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28 Kings' Bjelica beats the buzzer to stun Rockets



# Amir hails positive steps to forget the past at Gulf meet