, vast and very dangerous conspiracy on which a lot of money was spent for destruction, viciousness and the killing of people," Khamenei said on state television. Last month, the Revolutionary Guards praised the "timely" action taken against "rioters". The Guards' deputy commander Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi called for the severe punishment of "mercenaries" arrested in connection with the violence.

But as Internet connectivity was gradually restored, Iranians on social media mourned loved ones who had nothing to do with the riots and were killed simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. President Hassan Rouhani acknowledged on Wednesday that "innocents" could be among those imprisoned in waves of mass arrests during and after the protests. "All those people who have been arrested, of course some of them are innocent and should be freed," Rouhani said in an address broadcast by state television. — AFP

Dozens of migrants drown as boat sinks

NOUAKCHOTT: At least 58 migrants heading to Europe died as their makeshift boat sank off the coast of Mauritania, but 83 survivors managed to swim to shore, the International Organization for Migration said. The migrants "were mostly clandestine immigrants trying to reach Spain, coming from Banjul in Gambia," Mauritania's interior ministry said in a statement released Wednesday night. "At least 58 people are confirmed dead after a vessel carrying migrants sank as it approached the coast of Mauritania," the IOM said in a statement. "Eighty-three others swam to shore and are receiving assistance."

The migrant vessel sunk some 25 km north of the town of Nouadhibou, near the border with Western Sahara, a Mauritanian security official told AFP. "The craft hit a rock in the middle of the sea, it started taking on water and the engine fell apart," the official said. "They weren't far from the shore, but a large swell stopped them from reaching the coast by boat."

The official added that there was nothing aboard and that the migrants were hungry and cold so they jumped into the sea and started swimming. The IOM said survivors had said the boat left The Gambia on Nov 27. Attempted migrant crossings to Europe along the coast of West Africa - known as the "western route" - have grown in number in recent years.

Survivors of Wednesday's sinking in Mauritania told the IOM there were at least 150 people aboard when the craft went down, including women and children. Mauritania's interior ministry also said the vessel was carrying between 150 and 180 people, adding that most of the passengers were between the ages of 20 and 30. "Unfortunately, we counted 58 dead," the ministry said, adding that 10 survivors needed emergency medical treatment. — AFP

International

'Do it for our kids,' parents plead at UN climate meet

Thunberg plans to march through Spanish capital

MADRID: Parents from around the globe yesterday said governments locked in negotiations at UN talks in Madrid must beat back the threat of global warming to "give our children the future that they deserve". "Our children are being handed a broken world on the verge of climate chaos and ecological breakdown," they said in an open declaration from 222 associations in 27 countries. "As parents, seeing this is agonizing."

The plea comes the day before young climate strikers led by Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg plan to march through the Spanish capital under the Friday for Futures banner. The student-led movement - sparked by Thunberg's solo protests last year outside Sweden's parliament - saw millions pour into the streets worldwide ahead of a UN climate summit in September. "Many of the delegates at COP25 are also parents and we appeal to these delegates in particular," the declaration said. "Addressing the climate crisis is not the responsibility of our chil-

dren - it's our job as adults and parents to act."

The 12-day UN talks, under way since Monday, are mired in the small print of the 2015 Paris climate treaty's "rule book". Despite a crescendo of public alarm, the world's major carbon polluters have shown little or no willingness to improve on emissions reduction pledges that, collectively, are not deep enough to prevent catastrophic warming, scientists say. "Every person in the negotiations has a responsibility to act to ensure our children's rights are safeguarded, and to disregard vested corporate interests," said Isabella Prata, a mother of two, from Parents for Future Brazil.

'Letting down humanity'

Protecting future generations is a recurring leitmotif at the talks, echoed by leaders and frontline diplomats alike. On Monday, as 40 heads of state took turns working similar themes, Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen at

one point held up a stuffed polar bear. "All of you, just like me, are so-called decision-makers, and probably have children or grandchildren who you love," he said in a scolding tone. "Think about those children when you take a decision on behalf of your country," he said. "Because our children will later think about us - about what we did, or what we did not do." Costa Rica's President Carlos Alvarado made it even more personal. "I have a six-year-old kid," he told a gathering of leaders from climate-vulnerable nations. "If we are not courageous enough to take action in these weeks, we will not only be failing me and my kid, we will be letting down humanity." The Paris Agreement calls for capping global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, but the greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change keep rising.

Scientists reported this week in Madrid that CO2 emissions will rise just over 0.5 percent in 2019, to about 42 billion tonnes per year - the

equivalent of five million tons per hour. Earth's average surface temperature, which has already gone up more than 1C, is on track to rise another two or three degrees, even if nations keep their Paris treaty promises.

"At our current rate of emissions, we are dangerously close to reaching tipping points which could unravel human civilization within our own and our children's lifetimes," the declaration said. "We are at a turning point in the story of our species, and you, the delegates of this influential UN climate summit, have an opportunity to choose what happens next. We know that you can and we trust that you will." In August, Thunberg - who refuses to fly - set sail from England to New York, and from there continued overland towards Santiago, where the UN climate conference was to be held. But the annual meet was transferred to Madrid because of social unrest in the Chilean capital, so Thunberg did a U-turn from the US west coast, arriving Tuesday in Lisbon. — AFP

Netanyahu presses Pompeo for more pressure on Iran

LISBON: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Portugal on Wednesday and called for increased pressure on the "tottering" Iranian government. "I think we have been fortunate that President Trump has led a consistent policy of pressure against Iran. Iran's aggression is growing, but its empire is tottering," Netanyahu said in Lisbon. "And I say, let's make it totter even further," he added.

Netanyahu stressed that Iran was the main subject of his meeting with Pompeo, adding "the second subject is Iran, and so is the third". Pompeo, in a tweet, said it had been a "productive meeting". "We discussed efforts to counter Iran's destabilizing influence in the region, the importance of economic cooperation with regional partners and other issues related to Israel's security," he added.

The question of how to create Middle East stability when "there are anti-Iran protests taking place in Baghdad, anti-Iranian protests taking place in Beirut," was a key issue in talks held on the margins of a NATO summit which ended in London earlier Wednesday, Pompeo told reporters before leaving Lisbon. Israel, which is widely believed to have the Middle East's sole but undeclared nuclear arsenal, has for years accused Iran of seeking to obtain nuclear weapons and strongly opposed a 2015 agreement designed to address the concerns of major powers.

'Should be ashamed'

Trump, a strong Netanyahu ally, unilaterally pulled the United States out of the deal in May last year and reimposed crippling sanctions. Netanyahu, who is fighting for his political life after an indictment on graft charges, has hailed the Trump sanctions. Israel believes they have squeezed the Iranian economy, prompting the government to raise fuel prices - sparking nationwide protests.

Lebanon and Iraq, both countries where Iran has significant influence, have also seen major demonstrations. Netanyahu criticized European governments that have signed up to a barter system that would allow Iran to trade without fear of US sanctions. Six new European countries agreed to support the Instex system and Netanyahu said that "instead of supporting American sanctions, they are weakening them. That's not right. They should be ashamed of



LISBON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (left) meets Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday. — AFP

themselves. While people are risking their lives and dying on the streets of Tehran, they are giving sustenance and support to this tyrannical regime," he said before meeting with Pompeo.

Graft charges

Netanyahu, who was last month indicted on a variety of graft charges and faces a third election within a year after deadlocked polls in April and September, has been bolstered by a number of landmark steps taken by Trump. He is Israel's longest serving prime minister but he is serving in a caretaker capacity after the inconclusive elections. Wednesday's meeting was the first between the two men since Pompeo announced last month that the United States no longer considered Jewish settlements in the West Bank to be illegal. The announcement broke with decades of international consensus that the settlements are illegal and a major barrier to peace with the Palestinians. The US position offered a boost to Netanyahu as he threatens to annex much of the West Bank, a step that would severely impede the long-held Palestinian hope for a separate state.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in settlements in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, alongside around three million Palestinians. Among previous steps, Trump earlier recognized bitterly contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital and cut off US funding for the UN body that supports Palestinian refugees. Pompeo also met Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa and Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva before flying on to Morocco yesterday. — AFP

Vaping linked to rare lung disease

PARIS: Doctors treating a patient with a rare lung disease usually caused by exposure to industrial metals say it may instead be the first case linked to vaping. Electronic cigarettes are sold as safer alternatives to traditional tobacco products and as aids to stop smoking. But they have been implicated in a growing number of recent deaths and health alerts, especially in the United States.

Researchers at the University of California San Francisco said the patient had hard-metal pneumoconiosis, typically found in people exposed to metals such as cobalt or tungsten used in tool sharpening or diamond polishing. It causes a persistent cough and breathing difficulties, and leaves tell-tale scarring on lung tissue. Kirk Jones, Clinical Professor of Pathology at UCSF, said "this patient did not have any known exposure to hard metal, so we identified the use of an e-cigarette as a possible cause."

The case study, published in the European Respiratory Journal, said that when researchers tested the patient's e-cigarette, which was used with cannabis, they found cobalt in the vapor it released, as well as other toxic metals - nickel, aluminium, manganese, lead and chromium. This was similar to other studies, suggesting that the metals were coming from the heating coils found in vaping devices, rather than from any particular type of refill - as has been previously thought.

"Exposure to cobalt dust is extremely rare outside of a few specific industries," Rupal Shah, assistant professor of medicine at UCSF, was quoted as saying. "This is the first known case of a metal-induced toxicity in the lung that has followed from vaping and it has resulted in long-term, probably permanent, scarring of the patient's lungs," he said.

An accompanying European Respiratory Society editorial on stopping smoking rejected the use of e-cigarettes as an aid, saying it was "based on well-meaning but incorrect or undocumented claims or assumptions". Editorial co-author Jorgen Vestbo, Professor of Respiratory Medicine at the University of Manchester, said "E-cigarettes are harmful, they cause nicotine addiction and can never substitute for evidence-based smoking cessation tools." — AFP

International

Johnson plans for victory with Brexit Party boost

Labour challenges PM's claim to represent change

LONDON: One week before Britain's election, Prime Minister Boris Johnson was confident enough to publish a plan yesterday for his first 100 days in office, boosted by an endorsement from Brexit Party MEPs. Jeremy Corbyn's main opposition Labour party is struggling to close the gap in opinion polls with Johnson's governing Conservatives, which remains at around 10 points. Meanwhile the electoral threat posed by Nigel Farage's Brexit Party receded further with the decision of four of its European Parliament MPs to endorse the prime minister.

Johnson has promised to get Britain out of the European Union on Jan 31, after years of turmoil sparked by the 2016 referendum vote for Brexit. But he says this would only be possible if he wins a majority of MPs in the December 12 election, allowing him to get his EU divorce deal through parliament. "If there is a Conservative majority next week, we will get Brexit done by the end of January. 2020 will then be the year we finally put behind us

the arguments and uncertainty over Brexit," he said.

He also announced an unspecified tax cut for "hard-working families", which he said would be unveiled in a post-Brexit budget in February. Within 100 days of taking office, he also vowed to pass laws to increase school funding and toughen sentencing laws, as well as beginning moves to shake up the immigration system. Labour is offering a fresh referendum on Brexit, but has sought to focus on a radical agenda to address inequality, from nationalizing key industries to borrowing heavily to fund a huge investment drive.

It challenged Johnson's claim to represent change, given the Conservatives have been in power since 2010 and introduced huge public spending cuts. "The Tories have had 3,494 days in office, and in those days we've seen child poverty soar, rising homelessness, rising food bank use, and violent crime is up too," said Labour MP Andrew Gwynne.

Brexit Party fragmentation

The Brexit Party has been nipping at the heels of the Conservatives for months, threatening to take EU referendum "Leave" voters from Johnson with its promise of a clean break with Brussels. But the party has suffered a series of setbacks and four of its MEPs - elected on a huge show of support for the party in May's European elections - announced they were backing the Conservatives. Among them is Annunziata Rees-Mogg, the sister of Jacob Rees-Mogg who is a leading Brexit supporter and member of Johnson's cabinet.

She said the premier's EU divorce deal, which Farage has rejected as "Brexit in name only", would get Britain out of the EU and return its sovereignty. "That is what most Brexiteers I've ever met have been fighting for decades," she told reporters. With Labour backing a second referendum, she added that "Boris's deal is the only Leave option we have".

Jacob Rees-Mogg has been absent from the

election campaign since suggesting the victims of the deadly 2017 Grenfell Tower blaze lacked common sense in heeding official advice to stay in their homes. The departures are another blow for Farage, who began the campaign threatening to stand against the Conservatives in every seat, only to back down. He said he was "disappointed" they were leaving.

But he noted the Brexit Party was winning over voters in many traditional Labour areas of England, making it easier for the Conservatives to win there. Len McCluskey, the head of the Unite trade union who is close to Corbyn, this week admitted Labour was struggling to win over Brexit-backing voters. Labour has also been grappling with a long-running row over claims of widespread anti-Semitism in the party, something it strongly denies. It was hit by a new row yesterday after lawyers said they had statements from former and current Labour staffers alleging "interference" into investigations into complaints against members. —AFP

Europe's oldest nuclear plant not ready to retire

BEZNAU, Switzerland: Europe's oldest functioning nuclear reactor, at Switzerland's Beznau plant, will turn 50 next week - a lifespan deemed dangerously long by environmentalists who are demanding that it be shut down immediately. Commercial operation began at the plant in the northern canton of Aargau, near the German border, on Dec 9, 1969 - back when The Beatles were still together and a man had just walked on the Moon.

Fifty years later, a message in German is printed in white letters on a bright blue wall of the building housing Reactor 1: "Anniversary 1969-2019. 355,000 hours of service". Beznau 1 is one of the very oldest reactors in operation today, following only reactors 1 and 2 at Tarapur in western India, which went online in Oct 1969, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"It's a privilege to work here," Michael Dost, director of the plant run by Swiss power company Axpo, said during a media tour of Switzerland's first nuclear plant earlier this year. He said he was proud to work at such a productive monument of industrial history. The plant's two ageing reactors (Reactor 2 began operating in 1971) together still pump out around 6,000 gigawatts per year - equivalent to twice the electrical consumption of Switzerland's largest city, Zurich. Showing off a command centre with large control panels and colorful buttons reminiscent of the 1960s, Dost insisted that the plant's age was not an issue.



BEZNAU, Switzerland: A man takes a picture on July 9, 2019 of Beznau nuclear plant near Dottingen. —AFP

'Significant equipment updates'

"A lot of work has been done here," he told AFP, noting that in recent decades "components have been altered and new equipment has been built, so we meet all technical requirements that can be placed on a nuclear plant." The Swiss Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (ENSI) meanwhile told AFP that "Beznau 1 has proven that it fulfils all regulatory requirements thanks to significant equipment updates". But critics warn that the renovations do not compensate for the reactor's advanced age.

"I fully acknowledge that large sums have been invested in this plant, but you can't transform a Volkswagen Beetle into a Tesla just by investing in security upgrades," Florian Kasser, a nuclear expert with Greenpeace Switzerland, told AFP. He noted that the last time the plant was shut for repairs - between 2015 and 2017 - analyses were carried out after flaws were discovered in the steel of the reactor's pressurized water tanks.

In a finding later confirmed by ENSI, experts concluded that the flaws were not linked to the operation of the reactor, and posed no safety risk. But Greenpeace maintains that the tests did not take into account the effects of radioactivity on the wear and tear of the tank. —AFP

Four scenarios as Merkel partners debate future

BERLIN: Headed by a new leftist leadership duo, Germany's struggling Social Democrats are gearing up for a crunch congress from today that could decide the future of Chancellor Angela Merkel's fragile coalition government. As SPD members gather to discuss their demands for keeping the coalition afloat, here's a look at four possible scenarios for the months ahead.

'GroKo' clings on

Incoming SPD leaders Norbert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken are critical of Merkel's grand right-left coalition, known as "GroKo" to Germans. But the pair have stopped short of calling for a vote on whether to stay in the loveless marriage at the Dec 6-8 congress. Instead, they want to tweak the hard-fought coalition agreement struck with Merkel's centre-right CDU and its Bavarian CSU sister party after 2017's inconclusive general elections.

If a compromise is struck and the SPD secures some concessions, the GroKo could survive until Germany's next election in 2021 - allowing Merkel to complete her fourth and final term as planned. This scenario is seen as most likely by observers as it would also allow the SPD, weakened by a series of poll setbacks, to sharpen its profile under the new leaders before facing voters again.

Merkel-led minority government

If it fails to push through its demands, the SPD could pull the plug on the partnership with the CDU/CSU, triggering the coalition's collapse. Merkel, keen to shape her own political exit after

14 years in power, could then try to head a minority government - a first in postwar Germany. Merkel has in the past said she was "very skeptical" about leading a government without a stable parliamentary majority, but observers say the prospect may be less daunting now. Several senior CDU figures have voiced their preference for this scenario, including Merkel critic Friedrich Merz, who said the "experimental nature" of a minority government "has its charms".

'Jamaica' coalition

If the SPD walks away, Merkel's CDU/CSU alliance could try to woo the liberal FDP and the left-leaning Greens into a tie-up nicknamed "Jamaica" - because the parties' colors match those of the Caribbean country's flag. A 2017 attempt at such an alliance broke down when the FDP abruptly quit talks, but the party has signalled it would be ready to play ball now. The Greens, however, have less incentive these days to join in as junior coalition partner. Spurred by growing concern about climate change, they have surged in the polls and are poised to become Germany's second-largest party in the next elections - putting even the chancellery within reach.

Snap elections

Snap elections are seen as the least likely outcome by local media - but they also wrongly predicted that the SPD would choose another, more moderate leadership duo last month. The move would require Merkel to call, and lose, a confidence vote in the Bundestag lower house of parliament. Attention would then shift to President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who would embark on complex negotiations to try to cobble together another coalition. If that failed, he would dissolve parliament and fresh elections would follow within 60 days. Voters could well punish the SPD and the CDU for sending them to the polls early, while the far-right AfD and the Greens stand to make gains. —AFP

International

24 hours in shadow of brutal Mexico violence

Bloodshed unleashed by 'drug wars'

MEXICO CITY: As Mexico struggles to stop the bloodshed unleashed by its "drug wars", the violence casts a long shadow over ordinary life for many Mexicans. On Nov 22, AFP deployed a team of photo and video journalists across the country to document the daily brutality for 24 hours. These are their reflections on covering the deadly onslaught gripping the country, where more than 250,000 people have been murdered since the government deployed the army to fight drug cartels in 2006.

'Constant contact with death'

Everything in Ciudad Juarez is extreme: The arid climate of the Chihuahuan desert, the stark contrasts of the US-Mexican border, the violence. It was once dubbed the "murder capital of the world", before other cities overtook it. To photojournalist Herika Martinez, 36, it is home. "My images tell the stories of mothers who have lost a daughter, victims of massacres, communities that have been deserted because of the violence," she says.

Death can come for anyone, anytime here - in cartel turf wars or anti-narcotics operations. Sometimes innocent civilians are caught in the crossfire. "Being a photojournalist in Ciudad Juarez means being in constant contact with death and suffering. It means living other people's pain, and then having it become your

own, against a backdrop of tears, bullets, blood," she adds. Raul Morales, 41, is a video journalist in the city. The toughest part of the job, he says, is separating his work chronicling the violence from "my feelings as a father, brother, son or husband."

'Red pages'

Pedro Pardo, 44, says he never really wanted to cover "la nota roja," or "red pages" - the stories of daily violence that are a fixture of the Mexican press. But working for nine years in the southern state of Guerrero, one of the most violent in Mexico, the "nota roja" came looking for him. He has had to learn to live with the trauma of photographing mutilated remains, charred bodies and severed body parts. "As photojournalists, we couldn't just ignore the violence. We had a responsibility to inform people," says Pardo, who is now based in Mexico City. But he adds: "It pains me sometimes to look at my own pictures. I'm human."

On the northern border with the United States, in Tijuana - a jumping-off point for migrants chasing the American dream, and a battleground for rival cartels - Guillermo Arias, 43, found himself drawn to a mass grave turned memorial to Mexico's faceless victims. He fixated on the inscriptions painted there: "Where are you?" "What happened here?" "Never again."



GUADALAJARA, Mexico: Policemen are seen at a crime scene on Nov 22, 2019. —AFP

'You breathe death'

Ulises Ruiz, 42, is based in Mexico's second city, Guadalajara. He says a Mexico without narco-violence is "a very distant idea." "The authorities are overwhelmed. Every day there are murders, kidnappings, people tortured and their bodies dumped in public, mothers looking for their missing children, investigators searching in mass

graves," he says. "It's impossible to cover it all."

Rashide Frias, 35, lives in Culiacan, capital of the western state of Sinaloa - jailed drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's bastion. One of his pictures for this project, taken at night, shows a compact car illuminated by a glassy halo of light that reveals a dead man at the wheel, his pale face slumped back. —AFP

News in brief

Eight dead in gas explosion

WARSAW: Eight people, including four children, were killed after a gas explosion destroyed a house in a ski resort in the south of Poland late Wednesday, local authorities said. Around 200 rescuers had scoured the debris of the house in Szczyrk yesterday morning to find the bodies. No one else is believed to have been inside when the explosion occurred. "It appears that this is the final toll," local prefect Jaroslav Wieczorek told reporters, but added that rescuers will continue looking just to make sure. The local gas distributor, PSG, said that the explosion had been preceded by a sudden drop in pressure in the gas pipeline, which could indicate that the pipeline had been accidentally punctured during nearby construction works. —AFP

Man burnt to death in church

LAGOS: A man was burnt to death yesterday after a pastor mistook petrol for water during a healing service in Lagos, the emergency services said. "The pastor picked a keg believing it contained water not knowing it was filled with petrol," said Ibrahim Farinloye of the National Emergency Management Agency. "In the process of emptying the contents on the man, a lit candle nearby sparked fire that engulfed both of them," Farinloye told AFP. The church fire in the Baruwa area in the north of the sprawling city spread to nearby oil pipelines, which burst into flames, he added. "We have recovered the body of a man. He was burned beyond recognition, while another person (the pastor) was injured with severe burns," Farinloye said. —AFP

Trayvon Martin's killer sues teen's family in US court

MIAMI: George Zimmerman, who fatally shot Trayvon Martin in Florida in 2012, is suing the teenager's family, their attorney, the US state and others for more than \$100 million, his lawyer said Wednesday. Zimmerman said he shot Martin - an African American - in self-defense, but the teen's family and friends insisted it was a murder driven by racism. The lawsuit claims that "that the prosecution's key witness in his 2013 murder trial... was an imposter" who "provided false statements to incriminate Zimmerman based on coaching from others," his lawyer Larry Klayman said in a statement.

"Zimmerman, who faced a life sentence had been wrongly convicted, based on the alleged false evidence, is suing for damages in excess of \$100 million," Klayman said. Ben Crump, the Martin family's lawyer and one of those named in the lawsuit, slammed it as "unfounded and reckless," and said that it was "a shameless attempt to profit off the lives and grief of others".

Zimmerman "would have us believe that he is the innocent victim of a deep conspiracy, despite the complete lack of any credible evidence to support his outlandish claims," Crump said in a statement. "This tale defies all logic, and it's time to close the door on these baseless imaginings," he added.

While serving as a neighborhood watch volunteer in a gated community in Florida in February 2012, Zimmerman fatally shot high school student Martin as he was walking home with iced tea and candy. Zimmerman insisted he had been following the teenager on suspicion he was involved in robbery, and that he shot him in an act of self-defense. His trial and subsequent acquittal exposed deep racial divides in US society, in a case that sparked nationwide protests. —AFP

US cop under investigation for fondling corpse

LOS ANGELES: An officer with the Los Angeles Police Department is under investigation after his body camera allegedly caught him fondling a deceased woman's breasts. A police spokesman confirmed the probe to AFP on Wednesday but would not discuss details of the case. "We are aware of it and an administrative investigation has begun," Lieutenant Chris Ramirez said. "We cannot discuss the case because it's a personnel matter and because of litigation issues."

An official familiar with the case who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity said the incident unfolded after the officer and his partner responded to a call about a woman who was possibly dead in a residential unit. Once the pair determined the woman was deceased, one of the officers left the room, the official said. "The one who is accused went back in to where the deceased woman was and allegedly fondled her breasts," he added. Although the officer had turned his body camera off, a two-minute buffer on the device captured the incident.

The official said the footage was uncovered during a random inspection and reaction among the force has been "utter disgust". "This has no place in law enforcement or anywhere," he said. "There needs to be and there always has been a reverence of respect for folks who have died, and from the rank and file all the way up to the chief, it's just total disgust at this."

In a statement, the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents officers, said the allegations are "extremely disturbing". "If this allegation is true, then the behavior exhibited by this officer is not only wrong, but extremely disturbing, and does not align with the values we, as police officers, hold dear and these values include respect and reverence for the deceased," the statement said. Police said the officer has been placed on leave pending the outcome of the probe. —AFP

International

Trump on quest for foreign wins - and drama - in election year

2019 full of tosses and turns for US president

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has shattered norms and niceties on the world stage in his nearly three years in office. Entering an election year, Trump is unlikely to slow down as he seeks what has largely eluded him - a headline-grabbing victory. The tycoon-turned-president closes 2019 with a new stride after what was perhaps his most unambiguous achievement - the US commando raid that killed the leader of the Islamic State group, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

But the year was also full of tosses and turns for Trump. On his ambition to end the war in Afghanistan, he startled Washington by inviting the Taliban to talks, then declared the talks dead, and finally resumed them. On North Korea, where Trump has hoped to secure a landmark accord, a highly anticipated summit with leader Kim Jong Un ended in stalemate.

Trump later jumpstarted diplomacy with a hastily arranged new meeting, only to see the talks languish as Pyongyang fires rockets and issues threats. Even more tumultuous has been Trump's aggressive trade push on China. Expectations have repeatedly risen and then waned that the world's two largest economies can reach a deal that would cancel tariffs on billions of dollars worth of goods.

In a rare issue that has drawn criticism from his Republican allies, Trump also sent mixed messages on Turkey, ordering a US troop withdrawal from Syria that paved the way for Ankara to attack US-

allied Kurdish fighters before Trump pressured the NATO ally with sanctions. Beyond the hotspots, Trump may have broken the most ground with his style, hobnobbing with some of the world's most autocratic leaders even as he clashes with many close allies, as seen in his testy exchanges at the December NATO summit.

He has torn through the international consensus by withdrawing from the Paris climate accord and a European-backed denuclearization pact with Iran, and by unabashedly seeking to boost Israel's right-wing leader, Benjamin Netanyahu. In a mirror of his domestic agenda in which slashing immigration is a top priority, Trump has cast himself as the unique leader who stands up to the long-accepted status quo. Heading on his NATO trip, Trump spoke first not of the security challenges of Russia, Syria or Afghanistan but of allies he says contribute less than their fair share.

Eyeing successes

The 2020 White House campaign opens under the shadow of impeachment, with House Democrats saying Trump abused his power by delaying aid to Ukraine as he pushed Kiev to investigate domestic opponent Joe Biden. But Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the left-leaning Center for American Progress, called foreign policy the "sleeping issue" of the election with the theatrical Trump likely to find a way to put it at the forefront. "This



WATFORD, United Kingdom: In this file photo taken on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump (left) and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) leave the stage after a family photo at the Grove Hotel. —AFP

is a reality-TV presidency. Even if he doesn't achieve major successes, he will claim that he has," he said. "He will use other countries and their leaders as props in his re-election campaign."

Nile Gardiner, a former aide to British prime minister Margaret Thatcher who is now at Heritage Foundation, a conservative Washington think-tank, argued that Trump had achieved "sig-

nificant successes". "We have seen 99 percent of ISIS territory taken away in Iraq and Syria. There's still a job to be done but this is a very, very big-scale achievement," he said. "Trump's foreign policy is forward-looking and not isolationist," Gardiner said, adding that European leaders "are preparing for the very strong possibility of Trump's reelection." —AFP

Two killed in shooting at Pearl Harbor

LOS ANGELES: A US sailor fatally shot two people and wounded a third at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in Hawaii on Wednesday before taking his own life, a senior Navy officer said. The base was locked down for more than an hour after the shooting, according to a statement issued by the facility, while Navy officials said they were investigating what prompted the attack. "I can confirm that there were three shooting victims. We have confirmed that two are deceased, one is in stable condition in a local hospital," said Rear Admiral Robert Chadwick.

He added that the shooter - "tentatively" identified as a sailor assigned to the USS Columbia, a Los Angeles-class attack submarine - had also died after "an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound." One witness told local media he was sitting at his computer when he heard shots fired and rushed to the window, where he saw three victims on the ground. The witness, who did not want to be identified, said he then saw the gunman, who was wearing a sailor's uniform, shoot himself in the head. White House spokesman Hogan Gidley said that US President Donald Trump had been briefed on the shooting and was monitoring the situation. Hawaii governor David Ige tweeted that the "White House has reached out to offer assistance from federal agencies, and the state is standing by to assist where necessary". "I join in solidarity with the people of Hawaii as we express our heartbreak over this tragedy and concern for those affected by the shooting," Ige wrote.

Pearl Harbor anniversary

The shooting took place at 2:30 pm local time near the south entrance of the sprawling base located on the southern shore of Oahu. The base hosts both the Navy and Air Force. It unfolded three



HONOLULU: A guard stands by at the Nimitz Gate of Pearl Harbor shortly after a sailor fatally shot two civilians at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard on Wednesday. —AFP

days before the 78th anniversary of the 1941 Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor that left more than 2,400 US service members dead. The worst shooting in Hawaii history took place just over 20 years ago when a Xerox employee killed seven of his colleagues.

While gun violence is common in the United States, shootings at American military facilities in the country are relatively rare. In July 2015, Mohammad Youssuf Abdulazeez carried out an attack at two military installations in the US state of Tennessee that killed four Marines and a sailor, with the FBI concluding that the violence was inspired by a "foreign terrorist group".

Two years earlier, Aaron Alexis killed 12 people and wounded eight others at the Washington Navy Yard, just three kilometers from the US Capitol building, before being shot dead by officers. Four years before that, Major Nidal Hasan, a US Army psychiatrist, killed 13 people and wounded more than 30 others at Fort Hood. He was considered a "lone wolf" who supported terror network Al-Qaeda. —AFP

US warship seizes missile parts of Iranian origin

WASHINGTON: A US Navy warship seized advanced missile parts believed to be linked to Iran from a boat it had stopped in the Arabian Sea, US officials said on Wednesday, as Trump's administration pressures Tehran to curb its activities in the region. In a statement, the Pentagon confirmed that on Nov. 25 a US warship found "advanced missile components" on a stateless vessel and an initial investigation indicated the parts were of Iranian origin. "A more thorough investigation is underway," the statement said.

US officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the guided missile destroyer Forrest Sherman detained a small boat and a detachment of US personnel boarded the vessel, where the missile parts were found. The crew on the small boat have been transferred to the Yemeni coast guard and the missile parts are in the possession of the United States, the officials added. One of the officials said they believed from initial information that the weapons were bound for Iran-aligned Houthi fighters in Yemen.

In recent years, US warships have intercepted and seized Iranian arms likely bound for Houthi fighters. The official said this was different, citing the advanced nature of the parts. Under a United Nations resolution, Tehran is prohibited from supplying, selling or transferring weapons outside the country unless approved by the Security Council. A separate UN resolution on Yemen bans the supply of weapons to Houthi leaders. —Reuters

International

Trump committed impeachable crimes, scholars tell Congress

White House spokeswoman slams 'sham process'

WASHINGTON: Three constitutional scholars on Wednesday bolstered Democrats' case for impeaching Donald Trump by saying the president's actions seeking foreign interference in US elections were clear grounds for removal, as the inquiry kicked into high gear in Congress. But reflecting the Washington political divide, a fourth expert strongly dissented, saying there was "woefully inadequate" evidence that Trump committed high crimes and misdemeanors necessary for removal.

Democrats have made a forceful case that Trump should be impeached for trying to leverage a White House meeting and military aid to pressure Ukraine for dirt on an election rival. In a sometime theatrical hearing of the House Judiciary Committee - now tasked with weighing impeachment charges against the president - lawmakers listened to damning testimony from constitutional law professors.

"On the basis of the testimony and evidence before the House, President Trump has committed impeachable high crimes and misdemeanors by corruptly abusing the office of the presidency," Harvard Law School professor Noah Feldman told the hearing. "We three are unanimous" in that view, jurisprudence professor Michael Gerhardt of the University of North Carolina stated, referring to himself and fellow witnesses Feldman and Stanford Law School professor Pamela Karlan.

The trio was invited by Democrats to testify. Americans tuning in to the eight-hour live broadcast witnessed clashes between Democrats and Republican Trump loyalists on the panel, who re-

peatedly forced procedural votes to stall the process. The new phase of impeachment began a day after a congressional report on the high-stakes inquiry detailed "overwhelming" evidence of abuse of power and obstruction by the president.

The report mapped out a months-long scheme by Trump, his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, senior diplomats and White House staffers to pressure Ukraine's president into investigating Joe Biden, the current favorite to win the Democratic nomination for the 2020 election. Trump "was willing to compromise our security and his office for personal, political gain," said Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler.

'Proof, not presumptions'

Trump's alleged political crimes, including bribery and obstruction of justice and Congress, "are worse than the misconduct of any prior president," Gerhardt said. "If what we're talking about is not impeachable, then nothing is impeachable." Feldman added that if Trump is not held to account for his offenses "we live under a dictatorship."

White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham hit back in a statement, saying that "the only thing the three liberal professors established at chairman Nadler's hearing was their political bias against the president". "It did nothing to change the fact that, despite weeks of hearings in this sham process, the president did nothing wrong," Grisham said.

The fourth academic who testified, George Washington University Law School professor Jonathan Turley - the only expert invited by Re-



WASHINGTON: US House Judiciary Committee ranking member Doug Collins (R-GA) speaks to members of the press at the conclusion of an impeachment hearing on Wednesday. —AFP

publicans - argued there was "no evidence" that Trump acted with corrupt intent. He warned that partisan "rage" was compromising the inquiry. "Impeachments have to be based on proof, not presumptions," he said, adding that Democrats were rushing the process so quickly that they were not hearing from key players in the Ukraine scandal. Turley and Republicans did not, however, mention the White House's stonewalling. Despite Democratic requests, 12 current or former administration officials have refused to testify.

'Impeachable offense'

The president himself, in London for a NATO summit, lambasted his opponents for proceeding with impeachment hearings. "What they are doing is a very bad thing for our country," Trump said. "It's a joke." Karlan asserted that Trump's alleged effort to withhold military aid until Ukraine committed to investigating Biden was grounds for removal - even though Kiev never conducted the probe. "Soliciting itself is the impeachable offense," she said. —AFP

Trump lawyer Giuliani back in Ukraine

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani returned to Ukraine Wednesday, shrugging off the scandal over seeking dirt from Kiev on rival Democrats. The New York Times said Giuliani had traveled to Budapest on Tuesday and Kiev Wednesday to speak with former Ukrainian prosecutors who could have information that would support Trump's battle against impeachment. One America News Network also said it had a camera team traveling with Giuliani in Ukraine for an investigation into the impeachment case against Trump.

In a tweet, Giuliani wrote that he was "working on an important project with @OANN," aimed at exposing what he said was information covered up by hearings conducted by Democratic Party impeachment chief Adam Schiff. According to the Times, Giuliani, who is the former mayor of New York, was meeting with former Ukrainian



Rudy Giuliani

prosecutor, Yuriy Lutsenko, a central figure in the impeachment case Democrats are building against Trump. He was also planning to meet with two other ex-prosecutors, Viktor Shokin and Kostiantyn Kulyk.

Giuliani has approached all three over the past year to aid Trump's effort to find dirt on Democrats, especially former vice president Joe Biden, who could face the president in next year's election. Democrats are preparing impeachment charges against Trump on the grounds that he, with Giuliani's assistance, solicited foreign interference in US elections for his personal needs. —AFP

US first lady wades into impeachment fight to defend son

WASHINGTON: US First Lady Melania Trump on Wednesday publicly rebuked a scholar who used her 13-year-old son's name to make a point during a hearing as part of the impeachment inquiry into the president. Constitutional law professor Pamela Karlan invoked Barron Trump, the son of Donald and Melania Trump, to demonstrate how the constitution imposes distinctions between a monarch's power and that of a president.

"The constitution says there can be no titles of nobility," Karlan told lawmakers during the House Judiciary Committee's first hearing on impeachment, which featured four constitutional scholars. "So while the president can name his son 'Barron,' he can't make him a baron." The pun led to chuckles in the congressional hearing room, but Melania Trump made clear it was no laughing matter.

"A minor child deserves privacy and should be kept out of politics," the first lady tweeted shortly afterwards. "Pamela Karlan, you should be ashamed of your very angry and obviously biased public pandering, and using a child to do it." President Trump



Pamela Karlan

retweeted his wife's message to his 67 million followers.

As the row snowballed, Karlan quickly tried to stem the damage by expressing her regret. "I want to apologize for what I said earlier about the president's son," she told the panel. "It was wrong of me to do that" she said, before adding that she also wished "the president would apologize, obviously, for the things that he's done that's wrong". For years, members of both political parties have agreed that the minor children of US politicians, particularly presidents, are off limits. During the hearing, Republican congressman Matt Gaetz snapped at Karlan, telling her that invoking Trump's son "does not lend credibility to your argument. It makes you look mean." —AFP

Destination Pyongyang: 50-yr search after N Korean hijack

Search for missing father has defined son's life

SEOUL: Half a century ago a North Korean agent hijacked the flight carrying Hwang In-cheol's father. Pyongyang never returned him, and the search has defined his son's life. Hwang was just two when he last saw his father and knows him only through photographs, but he has spent much of his adult life campaigning for him. A producer for South Korean broadcaster MBC, Hwang Won was starting a business trip on a domestic Korean Air flight from Gangneung to Seoul's Gimpo airport on Dec 11, 1969.

Minutes after takeoff North Korean agent Cho Chang Hee slipped into the cockpit and diverted the plane to Pyongyang at gunpoint. Survivors say three North Korean fighter jets escorted it in to land, and that Cho was met by army officers and driven away. The 50 passengers and crew were blindfolded with handkerchiefs before they were taken off the plane. The incident sparked international outcry, prompting a UN resolution denouncing the hijacking, and two months later 39 of those on board were repatriated, but Hwang's father was not among them.

Returning passengers said Hwang Won had been dragged away after resisting efforts to indoctrinate them and questioning the North's ideology. The Red Cross has long demanded the return of the remaining 11 South Koreans, but Pyongyang has repeatedly denied abducting them, claiming some had chosen to stay. Their plight soon dropped from public attention, but the impact on Hwang's family has never faded. "My life has been a cycle of misery," said his son.

'Fears over minor things'

His mother was left traumatized by her husband's disappearance while doing something as ordinary as taking a plane, and she was consumed by "fears over minor things", said Hwang In-cheol. She would stop her children riding bicycles to avoid the risk they could be hit by a car, or going swimming in case they drowned. Later in life, his father's detention in Kim Il Sung's Communist North was "a major handicap", the mere fact he was in Pyongyang making the son stumble on background checks for decent jobs.

In 2001, at one of the government-arranged reunions periodically allowed by Pyongyang for families separated by the Korean War, one of the flight attendants, Sung Kyung-hee, met her mother for the first time in more than 30 years. The sight of the pair's tearful reunion inspired him to embark on a search for his father, quitting his job at a publishing company to travel across the South to raise awareness about the incident. "I started out with the simple thought that I should meet my father too," Hwang said. He would now be 82, but he is sure he was still alive as recently as 2017, when an intermediary gave him answers to questions that only his father would know.

Diplomatic dawn?

After some research, Hwang seized on the United Nations' Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, ratified by the North in 1983. "Since the crew members and passengers have not arrived at their final desti-



SEOUL: In a photo taken on Nov 10, 2019, Hwang In-cheol shows a photo of his father. —AFP

nation, the plane is still in flight according to the treaty," he said. Seoul could demand the North abide by the international agreement and free the abductees, Hwang said - but his pleas for government action have gone unanswered.

Initially Seoul had encouraged the hijacking victims' families to keep a low profile, saying their actions could complicate their relatives' lives in the North. Inter-Korean relations have gone from warm to cold and back again in his years of campaigning, but the diplomatic

process has made no difference to his quest. South Korean President Moon Jae-in met three times with the North's leader Kim Jong Un last year, but Hwang remained a bitter onlooker.

"It was just an extension of the empty calls for reunification that I'd heard during the previous liberal administrations," Hwang said. "Humanitarian issues - by far the most important - have always been left out. 'The ignorance and indifference of the South Korean government has turned into a huge pain for me.'" —AFP

Sydney smoke crisis 'longest on record'

SYDNEY: Australian bushfires have caused unprecedented pollution in Sydney and along the country's east coast, officials said yesterday, with smoke and dust burning residents' eyes and prompting a spike in respiratory complaints. Hundreds of bushfires have burned out of control since September up and down the eastern seaboard, blanketing cities from Sydney to Brisbane in smoke for weeks on end. The extent of the crisis was made clear yesterday, with the New South Wales department of environment declaring bushfires and dust had caused "some of the highest air pollution ever seen" in Australia. The region "has experienced other periods of poor air quality that lasted several weeks, including the 1994 Sydney bushfires and the Black Christmas bushfires of Dec 2001-Jan 2002," a spokeswoman told AFP. "This event, however, is the longest and the most widespread in our records." New South Wales Rural Fire Service said more than a dozen fires were burning near Sydney on Thursday, including three that carried an emergency warning.

For three weeks the city has seen almost daily air quality warnings. Bushfires are common in Australia, but scientists say this year's season has come earlier and with more intensity due to a prolonged drought fuelled by climate change. New South Wales health officials said more people with asthma were turning up at hos-



SYDNEY: This picture taken yesterday shows a family spending their evening at a beach as smoke haze continues to hang over the city. —AFP

pitals, and ambulance call-outs for breathing problems were up 24 percent in the week to Dec 1.

Meanwhile, tourists and residents took measures to combat the smoke, buying facemasks and staying indoors as much as possible. On Thursday, Sydney's air quality index registered fine particulate pollution - small enough to penetrate deep inside the lungs - at over 160 parts per million, far above levels considered to be safe. Local newspapers and television have posted advice about how to limit the impact of the smoke - offering tips on what masks to buy and what activities are safest. The smoke caused golfers at the Australian Open - one of the world's oldest national opens - to complain about conditions. "It's tough to see your golf ball when you're out there playing, where it finishes. Your eyes do burn," said 2015 champion Matt Jones. "I've got that cough like you've got something in your lungs, phlegm in your lungs or whatever, but it's not fun," he said. —AFP

Indonesian faints during whipping

IDI, Indonesia: An Indonesian man who fainted as he was being whipped for pre-marital sex yesterday was revived to receive the rest of his punishment before being rushed to hospital. Despite international condemnation, public flogging is common for a range of offences banned under local Islamic law in the conservative Aceh region on Sumatra island, including gambling, drinking alcohol, and having gay or pre-marital sex. Aceh is the only region in Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim-majority country, that imposes religious law.

Yesterday, a 22-year-old man - sentenced to 100 strokes - pleaded with a masked sharia officer to stop lashing his back with a rattan cane before he fainted. He was revived and given brief medical attention and then the flogging continued. He was later rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. The man had been found guilty of having sex with a woman who was also sentenced to 100 lashes outside a mosque in Aceh Timur district, along with another man she had relations with.

Some 500 jeering spectators watched the punishment as some yelled "harder, harder". "This is the consequence they have to face for violating the law," onlooker Muhammad Yunus told AFP. In



GOH, Indonesia: An Indonesian man faints after he was whipped in public on charges of engaging in sexual relations in Aceh yesterday. —AFP

July, three people were flogged 100 times each for having premarital sex, while two men caught having sex with underage girls were also whipped 100 times last year. Other offences tend to carry dozens or even fewer lashes. In October, Aceh officials announced that poachers who threaten endangered orangutans, tigers and other wildlife could receive up to 100 lashes under new rules. Rights groups have slammed public caning as cruel, and Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has called for it to end, but the practice has widespread support among Aceh's mostly Muslim population. —AFP

International

Indian rape victim set ablaze on way to court

Outrage mounts over crimes against women

LUCKNOW: A 23-year-old rape victim was set ablaze by a gang of men, including the alleged rapist, as she made her way to court in the northern India yesterday, police said, stirring public outrage and shame over the scourge of crimes against women. During the past week, thousands of Indians have protested in several cities following the alleged rape and murder of a 27-year-old vet near the southern city of Hyderabad.

Protesters and parliamentarians are pressing for courts to fast-track rape cases and demanding tougher penalties. The woman attacked and burned yesterday morning was in a critical condition, according to D S Negi, a doctor at the Civil Hospital in Lucknow, the capital of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. She had been on her way to catch a train in Unnao district to attend a hearing when she was doused with kerosene and set on fire, police said.

"As per victim's statement five people were involved in setting her on fire, includ-

ing the one who was accused in the rape case," Vikrant Vir, a police superintendent in Unnao, told Reuters. All five men have been detained, Uttar Pradesh police said in a tweet. Police documents seen by Reuters showed the woman had filed a complaint with Unnao police in March alleging that she had been raped at gunpoint on Dec 12, 2018. Having been subsequently jailed, the alleged rapist was released last week after securing bail, police officer S K Bhagat said in Lucknow.

Uttar Pradesh is India's most populous state and has become notorious for its poor record regarding crimes against women, with more than 4,200 cases of rape reported there in 2017 - the highest in the country. The Uttar Pradesh state government, currently controlled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), came under fire in July from opposition groups accusing it of protecting a lawmaker accused of rape. — Reuters



AMRITSAR: Activists from Shiv Sena Taksali shout slogans as they burn effigies of 'rapists' to protest against the alleged rape and murder of a 27-year-old veterinary doctor in Hyderabad, during a demonstration yesterday. — AFP

Wanted Indian guru resurfaces to announce new cosmic country

NEW DELHI: An Indian guru facing rape and sexual abuse charges made headlines Wednesday after he emerged from hiding and announced the birth of a new cosmic country with its own cabinet and golden passports. Swami Nithyananda, a controversial self-styled godman with thousands of followers in southern India's Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states, posted a video on his YouTube channel announcing the special project to his followers.

41-year-old Nithyananda announced that his country is called Kailaasa, and is the biggest Hindu nation without boundaries. "The Hindu nation exists in cosmos," he said in the now-viral video. Local media reports cited a website allegedly created by the guru with details about his plans for Kailaasa, even as the police and other authorities investigating him for various criminal charges continue to remain clueless about his whereabouts.

The website shares details of different government departments and agencies in his make-believe country, including homeland security, commerce, treasury, housing, technology and one for enlightened civilization. It also gives Kailaasa its own triangular flag and an emblem with Tamil, Sanskrit and English as its main languages.

Though not convicted, Nithyananda first made national headlines in 2010 after he was arrested and jailed for 53 days over a sex scandal involving him and a regional actress. Subsequently, some other women also accused him of abusing them at his religious retreat in Karnataka. Last month, a case was registered against him in the western Indian state Gujarat on charges of wrongful confinement of children.

Indian media reports said that police believe he fled the country during the investigation. "So far what we know is that he is not in the ashram (his retreat) here for almost a year," a police officer told the Press Trust of India. "This is one of the 10 to 15 ashrams he has nationwide. His main areas of operation are Tamil Nadu and Gujarat," he added.

Nithyananda is one of several Indian gurus who've faced charges ranging from murders, sexual assaults, rapes and financial frauds over the last few years. In 2017, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, another controversial self-styled godman, was arrested and charged over raping two of his female disciples. His arrest led to widespread rioting and clashes in northern Haryana state that killed at least three dozen people. — AFP

Japanese doctor made Afghan deserts green, until deadly attack

TOKYO: Tetsu Nakamura, the Japanese doctor and aid worker killed in Afghanistan on Wednesday, was inspired to make the country's deserts green by the deaths of children in a clinic he ran in a drought-stricken rural area. "You'd hear a child screaming in the waiting room, but by the time you got there they'd be dead," he told NHK television in an October program. "That happened almost every day. They were so malnourished that things like diarrhea could kill them ... My thinking was that if those patients had had clean water and enough to eat, they would have survived."

His death in a Wednesday attack by unknown gunmen who riddled the car he and five others were driving with bullets left both Afghanistan and Japan in mourning. Born in western Japan, Nakamura, 73, trained as a doctor and answered a 1984 recruitment call to work in a clinic treating leprosy in the Pakistani city of Peshawar, attracted by the region's stark beauty. He began treating Afghan refugees who were pouring over the border in the wake of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which led to him opening a clinic in that country in 1991. "I couldn't

ignore the Afghans," he said.

Following a devastating 2000 drought which brought scores of starving and ill people to his clinic, he first helped bore wells and then came up with the idea of an irrigation canal, inspired by similarities between Japanese and Afghan rivers. In 2003 - the same year Nakamura was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award, often called Asia's Nobel - construction began. After six grueling years of labor, much of it by hand and in temperatures as high as 50 Celsius, the canal was finally completed.

Since then, some 16,000 hectares of desert has been brought back to life, making Nakamura such a widely revered figure in Afghanistan that earlier this year he became the first foreigner awarded Afghan citizenship. "As a doctor, nothing is better than healing patients and sending them home," and re-greening the desert did the same for rural Afghanistan, Nakamura told NHK. "A hospital treats patients one by one, but this helps an entire village...I love seeing a village that's been brought back to life." — Reuters



Tetsu Nakamura

Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019

www.kuwaittimes.net

Red carpet, no
cinema; Gaza film
festival forced

outdoors Page 24



Iraq revolution will be
written, read, painted
and dramatized

Page 27



Birdcages, pearls galore
at Chanel fashion show

See Page 20



Models pose with their creation at the end of the Chanel 'Metiers d'art 2019-2020' show at Le Grand Palais on Wednesday in Paris, France. — AFP Photos

Birdcages and pearls galore at Chanel's craft-heavy fashion show

Chanel turned little gilded birdcages into handbags on the catwalk in Paris on Wednesday, at an annual 'Metier D'Art' fashion showcase of its most intricate craftwork that also included lacy creations and shiny tweed suits. The French couture house recreated the Parisian apartment where founder Coco Chanel lived in the early 1900s and where collections were once presented, as models strutted down a reconstruction of its famed winding staircase. Kaia Gerber, the daughter of supermodel Cindy Crawford, showed off a logo-strewn, black and white ensemble that included a wispy, short skirt, while other models also paraded down the runway in monochrome outfits.

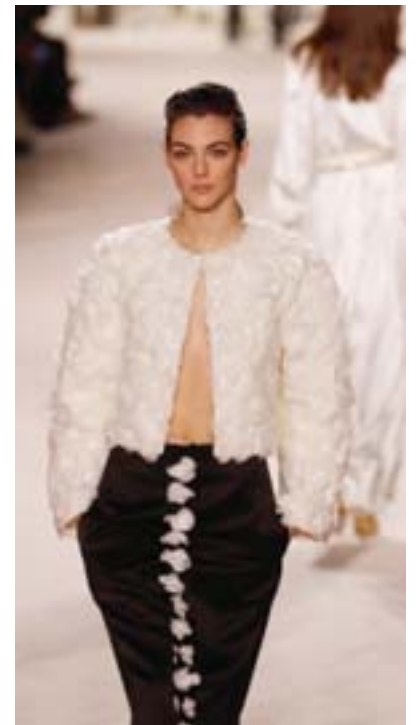
Some wore long strings of pearls, while one dress was entirely embroidered in the semi-precious stones, in a spectacular, twirling pattern. Rhinestones and golden buttons added pizzazz to jumpsuits and jackets, while many looks carried intricate flower embroideries and ruffles. Actresses Marion Cotillard and Penelope Cruz were among stars on the front row at the show, which was designed by Virginie Viard, successor to Chanel's long-time creative chief Karl Lagerfeld, who died in February.—Reuters



A model presents a creation at Le Grand Palais.



Models present creations during the Chanel 'Metiers d'art 2019-2020' show.



Italian model Vittoria Ceretti presents a creation during the Chanel 'Metiers d'art 2019-2020' show.

Artists cash in on China's online sticker craze

When "Silly Piggy" appeared in China's popular WeChat social media app, the sticker became an instant hit, with people sending it more than 30 million times in its first month to express their feelings in text messages. Stickers like the mischievous cartoon pig and other quirky creatures are all the rage in China, giving the artists behind them a way to make money and win fans—as long as they stay within the bounds of censorship.

The creator of Silly Piggy, River Rui, was able to leave her office job with a design firm and set up as an independent artist thanks to the success of the character. "Silly Piggy" is more like how I am in my little world, how I interact with my friends, it's that "Silly Piggy" kind of style," Rui told AFP. The pig has many moods: he types furiously at his desk as tears stream down his face. He lays flat on the office floor as his spirit leaves his body. "Basically anyone who has done overtime will have the same feelings as him," said Rui as she doodled on a scrap of paper in a Shanghai cafe.

Unlike memes and animated GIFs popular outside China, instant messaging stickers are often original creations of local artists who can see their little characters enjoy spectacular popularity among the country's 847 million mobile internet users and spread offline through commercial licensing deals. "Friends feel proud of me when people they know share my stickers and they tell them 'I know the person who made those' and they feel proud. It's really flattering and makes me very happy," Rui said. "It's like a dream."

Now more than two-thirds of her income comes from her cartoon pig, through licensing and selling merchandise online, including soft toys and keychains of Silly Piggy. WeChat also allows people to send money to the artists directly via the application. Some, like Rui, have a loyal following. Scores of excited fans queued up for Rui's autograph at a recent fan meeting in a fashionable Shanghai mall with a pop-up Silly Piggy merchandise stall. "It's so cute and it reflects how young office workers feel inside," said 23-year-old fan Yang Hao. "Even though it's grumbling it can still express that in a really lively and vivid way."

Popular in Asia

Stickers are also popular in other parts of Asia. In Japan, the LINE messaging service has launched 4.9 million sets of stickers, including officially-approved cartoon versions of famous characters from Harry Potter to Mickey Mouse. South Korea's largest messaging app KakaoTalk introduced its first set of emoticons in November 2011 and now boasts 7,500 sets that generally cost 2,000 won (\$1.70) each.

WeChat stickers are subject to strict censorship-like all online content in the Communist-ruled country. To be approved by the platform, stickers must not violate rules such as harming the nation's honor, disturbing social order or inciting unlawful assembly and protest, according to WeChat's regulations. After people drew unflattering comparisons between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Winnie the Pooh, stickers of the popular portly bear became unavailable for download on WeChat.—AFP



Photo shows Chinese artist River Rui (centre right) at an autograph signing event for fans of her 'Silly Piggy' character in Shanghai. — AFP Photos



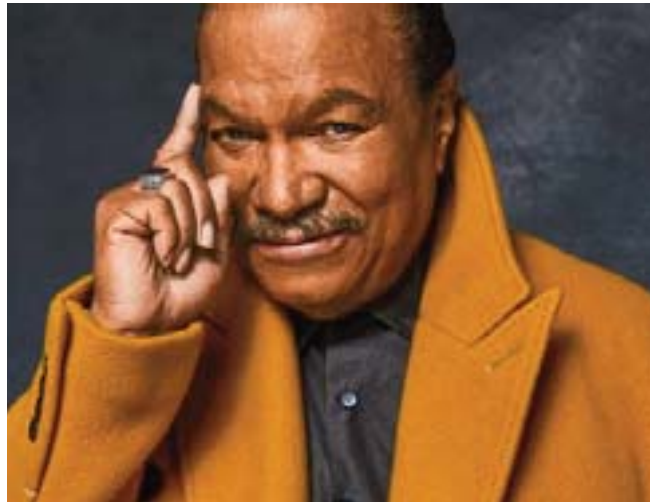
Photo shows shareable 'Silly Piggy' images in Chinese social media app WeChat, in Shanghai.



Chinese artist River Rui sketches images of her 'Silly Piggy' character at a cafe in Shanghai.



Chinese artist River Rui looks at an image of her 'Silly Piggy' character at a cafe in Shanghai.



Billy Dee Williams didn't know what 'gender fluid' meant

The 82-year-old actor caused a stir last week when he said he sees himself as “feminine as well as masculine” but he has insisted his comments were misunderstood and he doesn't view himself as not having a fixed gender. He told *The Underfeared*: “Well, first of all, I asked last night. I said, ‘What the hell is gender fluid?’ That's a whole new term.” But what I was

talking about was about men getting in touch with their softer side of themselves.” There's a phrase that was coined by Carl G Jung, who was a psychiatrist, who was a contemporary of Sigmund Freud, and they had a splitting of the ways because they had different ideas about the... what do you call it? Consciousness. Unconscious. It's a collective consciousness. “But he coined a phrase that's ‘Anima

animus.’ And anima means that is the female counterpart of the male self and the animus is the male counterpart of the female. “So that's what I was referring to. I was talking about men getting in touch with the female side of themselves.” And the ‘Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker’ actor insisted his remarks had nothing to do with sexuality.



Charlize Theron hits out at Harvey Weinstein

The ‘Bombshell’ star has hit out at the disgraced producer - who has been the subject of dozens of accusations of sexual misconduct - and claimed he had “no limit” to the way he would try and makes actresses feel they were in competition. Discussing how he would pit women against each other so he could stay on top, Charlize told the *New York Times* newspaper: “Yeah, and he did that to everybody. Pitting women against each other? He was really, really good at that. “There was a lot of, like, ‘Well, I'm talking to Gwyneth [Paltrow] for this movie ...’ “One of his lines was that Renee [Zellweger] and I slept with him to get jobs. There was no limit to him. Even in the sexual favors, he

would still pit us against each other.” ‘Bombshell’ tells the story of female Fox News employees and their allegations against CEO Roger Ailes - who is played by John Lithgow - and Charlize is proud of the way such as a scene when the executive orders Margot Robbie's low-level character to hitch up her hem has made people think and shown it is't just a “women's movie”. She said: “What the scene in ‘Bombshell’ was more about, and what made this brutal to watch on the day, was the fact that you had Roger Ailes dictating how this was going to go and she didn't have a say.



Ashley Graham has been having acupuncture

The 32-year-old model - who is expecting a baby boy with her husband Justin Ervin - credits the procedure with helping her body to “feel good” throughout her pregnancy. She shared a slideshow of videos showing the needles in her face and captioned the Instagram post: “I have been doing acupuncture throughout my whole pregnancy and I have to say it's been keeping my body feeling so good! Yesterday Sandra @treatmentbylanshin did a little face sculpting with the needles and I love the results!(sic)” In the first video, Ashley explained: “We are sculpting into my cheek, into my jawline.” Acupuncturist and founder of Treatment by Lanshin, Sandra Lanshin, added: “Getting the muscle tension out. And then we're going to sculpt, sculpt, sculpt.” In the next clip, Ashley shook her face so the needles - which resembled a green beard - wobbled and shouted: “Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas!” The third video documented Sandra removing the needles as her client joked about the bleeding. She said: “It's worth the sculpt.” The model recently admitted she has had “terrible days” worrying about her appearance after gaining 40lbs during her pregnancy.

R KELLY'S GIRLFRIEND SAYS THE ACCOUNT IN HER NAME IS FAKE

Posts on the page promised last month that Joycelyn Savage would make daily posts on the paid platform about the disgraced singer - who is facing numerous charges for sexual offences - and it was subsequently alleged he had kept her locked up “like an animal” and forced her to have two terminations at his house, but she has issued a statement in which she vowed to “never betray” the ‘I Believe I Can Fly’ hitmaker or destroy their “special” bond. She said in a video shared to TMZ: “Please do not believe what you see and hear on social media. That is not my Instagram. Someone is impersonating me. “I just want everyone to know we still support him and we would never betray him. Me and Azriel [Clary] will forever love him. “I'm not even that kind of girl that would do something like that and betray him. I've been through so much with him and we have a bond that is so special that no one ever can break. “I would never

in a million years hurt him like this. I would never do this. It's just really really sad that somebody would pretend to be me and put it out in the world and say that I'm a victim, that I am brainwashed, I'm a sex

slave — it doesn't get worse than that.” Joycelyn insisted she and Kelly's other girlfriend, Azriel Clary, are continuing to support him throughout all the sexual abuse charges against him.





Ray J admits Princess Love is 'still mad' at him

The 'One Wish' hitmaker has opened up after his model wife accused him of leaving her and their 17-month-old daughter Melody "stranded" in Las Vegas - which he denied - last month and despite her claim she would file for divorce, the singer confirmed they are still together. Speaking to PEOPLE magazine, he said: "Well, first off, let me say, Princess, I love you, baby, and I'm sorry for all the things that happened. "We cool now and we'll work it out. I know that you still made at me, but as a couple, you go through things and it just got a little bit out of hand. "Sometimes it gets out to the public and then everybody has their opinion on it, but we're good though, as parents and as friends and as husband and wife. We just went

through something." The public row was sparked after the 'Sexy Can I' singer shared a photo of himself and his family posing on the red carpet at the BET Soul Train Awards in Las Vegas. In the now-deleted post, Ray wrote: "Thank you @bet #soul-TrainAwards @princesslove @melodylovenorwood (sic)" Princess - who is due to give birth to the their second child in a few weeks - then commented: "Left me and Melody stranded in Vegas and blocked me from calling.. now you wanna post family photos," she wrote with a laugh-crying emoji and the hashtag #ByeUgly. (sic)"

Felicity Jones is pregnant

The 'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' actress and her husband Charles Guard are expecting their first child together, a representative for the actress has confirmed to PEOPLE. The news comes just over a year after the 36-year-old actress and the 43-year-old director tied the knot. Felicity and Charles married in June last year, 13 months after getting engaged following two years of dating. They pair married in a secret ceremony at Sudeley Castle in the Cotswolds, south west England, in front of guests including A-list pals Eddie Redmayne - who Felicity starred alongside in 'The Theory of Everything', and is acting opposite in new motion picture 'The Aeronauts' - and Tom Hanks. The castle closed its grounds to the public early on the Saturday to accommodate the ceremony, where Felicity is said to have made a speech. The couple have largely kept their romance private in the time they have been together, but Felicity admitted last month she loves the "stability" that marriage brings to her life. She said: "It's a joy. It's wonderful to have such stability in a very changeable profession." And she previously admitted to being a "romantic" at heart. She said: "I am definitely romantic and I love romantic stories - that's why I keep making romantic movies. "It's funny how seeing a love story never gets boring because it's the dream isn't it? It's the dream to have a true connection with another human being."



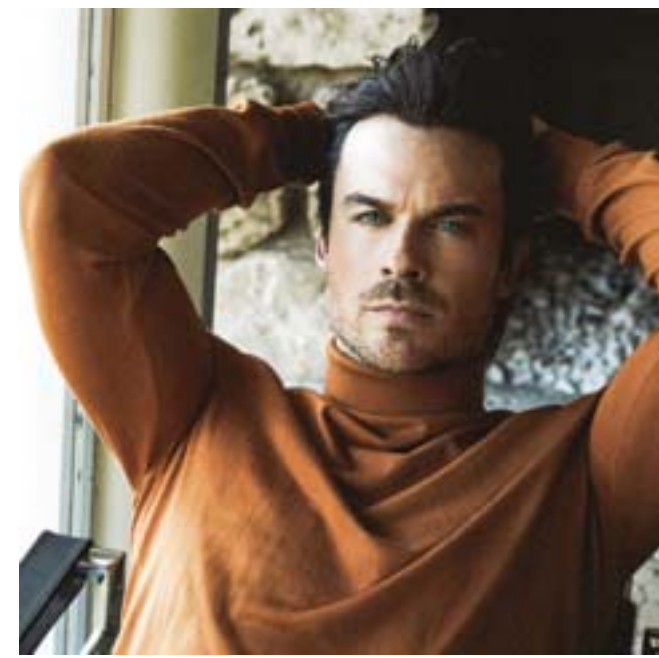
Ian Somerhalder lost virginity at 13

The 40-year-old actor - who now has two-year-old daughter Bodhi with wife Nikki Reed - has spilled the details of the first sexual encounter he had with a woman who was 16. Speaking to Andy Cohen on his SiriusXM show 'Radio Andy', Ian admitted: "It was fun." Andy then asked: "Was that when your sexual life started?" To which he replied: "When you're 13 and you're a boy ... boys are pretty on it." The 'Vampire Diaries' alum also confessed that he used to spy on his older brother, who is seven years older than him when he had women in his bedroom and that he learnt "a lot" about pursuing girls from his "Casanova" sibling. He said: "He taught me a lot, and he was quite a Casanova. "He used to have girls in his bedroom all the time and what I did was, I went into the bottom corner of his window and I pinched the Venetian blinds. I pinched the blinds down so I'd have a clear view. "I'd go outside and I'd watch, and I learned a lot." The father-of-one also admitted that he thinks it's "vastly unfair" that boys and girls are treated differently by their parents when it comes to them explaining sex and relationships. He said: "It so vastly unfair. "All my friends who are guys who have sons are like, 'Yeah, you're going to get a date, yeah,' while all the dads with daughters are like, 'I will kill these little ba****s.' It's so vastly unfair."

Lady Gaga wants to have children in the next decade

The 33-year-old singer has "crazy" plans for the future and hopes to be very busy in both her personal and professional life. Asked what she thinks will happen for her in the next 10 years, she told YouTube outlet NikkieTutorials "More music, not retiring any time soon... all

kinds of different music. "I wanna do more movies, I wanna have babies and I want to continue to build the behemoth that is Haus Laboratories into the makeup company of my dreams. "I'm living my inspirations right now, in this moment. When I get inspired, I do things right away. "There will be tons of crazy things that I do over the next decade. I just don't know exactly what they are, which is why they'll be extra crazy." During the video segment, the 'Star is Born' actress showed off products from her Haus Laboratories cosmetics range and explained how her passion for make-up and its ability to transform led to her creating her pop star alter ego. Gaga - whose real name is Stefani Germanotta - said: "I love make-up. I've discovered myself through make-up, that's what made me feel beautiful, that's what made me invent Lady Gaga, because I looked in the mirror and I was like, 'I don't like what I see and I don't feel good on the inside, so I'm just gonna start painting now, and I'm gonna make something that I like.' And the 'Shallow' hitmaker hopes her own product range gives people a similar confidence boost when they use it.



Lifestyle | Feature



Palestinians watch a film during the opening ceremony of the Red Carpet Human Rights Film Festival in Gaza-Karama Palestine, in front of the abandoned Cinema Amer building in Gaza City. The festival's 5th edition takes place between December 4 and 11, and will show a selection of 45 human rights-themed films in the Gaza Strip as well as in the West Bank and Jerusalem. — AFP Photos

Red carpet, no cinema; Gaza film festival forced outdoors

In the Palestinian enclave of Gaza, without a cinema for 30 years, a few hundred people walk the red carpet to a rare film screening - held on the street. The opening of the Red Carpet Human Rights Film Festival on Wednesday evening had been expected to take place inside the Amer Cinema, which has been abandoned for three decades. But it was moved at the last minute in unclear circumstances, with a screen erected in the street outside the cinema, a grey building with the letters peeling off. The festival's executive director, Muntaser Al-Sabaa, said organizers had been told by the cinema's owners that they could no longer use it as a venue.

"Suddenly they told us: 'We are sorry but the situation is dangerous'. They said: 'We are afraid'. 'What happened is incomprehensible. We don't know who told this partner to block the permit to open the cinema.' The organizers said that they had obtained the necessary permits to host the festival in the cinema. The Gaza Strip is run by Islamist movement Hamas, which enforces rules based on a strict conservative interpretation of Islam. Since seizing control in 2007 they have prevented events they consider immoral. The interior ministry in Gaza did not respond to a request for comment.

The week-long festival was scheduled to show 45 documentaries and is part-funded by the Palestinian Authority, based in the West Bank and dominated by the rival Fatah movement of president Mahmud Abbas. "We chose Amer cinema for its strong symbolism and to send a message that cinema buildings still exist in Gaza and

people have the right to enjoy shows," Sabaa said. The enclave of two million people has not had a working cinema since the last ones closed during the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, in the late 1980s. Gaza is still recovering from the last of three wars between Hamas and Israel in 2014.

'Unique feel'

In the end around 200 people sat outside to watch the opening film, the documentary "Gaza" by Irish directors Andrew McConnell and Garry Keane. The film, which documents the lives of a number of Palestinians over several years, has won critical acclaim. With a chill in the air, at times the audience clapped, while others looked saddened by the tale of daily woes in the Israeli-blockaded territory. "I came with my wife and daughter to watch," said Fathi Omar. "I was hoping to see the opening film on the screen (inside). 'When we travel to Egypt, we go to the cinema to see the new films. The cinema has a unique feel.

Actress and theatre director Dania Ziara said that she was happy that the screening had gone ahead. "But I would have been even happier if the show was in the cinema. In the street it is very noisy." Jonathan Conlon, representative of Ireland in Palestine, told AFP it was "very special to attend the screening of a film made by two Irishmen who were able to overcome so many obstacles to complete this extraordinary documentary of life in Gaza. "More than anything, I think, the film shows the great humanity - and the hopes - of ordinary Gazans." —AFP



Palestinians attend the opening ceremony of the Red Carpet Human Rights Film Festival in Gaza-Karama Palestine.



Palestinians watch a film during the opening ceremony of the Red Carpet Human Rights Film Festival in Gaza-Karama Palestine.

Egypt archaeologist Hawass sees role as 'custodian' of antiquities

Standing at the foot of the towering Great Sphinx of Giza, Zahi Hawass revels in his reputation as an indefatigable yet controversial figure in the enigmatic world of Egyptology. With the early morning sun-kissed pyramids behind him, the 72-year-old dubbed "the Egyptian Indiana Jones" posed casually for photos sporting his trademark cowboy hat. "This is a real archaeologist's hat. Harrison Ford's was a fake," he joked with AFP, referring to the American actor and star of the Indiana Jones movies. Hawass, who has appeared in dozens of documentaries about ancient Egypt, is himself a star attraction for a luxury archaeological tour organized by an operator based in Poland.

A larger-than-life character, who sees himself as "the custodian of Egyptian antiquities", he evokes in the same breath ancient deities and Pharaohs as well as his own name. Regaling tour participants with stories of his archaeological adventures, he boasts of his international achievements and cheerfully poses for selfies. The high energy show is all part of his rambunctious performance for the eager crowd who fork out almost 10,000 US dollars each for two weeks of travel basking in his knowledge on all things Pharaonic.

'I found my passion'

Despite his swagger, Hawass says he never once imagined he would have such a meteoric rise in the often dry and dusty world of archaeology. "When I was young, I wanted to be a lawyer... I was a very bad student," he told AFP. On a whim, a few friends advised him to study archaeology, and he fell instantly in love.

One day while out on a dig everything clicked



Zahi Hawass, Egyptian archaeologist and former antiquities minister, stands before the Great Sphinx of Giza during a lecture with a tourist group on ancient Egyptian history, at the Giza Necropolis on the southeastern outskirts of the capital. — AFP

when he uncovered a statue. "I thought to myself, I've found my passion," he said. Today several decades later, he divides his time between digs in southern Egypt, his Cairo office, a daily sports workout and a multitude of prestigious conferences both at home and abroad. But his flamboyant showmanship when enthusiastically unearthing Egypt's ancient treasures to a global audience has ruffled many in his esteemed academic community.

Some peers accuse him of being a business-

man cashing in on his celebrity. And he admits that \$150 per entrance ticket to one of his conferences is a little steep. But to those who accuse him of lacking empirical rigor in his fieldwork, he hits back and points to his many awards. "I have made some major discoveries," he said citing the tombs of the pyramid builders in Giza in the 1990s or the golden mummies of Bahariya Oasis, eastern Egypt, in 1996.

Fayza Haikal, professor of Archeology at the American University of Cairo (AUC), said his re-

search methods are "serious". "Like all stars, he has his fans and detractors," she said. Hourig Sourouzian, a renowned Armenian archaeologist working in Upper Egypt, is more generous in his assessment. He maintains Hawass has been a dynamic "engine" for Egyptology, translating to lucrative research grants from governments and funding bodies.

'Ambassador for archaeology'

Hawass was head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities from 2002 to 2011 and then briefly minister of antiquities in early 2011. It was a portfolio especially created for him. But he had to give it up right after the 2011 revolution that unseated long-time autocrat Hosni Mubarak. Employees hurled abuse at him amid charges of nepotism and accusations of smuggling antiquities to overseas buyers as he was escorted out of the Egyptian Museum. He left in a haze of corruption allegations along with other Mubarak allies. A case brought against him was overturned and the charges dropped on legal technicalities. Hawass maintains his innocence and boasts that the case never made it to court.

Under President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, he remains an influential figure in the field, and he is effusive in his praise of the general-turned-politician saying he "saved Egypt". There have been rumors of a bitter rivalry between him and the current minister of antiquities, Khaled El-Enany, but Hawass dismisses such talk saying his successor is "doing a very good job". "Enany when he came he depended on the people that I trained," he said. "And he calls me for advice all the time." — AFP

Immersive movie technology gets US debut with the new 'Jumanji' adventure

Moviegoers have been offered rolling seats, 3D glasses and even rain and smells in recent years as theater chains seek to fill seats. Now comes an immersive experience that gets its US launch in Los Angeles next week. It features laser projection and giant LED panels that line each side of the auditorium and fill a moviegoer's peripheral vision.

The panels extract colors from the screen and project them around the audience. "It gives you a feeling of being immersed in the film," said Shelby Russell, senior vice president of marketing at AEG and the LA Live entertainment district in downtown Los Angeles. "It makes you more engaged in the film in a very immersive way so it sets the mood throughout the entire auditorium," Russell told Reuters Television.

The Immersive Cinema Experience (ICE), first launched in France two years ago by movie chain CGR Cinemas, will make its US debut on Dec 12 at a single venue in Los Angeles for adventure movie

"Jumanji: The Next Level," starring Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black and Kevin Hart. Moviegoers will be charged an additional \$6 for the experience, which CGR Cinemas plans to expand to other theaters around the United States. It takes a swift three weeks to convert a feature film into an immersive experience, with action films working best.

"The films on ICE must be the films that have action, color and movement," said Jocelyn Bouyssy, managing director of CGR Cinemas. "It really needs movement of the camera - 'Mission: Impossible,' 'Jumanji,' films like that." The technology is coming to the United States as movie theaters face increasing competition for audiences from streaming platforms like Netflix and Disney+. "We do believe that providing unique experiences is a way to draw moviegoers to movie theaters, and ICE is a great example of that, and this is an experience you can't get at home," said Shelby. — Reuters

Bye-bye, birdie: Study finds North American birds getting smaller

Since 1978, researchers have scooped up and measured tens of thousands of birds that died after crashing into buildings in Chicago during spring and fall migrations. Their work has documented what might be called the incredible shrinking bird. A study published on Wednesday involving 70,716 birds killed from 1978 through 2016 in such collisions in the third-largest US city found that their average body sizes steadily declined over that time, though their wingspans increased.

The results suggest that a warming climate is driving down the size of certain bird species in North America and perhaps around the world, the researchers said. They cited a phenomenon called Bergmann's rule, in which individuals within a species tend to be smaller in warmer regions and larger in colder regions, as reason to believe that species may become smaller over time as temperatures rise.

The study focused on 52 species - mostly songbirds dominated by various sparrows, warblers and thrushes - that breed in cold regions of North America and spend their winters in locations south of Chicago. The researchers measured and weighed a parade of birds that crashed into building windows and went splat onto the

ground. Over the four decades, body size decreased in all 52 species. The average body mass fell by 2.6%. Leg bone length dropped by 2.4%. The wingspans increased by 1.3%, possibly to enable the species to continue to make long migrations even with smaller bodies.

"In other words, climate change seems to be changing both the size and shape of these species," said biologist Brian Weeks of the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability, lead author of the study published in the journal Ecology Letters. "Virtually everyone agrees that the climate is warming, but examples of just how that is affecting the natural world are only now coming to light," added Dave Willard, collections manager emeritus at the Field Museum in Chicago who measured all the birds.

The study provides fresh evidence of worrisome trends for North American birds. A study published in September documented a 29% avian population drop in the United States and Canada since 1970 and a net loss of about 2.9 billion birds. "I think the message to take away is this," Weeks said. "As humans change the world at an unprecedented rate and scale, there are likely widespread and consistent biotic responses to environmental change." — Reuters



A diver clad in Santa Claus outfit performs amongst fish during a Christmas-themed underwater show at an aquarium in Seoul. — AFP Photos

Santa Claus dives into a hot climate issue in aquarium

In a change of scene, Santa Claus is donning flippers and a diving mask along with his traditional red-and-white outfit to scuba dive in a Paris aquarium as he teaches kids about global warming and climate issues during the festive season. The aquatic Santa, a professional diver and biologist, may be found swimming among the fish and even a zebra shark every day during the holiday weeks. The show is part of the

aquarium's activities aimed at educating children about environmental issues including global warming, loss of biodiversity and extreme weather as a result of climate change.

"Children are the future," said Alexandre Dalloni, one of the aquarium's scientists. "The planet is also here for children to inherit, so it's those of a very young age which we can teach ... to tell them that everyone is responsible for

preserving the planet for the future." Dalloni added that swimming with the shark was safe for Santa. "The shark is an animal which isn't going to attack a human for no reason. There are attacks, but they're accidental," he told Reuters. Assuming all remains peaceful in the tank, scuba-diving Santa will be in residence until Jan 5. — Reuters

Peloton exercise bike's latest TV advert draws scathing reaction

With the latest ad portraying a woman thanking her husband for giving her an exercise bike for Christmas, social media users have heaped ridicule on Peloton Interactive. "Nothing says 'maybe you should lose a few pounds' like gifting your already rail thin life partner a Peloton," one Twitter user said, as others piled on to scorn the commercial, which is set in a large, richly furnished home. Many note that Peloton bicycles are worth at least \$2,245 and require a paid subscription to the video exercise classes.

"Before you buy a Peloton, you must have a luxurious home with a spotless picture window so everyone can see you work out," another commentator noted. The ad, which ends with the couple watching the woman's video montage about her year of exercise, has been broadcast nearly 7,000 times since its appearance on November 4, costing about \$13.8 million, according to the specialized site iSpot.tv. It has been viewed more than 600,000 times on YouTube, and also is featured at some US movie theaters in the pre-show packages.

Others commentators wonder about the family dynamic portrayed. "But she's the only one exercising. He just sits on the couch and watches video of her exercising," said another Twitter user. Peloton, which aims to revive stationary bicycles and treadmills from their role as clothes hangers, by combining them with online sessions led by dynamic and smiling young instructors, has been routinely criticized for its marketing featuring luxurious apartments and models with perfect physiques.

While some on Twitter could not contain their visceral hatred of the commercial - "Every time it plays my blood boils," one said - others noted that the campaign was a success since



A Peloton stationary bike sits on display at one of the fitness company's studios in New York City. — AFP

people are talking about it. "Someone in the marketing department did a good job." After a difficult Wall Street launch in late September, Peloton shares have gained ground, hitting a high point Monday night of \$36.84, or 27 percent above its IPO price. — AFP

Award-winning UK film upends bloody shame

The award-winning short film, "My Time", was inspired by seeing a friend being bullied at school for having a period stain on her clothes, its director Giulia Gandini said. The young girl had just started her first period but the teacher refused to allow her to use the toilet during class - a rule that applies to seven out of 10 girls in Britain today, according to the children's charity Plan International. "I wish that I had seen this film when I was 12," the London-based director, who grew up in Italy, said at a screening on Tuesday. "I developed this relationship to menstrual blood that was very negative."

Gandini's film is the latest to tackle the stigma around menstruation, following last year's Bollywood movie "Padman" and the Netflix documentary "Period. End of Sentence" - which won an Oscar this year. Shame can be deadly. In Nepal, the centuries-old Hindu practice of "chhaupadi", where women are banished from their homes during their periods, has led to numerous deaths from suffocation and snake bites.

Despite government schemes to provide free sanitary products in British schools, "period shaming" persists, with one in three women saying they have been bullied, isolated or joked about over "the curse", research by the charity ActionAid found. "It was a deliberate choice to set it in the UK - you still have this kind of shame and taboo," said Gandini, adding that she only "started questioning why I was feeling so awful about something so natural" years after her friend's humiliation. Gandini said her goal as a filmmaker is to dispel stigmas and show the reality of young women's lives in a positive light.

"Films don't only reflect culture but they have the power to shape it," she said, highlighting negative comments she received from men while making the film, with some asking, "Why should I care about menstrual blood?" "My Time" has won multiple awards, including at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival, London's TweetFest and Sweden's BUFF International Film Festival. Gandini said her film has a happier ending than the event she witnessed at school, with a clear feminist message of "being proud of who you are". — Reuters



Iraqi actors perform a play representing the ongoing anti-government demonstrations, in Tahrir Square in the capital Baghdad.—AFP Photos

Iraq revolution will be written, read, painted and dramatized

The pops of gunfire rang out across the protest camp in Iraq's capital. Blood-stained bodies writhed on the pavement, and smoke from burning tyres smarted the captive audience's eyes. But for once in recent weeks, the scenes playing out in Baghdad's Tahrir Square were a dramatization, put on by actors who travelled 600 kilometers from the port city of Basra. To an audience in tears, they acted out protesters railing against corruption and the lack of jobs, and filming with smartphones to broadcast the rallies live on social media. Suddenly, the actors crumpled to the ground, motionless, under a volley of tear gas canisters and live rounds.

Each actor took turns recounting the story of his "martyr," weaving through the stunned spectators and occasionally folding into one of their hands an Iraqi tricolor labeled with the names of towns where dozens have died. The south has been particularly bloody over the last week, pushing the two-month toll to nearly 430 dead and 20,000 wounded—the vast majority of them protesters. In a time of such hope and heartbreak, art is the answer, says 30-year-old Ali Issam, one of the actors. "Art is finally playing its true role: carrying the voice of Iraq," he told AFP.

'Mini-ministry of culture'

As anti-government demonstrations in the capital and Shiite-majority south enter their third month, they are being turned into plays, paintings, poems and literature. Tahrir has become an art hub, a rare space for free expression in a country where conservative tribes, paramilitary forces and powerful politicians have at various points tried to snuff out criticism. "It's a mini-ministry of culture," said Muslim Habib, a young director from Baghdad. Every day at dusk, he sets up a small projector in a tent on Tahrir, marked with a huge banner identifying it proudly as "Revolution Theatre."

Inside, he screens documentaries, shorts and other works by Iraqis both at home and abroad and hopes to soon show "films from the revolutions in Ukraine, Egypt or Syria." Rows of chairs spill out from the tent onto the pavement, packed nightly with young and old, men and women, protesters and curious onlookers.

Even police officers poked their heads in for a glimpse. Across the rest of the square, poets puffed out their chests and recited their latest revolutionary verses while small groups debated politics and philosophy.

Busking musicians dotted the nearby streets and painters canvassed the walls with large murals and "calligraffiti"—a hybrid of graffiti and intricate Arabic calligraphy. Culture even reigns in the "Turkish restaurant," the gutted 18-storey building that has been occupied by protesters for two months after decades of abandon. A 24-hour library has opened in its ground-floor garage, a rare sight in Iraq where now just 50 percent of adults know how to read despite its legendary role as a literary hub.

Reading to revolt

The library is full of dozens of worn second-hand books, ranging from translated American novels and political essays to romance novels and theological works. "This is culture," said Mustafa, the 20-year-old volunteer manager, confessing: "I especially love Dan Brown novels." Curled up with a book in his hand, Mustafa said he stopped going to school at a young age so he could work to provide for his parents. Already married, he worked in a printing shop but now peddles bottles of icy water in Baghdad's traffic-clogged streets during sweltering summers. "Reading is my way of continuing my education," Mustafa said, insisting Tahrir should be flooded with novels for protesters.

"This is the proof that we are awake, we understand what is happening and we're trying to succeed," he said. Youth make up a vast majority of the protesters in Tahrir, as well as 60 percent of Iraq's 40 million people. Many have said their active roles in demonstrations disprove those dismissing them as the "PUBG generation," a combat video game that is so popular among Iraqi youth that parents often scold them for playing it too much. "Yes, we are the PUBG generation—but we are also a cultured generation," chuckled Mustafa, before turning back to his book.—AFP



An Iraqi actor playing an injured anti-government protester with a tear gas canister lodged in his head, performs in Tahrir Square in the capital Baghdad.



An Iraqi actor gestures as he performs in a play representing the ongoing anti-government demonstrations.



An Iraqi actor playing an injured anti-government protester with a tear gas canister lodged in the eye, performs in Tahrir Square



Wodaabe women sit at the back of a pick up truck waiting to leave the weekly market in Bermo. The Wodaabe People, a sub-group of the Fulani, are nomadic cattle herders and traders in the wider Sahel region. Their migrations stretch from southern Niger, through northern Nigeria, northeastern Cameroon, southwestern Chad, and the western region of the Central African Republic. —AFP Photos

Climate change threatens end of trail for Niger's nomadic herders

Ali's sharp eyes scanned the heat-shimmered horizon, searching in vain for clouds. It was noon and 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) on the ninth day of their quest to reach new pastures. There was no tree anywhere, no shelter at all for his family, 27 sheep and six camels. "We heard that the first rain has fallen in the north. That's where we're going," the turbaned herder said, as he filled up a water bottle at the side of the road. An arduous trail lay ahead: more than 100 kilometres (60 miles) across the arid wastes of southern Niger before the family reached their goal.

There at Bermo, they counted on joining thousands of other herders, spending a few months in verdant hollows on the edge of the Sahara, famous for their moist air, juicy grass and water. The annual migration of the nomadic Fulani community—also called Peuls—is a vast caravan of herder folk that tails back to neighboring Nigeria. Women and children perched on donkeys already overburdened with bags of jute, plastic containers, mattresses and gourdes. Scrawny cows, sheep and goats trailed alongside in the baking heat, looking exhausted.

Vulnerable

Nomadic herders are among the world's most exposed communities when it comes to the impact of climate change. Higher temperatures, shifting winds and moisture levels that alter rainfall

patterns, sandstorms, torrential rain—all can change the quality or even the location of pasture on which migrating herders depend. This year, for the Fulani, has been relatively good.

The herdsmen were able to draw on stocks of animal feed to help them survive stress points, while timely rainfall on some areas of the migration trail helped tender young grass to grow. But whether this respite endures is the big question. Niger, one of the world's poorest countries, depends on farming, particularly herding, to provide a livelihood for 80 percent of its population. In addition to its vulnerability to climate change, the country is on the frontline of desertification—the equivalent of around 150,000 football pitches is lost each year.

Capricious

"The weather has become completely unpredictable," said Djafarou Amadou, an engineer working for a group called the Association to Revitalise Herding in Niger (AREN). "What we fear most are pockets of drought which take people by surprise when they least expect it." In 2018, more than 60,000 people, gathered in Bermo, celebrated when rain began to fall as early as May. But after a few weeks, the precious rain suddenly stopped. None fell for the next 30 days. The green plains turned yellow and the price of cereal fodder on local markets rocketed. Rouada Sabgari, an elderly herder, said that he had to sell off his skinniest cows at rock-bottom



A Wodaabe Fulani herder directs his flock to a watering place at a well near the Sabgari Clan camp in Bermo.



Wodaabe women prepare their donkeys before fetching water at a well near the Sabgari Clan camp in Bermo.



Koumbou, an elderly nomadic Fulani woman, gestures at sunset in front of the hut she lives in at a Fulani camp in Dosso.



Nomadic Fulani men tend to the rebuilding of a hut at a camp in Dosso.



Wodaabe woman prepares the morning meal at the Sabgari Clan camp in Bermo.

prices just to survive—a mere 5,000 CFA francs (\$8.4, 7.6 euros) per animal, compared with more than 200,000 francs at better times.

Every winter, Sabgari said, he camps nearby a well dug by his grandfather more than half a century ago, six kilometers from the village of Bermo. He is part of a Fulani clan called the Wodaabe, famous for travelling extremely long distances with their herds, from Niger to the Central African Republic via Cameroon and Chad. They are also nicknamed the Mbororo, like the hardy strain of reddish, large-horned steers they drive.

There is little that Sabgari doesn't know about survival and resilience. But he said he wondered whether his children will be able to carry on the ancient herding traditions. Successive droughts over the past 10 years have caused him to lose half of his herd. Today, he only has 32 cows—a catastrophic loss of capital for him and his 25-member family. In the Fulani culture, cattle are the measure of wealth and freedom. According to their beliefs, at the making of the world, the cow was created by God (Gueno) himself, using a drop of milk.

Lethal droughts

Seated on a mat in front of his tent, on a plain swept by winds and plastic bags snared on thorny bushes, Sabgari looked back on a life of hardship and brutal change. “In the old days, we didn't eat cereal or meat. The milk was rich and plentiful, it made us strong just by itself,” he said. “It's impossible to do that today.” Sabgari said the worst droughts, in 1974 and 1984, were turning points for Sahel herders. They lost half of their cattle. “We were unprepared for it,” he recalled. “Everyone fled (south) to Nigeria. The animals were so thin and tired that we had to lift them to get them on their feet. Even the people were dying. There was nothing in markets.”

Prayers to God to raise this “curse” and bring rain went in vain. After the big droughts, smaller ones followed—and food insecurity gradually became chronic, worsened by a jihadist insurgency and the displacement of the rural population it caused. “Today, we have

fewer animals and smaller harvests and more mouths to feed,” said the engineer Amadou. Niger is the sixth poorest country in the world but has the planet's highest fertility rate at more than seven children per woman on average.

The crunch

Dwindling harvests, relentless population pressure, climate uncertainty, pollution of underground aquifers, rivalry between herders and farmers over access to land: all this is a deadly mixture. In recent times, even in good years such as 2019, the phantom of hunger has never gone away. Harvests and livestock production are in surplus and the price of millet, sorghum and corn has fallen.

Yet despite this, between June and August, 1.2 million Nigeriens were in a position of serious food insecurity, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Barka Azzey, 38, is a testimony to how herder families in Niger can be ground down by repeated crises. His once-proud herd of 40 cows dwindled from hunger and diseases, leaving only scrawny beasts that gave no more milk and were unable to have calves. It was time to quit. “We didn't have enough to eat, to buy clothes, so I took my family and we went to live in the town,” Azzey said, his voice betraying sadness.

He became a watchman, living with his wife Rabi and their five children in the grounds of a wealthy trader in Maradi, Niger's second largest town. On the floor of his hut, three thin chickens rested in the shadow of a satellite dish where clothes were stretched out to dry. Azzey earns a meagre 20,000 CFA francs (\$34, 30 euros) a month, and to feed the children has to buy food on credit at the local grocery store. “There's nothing good in towns. Just despair,” Azzey said. He is fixated by one idea—“to earn enough money to rebuild my herd and get my old life back.”

Exodus

Azzey is just one of innumerable young Nigeriens who have turned their backs on the harsh life of herding to try their luck in

the cities. In cities across West Africa, you can see these young men hustling for a few bank notes, offering to shine your shoes, sell you a SIM card for your phone or some medicinal remedy. Many become caught in the poverty spiral, and have no way out. AREN, the British charity Oxfam and other NGOs have set up programs in rural areas that seek to stem this human haemorrhage.

One such scheme is a dairy, set up in the village of Bermo, which employs 300 people, mainly women, to produce yoghurt and cheese that are then sold at the local market. Help such as this has been a boon to Hadiza Attahirou, 39, who for 15 years went to Mali or Senegal to work for a few months to earn a little money. She received two cows under a help scheme—a small income, but a lifeline. “I can ease the burden for my husband when he goes off with the herds and pay my daughter's school fees,” she said. Others have benefited from micro-credit to buy farming tools or sewing machines.

Store the good times

The wheel of time turns, in the Fulani year, to Gerewol—a grand festival to mark the end of the rainy season. In Fulani folklore, this is a time to breathe and take into account life's blessings. Food is plentiful and the flanks of the animals are fat. Nomadic clans arrive in Bermo from across the Sahel. Bonds of friendship and love are renewed. Weddings and births are celebrated.

The ageless rituals of courting are renewed once more, as men—their faces painted, their hair in locks and bodies decorated with magical charms—dance for the women.

Like their animals who have grown fat on the grass of Bermo, the Fulani will also stock up on this moment. Tomorrow, they will set out once more on the trail. They will draw on memories of these days of comradeship, love and fun—a precious fund to sustain them in the perils that lie ahead. Before them lies furnace-like heat. Grass that will unexpectedly wither and die. Water holes that become parched. And they will be doomed to walk further and further, in search of those elusive clouds.—AFP

Lifestyle | Feature

Rap mogul Jay-Z marks his 50th birthday with return to Spotify

Rap mogul Jay-Z celebrated his fiftieth birthday and surprised fans Wednesday by putting his catalog back on streaming giant Spotify, after a two-year hiatus. The billionaire artist, who owns rival streaming service Tidal, had pulled the majority of his discography from Spotify in 2017, months before dropping his “4:44” album exclusively on his own upstart platform. The introspective album prompted a surge of interest in the paid subscription service Tidal — which also exclusively carries his megastar wife Beyoncé’s much-touted visual album “Lemonade” — briefly becoming a top downloaded app.

Fans can now stream “4:44” on Spotify for the first time, along with classics like “The Blueprint,” “American Gangster” and “Watch the Throne.” The rapper has the second-most top albums in

the history of Billboard’s rankings chart with 14, bested only by The Beatles, who have 19. “Happy Birthday, Hov,” Spotify tweeted Wednesday, using a nickname of the rapper born Shawn Carter, who grew up in one of Brooklyn’s most notorious housing projects.

There was no indication how long Jay-Z’s flow would remain available on Spotify, which has often come under fire from prominent artists including Prince, Taylor Swift and Thom Yorke for its royalty system, which many musicians say leaves them underpaid. In June, Forbes declared Hov rap’s first billionaire, estimating \$100 million of his vast fortune came from Tidal. As of 2016, Tidal said it had 3 million users. Today, Spotify says it has 248 million users, including 113 million who pay for premium service. — AFP



Rap mogul Jay-Z

First glimpse of latest Bond film goes online

Car chases, machine gun fire and love interest: fans of James Bond on Wednesday got their first taste of the upcoming film featuring the fictional British superspy, “No Time To Die”. A trailer on the official 007 Twitter account shows sharp-suited Bond, played by British actor Daniel Craig, evading capture in his Aston Martin sports car and jumping off a viaduct. Making a return alongside the suave secret agent is actress Lea Seydoux, whose character Madeleine Swann provided the obligatory love interest in the last film, “Spectre” (2015). “Why would I betray you?” she asks Bond as they hurtle through narrow streets at breakneck speed while being shot at. “We all have our secrets,” Bond replies. “We just didn’t get to yours yet.”

The 25th instalment of the British spy saga, due out in April, sees Bond drawn out of retirement in Jamaica by his old friend and CIA agent Felix Leiter. He is asked to embark on a treacherous mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist, according to Universal Pictures. Rami Malek, who won a best actor Oscar for his depiction of Queen frontman Freddie Mercury in “Bohemian Rhapsody”, plays the villain in the long-awaited movie.

Craig, 51, who had to undergo minor ankle surgery after an injury on set, is expected bow out after eight years as agent 007. The trailer introduces a new rivalry between the ageing Bond and a new spy, played by British actress Lashana Lynch. “The world’s moved on, Commander Bond,”



she says to 007, warning him to “stay in your lane”. British actress and writer Phoebe Waller-Bridge (“Fleabag”) was involved in the script to help improve the portrayal of women, after repeated claims of misogyny and sexism. — AFP

Instagram to require birth dates in move to block underage use

Instagram said Wednesday it would require new users to verify they are at least 13 when they join the visually focused, Facebook-owned social network. The move aims to help Instagram comply with a US law and its own policies that require any user to be at least 13. “Asking for this information will help prevent underage people from joining Instagram, help us keep young people safer and enable more age-appropriate experiences overall,” an Instagram blog said. The company said the age information would not be visible to others but would help in creating “age-appropriate and safer experiences” on the social network with

more than a billion users.

It was not immediately clear how Instagram would protect against young people providing false information, which has been a persistent issue for social media. The announcement came a day after a TechCrunch article which noted that Instagram did not follow the example of most of its social media peers in checking the ages of users, which could put the network in violation of the Child Online Privacy Protection Act. The article noted that Facebook and Instagram both employed moderators who may lock the accounts of any users they suspect are under 13. — AFP



An employee holds a cup with the Instagram logo at Facebook’s corporate headquarters during a media event in Menlo Park, California. — AFP

‘The rapist is you’: Chile hymn against sexual violence goes viral

Thousands of women have mobbed the National Stadium in Chile’s capital for a flash denunciation of sexual violence—the latest performance of a battle-cry that has seized public attention during weeks of national unrest. Women of all ages from around Santiago, dressed in black and

wearing red scarves and blindfolds, converged on the sporting venue in the early evening after a call-out on social media networks. “The fault is not with me, nor where I was, nor how I was dressed... The rapist is you!” the group sang, stomping their feet and waving their arms in a choreographed routine that has in re-

cent weeks been staged around the country and around the world. Similar performances have been staged by women as far away as Paris, Barcelona and Mexico City. “It was a great experience to share this with thousands and thousands of women,” 66-year-old Jacqueline Saintard told AFP after Wednesday’s

demonstration. First created by the feminist collective LasTesis, based in the Chilean seaside town of Valparaíso, the performance began to be emulated after reports of police violence against women and as countrywide demonstrations against the government gained steam. —AFP

Comic

Word Search

Public Library

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Henry Ward Beecher quotation.

ACSEIVOMSENIZAGAMLIRB
 RSHAVYGLOHOCYSPRWENER
 YAREIRSNLIBRARYCARDCE
 GPBECOESELBATTYANIYRI
 OPLRPKSSDOUAWORROBNHEP
 LLSLAAOCECXNAUIRMTPAO
 AITRINPUIRINGTYEUEOTC
 TERBITCSTTOAAUNUSRSIO
 ADATYAEHWIAMLCATINOOT
 CSDPHRRHRTERMYSCEGCELNO
 OCUAPNECAONCECCOETITH
 EIEPAHIVFTLOHHMIESHEP
 SEDERDINOOUNFPTUETPIB
 LNARGFISPCORUHDAENNUO
 ECTBOEIEITLDTERCEMSCOO
 VEEAESDNOOERELIGIONEK
 OITCGIIGERRVAFICTIONS
 NESKAOYFSSOYLHCRAESER
 SEVLEHSLACIDOIREPREAD
 IFLIBRARIANE BIOGRAPHY

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| APPLIED SCIENCE | ENCYCLOPEDIA | MAGAZINES | QUIET |
| ARTS | FICTION | MATHEMATICS | READ |
| BIOGRAPHY | FINES | MOVIES | RECREATION |
| BOOKS | GEOGRAPHY | MUSIC | RELIGION |
| BORROW | HARDCOVER | NEWSPAPERS | RENEW |
| BRANCH | HISTORY | NOVELS | RESEARCH |
| CATALOG | INFORMATION | OVERDUE | RESERVE |
| CHAIRS | INTERNET | PAPERBACK | SHelves |
| CHECKOUT | LANGUAGES | PERIODICALS | SOCIAL SCIENCES |
| COMPUTERS | LIBRARIAN | PHILOSOPHY | TABLES |
| DICTIONARY | LIBRARY CARD | PHOTOCOPIER | TECHNOLOGY |
| DUE DATE | LITERATURE | PSYCHOLOGY | |

Yesterday's Solution

Pizza

BAONTLPQSEOTAMOTCH
 AKOGIOYENASEMRAIPVI
 CECSASMOFSPUSCRITSHI
 OCAATILAKPHSTEENMZ
 NBSEJOSMTREIAVFOEU
 GAROYTRATOCRIGZISC
 OSTONBEMTHSLOZELMWC
 AARLOEPRONOAVANSOCH
 TPLILMPKEKARUNICOI
 CRSMIAEACTELOCRNRN
 HICAVHPALLNIPUECHIG
 ECILEPLILANOSGNRSIG
 EOLAOBLAEOJTMAGBUO
 STRSIFEEBDNUORDEMU
 ETAPLPBLASPARAGUSD
 SAGSREPPPEPANANABEA
 SPYNACHGREENOLIVES

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| ARTICHOKE HEARTS | CRUST | JALAPENOS | PROVOLONE |
| ASSAGO | EGGPLANT | MONTEREY JACK | RICOTTA |
| ASPARAGUS | FETA | MOZZARELLA | SALAMI |
| BACON | GARLIC | MUSHROOMS | SAUSAGE |
| BANANA PEPPERS | GOAT CHEESE | OLIVE OIL | SHRIMP |
| BASIL | GOUDA | ONIONS | SPINACH |
| BELL PEPPERS | GREEN OLIVES | OYSTERS | TOMATO SAUCE |
| BLACK OLIVES | GROUND BEEF | PARMESAN | TOMATOES |
| BROCCOLI | HAM | PEPPERONI | ZUCCHINI |

The hidden words are: ANCHOVIES CHICKEN MEATBALLS PINEAPPLE

Crossword 2378



ACROSS

- Select as an alternative.
- A member of a North American Plains people (now living in Oklahoma and Wyoming).
- God of the underworld.
- Perennial herb of East India to Polynesia and Australia cultivated for its large edible root yielding Otaheite arrowroot starch.
- A turn made in skiing.
- Any high mountain.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- Roman poet remembered for his elegiac verses on love (43 BC - AD 17).
- Paraphernalia indicative of royalty (or other high office).
- A drug (trade names Calan and Isoptin) used as an oral or parenteral calcium blocker in cases of hypertension or congestive heart failure or angina or migraine.
- English aristocrat who was the first wife of Prince Charles.
- Wild or seedling sweet cherry used as stock for grafting.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
- Framework for holding objects.
- Viscera and trimmings of a butchered animal often considered inedible by humans.
- A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.

- Slanting diagonally across the grain of a fabric.
- Bourbon with bitters and Pernod and sugar served with lemon peel.
- A genus of evergreen shrub that grows in New Zealand.
- A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
- A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
- British informal term.
- A facial expression of contempt or scorn.
- The bill in a restaurant.
- A member of an ancient people living east of Babylonia as early as 4000 BC.
- Give up, such as power, as of monarchs and emperors, or duties and obligations.
- A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- A solution containing chemicals that can change the color of a photographic print.
- A catch for locking a door.
- The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- A type of submachine gun that is designed and manufactured in Israel.
- Usually good-naturedly mischievous.
- Standard time in the 6th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 90th meridian.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- An underwater mountain rising above the ocean floor.
- (combining form) Former.

Daily SuDoku

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

- Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
- Be seated.
- The act of reproducing recorded sound.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- Low tree ferns with large fronds.
- The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.

DOWN

- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Type genus of the Pipidae.
- An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
- (music) Characterized by avoidance of traditional Western tonality.
- Rate of revolution of a motor.
- Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- Before noon.
- A support consisting of an arrangement of straps for holding something to the body (especially one supporting a person suspended from a parachute).
- (Greek mythology) One of the mountain nymphs.
- A graphical recording of the cardiac cycle produced by an electrocardiograph.
- Indigo bush.
- (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
- A slap with the flat of the hand.
- United by being of the same opinion.
- Lower in esteem.
- Black tropical American cuckoo.

- Occurring at or forming an end or termination.
- A ruling on a point of Islamic law that is given by a recognized authority.
- The wife or widow of a czar.
- A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
- Advanced in years.
- A switch made from the stems of the rattan palms.
- Make less active or intense.
- A heavy wooden pole (such as the trunk of a young fir) tossed as a test of strength (in the Highlands of Scotland).
- Being six more than fifty.
- Sour or bitter in taste.
- Oil palms.
- A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- United States neoclassical architect (1847-1909).
- Expandable metal or wooden wedge used by printers to lock up a form within a chase.
- A metrical unit with stressed-unstressed-unstressed syllables.
- A naturally occurring glyceride of oleic acid that is found in fats and oils.
- Of a leaf shape.
- Piece of solid food for dipping in a liquid.
- A Polynesian rain dance performed by a woman.
- A drop of the clear salty saline solution secreted by the lacrimal glands.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Tropical Asian starlings.
- (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great distance.
- A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
- Being one more than ninety.
- A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- Unknown god.

Yesterday's Solution

P	C	T	S	I	D	E	S	T	E	P	P	F	H	A
I	R	E	C	A	R	A	C	O	L	E	L	A	D	
P	A	S	C	H	A	R	A	S	R	A	K	A		
I	S	L	A	M	I	C	P	T	I	B	S	E	N	
T	H	A	N	E	O	L	E	A	C	B	A	A		
	C	A	Y	D	E	A	F							
K	A	T	A	R	A	S	I	A	R	A	I	T	A	
E	B	O	N	A	G	I	O	E	P	I	L	O	G	
B	U	R	M	O	L	N	A	R	N	A	P	A		
A	J	A	R	G	O	I	N	G	M	A	P			
B	A	H	A	S	A	M	A	D	A	M	A	Z	E	
	B	A	C	C	A	R	A	Z	E					
G	A	L	I	L	E	O	E	L	A	S	T	I	C	
H	A	I	D	A	U	L	V	A	L	A	S	S	A	
A	R	M	A	N	T	E	C	E	D	E	A	L	S	
T	E	A	M	A	H	A	R	A	J	A	R	E	T	

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings

00:15 Overlord
02:20 Friday The 13th Part IV: The Final Chapter
04:05 The Quake
06:05 Men In Black 3
08:00 Spy Hard
09:30 We Still Steal The Old Way
11:15 Occupation
13:20 Men In Black 3
15:20 WarGames
17:25 Power Rangers
19:40 Twelve Monkeys
22:00 Predators



00:50 Wolves And Warriors
01:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
02:40 I Survived An Animal Attack
03:35 The Aquarium
04:25 Wolves And Warriors
05:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
06:02 Wildest Middle East
06:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
07:36 Dogs 101: New Tricks
08:25 Animal Cops Houston
10:10 The Zoo
11:05 Treehouse Masters
12:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:55 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
13:50 Crocodile Hunter
14:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
15:40 Pit Bulls & Parolees
16:35 Urban Predator: Lion On The Loose
17:30 Whale Wars
18:25 Animal Cops Miami
19:20 Keeping Up With The Kruger
20:15 The Vet Life
21:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
22:05 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
23:00 Urban Predator: Lion On The Loose
23:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees



00:10 EastEnders
00:40 Mrs Wilson
01:40 Holby City
02:35 Bad Move
03:00 Back
03:25 The Coroner
04:10 Father Brown
05:00 Doctors
05:30 Doctors
06:00 Doctors
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Holby City
07:55 Death In Paradise
08:50 Father Brown
09:35 Casualty
10:20 Five By Five
10:25 Bad Move
10:50 Bad Move
11:15 Holby City
12:10 Death In Paradise
13:05 Father Brown
13:50 Casualty
14:35 Five By Five
14:40 Bad Move
15:05 Bad Move
15:30 Doctors
18:30 Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators
20:10 The Cry
21:10 Line Of Duty
22:15 The Good Karma Hospital
23:05 Press



00:00 The First 48
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
02:55 Psychic Kids
03:50 It Takes A Killer
04:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
05:30 The First 48
06:15 Homicide Hunter
07:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
08:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
08:20 The First 48
09:50 Homicide Hunter
11:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill



12:25 The First 48
13:20 Crimes That Shook Australia
14:15 Live PD: Police Patrol
14:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
15:10 It Takes A Killer
15:40 It Takes A Killer
16:05 Homicide Hunter
17:00 The First 48
18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
19:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
20:00 It Takes A Killer
20:30 It Takes A Killer
21:00 The First 48
22:00 Homicide Hunter
23:00 Kids Behind Bars: Life Or Parole



00:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
00:27 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
00:50 Impractical Jokers
01:15 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
01:40 Teachers
02:05 Friends
02:55 South Park (Repeats)
03:20 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
03:45 Teachers
04:08 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
04:35 South Park (Repeats)
05:00 Friends
07:10 House Of Food
08:00 House Of Food
08:55 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
10:15 Friends
12:20 Ridiculousness
14:30 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team
17:10 Friends
19:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
21:30 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:30 Rachel Feinstein: Only Whores Wear Purple
23:30 Most Ridiculous



00:30 Dodo Heroes
01:20 Animal Airport
01:45 Animal Airport
02:10 My Cat From Hell
03:00 Dirty Jobs
03:50 Somebody's Gotta Do It
04:40 Tanked
05:30 Animal Airport
05:53 Animal Airport
06:15 My Cat From Hell
07:00 Dirty Jobs
07:45 Somebody's Gotta Do It
08:30 UFOs: The Lost Evidence
09:15 Strip The Cosmos
10:00 Strip The Cosmos
10:45 Cliptastic
11:10 Tanked
12:00 UFOs: The Lost Evidence
12:50 Storm Chasers
13:40 Invent It Rich
14:30 Man v Expert
15:20 Dirty Jobs
16:10 Tanked
17:00 Bad Dog
17:50 My Cat From Hell
18:40 Dirty Jobs
19:30 The Carbonaro Effect
20:20 Tricks On The Streets
21:10 Breaking Magic
21:35 Breaking Magic
22:00 The Next Great Magician
22:50 Keeping Up With The Kruger
23:40 Tanked



00:00 Dead Of Night
01:00 Twisted Sisters
02:00 The Lies That Bind
03:00 The Coroner: I Speak For The Dead

05:30 Border Control: Spain
07:35 Border Control: Spain
08:00 Evil Online
08:55 Evil Online
09:50 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
10:45 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
11:40 Betrayed
12:35 Murder Chose Me
13:30 Murder Chose Me
14:25 Swamp Murders
15:20 Deadly Affairs
17:10 Betrayed
18:05 Evil Stepmothers
20:00 Disappeared
22:00 Bride Killa
23:00 Til Death Do Us Part



00:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
01:00 Alex & Co.
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:40 Alex & Co.
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Evermoor Chronicles
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:35 Violetta
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Raven's Home
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 That's So Raven
08:20 That's So Raven
08:45 K.C. Undercover
09:10 Bizaardvark
09:35 Jessie
10:00 Jessie
10:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
11:15 Bizaardvark
12:05 Liv And Maddie
12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:45 Bunk'd
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
15:00 Disney Cookabout
15:25 Shake It Up
15:50 A.N.T. Farm
16:40 Penny On M.A.R.S
17:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
17:10 Amphibia
17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
18:00 Raven's Home
19:00 That's So Raven
20:00 Stuck In The Middle
20:30 K.C. Undercover
21:30 Shake It Up
22:30 Disney Mickey Mouse
22:35 Liv And Maddie
23:25 Jessie



00:00 PJ Masks
00:30 The Lion Guard
01:00 Sofia The First
01:25 Disney Junior Music Nursery Rhymes
01:30 Gigantosaurus
02:00 PJ Masks
02:50 Paprika
03:00 Zou
03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:20 Paprika
04:40 Zou
05:25 Paprika
05:35 Paprika
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 PJ Masks
07:30 Gigantosaurus
07:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
08:00 The Lion Guard
08:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:00 PJ Masks
09:30 Bluey
09:40 Bluey
09:50 Vampirina
10:10 Vampirina
10:30 Elena Of Avalor
11:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
11:30 PJ Masks
12:00 Vampirina
12:30 Vampirina

13:00 Doc McStuffins
13:30 Gigantosaurus
14:00 Puppy Dog Pals
14:30 Puppy Dog Pals
15:00 PJ Masks
15:30 T.O.T.S.
16:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
16:30 Vampirina
17:00 Elena Of Avalor
17:30 Sofia The First
18:00 T.O.T.S.
18:30 Bluey
18:40 Bluey
18:55 Doc McStuffins Shorts
19:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
19:15 Fancy Nancy Clancy
19:30 Vampirina
20:00 PJ Masks
20:30 The Lion Guard
21:00 Sofia The First
21:30 Elena Of Avalor
22:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
22:30 Bluey
22:40 Bluey
22:55 Doc McStuffins Shorts
23:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
23:15 Fancy Nancy Clancy
23:30 Vampirina



00:15 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
01:05 Ripley's Believe It Or Not!
01:50 Mythbusters
02:35 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers
03:20 Misfit Garage
04:05 Misfit Garage
04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:15 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Garage Gold
06:00 Shed And Buried
06:20 Garage Gold
06:45 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
07:35 Alaskan Bush People
08:20 Gold Rush
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
09:55 Salvage Hunters
10:45 How Do They Do It?
11:10 How Do They Do It?
11:30 Misfit Garage
12:20 Misfit Garage
13:05 Shed And Buried
13:30 Garage Gold
13:55 Salvage Hunters
14:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier
15:30 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
16:15 Bad Chad Customs
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
17:50 Gold Rush
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 How Do They Do It?
19:25 Misfit Garage
20:15 Misfit Garage
21:00 Salvage Hunters: Classic Cars
21:50 Bad Chad Customs
22:40 Wheeler Dealers
23:30 Deadliest Catch: The Bait



00:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
01:00 Boyster
01:20 Boyster
01:45 Counterfeit Cat
02:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:20 Boyster
03:40 Boyster
04:05 Counterfeit Cat
04:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
05:15 Supa Strikas
06:00 Lab Rats
06:50 Phineas And Ferb
07:40 Gravity Falls
08:30 Phineas And Ferb
09:20 Big City Greens
10:05 Phineas And Ferb
10:50 Lab Rats
11:10 Lab Rats

11:35 Phineas And Ferb
11:55 Phineas And Ferb
12:20 Gravity Falls
12:45 Gravity Falls
13:10 Furiki Wheels S1 Shorts
13:15 Phineas And Ferb
13:40 Phineas And Ferb
14:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:30 Phineas And Ferb
14:55 Phineas And Ferb
15:20 Big City Greens
15:45 Big City Greens
16:10 Supa Strikas
16:35 Supa Strikas
17:00 Disney 11
17:25 Lab Rats
17:50 Phineas And Ferb
18:15 Phineas And Ferb
18:40 Supa Strikas
19:05 Lab Rats
19:30 Lab Rats
19:55 Furiki Wheels S1 Shorts
20:00 Disney 11
20:25 Gravity Falls
20:50 Phineas And Ferb
21:15 Phineas And Ferb
21:40 DuckTales
22:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:55 Furiki Wheels S1 Shorts
23:00 Furiki Wheels
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost
23:50 Dude That's My Ghost



00:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
01:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
02:00 Nightly Pop
03:00 Famously Single
04:00 WAGs
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 True Hollywood Story
11:40 E! News: Daily Pop
12:35 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
19:00 E! News: Daily Pop
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 Nightly Pop
23:30 Nightly Pop



00:30 Weapons At War
01:15 The Lost Evidence
02:00 UFO Hunters
02:45 How The Earth Was Made
03:30 Fifth Gear
04:15 Ancient Discoveries
05:00 Ancient Aliens
05:45 Cryptid: The Swamp Beast
06:30 UFO Files
07:15 Weapons At War
08:00 How The Earth Was Made
08:45 Fifth Gear
09:30 Ancient Discoveries
10:15 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Decoding The Past
11:45 UFO Files
12:30 Weapons At War
13:15 UFO Hunters
14:00 How The Earth Was Made
14:45 Fifth Gear
15:30 Ancient Discoveries
16:15 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Decoding The Past
17:45 UFO Files
18:30 Weapons At War
19:15 UFO Hunters
20:00 How The Earth Was Made
20:45 Fifth Gear
21:30 Ancient Discoveries
22:15 Ancient Aliens
23:00 MysteryQuest
23:45 UFO Files



00:20 The Curse Of Oak Island
01:05 Storage Wars
01:25 Storage Wars
01:50 American Pickers Best Of
02:35 Pawn Stars

02:55 Pawn Stars
03:20 Hunting Hitler
04:10 Project Impossible
05:05 Forged In Fire
06:00 Detroit Steel
06:45 The Curse Of Oak Island
07:30 Storage Wars
07:50 Storage Wars
08:15 American Pickers Best Of
09:00 Pawn Stars
09:20 Pawn Stars
09:45 Hunting Hitler
10:30 Project Impossible
11:15 Forged In Fire
12:00 American Pickers
14:15 Truck Night In America
18:45 Hunting Hitler
21:00 Unidentified: Inside America's UFO Investigation
21:50 Ancient Aliens
22:40 Ancient Aliens
23:30 American Pickers



00:10 Fish Tank Kings
01:00 48 Hrs Destination
01:50 What's For Sale With A View
02:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
03:30 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
03:55 Late Nite Eats
04:20 Destination Extreme
05:10 Access 360 World Heritage
06:00 David Rocco's Dolce India
06:50 Miguel's Feasts
07:40 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
08:30 Late Nite Eats
08:55 United Plates Of America
09:20 Log Cabin Fever
10:10 Pizza In Parma
10:35 Delicacy Hunter: On The Silk Road
11:00 Access 360 World Heritage
11:50 David Rocco's Dolce India
12:40 Miguel's Feasts
13:30 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
14:20 Late Nite Eats
14:45 United Plates Of America
15:10 Log Cabin Fever
16:00 Pizza In Parma
16:25 Delicacy Hunter: On The Silk Road
16:50 Access 360 World Heritage
17:45 David Rocco's Dolce India
18:40 Miguel's Feasts
19:35 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
20:30 Late Nite Eats
20:55 United Plates Of America
21:25 Log Cabin Fever
22:20 Pizza In Parma
22:45 Delicacy Hunter: On The Silk Road
23:15 Access 360 World Heritage



00:00 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
00:55 Primal Survivor
01:45 Locked Up Abroad
02:35 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
03:00 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
03:25 Inside T4: Terminal Of Tomorrow
04:15 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
05:05 Primal Survivor
06:00 Locked Up Abroad
06:55 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
07:20 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
07:50 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
08:45 Primal Survivor
09:40 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
10:35 Car SOS
11:30 Brain Games
12:25 Access 360 World Heritage
13:20 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
14:15 Airport Security: Brazil
15:10 America Inside Out With Katie Couric
16:05 Lost Cities With Albert Lin
17:00 Car SOS
18:00 Access 360 World Heritage
19:00 Brain Games

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Plan a special outing with someone near and dear to your heart. Special time with someone you love will be very emotionally satisfying to you today. You are in a loving mood. You are focused on building a stronger relationship and you will find this very satisfying. This is the ideal time to tap into your creative energy. Look around for a need that is not being met. The answer could be a simple invention with a huge impact. Your mindset is perfect for this. You will be able to not only use your talent to benefit your needs, but also help others. This could be a win-win situation for you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Prepare for a major event. This may put an end to your old way of life. You may find independence is a necessity now rather than a choice. You are on your own and this may mark a time of increased responsibility and accountability. Some soul searching may be in order to face this new life. Take your time and spend sometime meditating or relaxing to access your new situation. Do not ask yourself, Why me? You know why. Because you can handle any obstacle that is put in your path.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Things may seem too good to be true. In an almost magical sense it seems that all of your dreams are coming true. Goals seem attainable now. Everything seems to be falling in your lap. You are being smiled upon and you have a new love for life. This is the result of your hard work and dedication. You may find that karma has a way of repaying your good deeds and there seems to be no other explanation for this vast array of good fortune. This is a great time to get all of your affairs in order and continue to dream big.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your words have more power than you could ever imagine. Use them wisely. This is a time others will find you very persuasive. You are a natural born leader and may find yourself asked to lead the pack today. You are starting to discover may career opportunities will begin to present themselves to you. Choose your friends wisely and be sure to keep only those who have your best interest at heart in your circle. You may find not everyone is supportive. Jealousy and envy may rear its head in your world today. Keep your chin up and keep going full steam ahead!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your peers are appreciative of your ability to be able to make constructive suggestions or to help them with practical decisions, which relate to group issues. Knowing exactly what the public wants at this time is yet another feather in your hat. Your name and reputation are spreading quickly. Expect an upgrade soon in your job identity and pay. The idea of value or a greater appreciation for things of value is fun to comprehend this afternoon. It is most assuredly a time when tangible things have a great deal of importance. Your emotions or the feelings of those around you should be quite clear, making it a great time to reflect and truly understand individual family members and your connection in the family.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today may find you feeling as you encounter a road block at every turn. Perhaps, today is not the day for big decisions. You may find yourself a bit frustrated and preferring a bit of isolation. You are simply not in the mood for people. You may feel as if you are not able to get your point across to anyone and may feel greatly misunderstood. You could find yourself at odds with those close to you and should remember to try and remain calm as conflict and confrontation seem to be seeking your company today. Today would be a great day for reorganizing and reflection to get yourself back where you want to be.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You have a special place in your heart for those close to you. You seem to be the one the younger generation in your life look up to and admire. Your advice and guidance maybe sought from someone who looks to you as a mentor. You may feel as if your greatest growth comes when you are helping others. Today may be one of those days you are spinning your wheels getting physical tasks accomplished. Before frustration takes hold, stop and realize your shoulder to lean on and your listening ear and wonderful advice may be a much greater accomplishment than a completing a simple chore. Libra, be proud of who you are and what you mean to others.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Things may seem too good to be true. In an almost magical sense it seems that all of your dreams are coming true. Goals seem attainable now. Everything seems to be falling in your lap. You are being smiled upon and you have a new love for life. This is the result of your hard work and dedication. You may find that karma has a way of repaying your good deeds and there seems to be no other explanation for this vast array of good fortune. This is a great time to get all of your affairs in order and continue to dream big.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A need for power and control is a driving force in your life now. You long to be in control of everyone and every aspect of your world. You may find that others see you as being more assertive than usual and are caught off guard by the change in you. You find you are curious and seeking answers to subjects and mysteries you find intriguing. Today could find you doing a bit of soul-searching trying to find answers to all that fascinate you about who you are, who you have become, and where life finds you today. This is a day solutions to old problems seem to fall into your lap. You may find much support from someone close to you that truly admires your more eccentric qualities.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your relationships seem to take on a new importance for you now. You have come to realize you gather strength from the support of those closest to you. You may experience a bit of a wakeup call today. A refreshing reminder that helps you remember it is ok to put yourself first. You are not responsible for anyone's happiness but your own. Always putting others ahead of yourself after time can cause you to be unhappy. Take some time today to spoil yourself. This will be rewarding and satisfying to you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Lady Luck is smiling down on you. Today is one of those days that it seems you can do no wrong. Everything is going your way and you are full of happiness and energy. This is a great time to seek advice from an elder. You are well aware that with age comes knowledge. You may find the advice you receive from this person is good and just the bit of encouragement you needed to make a leap forward. Live without fear. Aquarius. Take a chance and enjoy everything this day has to bring. Make plans today for future events as you will find everything seems to fall into place. What a great day.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

There is a reason they make chocolate AND vanilla. What appeals to one may not always appeal to the other. People are different. They have different options and different outlooks on life. You may find yourself running across someone who could not be any more opposite of you. This person will not be someone whose company you enjoy. You can always turn a negative situation into something positive. Sit and have a talk and really listen to what this person has to say. Sometimes listening to understand rather than listening to respond can shed great light and understanding on a situation.

Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	00354	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Friday, December 6, 2019

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- Diagnosis/Treatment of General Ear, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatric
- Minimally Invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- Minimally Invasive Microscopic Endoscopic Ear surgery
- Diagnosis & treatment of Otolgy and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- Diagnosis & treatment of voice and swallowing disorders
- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

DR. FAHAD S. BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:

- Dermatology board certified.
- Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

- Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- Laser Treatments.
- Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- Body & Face Contouring.
- Injectable Fillers & Botox.

SHARL, Ahmad Alshar, Building 16, Floor 11.
Tel: (+965) 22060777
@DrFahadS, @DrFahadS, @DrFahadS
Email: drfahad@beautybeyond.com.kw
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant Interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

- 1- Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty), Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4- Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24-hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

Know your Doctor
Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)
Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

- Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the British Laryngological Association
- Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- Thyroid surgery.
- Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- Treatment of snoring.
- Treatment of vertigo.

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo-Rectal Surgeon

daralshifa
Email: aahaddad@daralshifa.com

Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

daralshifa
Tele:1802 555

IC
American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- Day care surgeries
- Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- Hernia repair
- Surgery for reflux disease
- Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- Breast surgeries
- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com
Tel: 1886677

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617 or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

RADIOLOGY & MEDICAL IMAGING

These services include, but are not limited to, the below:


MRI

- Arthritis
- Brain & the brachial plexus
- Breast lumps
- Small intestine & colon
- Angiography

Ultrasound
Digital X-Ray
Mammography

CT Scan

- Head
- Middle & inner ear
- Chest
- Abdomen & pelvis
- Bones
- Angiography



1 888 883 tashhospital.com
@tashhospital

RADIOLOGY & MEDICAL IMAGING



Dr. Thamer Alshubaykh
Consultant of Radiology & Medical Imaging



Dr. Ali Alsuwaid
Consultant of Radiology & Medical Imaging



Dr. Alaa Kaddah
Specialist Radiologist



Dr. Nazeem Islam-Rawas
Consultant of Radiology & MRI



Dr. Ahmad Isht
Specialist of Radiology & MRI



Dr. Yusef Khatib
Radiologist



Dr. Nafaa Alshuaib
Radiologist



Dr. Mohamed Naguib
Radiologist



Dr. Kufi Ali
Radiologist

1 888 883 tashhospital.com
@tashhospital



Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
Senior Registrar

Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid
Consultant

Dr. Abeer Khattab
Specialist

Ophthalmology Services

Cataract Surgery

Glaucoma

Retina

General Ophthalmology

Follow-Up All Treatments

1 888 883
WhatsApp Us
+965-6000 2184

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!



Dr. Kiran Toraka
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Zareena Zahir
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Hassan Khan
Senior Ophthalmologist



Dr. P. Sushendra Reddy
Ophthalmic Consultant (MRD/FRD)
Specialized in Retina, Strabismic, Ptosis and Glaucoma

50721507 / 24551555
www.exircenterku.com

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER

Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

Tel : 24568857 / 24568858 info@exircenterku.com www.exircenterku.com

WELCOME

Dr. Tammam Abou Ali
Consultant ENT, Head Neck, Facial Plastic Surgery

- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
- Snoring and OSAP Surgery
- Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
- Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
- Salivary gland and parotid surgery
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Micro laryngeal surgery




1 888 883
www.qmckuwait.com



To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102
or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617
or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com



DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM

Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery



Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

- Bariatric surgeries.
- Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- G.I. surgeries.
- Thyroid and para - lthyroid surgeries.
- Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228
Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 15 - Queen Centre Mazaya Building

Classifieds

MATRIMONIAL

Reputed high educated Goan Catholic family girl 38 yrs. 5'3" slim, fair, good looking, convent educated graduate B.Pharm. Having her own medical pharmacy in Goa. Seeks alliance from well established Catholic bachelor below 42 yrs. Good looking, clean habit, preferably doctor, engineer, CA or professional businessman from Kuwait/Gulf/abroad. Send details with family background and photo email: cariren@yahoo.com (C 5692) 6-12-2019

Vithayathil house, Ayroor, Ernakulam Dist. Kerala, India and presently residing building No. 12, Block-2, Abuhalifa, Kuwait. Do hereby split my name from Joymon Vithayathil Paulose to Joymon as given name and Vithayathil Paulose as surname with immediate effect. (C 5692)

I, Heba Joymon daughter of Joymon holder of Indian Passport No. T0711766 issued at Kuwait on 23.12.2018 permanent resident of Vithayathil house, Ayroor, Ernakulam Dist. Kerala, India and presently residing building No. 12, Block-2, Abuhalifa, Kuwait. Do hereby split my name from Heba Joymon Vithayathil to Heba as given name and Joymon Vithayathil as surname with immediate effect. (C 5692) 3-12-2019

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Joymon Paulose son of Paulose holder of Indian Passport No. J5343908 issued at Kuwait on 04.03.2011 permanent resident of

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 20 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Rather cold with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear later on.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 05/12/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	16 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	08 °C		
ABDALY	22 °C	09 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	22 °C	11 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	20 °C	16 °C		
AHMADI	20 °C	16 °C		
NUWAISIB	23 °C	12 °C		
WAFRA	23 °C	08 °C		
SALMY	20 °C	07 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	12/06	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	25 °C	13 °C	SE	15 - 45 km/h
Saturday	12/07	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	23 °C	17 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	12/08	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	20 °C	11 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Monday	12/09	Partly cloudy to cloudy	21 °C	07 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:03
Sunrise	06:27
Zuhr	11:38
Ast	14:31
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	12 °C
MAX. RH	94 %
MIN. RH	35 %
MAX. Wind	NW 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Business

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019

38 Saudi Aramco pursues war cover after attacks

أرامكو السعودية
Saudi Aramco



38 OPEC weighs deeper output cuts; Oil rises



39 Japan's PM unveils \$120 billion stimulus package



PARIS: People take part in a demonstration against the pension overhauls, in Paris yesterday as part of a nationwide strike. — AFP

Striking unions cripple France

French unions face off against Macron

PARIS: Railway workers, teachers and emergency room medics launched one of the biggest public sector strikes in France for decades yesterday, determined to force President Emmanuel Macron to abandon plans to overhaul France's generous pension system. Transport networks in Paris and cities across France ground to a near halt as unions dug in for a protest that threatens to paralyze France for days and poses the severest challenge to Macron's reform agenda since "yellow vest" protests erupted.

Railway and metro stations in Paris were largely deserted during the early rush hour as commuters dusted off old bicycles, turned to carpooling rides or worked from home. "What we've got to do is shut the economy down," Christian Grolier, a senior official from the hard-left Force Ouvrière union, told Reuters. "People are spoiling for a fight."

Airport workers, truck drivers, police and garbage collectors and others are all expected to join the strike at a time of widespread discontent towards Macron's drive to make France's economy more competitive and cut public spending. Macron wants to simplify France's unwieldy pension system, which comprises more

than 40 different plans, many with different retirement ages and benefits. Macron says the system is unfair and too costly.

He wants a single, points-based system under which for each euro contributed, every pensioner has equal rights. The battle between Macron and the unions for public support will be pivotal to the strike's success. An Opinion poll last month showed almost half of all French opposed the reform. "For 30 years successive governments have tried to bring reform and fail because the unions cripple the country," said 56-year-old cafe owner Isabelle Guibal. "People can work around it today and tomorrow, but next week people may get annoyed."

Street protests

Before sunrise, riot police erected barriers in streets surrounding the president and prime minister's offices and searched the bags of pedestrians along the Champs Elysees boulevard, ahead of a day of street protests which the government has warned may be infiltrated by violent groups. Protesters will march from the capital's Gare du Nord to Place de la Nation in the afternoon.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said thousands of anarchist "black bloc" and hardcore "yellow vest" protesters were expected to wreak havoc. He ordered shops along the route to close. Some 6,000 police will be deployed, including dozens of rapid-response officers on motorbikes. The SNCF state railway said only one in 10 commuter and high-speed TGV trains would run. Train operators Eurostar and Thalys have cancelled services linking Paris with London and Brussels. The civil aviation authority asked airlines to cancel 20% of flights because of knock-on effects from the strike. In southern France, protesters blocked at least one oil facility. Power output was down at two coal-burning power plants and one gas plant as some energy workers walked out, though there were no impact on nuclear output, grid operator RTE said. Past attempts at pension reform have ended badly. Former president Jacques Chirac's conservative government in 1995 caved into union demands after weeks of crippling protests. For Macron, this week's showdown with strikers will set the tone for the second half of his mandate, with more difficult reforms to come, including to unemployment benefits. — Reuters

Business

Saudi Aramco pursues war cover after attacks

Aramco looking to buy insurance against war, terror attacks

LONDON: Saudi Aramco is looking to buy insurance against war and terror attacks after a damaging drone and missile attack on some of its oil facilities in September, two sources said. Aramco, the world's largest oil company, has been looking for cover from insurers including those based at Lloyd's of London and elsewhere in the London market, they added. The firm is seeking cover for facilities in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, its oil heartland, where it suffered the September attacks, one of the sources said. Aramco said in the prospectus of this month's planned listing that it did not insure against all risks and its cover may not protect it from terrorism or acts of war.

At the launch of the IPO, which could be the world's biggest and raise up to \$25.6 billion, Aramco said that it did not expect the Sept 14 attack to have a material impact on its finances and operations. Aramco declined to comment. Available insurance options range from cover against a terror attack or sabotage through to

full coverage, which includes war or civil war, along with compensation for the cost of business interruption. An initial loss estimate from the strikes on Aramco's plants was 2 billion riyals (\$533 million), a third source said.

Aramco insures much of its property itself through a so-called captive insurer, Bermuda-based Stellar Insurance. Although one of the sources said Aramco also has an "excess of loss" cover with international insurers for any property damage above \$200 million, this does not cover war or terror attacks, or revenue losses due to business interruption. Aramco, which said in October it had fully restored oil output after the September attacks on its facilities, did have war cover around five years ago, the source added.

'Waking up'

Companies have become nervous about attacks on their property in Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter, after the strikes which temporarily shut down 5.7 million barrels

per day (bpd) of Aramco's output, more than 5% of global oil supply. As well as Aramco, a Saudi petrochemical company is also looking for terror and war insurance in Eastern Province where the attacks took place, a fourth source said.

"We have received more enquiries," said Scott Bolton, director, crisis management at insurance broker Aon, adding that both domestic and international companies were checking whether they were covered for such attacks. Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC), which Aramco agreed to buy in a \$69.1 billion deal this year, already has war insurance, one of the sources said.

SABIC did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but said in its 2018 annual report that it "kept a close eye on emerging geopolitical interruption risks" and had added cyber insurance to its global insurance program. Riyadh and Washington have blamed the September strikes on Iran, which denies involvement. The United States has sent troops to Saudi

Arabia, which it says is aimed at deterring further attacks amid heightened regional tensions.

The cost of war and terror policies in Saudi Arabia has risen by "multiples" since the attacks, one of the sources said without giving more detail on pricing. Another added that companies in the region were "waking up" to the idea. Aramco's captive insurer, Stellar, offers energy onshore and offshore property, general liability and associated business interruption cover, insurance ratings agency AM Best said.

AM Best confirmed Stellar's financial strength rating of A (excellent) with a stable outlook in October, adding that the insurer had indicated its property program had "no exposure" to the strikes. The captive has a "diversified panel of financially strong reinsurers", AM Best said. Global reinsurers Hannover Re, Munich Re and Swiss Re, which help insurers cover large risks, declined to comment, while Aon said it did not have "visibility" into whether Aramco was seeking insurance. — Reuters

World's food prices surge, lifted by meat and vegetable oils

ROME: World food prices rose strongly in November, lifted by big jumps in prices of meat and vegetable oils, despite slightly lower cereals prices, the United Nations food agency said yesterday. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar hit a 26-month high in November, averaging 177.2 points, up 2.7% on the previous month and up 9.5% year-on-year.

FAO also predicted that cereal production would reach an all-time high of 2.714 billion tons in 2019, up 0.4% from its last forecast. The cereal price index fell 1.2% to 162.4 points, with large export supplies and strong competition among world producers weighing on wheat prices. Rice prices fell to six-month lows as new crop arrivals added pressure.

The vegetable oil price index rose 10.4% to 150.6 points, reaching its highest point since May 2018, led by firmer palm oil prices, which strengthened on robust import demand, increased biodiesel use and concerns over possible supply shortages. The meat price index registered its largest month-on-month increase since May 2009, rising 4.6 percent from October to 190.5 points, with beef and sheep meat rising most strongly, lifted by demand from China and year-end holiday demand. The sugar price index averaged 181.6 points, up 1.8% percent from October, led by expectations of higher demand.

The FAO Dairy Price Index averaged 192.6 points, only marginally up from October, after two months of declines. The agency raised its forecast for global cereal production in 2019 by 0.4%, estimating world cereal output at 2.714 billion tons, compared with 2018 levels. Wheat output was seen up 4.8% at 766.4 million tons. Global rice production was seen at 515 million tons, up 1.6 million tons from the previous forecast, implying a 0.5 percent fall from the 2018 all-time high, the agency said. — Reuters

Oil rises as OPEC weighs deeper output cuts

LONDON: Oil prices edged higher yesterday ahead of an OPEC meeting where members are expected to agree on deeper output cuts in an effort to prop up prices and prevent a glut next year. Sources told Reuters that OPEC was seeking to increase production cuts by the group and its allies by Russia by more than 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) from their current level of 1.2 million bpd. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries meets in Vienna followed by a meeting on Friday with Russia and other producers. The group is known as OPEC+.

Brent crude futures were up 21 cents, or 0.33%, to \$63.21 a barrel at 1005 GMT. Brent surged 3.6% on Wednesday. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 1 cent to \$58.44 a barrel. They settled up 4.2% on Wednesday. The OPEC+ group has been curbing output since 2017 to counter surging production from the United States, now the world's biggest oil producer thanks to a rapid growth in shale oil output. Next year, rising production in other non-OPEC countries such as Brazil and Norway threatens to add to the glut.

"We expect a constructive outcome to today's meeting in terms of a prolongation of the deal, but are not yet convinced that a strong bullish surprise with a sizeable adjustment to the target level will really transpire," Vienna-based consultancy JBC Energy said in a note. OPEC's effort to deepen cuts and increase member

Western, Chinese consumers divided on self-driving cars

BEIJING: Automakers, ride-hailing and technology companies plowing money into the development of electric, self-driving and shared car services will find more enthusiastic consumers in China than in Europe and the United States, a survey yesterday showed. Consumers in some Western countries appear unconvinced as au-



VIENNA: Kuwait's Oil minister Khaled Al-Fadhel arrives for the 177th Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting in Vienna, Austria yesterday. — AFP

tomakers overhaul their factories and supply chains to produce pricey electric cars and invest billions to develop self-driving technology, the survey by OC&C Strategy Consulting showed.

While more than 90% of Chinese residents said they would consider, were likely to or definitely would buy an electric car, only about half of the surveyed consumers in the United States were eyeing an electric car as their next purchase. In Europe, between 64% and 77% of respondents said the same. The research comes as the global auto industry is undergoing drastic changes with a downturn in sales, pressure to meet ambitious emissions targets and challenges in deploying fully self-driving cars as robotaxis. — Reuters

Business

Drought and economic woes empty Zimbabwe, 'cattle bank'

Farmers counting their losses as animals die from thirst, lack of food

NESIGWE: Livestock farmer Siphwi Moyo walks briskly under the scorching sun until she arrives at a shady tree in the middle of a parched, unplanted maize field. She is making a second check on three emaciated cows, two of which are pregnant. Moyo, 59, is relieved to see them still standing. She and her husband, Daniel sometimes have to lift the weakened animals back to their feet three times a day in a frantic bid to keep them alive. As another drought ravages Zimbabwe, farmers in livestock-rich Matabeleland, in the country's west, are again counting their losses as animals die from thirst and lack of food.

Zimbabwean farmers, hit by more frequent droughts as climate change takes hold, have made efforts to change livestock practices to better cope with dry times - but not all of the new adaptation strategies are holding up, they say. As a result, in a region where livestock are a store of wealth for most families, drought is again drying up income and reducing savings, farmers say. "The cattle are our bank," Siphwi Moyo told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, as her cows - two of them pregnant - stood in the shade. If the cows die, "we will lose five animals in one go", she said.

Dying cattle

In September and October, Matabeleland North reported losses of nearly 2,600 cattle as drought dried water supplies and pastures,

said Pox Moyo, an officer for the province's department of veterinary services. He believes the losses will be even higher, with many livestock "in very poor condition", he said. A year ago, by comparison, 766 cattle were lost over the same period, he said.

Cattle are dying in part because cash-strapped farmers can't afford to buy the supplementary feed their animals need, particularly with the price surging as demand soars, said Kenneth Nyoni, a trader in agricultural inputs. A 50-kilo (110 lb) bag of commercial cattle feed is now selling for a third more than a year ago, he said. Daniel Moyo said his family has already sold three goats to buy cattle feed in an effort to keep the three emaciated cows alive, and he expects to sell more goats.

But the struggling cows also are eating some of the family's own maize meal - a staple food - mixed with salt and maize stalks saved from a 2017 harvest, he said. "We have never lost animals to drought before because the situation was never this bad," he said. Another 20 cattle the family owns "are at risk too unless we get rains soon and they have water and grass", Moyo said. Moyo's neighbours in other villages in Nkayi District are already seeing their animals die. In Tshutshu, village head Mbulawa Sibanda says he has seen 15 cattle lost to drought in the last few weeks.

The bush is filling with rotting animals, and more will die even if rains come, he said, as pastures take time to recover. Ngwiza Khumalo, the headman of nearby Mhlabuyatshisa village said his community had lost 18 cattle in the last three weeks. The deaths come as most rivers in the district have dried up and livestock need to travel ever-longer distances in search of water, Moyo said. Farmers started reducing their herds as the drought hit, he said, but many took action too late.

Struggling feedlots

A project in Nesigwe village, to put cattle into feeding pens during droughts - a move that cut losses in a previous drought - also has struggled in recent years, said Moyo, who chairs the effort. When the project was first established in 2015, farmers fed animals in the pens with commercial feed, with the cost offset by the much higher price the fat cattle brought at market in a year when supplies of them were low.

The cash earned from sales then helped feed other animals, keeping more of them alive. But a devaluation of Zimbabwe's currency in late 2016 led to the collapse of the project, as the currency farmers brought in from cattle sales couldn't buy enough feed to keep other animals alive, said Muhle Masuku, a farmer who helped launch the project. —Reuters

In September, the International Monetary

Fund warned that Zimbabwe's economy was likely to shrink in 2019 as inflation soared to 300%, the highest rate in the world after Venezuela. A shortage of foreign currency, water and electricity, combined with rising inflation, have sent the costs of goods and services surging in the country, which declared a drought disaster in August.

Reason Ndebele, a farmer in the village of Mtshengiswa, said saving cattle during drought often required hard work as well as cash. He has hand-dug a well deep into the dry bed of the Tshangani River to provide water for his 25 cattle, and pulls up 30 20-litre buckets of water each day for them. He sold some animals to pay for supplementary feed for the rest - something not everyone is willing to do, he said. "Many farmers are not even keen to sell one animal to buy livestock feed and save 20 animals," he said.

Farmers - many of whom grow crops as well as raise cattle - also are struggling to afford quality seeds and fertiliser this year, local officials said. "While farmers are losing cattle in Nkayi, many families are also going for days without food and cannot afford to buy inputs to prepare for farming this year," said Kufakwezwe Ncube, a councilor in Nkayi Urban Ward 29 and former chairman of the Nkayi Rural District Council. He called for urgent government help to supply food aid. —Reuters

Japan cosmetic giant Shiseido gambles on 'Made in Japan'

OTAWARA: On wasteland once used for earthquake drills in the small town of Otawara north of Tokyo, Japanese giant Shiseido has built its first domestic factory in 36 years, hoping to capitalize on a boom for "Made in Japan" cosmetics. The Japanese cosmetics industry faces huge competition not only from established players such as L'Oreal and Estee Lauder but increasingly also from the "K-beauty" craze coming from South Korea.

Nevertheless, Japan is more than holding its own, with exports nearly quadrupling since 2013 to 546 billion yen (\$5 billion), according to finance ministry figures, nearly two-thirds of that going to China and Hong Kong. The domestic industry is also benefitting from an explosion of inbound tourism in recent years ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics - in particular a relaxing of visa requirements for Chinese tourists who lap up the latest Japanese cosmetic fads.

Shiseido chief executive Masahiko Uotani told AFP that a focus on the high end of the market and time-honored attention to detail set them apart from the foreign brands seeking to dominate globally. "We are focusing on prestige, premium brands. Consumers in those categories see the



OTAWARA: Photo shows workers at the inauguration of a new production plant for Japanese cosmetics brand Shiseido in Otawara, Tochigi prefecture. —AFP

value of Japanese culture," said Uotani. "So strategically, we are telling consumers: those brands are from Japan, it's Japanese R&D. And that is becoming a very important competitive value."

In addition to the new plant in Otawara, Shiseido plans to open two more in Japan before 2022 - a total investment of 120 billion yen - the fastest pace of expansion in the firm's 150-year history. Otawara's mayor said the plot for the new factory had been barren since the 1990 tech bubble burst. "We used to use it to hold exercises to prepare for natural disasters," Tomio Tsukui explained. The 1,000 jobs it creates will make Shiseido the biggest private employer in the town, Tsukui said, putting it down to a drop in value of the yen that has made relocating production more profitable. —AFP

Japan's PM unveils \$120 billion stimulus package

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe unveiled \$120 billion in stimulus measures yesterday, to help the world's third largest economy overcome the aftermath of recent natural disasters. The package is also aimed at helping alleviate the impact of a recent tax hike and survive a potential economic slowdown after a spending boom for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. "We will introduce a daring fiscal policy worth 13 trillion yen (\$120 billion)," Abe told ministers and party leaders at the prime minister's office.

"We have crafted a powerful policy package," Abe added. Under the plan, the government will spend some six trillion yen on public investment after a series of natural disasters - including killer Typhoon Hagibis - caused huge damage to infrastructure, local media said. Japan's economy has so far expanded this year, partially because of strong demand related to preparations for the Olympics, which will start in July. Some

analysts warned the country may suffer a post-Olympic slump. The package is also aimed at easing the impact of the increase in consumption tax from eight percent to 10 percent, which came into effect on October 1, and helping Japanese firms prepare for a global economic slowdown due to the US-China trade dispute. The Tokyo market welcomed the package, with the Nikkei index up 0.71 percent and the broader Topix climbing 0.48 percent. "In particular, stimulus-related shares such as construction companies benefited from the announcement," Toshikazu Horiuchi, a broker at IwaiCosmo Securities said. But Yusuke Shimoda, economist at Japan Research Institute, warned the impact of the package could be "limited."

"The package is likely to boost infrastructure-related businesses, but is unlikely to help reform the nation's slow-growth economy fundamentally," Shimoda said. The package will also include government measures to help expand exports of farm products as a trade accord between Tokyo and Washington is set to take effect next year, Kyodo News said. Among other steps, the government will help people in their 30s and 40s, who have been struggling to find work due to past economic slowdowns, to land new jobs, it said. —AFP

Business

Asian stocks climb as US and China trade deal hopes flicker

Investors remain on edge amid mixed messages from Trump

TOKYO: Stock markets in Asia inched up yesterday on the possibility that China and the United States may soon seal a “phase one” deal to end their 17-month trade war, but conflicting messages from US President Donald Trump kept a lid on the advance. European shares are set to follow with a slightly firmer open, with the pan-regional Euro Stoxx 50 futures and London’s FTSE futures rising 0.1% in early trade. Hopes that an agreement would soon emerge stemmed from a Bloomberg report on Wednesday that the two sides were close to a “phase one” deal, and Trump’s remarks that the talks were going “very well” after he had earlier said it might take until late 2020 to reach an accord.

“My base case scenario is the two sides reach some deal. The pressure for a deal is immense simply because of the economic slow-

down in both countries,” said Shane Oliver, head of investment strategy and chief economist at AMP Capital Investors in Sydney. “However, we see increased volatility because policy uncertainty has become a constant.” As investors tilted towards optimism, riskier assets rose and safe havens such as the Japanese yen weakened.

MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan gained 0.5%. Japan’s Nikkei stock index rose 0.7%, Australian shares were up 1.2%, and in China, blue chips climbed 0.7% and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index eked out gains of 0.4%. HSBC Global Research said in a note on Wednesday analysts’ consensus estimates of Asian companies’ earnings forecasts were revised up for the first time in 18 months, and that similar turning

points in recent years had paved the way for stock market recoveries.

But more market turbulence is possible in the short term given Sino-US negotiations are very fluid. If China and the United States cannot reach an agreement soon, the next important date to watch is Dec 15, when Washington is scheduled to impose even more tariffs on Chinese goods. Traders are also bracing for the closely-watched US non-farm payrolls report due Friday to determine how well the US economy is holding up amid a global slowdown.

Trading will likely be thin and there will be little money chasing these unpredictable trade headlines as the year-end approaches, said Robert Carnell, chief economist and head of research for Asia-Pacific at ING in Singapore. “The motivation now (for investors) is not to

lose any money if you’re under water, and if you’ve made money, keep it that way,” he said. “If you haven’t positioned yet you are not going to in the next couple of weeks.”

The yen traded down 0.07% at 108.77 per dollar, ceding some of the previous day’s gains as positive signs about the trade dispute hurt demand for safe-haven currencies. The yield on benchmark 10-year Treasury notes fell slightly to 1.7603% in Asia, retracing some of the gains made in the previous session. US crude edged 0.25% lower to \$58.18 a barrel yesterday as a 3% rally overnight showed signs of fading. However, prices could be supported if the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, and fellow producers including Russia, approve deeper crude output cuts when they meet in Vienna today. — Reuters

Huawei cancels new Taiwan phone launch

TAIPEI: Tech giant Huawei has cancelled the launch of a flagship phone and watch in Taiwan after Taipei imposed a temporary ban on some of its products for listing the island as part of China. On its official Taiwan Facebook page Wednesday Chinese company Huawei said the launch of its Mate 30 Pro smartphone and its GT 2 digital watch had been cancelled due to “supply issues” without elaborating further.

“We thank all users who participated in the pre-order event of the products ... and express deep regret for causing you inconvenience,” the statement said, adding that users would be refunded. The cancellations came after Taiwan last month suspended sales of three Huawei models that listed the self-ruled, democratic island as “Taiwan, China” for timezones and contacts. On Thursday Taiwan’s National Communications Commission (NCC) said the temporary ban of Huawei’s P30, P30 Pro and Nova 5T models was still effective as the company had yet to change the wording. How Taiwan is described is a hugely sensitive political issue. Beijing considers Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to seize it by force if necessary, even though the two sides have been governed separately for the last seven decades.

In recent years international brands have routinely found themselves bowing to Beijing’s stance on Taiwan - a much smaller market compared to the lucrative mainland. A growing list of international firms, including luxury brands, airlines and hotels, have been pushed to apologize to Beijing or change Taiwan’s classification on their websites to “Taiwan, China” or “Chinese Taipei”. The authoritarian mainland has ramped up diplomatic and economic pressure on Taiwan since President Tsai Ing-wen was elected in 2016 because her party refuses to recognise that idea that the island is part of “one China”.

Pressure is building as Taiwan heads towards elections in January, with Tsai seeking to defeat an opponent who favors much warmer ties with China. Huawei, the world’s number two smartphone producer, has previously come under fire in mainland China for the opposite offence - not labeling the cities of Taipei, Hong Kong and Macau as part of China in some Chinese-language settings. The company is also fighting legal battles in the United States, saying Thursday it has petitioned a US court to overturn a ban imposed on national security grounds that prevents carriers in rural America from buying its equipment by tapping an \$8.5-billion federal fund. — AFP

India’s poor fight desperate battle to find work as slowdown bites

NEW DELHI: The hunt for work becomes more desperate every day on Delhi’s street corner labor markets as India’s economic slowdown bites deeper, piling pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi just half a year into his second term. With the central bank cutting interest rates five times this year - but on Thursday unable to lower them any further because of high inflation - patience was running thin at the “labour Chowk”, or market, in the packed, narrow streets of Old Delhi.

Among the hundreds of painters, electricians, carpenters and plumbers who anxiously gather at dawn each day, 55-year-old painter Tehseen has been a regular for three decades. But he is despondent. His monthly income has slumped from about \$350 to \$140 in the past three years. He is at least still earning. The unemployment rate, currently about 8.5 percent, has hit a four-decade high in the past two years. Tehseen blames government efforts to eradicate the tax-avoiding “unofficial economy”. A government survey this year estimated that more than 90 percent of the workforce are “unofficial”.

Modi stunned the country in November 2016 by cancelling more than 80 percent of the bank notes in circulation, and the introduction a year later of a nationwide goods and services tax dealt a new blow to business confidence. Last week, official figures showed the economy grew just 4.5 percent in the second quarter, the slowest rate in six years. Modi’s rightwing government is struggling to convince the public that it has the answers to the slowdown.

“Companies have suffered since the note ban,” said Tehseen. “They do not want to think about getting their offices renovated when they have no business. We have to bear the brunt now.” Raju, a labor market carpenter for 20 years, said he now goes for days on end without a job offer. “The work and the money are 50 percent down on what I used to get,” he said. And lower wages means a harder time to get a meal on the table.

In trouble and worried

At the Old Delhi food market, Zarina Begum said she sometimes goes home with her bags empty. “The vegetables are just too expensive,” said the 50-year-old housewife. On bad days her children get a meal of pulses, or chickpea flour with oil. Raj



NEW DELHI: Daily wage laborers (back) wait for work on a street in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

Kumar used to sell a meal of lentils and vegetables in his nearby restaurant for the equivalent of 56 US cents.

But increased costs means he now asks 70 cents and sales have taken a hit. “I had to increase prices to keep up with expenses. But people just don’t have the money,” he said. Sandip Jain, a 45-year-old stone mason, said people might have a good opinion of Modi but they are disappointed with his handling of the economy. “Every businessman is in trouble and is worried. Those who ended their day with an income of 700 rupees (10 dollars) are now down to 270,” he said.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced reforms, including easing restrictions on foreign investment and cutting corporate taxes. But that does little to boost public confidence in a country where hundreds of millions live barely on poverty wages. The multi-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development stepped up pressure on Modi yesterday by calling for India to bring down trade barriers and reform its “complex” labor laws that discourage hiring. “Consumption has fallen because of the breakdown of the labor market,” Ram Kumar of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences said. He said Modi has given incentives to the private sector but companies have not responded and the economy was now worsening because the government “avoids” questions on the slowdown. Economist Sameer Narang said the government had to see through its privatization and other reforms but warned “it will be a slow recovery for India from here on”. — AFP

Business

US services sector and payrolls growth slow

Business activity index tumbles 5.4 points to 51.6

WASHINGTON: US services sector activity slowed in November as lingering concerns about trade tensions and worker shortages pushed production to its lowest level in a decade, which could heighten fears about the economy's health. Other data on Wednesday showed private emThe continued manufacturing slump and second straight monthly drop in construction outlays tempered growth expectations for the fourth quarter, which had been boosted by a rush of upbeat reports on the trade deficit, housing and business investment. Still, the economy appears to be growing at a moderate pace rather than stalling. Growth is being constrained by the Trump administration's "America First" policy, which has seen the United States embroiled in a trade war with China, and tit-for-tat tariffs with other nations. The trade tensions, which have eroded business confidence, come as the stimulus from last year's \$1.5 trillion tax cut package is fading.

The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said its non-manufacturing activity index fell to a reading of 53.9 last month from 54.7 in October. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in the services sector, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index dipping to a reading of 54.5 in November. The survey's production index tumbled 5.4 points to 51.6, the lowest level since November 2009, as tariffs on imports, including steel and aluminum raised costs for businesses. A measure of prices paid by services industries jumped 1.9 points to 58.5 last month.

"The decline in the index in November seems

to reflect the tariffs that are impacting the prices of many products that services companies use to provide their services to other companies and consumers," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG in New York. "China is not paying for all the tariffs apparently." President Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed that China was paying the tariffs in the 17-month trade war. The dollar fell against a basket of currencies, while U.S. Treasury yields rose. Stocks on Wall Street were trading higher.

Labor market slowing

The ISM said services industry businesses "hope for a resolution on tariffs and continue to be hampered by constraints in labor resources." It said 12 industries, including retail trade, utilities and information, reported growth last month. Five industries, including agriculture, mining and construction reported a contraction. But key details of the ISM survey were upbeat. New orders picked up last month, though order backlogs contracted.

A measure of services industry employment rose to 55.5 from 53.7 in October. This supports economists' expectations that the government's closely watched employment report on Friday would show a sharp rebound in job growth in November, despite the paltry job gains reported by private employers last month. Private employers added only 67,000 jobs in November, the ADP National Employment report showed on Wednesday. It was the smallest monthly gain since May when just 46,000 jobs were created, the fewest since 2010, and continued a trend of decelerating job



NEW YORK: A street vendor does business on Broadway during the first snowstorm of winter in Manhattan in New York, United States. —AFP

growth that has taken hold this year.

Data for October was revised down to show private payrolls increasing 121,000 from an originally reported 125,000 gain. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast private employment rising by 140,000 jobs in November. The ADP figures come ahead of the Labor Department's more comprehensive nonfarm payrolls report due out on Friday, which includes both public- and private-sector employment.

According to a Reuters survey of economists, nonfarm payrolls probably increased by 180,000 jobs last month, boosted in part by the return of

about 46,000 General Motors workers who had been excluded while on a 40-day strike. The strike held down job growth to 128,000 in October. The unemployment rate is forecast unchanged at 3.6% in November.

The ADP report, which is jointly developed with Moody's Analytics, has a poor record predicting the private payrolls component of the government's employment report. Economists said the ADP job count was not affected by the resumption of work by the GM workers. Still, last month's private payroll gains pointed to a cooling labor market. —Reuters

SMAC in DARQ: Tech trends shaping 2020

LONDON: In 2020, will the wow factor return to consumer hardware? Will blockchain and 5G punch into the mainstream? Or will the world unify against Big Tech's privacy-busting, tax-avoiding practices? AFP looks at five themes shaping the world of technology after a year in which the public's mood towards the industry grew more distrustful.

5G's unfulfilled promise

Super-fast fifth-generation network speeds are meant to revolutionize communications along with areas like urban transport — driverless cars plying our streets safely could finally become reality. But so far, 5G has failed to meet expectations due to the lagging build of infrastructure in many places. Apple has yet to launch a compatible phone, unlike rivals including Samsung. The rollout should quicken next year as more countries install base stations and networking equipment — although US President Donald Trump's war on Chinese sector leader Huawei remains a wild card. As smartphone sales plateau around the world, manufacturers have been focusing more on ancillary services. "You have to sell the entire experience, the entire ecosystem," Dominique Bindels, senior an-

alyst for home and tech with London-based research firm Euromonitor International said. Highlighting Apple's success in payments and peripheral devices such as AirPods, Bindels predicted that smart earphones, along with speakers and at-home devices connected on the "internet of things", would be among the more dynamic sectors in 2020. Another trend could be consolidation in TV streaming, after Apple and Disney joined Netflix, Amazon Video and some national broadcasters in a crowded subscription market.

Leap into the quantum dark

For the industry at large, business consultancy Accenture this year coined the acronym DARQ to denote four major trends: distributed ledger technology (such as blockchain), artificial intelligence (AI), extended reality and quantum computing. Unbreakable blockchain networks of computers have already been generating virtual currencies in the form of bitcoin and its ilk, bypassing the need for a regulator like a government or central bank.

Facebook wants to make the tech respectable through its "Libra" project, but has hit political opposition around the world, and several financial partners have pulled out. Unwilling to let private enterprise dictate terms, China and other nations are building their own digital payments systems, which could see fruition next year. However, blockchain net-

works devour huge amounts of energy, and concerns will mount about their environmental impact as debate intensifies more broadly about tech's contribution to climate change.

The price of privacy

Most companies are now actively engaged across the spectrum of another tech acronym, SMAC: social, mobile, analytics and cloud. For consumers, SMAC is felt in how we communicate with friends and how we search and shop. That is accentuating fears about privacy, after a series of data leaks at Facebook laid bare how much of our online lives are exploited by companies and political parties.

One recent revelation showed that Google is mining the medical data of millions of people, in a bid to access what observers think will be the next frontier of growth in tech — healthcare. "People are becoming more conscious of sharing data but also in the same moment, the Nest cameras and smart speakers are flying off the shelves," said Bindels. "There's a huge divide. People have been learning to trade privacy for convenience. It's just another currency." For Amnesty International, in a hard-hitting study last month into Facebook and Google, that tradeoff amounts to a "Faustian bargain" which imperils our human rights.

Tech wars

To Beijing's anger, Washington alleges that

Huawei and another telecoms group, ZTE, are little more than shell fronts for Chinese spy chiefs. Ni Lexiong, professor at the Shanghai National Defense Strategy Institute, said US tech sanctions would only encourage China to stand on its own feet. "In the end, once China has formed its own industrial chain in the field of artificial intelligence, the United States will also lose a large market," he said. Samm Sacks, an expert on China's digital economy at the Washington think tank New America, said the tech standoff could harm progress in areas such as precision medicine and AI-based diagnoses. The two countries have cooperated in research, "and severing that could have global consequences", she warned.

Taxing times

The US presidential election next November will likely prove another flashpoint over disinformation peddled on social media. Democratic hopeful Elizabeth Warren wants Amazon, Facebook and Google to be broken up on anti-trust grounds. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development is meanwhile due by June 2020 to present a "unified approach" for richer countries to levy a digital tax on internet giants. Some like France have gone ahead with their own tax, igniting another potential front in Trump's multifaceted trade wars as the US threatens tariffs on a range of French goods.—AFP

Sports

Titans, Raiders battle to remain in playoff race

OAKLAND: The Tennessee Titans and host Oakland Raiders will treat each other like play-off opponents when the postseason hopefuls go head-to-head Sunday in a game that figures to have significant ramifications in the AFC race.

With four games remaining, the Titans (7-5) enter the battle of second-place teams in better shape than the Raiders (6-6) in the AFC wild-card chase.

Sunday's outcome, barring a tie, will either give Oakland the overall edge on Tennessee (based on a head-to-head tiebreaker of teams with the same record) or basically eliminate the Raiders from wild-card contention (two games behind the Titans with three to play, with Tennessee holding the tiebreaker).

"We would love to make the playoffs. We would love to win a championship. That's out of our control right now," Raiders coach Jon Gruden noted in the wake of a 40-19 blowout loss to Kansas City on Sunday that dropped his club two games back of the Chiefs (8-4) in the AFC West and one behind Tennessee and Pittsburgh in the duel for the AFC's second wild-card spot. "We're going to focus on the Titans," he continued. "We can't control who's playing who and what the scores are in other places. We have to control the things we can control."

The Raiders have lost two in a row after a 6-4 start that, after Week 11, had them a game ahead of the Titans. But Tennessee has ridden a rejuvenated Ryan Tannehill to three consec-

utive wins, and now finds itself in a position in which winning out will assure the Titans of just their second playoff berth since 2008.

That's because two of their remaining four games are against AFC South leader Houston (8-4). The Titans sandwich those two show-downs with a visit from one of the NFC's best, the New Orleans Saints.

Tennessee coach Mike Vrabel has warned his guys: Beating the Texans might not matter if they lay an egg in Oakland. "We're focused on the team that's 4-1 at the Oakland Coliseum," Vrabel told reporters Wednesday. "A defense that gives up 20 points a game at the Oakland Coliseum. An offense that averages 360 yards at the Oakland Coliseum. And a team that is plus-4 in turnover margin at home."

Indeed, the Raiders have won three in a row in Oakland, sweeping Detroit, the Los Angeles Chargers and Cincinnati before going on the road and losing to the New York Jets and Kansas City. The Raiders have won three in a row against the Titans, sweeping consecutive road games in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Tennessee's last win in the series came in its last trip to Oakland, a 23-19 triumph in 2013.

The duel between former Alabama star running backs Derrick Henry and Josh Jacobs will be a first. Henry, who rushed for 3,591 yards in three years at Alabama before being a second-round NFL pick in 2016, ranks third in the



INDIANAPOLIS: File photo shows Kevin Byard #31 of the Tennessee Titans intercepts a pass during the third quarter of the game against the Indianapolis Colts at Lucas Oil Stadium on December 1, 2019 in Indianapolis, Indiana. — AFP

NFL in both rushing with 1,140 yards and touchdowns with 13. Jacobs, a rookie first-round pick who arrived on the Alabama campus one year after Henry left with a Heisman

Trophy and accumulated 1,491 rushing yards in three seasons, ranks fourth in the NFL in rushing with 1,061 yards and is tied for 14th in touchdowns with seven. — Reuters

Besieged Castle: Folau not only problem for Rugby boss

SYDNEY: Australian rugby was already in crisis when Raelene Castle took over but the problems refuse to go away for the chief executive — even after ending the Israel Folau anti-gay controversy. Two years after Castle was tasked with steadying Rugby Australia's listing ship, Folau, a poor World Cup and the demise of a lucrative TV deal have detained her in choppy waters.

The New Zealander faced calls to step down yesterday over her handling of the Folau case, which Rugby Australia settled out of court for an undisclosed sum. But she insisted she was the best person for the job as Rugby Australia heads towards 2020 seeking a new broadcast partner and an uptick in fortunes on the pitch.

"There's not a business leader that leads an organisation that I've spoken to that hasn't looked at this situation and gone, 'This is a very difficult thing,'" Castle said, referring to the Folau case. "Ultimately we've had extensive support from the rugby community and also from the wider business community."

Folau, the former Australia fullback, had launched a Aus\$14 million compensation claim

after his sacking in May for posting "Hell awaits" gays, as well as drunks, atheists and others. While his comments drew outrage, it was a case that exposed divisions in Australian society after Folau won backing from conservatives who defended his right to express his religious views.

There were also commercial implications for Rugby Australia whose main sponsor, flag-carrying airline Qantas, warned the governing body to take appropriate action. Castle will be delighted to finally see the back of Folau, after admitting he had caused her the toughest challenge of her career when he posted similar comments last year. But although settling the case avoided a lengthy and expensive court battle, the outcome still hit Rugby Australia in the pocket — and Folau's beaming reaction spoke volumes about which side was the happier.

"A team of the sassiest spin doctors can't help Rugby Australia. They lost on Wednesday. Big time," wrote columnist Janet Albrechtsen in *The Australian*. Castle will now be looking forward eagerly to the arrival of fellow New Zealander Dave Rennie, the highly rated new Wallabies coach whose signing was one of the brightest moments of Rugby Australia's year.

Rennie, who takes the reins in July, succeeds Michael Cheika whose stormy tenure ended with a record defeat to England in October's World Cup quarter-finals — and a stinging parting shot. "It is no secret I have no relationship with the CEO (Raelene Castle) and not much with the chairman (Cameron Clyne)," Cheika was quoted as saying by Australia's Fox Sports. — AFP

'We didn't back down', Rugby Australia insists after Folau payout

SYDNEY: Rugby Australia insisted yesterday it did not back down by settling its feud with Israel Folau over homophobic comments, while all-but ruling out the staunch Christian from playing Super Rugby again. The two parties avoided a costly court battle by reaching a mediated agreement on Wednesday to end Folau's lawsuit over his sacking in May for warning "hell awaits" gay people and others he considers sinners. Under the settlement, both sides apologised for "any hurt or harm" caused, with Folau taking to YouTube to claim he had been "vindicated". Financial terms of the deal were confidential, but Rugby Australia chief Castle shot down a report that the settlement was worth Aus\$8 million as "wildly inaccurate".

She said the governing body "didn't back down" and that it stood by its decision to terminate his contract. "We had to make a decision that was right for rugby in this country," she said at a press conference in Sydney. "We made the right decision in calling out Israel on his posts and his inappropriate messaging," she added. "That remains the same, we stick to our values that inclusiveness is absolutely core to rugby." Castle said taking the matter to court was not in the interests of the game, which is already strug-

gling with poor crowds and disappointing performances by the Wallabies, quarter-final losers at this year's World Cup in Japan. "So we made a decision that gave us cost certainty that put us in the best financial decision entering the new year in a positive way," Castle said. Folau had been demanding Aus\$14 million (US\$9.5 million) in compensation, claiming he was unlawfully dismissed under legislation that bans sacking someone because of their religion.

Rugby Australia argued the termination for "high-level" misconduct was purely contractual. Castle would not reveal how much the settlement amounted to, but said it was "a commercial decision" that was deemed cheaper than going to trial. She added that the governing body had an insurance policy and would not have to make changes to its budget to pay Folau, who she said would not be playing Super Rugby again, effectively ending his Wallabies career.

"At the end of the day, we have parted ways. He's been terminated since April," she said when asked if he could play for an Australian club in the southern hemisphere tournament under the settlement. "Never say never, because that would be crazy," she added, when pressed by reporters on the issue. "I think it's clear to see our values are not aligned and the expectations that Rugby Australia would have of Israel coming back into the sport would not be acceptable." Folau played 73 Tests for the Wallabies and was Super Rugby's record try-scorer for the NSW Waratahs before his four-year, Aus\$4 million contract was terminated. Australia's National Rugby League has previously said it would not welcome him back to the 13-man code he played at the start of his career, although a move to a rugby union club overseas remains a possibility. — AFP

Sports

Kosgei targets Olympic gold after smashing world record

ELDORÉT: Kenya's Brigid Kosgei, the fastest-ever woman marathon runner, has set her sights on next year's Olympic games, where a win will solidify her place among the greatest to have ever competed in the sport.

The 25-year-old mother of twins smashed Briton's Paula Radcliffe's 16-year-old world record by 81 seconds at the Chicago Marathon in October, recording a time of two hours, 14 minutes and four seconds to cap a stunning rise to the sport's summit for Kosgei who started competing internationally only four years ago.

"When I went to compete (in Chicago) I did not think that I would break the record," Kosgei told Reuters at an Athletics Kenya conference in the northwestern city of Eldoret. "My aim was to break the course record (which was 2:17:18)."

She does not feel any pressure now after her record-breaking win or that she needs to restore some Kenyan pride over the distance, where, despite producing great runners for decades, they have struggled to crack the Olympics and then been shamed.

They managed three successive silvers before Jemima Sumgong finally took their first gold in 2016, only for her victory to be tarnished by her failing a doping test less than a year later. "It will be my first time at the Olympics, if I'm se-

lected," Kosgei said. "I want to achieve (my best) at in Tokyo, to bring gold for Kenya."

Kosgei said she does not fear anyone and focuses only on running her best while competing, a mentality shaped by her win at her first international marathon in Porto in 2015. "Winning made me realize that I can run marathons," she said. "Before that sometimes I would be discouraged by others that marathons are really tough. But I came to realize, it's not tough. It's just discipline and hard work and patience."

Her goal since then has been to lower her personal best. "I would just keep lowering it until a few weeks ago when God helped me in Chicago, where I broke the record," she said. Kosgei said she was disappointed by the scepticism in some quarters that the record went to Kenya, a country that has had its reputation as a world leader in athletics tarnished by the use of performance-enhancing drugs by some of its athletes.

From 2004 to August 2018, 138 Kenyan athletes tested positive for doping, according to a World Anti-Doping Agency report in September 2018. "I said to myself they've tested me several times and they would have caught me if I was using drugs," she said. "If somebody has used something, that is their problem."

Kosgei also dismissed critics who have said



Brigid Kosgei

her record was unfairly aided by the use of the latest running shoes from Nike. The shoes have carbon-fibre plates and a thicker midsole that the manufacturers claim improve running economy by 4% or 5%. A version of the shoes are also worn by men's marathon world-record

holder Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge, who the day before Kosgei's Chicago win, recorded an astonishing, pacer-aided 1:59.40 in Vienna.

"Shoes don't run, it's the feet that run," Kosgei said. "If you are not in shape and I use those shoes it won't help." —Reuters

eSports levels up with SEA Games debut

MANILA: eSports took a step into the sporting mainstream yesterday as it made its debut at the Southeast Asian Games, becoming a medal event for the first time at an Olympic-recognised multi-sport competition.

As the typhoon-hit Games, spread across dozens of venues in the northern Philippines, neared the halfway stage, eSports made its grand entrance at a darkened arena in Manila.

It represents progress for video gaming, which was a demonstration sport at last year's Asian Games but has been left off the programme for the next edition in 2022.

Players from nine countries are competing over six days for medals in Mobile Legends, Arena of Valor, Dota 2, Starcraft II, Tekken 7 and Hearthstone.

"This is a very, very historic day because for the first time eSports will be played in the Southeast Asian Games," local mayor Francis Zamora said at an opening ceremony at the 5,500-capacity San Juan Arena.

The 11-country Games, featuring a record 56 sports, were rocked by deadly Typhoon Kammuri which forced about half of Tuesday's events to be rescheduled.

It was the second time major sporting event has suffered typhoon disruption in Asia in recent months, after Typhoon



MANILA: Gamers from the Vietnam team compete in the qualifying rounds of the eSports event between Malaysia and Vietnam at the SEA Games (Southeast Asian Games) in Manila yesterday. —AFP

Hagibis forced the cancellation of matches during the Rugby World Cup in Japan.

Despite 13 deaths in Typhoon Kammuri, none of the 8,750 athletes and team officials or 12,000 volunteers was reported hurt and a full SEA Games programme resumed on Wednesday.

Among yesterday's highlights, Olympic champion Joseph Schooling will be hoping to bag his first individual gold of the Games when he swims in the 50 metres butterfly final.

The 24-year-old Singaporean opened his medal account on Wednesday with a win in the 4x200m freestyle relay in a SEA Games record time of 7min 17.88sec.

Six medals are up for grabs at the

aquatics centre in New Clark City, the Games' main hub north of Manila, including the men's 1,500m freestyle, the longest event in the pool.

Places in the women's football final will also be decided, as Myanmar take on Thailand and Vietnam face the Philippines in semi-final clashes.

The Philippines remained in firm control of the medals table yesterday with 60 golds — compared with the 24 it won in 2017.

Seven of the last 11 host nations have finished top of the medals table at the SEA Games, where the flexible sporting programme is traditionally weighted towards the home team. —AFP

Woodland, Reed share lead as Woods falters in Bahamas

MIAMI: US Open champion Gary Woodland and Patrick Reed shared the lead Wednesday in the Hero World Challenge as tournament host Tiger Woods faltered late in the Bahamas. Woodland and former Masters champion Reed both shot six-under par 66 at wind-whipped Albany Golf Club — displaying the kind of solid golf US Presidents Cup playing captain Woods was hoping to see from the pair when he selected them for this month's matchplay showdown with Ernie Els' International squad. Woods himself had his struggles, improving from two-over through 10 holes to reach three-under before closing with a bogey and double-bogey in an even-par 72. Woods made a run up the leaderboard with birdies at 11, 13 and 14 followed by an eagle at 15 — where his chip from off the green took two bounces and rolled into the hole. "Got it going on the back nine just a little bit, got myself kind of right there in the mix and then bad shots on 17 and 18," Woods said.

Woods wasn't the only player to run into trouble at Albany's closing hole — where Patrick Cantlay finished with a quadruple bogey and Jordan Spieth a triple bogey. Despite the disappointing finish, Woods wasn't discouraged about his game. "I didn't putt well today," he said. "My short game was great, drilled it really well, just hit a couple of poor iron shots that cost me a few shots." Woodland said keeping it in the fairway was the key to his round, which included eight birdies and two bogeys.

"The wind was tricky," he said. "Fortunately I drove the ball really well, gave myself a lot of looks from the fairway which you've got to do. "Obviously when you have a lot of birdies you see putts go in — so all in all a good day." "Nice to get the game trending in the right direction," he added. "Obviously next week is a big week — but so is this week." Reed, who reeled off four straight birdies from the 13th through the 16th to join Woodland on six-under, said patience was key in the challenging conditions. "When this wind's blowing like this, you're going to hit some great putts and great shots that are not going to turn out very well," he said. "And you're going to hit some bad ones that go your way." —AFP

Sports

Tristan Jarry, Penguins stop visiting Blues with shutout

PITTSBURGH: Tristan Jarry stopped all 28 shots he faced Wednesday as the Pittsburgh Penguins halted the visiting St. Louis Blues' four-game winning streak, 3-0. It was the first shutout of the season for Jarry, the third of his career. No. 1 goalie Matt Murray has won two Stanley Cups with Pittsburgh, but lately the Penguins have been leaning on Jarry, who has four starts and five appearances over the team's past six games. Teddy Blueger, Stefan Noesen and Alex Galchenyuk scored for Pittsburgh, one in each period. The Penguins had lost two straight, including a 5-2 game Saturday at St. Louis. Jordan Binnington made 30 saves for St. Louis. The loss ended the Blues' road point streak at 10 games (8-0-2), one shy of the franchise record set in 2000 with 10 wins and a tie.

AVALANCHE 3, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Valeri Nichushkin scored a short-handed goal in the third period to break a tie, and Colorado went on to win at Toronto. Nathan MacKinnon added a goal and an assist, and Joonas Donskoi also scored a goal for the Avalanche, who won their fourth game in a row and their ninth in the past 12 games. Philipp Grubauer made 38 saves for Colorado. Zach Hyman scored for the Maple Leafs, who have lost two in a row but have won four of seven under new coach Sheldon Keefe.

Toronto goaltender Frederik Andersen, who also played Tuesday in a loss to the Philadelphia Flyers, made 27 saves.

SENATORS 5, OILERS 2

Tyler Ennis scored once in a three-point game while Connor Brown and Vladislav Namestnikov both collected one goal and one assist as visiting Ottawa defeated Edmonton. Ottawa snapped a five-game losing streak while winning for the sixth straight visit to Edmonton. The Oilers took their third defeat in four games. Senators goaltender Craig Anderson made 25 saves in his return after missing four games due to injury.

CAPITALS 3, KINGS 1

John Carlson scored two goals and Ilya Samonov made 22 saves to lead visiting Washington past Los Angeles for the Capitals' fifth straight victory. Tom Wilson also scored an empty-net goal for Washington, which improved to an NHL-best 13-2-1 on the road. The Metropolitan Division-leading Capitals now have 47 points after 30 games, a franchise record. Carlson has 42 points (11 goals, 31 assists) on the season. He joins Calgary's Al MacInnis (1990-91, 11 goals, 31 assists) as the only defenseman since 1979-80 to record 42 points in their first 30 games of a season. —Reuters



TORONTO: Nathan MacKinnon #29 of the Colorado Avalanche chases after a puck against Cody Ceci #83 of the Toronto Maple Leafs during an NHL game at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Avalanche defeated the Maple Leafs 3-1. —AFP

S Lanka overhauls cricket coaching team with Arthur appointment

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's cricket board yesterday announced a major revamp of the national team after their poor showing at the recent World Cup, confirming South African Mickey Arthur's appointment as head coach. Sri Lanka Cricket's secretary Mohan de Silva said the country had been without a proper coach since the early World Cup exit. "We are very pleased to have Mickey and hope his experience in Asia will help build our team to a very high standard," de Silva told reporters in Colombo a day after hiring the 51-year-old Arthur — who previously coached South Africa, Australia and Pakistan — said he had his first interaction with players yesterday and was impressed with the level of talent. "I looked at the talent and that is the key motivating factor," he said.

"The amount of talent they have is great, but it is teaching them how to use that talent and when to use it." Former Zimbabwe Test player Grant Flower was appointed the new national batting coach, Australian David Saker was made bowling coach while Shane McDermott was placed in charge of fielding training. The board did not discuss the terms of their two-year contracts, but the latest appointments effectively end head coach Chandika Hathurusingha's controversial role with the team. The board would not say what they plan to do with Hathurusingha who has refused to step down despite being sidelined since August. An announcement about Hathurusingha, whose contracts runs for another year, will be made within a week, the board added. Along with his assistants, he came under fire over the team's sixth-place finish at the World Cup.

Then sports minister Harin Fernando also complained about Hathurusingha's remuneration — \$40,000 a month — saying it was too high. —AFP

S African cricket crisis deepens

JOHANNESBURG: The crisis in South African cricket deepened yesterday as former chief executive Ali Bacher called on incumbent Thabang Moroe to quit, while a second independent director resigned from the board of Cricket South Africa.

Bacher, a former Test captain, said Moroe was out of his depth, while independent board member Iqbal Khan, the chairman of CSA's finance committee, said he could no longer be party to an organisation that was "ruining the game".

Khan blamed Moroe for the majority of issues besetting CSA, including failing to adhere to the terms of an agreement with the SA Cricketers' Association, the banning of five journalists last weekend and "widespread credit card abuse".

Reaction to death of former England captain Bob Willis

LONDON: For English cricket fans who witnessed Bob Willis's ferocious spell of fast bowling to win the third Ashes test at Headingley in 1981 it was an unforgettable and iconic sporting afternoon. Willis's former team mate Geoffrey Boycott had a close-up view that day as the six foot six inch paceman with the luxuriant curls ripped the Australian batting order to shreds.

Boycott joined the chorus of tributes to Willis after news of the 70-year-old's death on Wednesday, recalling the match-winning spell of eight for 43 which secured Willis's place in the nation's sporting folklore.

Here are a selection of tributes to England's fourth-highest Test wicket taker and the man nicknamed The Goose: "He was

In his letter to CSA president Chris Nenzani, Khan wrote: "Unfortunately, all fingers point at the CEO. "But, having said that, I cannot believe that you are not aware of the many issues that have caused this malaise and to that extent you are also complicit and perhaps even the entire board."

Khan's resignation came a day after that of Shirley Zinn, leaving CSA with only three of their five independent directors. CSA will be holding an emergency board meeting in Johannesburg on Saturday at which it said "important decisions will be made".

Bacher said in an interview with the *espnricinfo* website that he had mediated talks between Moroe and former Test captain Graeme Smith on August 28, which could have led to Smith becoming CSA director of cricket.

Smith announced on November 15 that he had withdrawn his interest in taking the job — although he confirmed on Monday that new talks were under way. According to Bacher, in more than two months since the original discussions, Smith had still not been presented with a contract for his consideration. —AFP

not seeing anything else other than the batsman and the stumps. He had blinkered vision, a bit like a racehorse galloping towards the finish line. "None of us needed to speak to him. There was no point anyway as his focus, emotion and passion all came together in that moment and he blew the Aussies away." —*Geoffrey Boycott*

"As a player he had a big heart, he'd run in, nearly 6ft 6ins, and hit the pitch hard. At his peak was one of the best three bowlers in the world." "He was hugely admired all around the world. Everybody knew who he was." —*former England bowler Darren Gough*

"Just saw the news on Bob Willis and very sad indeed. Off air I just loved listening to his great stories on how they played the game back in the day." —*former South Africa fast bowler Allan Donald*

"He was a man that cared passionately about everything to do with England cricket. He was one of England's greatest ever fast bowlers. Who would forget him charging down the hill in the '81 Botham's Ashes bowling the Aussies out in that fantastic series." —*former England assistant coach and current Warwickshire head coach Paul Farbrace*. —Reuters

Sports

Antetokounmpo leads Bucks past Pistons as Lakers trump Jazz

LOS ANGELES: Giannis Antetokounmpo's 35 points propelled the Milwaukee Bucks to a 13th straight NBA victory on Wednesday, a hard-fought 127-103 win over the Pistons in Detroit. Antetokounmpo, the reigning NBA Most Valuable Player, powered through a contentious encounter, pulling down six rebounds and handing out nine assists as the Bucks continued their domination of the Pistons.

The Bucks improved to 19-3 — tied for best record in the league with the Western Conference-leading Los Angeles Lakers, who beat the Utah Jazz 121-96 in Salt Lake City. Milwaukee, whose eight wins over Detroit last season included a first-round playoff sweep, have now notched two wins this season over the Pistons.

The Bucks led by 11 at halftime, and by 20 after three quarters as the Pistons proved unable to mount a challenge. Khris Middleton added 17 points for Milwaukee and Eric Bledsoe chipped in 15. Andre Drummond led Detroit with 23 points, 14 rebounds and five assists.

Antetokounmpo and Detroit's Blake Griffin clashed early and often. Midway through the second quarter, Griffin elbowed Antetokounmpo in the face and teammates hurried to intervene as the two exchanged words.

Antetokounmpo answered in the third with a monster block of Griffin's layup attempt, and less than a minute later when he hit the court after a foul by Bruce Brown, Griffin angered the Bucks by stepping over Antetokounmpo's legs.

Middleton raced over and admonished Griffin and after a lengthy review Brown, Griffin and Middleton all received technical fouls. "At that point, I was, like, tired," Antetokounmpo said. "I was, like, 'They're going to do this all night.'

"At first I was trying to talk back, trying to let them know this is more than basketball. We can stop playing basketball, we can fight. "At the end of the day my teammates want me in the game, my teammates want me to keep my head in the game." The tough-guy posturing didn't help the Pistons and the Bucks emerged with their longest winning streak since 1973. The Lakers put on a defensive clinic in Utah, coming up with 13 steals and blocking 12 shots as they held the Jazz to 41 percent shooting.

Anthony Davis, battling illness that saw him receive intravenous fluids at halftime of the Lakers' win at Denver on Tuesday, scored 26 points. Davis added five rebounds, six assists and three blocked shots.

LeBron James added 20 points and handed out 12 assists for the Lakers, who didn't trail at all after the first quarter and led by as many as 25 in the second half. "Thirty-two fastbreak points on the second night of a back-to-back, that's just great effort by our team," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said after his team's 10th straight road win.

"We just want to continue to battle on the defensive end," Davis said. "We played with great pace tonight and were able to get points in transition. We just played together." The Jazz lost for the fifth time in sixth games — but suffered just their second home defeat of the season.

In Boston, the Celtics defeated the Miami Heat 112-93, handing the Heat their first defeat of a three-game road trip that had included wins over the Brooklyn Nets and Toronto Raptors.

Miami were without coach Erik Spoelstra,



DETROIT: Ersan Ilyasova #7 of the Milwaukee Bucks shoots the ball against the Detroit Pistons at Little Caesars Arena in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP

who returned to Florida on Wednesday for the birth of his second son. The Heat led by as many as 11 points early in the second quarter, but Boston closed the half on a 28-9 scoring run to take a 52-44 lead at halftime and never trailed in the second half.

Jaylen Brown scored 31 points and Kemba Walker added 28 for the Celtics, who withstood a 37-point performance by Miami's Jimmy Butler. The Dallas Mavericks won a see-saw battle

against the Minnesota Timberwolves 121-114.

The Timberwolves led 93-91 with 7:19 remaining when the Mavericks made three-pointers on five of their next six possessions to seize the momentum. Dwight Powell led the Mavs with 24 points, connecting on nine of nine from the field. Luka Doncic added 22 points — a relatively quiet night for the Mavs' young star after his 33-point, 18-rebound performance against New Orleans on Tuesday. — AFP

Leaders Gladbach seek to beat Bayern

MUNICH: Borussia Moenchengladbach trying to bring down the mighty Bayern Munich after years of Bavarian dominance might sound like a line from a 1970s German football almanac but that will be the case tomorrow when the two sides meet in the league.

For decades-long roles have been reversed this season, with the 'Foals' of Gladbach galloping away at the top of the standings while Bayern struggle to keep pace. For younger German football fans this is a completely new experience but more seasoned fans could draw parallels to some 45 years ago when Bayern, in the midst of their three consecutive European Cup wins, lost their domestic crown to a sensational Gladbach team.

Gladbach won five of eight league titles between 1970 and 1977, including three straight from 1975-77. Bayern have again become the most powerful force in German football, having won seven consecutive league titles starting back in 2013 but their opponents are enjoying a scintillating campaign.

After decades stuck mid-table or even lower, Gladbach are top of the heap on 28

points, four ahead of fourth-placed Bayern, and closing in on the unofficial autumn champions title with the winter break coming later this month. Gladbach forward Alassane Plea said felling Bayern would mean so much. "Bayern are a big club with countless successes," he said this week. "They have won the league title almost every season in the past years and play without interruption in the Champions League.

"They have top players and are arguably the strongest team in the league. That is why we really want to win that game." Plea has formed a formidable partnership with fellow Frenchman Marcus Thuram and Swiss international Brel Embolo, scoring four goals and recording four assists.

Thuram has contributed six goals while Embolo, who struggled for a starting spot at Schalke 04, has five. "The fact that we are still league leaders shows how good we have been working and how good a season we have been playing," Plea added. "We have a great team ... and we are currently in just very good form."

The Bavarians will be feeling the heat, having suffered a shock 2-1 home loss to Bayer Leverkusen last week, their first defeat under interim coach Hansi Flick. Another loss would see them drop further behind in the title race and put Flick's future at the club in doubt. Second-placed RB Leipzig, on 27 points, host Hoffenheim, while Schalke 04, a further two points behind in third, travel to Leverkusen. — Reuters

Atletico seek quick fix at Villarreal in transitional season

MADRID: Atletico Madrid's seemingly unshakeable position as Spain's third force has come under threat following a slide in form and they desperately need to get their season back on track when they visit Villarreal in La Liga today. The match would be taking place in Miami had the league got its way but after losing a legal battle last month, the teams will be meeting on the shores of Spain's east coast rather than the sunshine state.

Atletico's season had promised so much after a flying start of three straight wins but they have been on a downward spiral since, earning only three victories in their last 12 games.

The club have finished in the top three in La Liga in all seven full seasons under Diego Simeone but are currently sixth in the standings, six points off leaders Barcelona and second-placed Real Madrid, who each have a game in hand.

Barca host struggling Mallorca on Saturday in search of a fourth straight league win while Real, who are unbeaten in their last eight

games, are at home to 19th-placed Espanyol.

Atleti's hopes of repeating 2014's remarkable title win have all but faded with Sunday's 1-0 defeat at home to Barca, yet even finishing in the top four might prove a challenge unless they can find some inspiration soon.

Someone's side are far from entertaining, with only six teams in the league having scored fewer than their 16 goals, although they can boast the second best defence.

Today's game represents an ideological clash of sorts — Villarreal, who are 13th in the table, have the best attack outside of Real and Barca but the fifth worst defence.

Simeone has blamed his side's recent struggles on the huge overhaul his squad underwent in the post season, asking for patience in a "season of transition".

He can point to key departures such as Antoine Griezmann, their top scorer for the last five seasons, stalwart defenders Juanfran, Filipe Luis, Diego Godin and Lucas Hernandez, plus Spain midfielder Rodrigo.

But the club spent a staggering 300 million euros (\$331 million) on replenishing their squad and many of their new arrivals are not stepping up, especially 126-million euro man Joao Felix, who has failed to score for over two months.

"We're worried but now is the time to dig in and stay united," added midfielder Saul Niguez. "It's a delicate situation but we'll only get out of it by working hard." — Reuters

Sports

Vardy scores again as Leicester win seventh straight match

LEICESTER: Leicester City forward Jamie Vardy struck for the seventh Premier League game in a row to help his rampant side to a 2-0 home win over basement club Watford on Wednesday, a seventh consecutive league victory that leaves them second in the table.

Vardy, the league's top scorer, smashed home from the penalty spot in the 55th minute to net his 14th goal of the season while midfielder James Maddison sealed the points with a strike deep in stoppage time. Vardy had seen a penalty appeal turned down earlier in the game which instead earned him a yellow card for simulation but his side were soon awarded a spot kick when Watford's Adam Mesina was penalised for striking Jonny Evans in the face.

Brendan Rodgers's side are second in the standings on 35 points after 15 games, eight behind league leaders Liverpool and three ahead of champions Manchester City in third. Leicester are in better form at the moment than at any point during their fairytale 2015/16 Premier League title-winning campaign and this victory equalled their top-flight record for consecutive wins, set in March 1963.

"We had to be patient this evening and worked very hard for that but I thought we deserved it," Rodgers told reporters. "It was a real team effort and to get seven wins on the spin in the Premier League is a great achievement. The

team is developing and proving they have a winning mentality and mindset."

Watford were playing their first game under caretaker coach Hayden Mullins after Quique Sanchez Flores was sacked following their 2-1 defeat by Southampton and showed plenty of fighting spirit as Leicester had to sweat to continue their winning run.

Winger Harvey Barnes was the hosts' biggest threat and had several opportunities, including a chance to double the lead when he raced towards an incisive pass from Vardy but he was thwarted from close range by a brave block from Mesina.

Watford stay rooted to the bottom on eight points although Mullins was pleased to see his side push one of the top teams in the league all the way. "I think up until the penalty we were in the game and even after it we were still in the game. We have come away from home to a team that has done really, really well and put a performance in.

"What I saw tonight was a side in us that came away from home and showed good levels of fitness, good intelligence on the field, put in a great performance and took it right to the wire," he said.

"The boys have responded fantastically well. I'm so proud of what they did tonight. There were loads of positives." — Reuters



LEICESTER: Leicester City's English midfielder James Maddison shoots to score their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Watford at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England. Leicester won the game 2-0. — AFP

Neymar, Mbappe fire PSG five points clear in Ligue 1

PARIS: Neymar and Kylian Mbappe both scored as Paris Saint-Germain restored their five-point cushion at the top of Ligue 1 with a 2-0 win over Nantes on Wednesday. Mbappe's smart finish shortly after half-time and Neymar's late penalty saw the hosts ease to victory at the Parc des Princes.

PSG, whose scheduled game against Monaco last weekend was postponed due to bad weather, also have a game in hand on second-placed Marseille as they bid for a seventh French league title in eight seasons. Marseille won 2-0 at Angers on Tuesday but briefly cut the gap to only two points.

Thomas Tuchel started Neymar and Mbappe together for the first time this season, although the German coach left Edinson Cavani and Mauro Icardi on the bench. "It says a lot if in December our two key players (Mbappe and Neymar), who we want to make the difference, are starting for the first time together," said Tuchel.

"Imagine if (Lionel) Messi and (Luis) Suarez played together for the first time in December (for Barcelona)... They lacked rhythm, I'm not expecting too much from both of them. "I'm happy they scored, but there is a lot of potential (for them to improve)."

Mbappe fired the first opening over the crossbar, before Nantes' Ludovic Blas was denied by Keylor Navas in the PSG goal. Neymar appeared to have put the hosts in front with a fantastic left-footed strike after Nantes could only half clear a corner, but following a lengthy delay, the goal was ruled out by VAR for an apparent high foot from Julian Draxler.

The world's most expensive player almost gave PSG a half-time lead anyway, but saw his low shot tipped away by visiting goalkeeper Alban Lafont. The league leaders did forge ahead in the 52nd minute as Mbappe met Angel Di Maria's low cross with a backheel flick into the corner after fine work by Neymar.

The Brazilian eventually got his goal with five minutes remaining, scoring his penalty at the second time of asking after substitute Icardi encroached in the area. Earlier on Wednesday, Gelson Martins came off the bench to fire Monaco to a 2-1 win over Toulouse as the principality side made it six victories in nine league outings. Saint-Etienne moved into fifth with a 4-1 success over Nice, while Montpellier were held to a 2-2 draw at lowly Dijon. — AFP

Mount, Abraham sink Villa as Chelsea return to form

LONDON: Frank Lampard challenged Tammy Abraham to prove he has the hunger for long-term success after the Chelsea striker's influential display inspired a 2-1 victory against Aston Villa on Wednesday. Lampard's side ended a run of two successive Premier League defeats thanks to the latest heroics from emerging England duo Abraham and Mason Mount at Stamford Bridge.

Abraham put Chelsea ahead in the first half against the team the 22-year-old striker helped win promotion from the Championship last season. Trezeguet drew Villa level, but 20-year-old midfielder Mount responded with a blistering volley from Abraham's assist to seal the points after half-time.

Chelsea remain fourth, six points ahead of fifth-placed Wolves, as they chase a Champions League berth in Lampard's impressive first season in charge. Abraham scored 26 goals in 40 appearances on loan at Villa and, his confidence sky-high after that success, he has enjoyed a breakthrough season with Chelsea.

His 12th goal in all competitions for Chelsea this term includes 11 in 14 league appearances and Blues boss Lampard expects him to maintain the speed of his development. "Tammy is near the top of the goal-scoring charts, stretches defences, starts our press and he's growing as a personality in the dressing room," Lampard said.

"When he comes out of the team he's a player you miss. He's a hungry boy. "I wouldn't set him a (goal)

target. All you would say is every game can you score and can you be hungry for the team? At the moment he is doing it." Like Abraham, Mount is thriving under Lampard, who coached him on loan at Derby last season and has given the dynamic midfielder his chance on the big stage.

"I don't think Mason should be mentioned solely on goals. I thought his all-round game in the second half is what we would expect of him. He won the ball back in good areas," Lampard said.

Lampard had been frustrated with Chelsea's lack of creativity and cutting edge in their shock 1-0 defeat against West Ham tomorrow, so he was encouraged by the way they dominated against Villa. "It was the team I wanted to see. West Ham was the only game this season when we haven't been up to par," he said.

"We have got a lot of credit for our energy and attacking play. That was missing at the weekend but today we were back to where we were. I'm happy but I want more."

Abraham's return from the hip injury that ruled him out of the West Ham game made Chelsea a far more incisive unit and the youngster broke the deadlock in the 24th minute. Showcasing his nuanced penalty area movement, Abraham edged subtly away from Ezri Konsa to meet Reece James' cross with a clinical close-range header.

Abraham's strike should have been the signal for Chelsea to go for the kill, but instead the creaky defence that has been their Achilles heel at times under Lampard was breached in the 41st minute.

Cesar Azpilicueta, caught out of position, gave Ahmed Elmohamady space to swing over a cross towards Trezeguet, who had no problem getting in front of the ponderous James. Despite almost losing his footing, the Egypt midfielder got his head to the ball, diverting it onto his foot and past Kepa Arrizabalaga at the near post. — AFP

Sports

Rashford strikes twice as Man Utd end Mourinho's perfect start at Spurs

MANCHESTER: Marcus Rashford spoiled Jose Mourinho's return to Old Trafford on Wednesday, scoring twice as Manchester United beat Tottenham 2-1 to end their former manager's perfect start to his tenure at his new club.

The England forward put United in front early in the first half and converted a second-half penalty to restore their lead after Dele Alli's exquisite equaliser as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side leapfrogged Spurs, climbing to sixth in the Premier League table. Spurs went into the match ahead of United after their mini-revival under their new boss, who replaced the sacked Mauricio Pochettino at the London club last month. Struggling United had made their worst start to a season in 31 years but played with energy and adventure and deserved their win.

Smiling manager Solskjaer hailed his youthful side. "The three points are massive for us," he told the BBC. "We've had too many draws this season and given too many points away from winning positions. It's a great lesson the last two games (Sheffield United and Aston Villa) and we came back in a great manner.

"We've started the rebuilding. We've made decisions that we had to and we're looking to build this club to be better again and I can't think short-term when I'm trying to do that." The home side deservedly took the lead when Rashford beat Paulo Gazzaniga at his near post in the sixth minute — the forward's 11th goal in his past 13 games for United and England.

United could easily have stretched their lead but Gazzaniga made amends by touching a thun-

derous Rashford shot onto the crossbar.

It was a far cry from recent disjointed performances against Sheffield United and Aston Villa. Both of those matches ended in draws after United had taken the lead. But despite being a clear second best, Tottenham edged their way back into the game and were on level terms six minutes before half-time thanks to an audacious piece of skill from the in-form Alli.

Serge Aurier's shot was saved and the rebound landed to Alli, whose sweet first touch took the ball away from Ashley Young and Fred. He let it bounce before shooting past David de Gea into the far corner.

The England man missed the majority of the early part of the season through injury but has bounced back in style, scoring four times in his past three matches. United would have been disappointed to have been trailing at the break after their impressive first-half showing but they were back in front in the 49th minute when Rashford sent Gazzaniga the wrong way from the spot after being brought down by Moussa Sissoko.

United surged forward in search of another goal, with Rashford a constant threat down the left and Daniel James also looking dangerous. Mourinho threw on unsettled midfielder Christian Eriksen in search of an equaliser as the game remained in the balance but despite some late pressure against a nervy United, Spurs left Old Trafford empty-handed. The new Spurs boss, sacked by United last December, described his reception at Old Trafford as "nice and polite". "It's a step back against a team that



MANCHESTER: Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Dele Alli (R) vies with Manchester United's English midfielder Jesse Lingard (C) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England. — AFP

is playing with same objective as us, trying to get up the table and reach the top six," he said. "We need to keep going. We made mistakes but it's not good to be crying about them now." Mourinho won his first three matches in charge of Spurs, with his team scoring 10 goals in the

process but he has problems to sort out at the back as he targets a Champions League spot. United are also eyeing the top four despite a big gap to close. They remain eight points behind fourth-placed Chelsea and just seven points above the relegation zone. — AFP

Bahrain in Gulf Cup finals

DOHA: Bahrain yesterday qualified for the final of the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup football tournament in Qatar after beating Iraq 5-3 on penalties. The extra time ended with a positive draw (2-2) at the meeting between the two teams at Abdullah Bin Stadium.

However, the game started until the Iraqi player Muhannad Ali scored an early goal in the sixth minute, but Bahraini player Abdullah Al-Hazza equalized in the 15th minute, then Iraqi's Ibrahim Baish responded with a second goal in the 18th minute while Bahrain's Mohamed Marhoun equalised in the 47th minute, ending the first half with two goals for both teams.

The Iraqi team entered with a clear preference in an attempt to seize a third goal, but the Bahraini team was defensively organized to end the half with this result.

With a score of (5-3) Bahrain reached the finals of the Gulf Cup while waiting for the results of Saudi and Qatar. The final match for the 24th Gulf Arab Cup will be held on Sunday at Khalifa International Stadium.

Meanwhile, Bert van Marwijk has been sacked as head coach of the United Arab Emirates, the country's football federation said on Wednesday after the team was knocked out of the Gulf Cup.

The UAE were eliminated from the



DOHA: Iraq's forward Mohanad Ali (R) vies for the ball with Bahrain's defender Abdullah Hazaa during the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup semi-final football match between Iraq and Bahrain at the Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium in the Qatari capital Doha yesterday. — AFP

keenly-contested regional tournament on Tuesday following a 4-2 loss at the hands of Qatar in a group game both sides needed to win to advance to the semi-finals. Van Marwijk, who led his native Netherlands to the final of the World Cup in South Africa in 2010, took over as head coach of the UAE earlier this year having previously qualified neighbouring Saudi Arabia for the finals of the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Sim-

ilar expectations were placed on the 67-year-old when he replaced Alberto Zaccheroni but the UAE have struggled so far in qualifying for Qatar 2022. The team are currently in fourth place in their group in the second phase of Asia's preliminary rounds, five points behind leaders Vietnam but with a game in hand. The UAE's next World Cup qualifier will be on March 26, when they host Malaysia. — Agencies

Liverpool thrash Everton

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool surged eight points clear at the top of the Premier League as Divock Origi was the scourge of Everton once more in a thrilling 5-2 Merseyside derby win for the European champions at Anfield.

All but one of the goals came before half-time as Origi and Xherdan Shaqiri, who replaced the rested Roberto Firmino and Mohamed Salah, put Liverpool 2-0 up inside 17 minutes.

Michael Keane pulled a goal back for Everton before Origi got his second and Sadio Mane finished off a blistering counter-attack to make it 4-1. The scoring did not stop there as Richarlison cut the deficit once more, but Georginio Wijnaldum hammered the final nail in the Everton coffin a minute from time as an eighth defeat in 11 league games sees the Toffees slip into the bottom three.

"All the goals were incredible," said a delighted Jurgen Klopp, who made five changes in total. "Wonderful goals, sensational passes, super pieces of football. I loved it a lot."

Klopp insisted this fixture remained the "standout" one in Liverpool's season despite the massive points difference between the sides at either end of the table. However, the German's actions spoke louder than words as he could afford the luxury of leaving out Firmino and Salah at the beginning of a hectic month for the Reds in three competitions.

"We needed fresh legs and I had to show my respect to the boys in the squad," added Klopp. "They proved it. It is much more fun making changes, all of the boys are ready to deliver performances like this." Origi scored the 96th-minute winner when the sides met last season at Anfield and proved his worth within six minutes this time with a calm finish to round Jordan Pickford and slot into an empty net after a sensational pass from Mane cut Everton open. — AFP



DETROIT: Derrick Rose #25 of the Detroit Pistons handles the ball against the Milwaukee Bucks at Little Caesars Arena in Detroit, Michigan.— AFP

Antetokounmpo leads Bucks past Pistons as Lakers trump Jazz

See Page 45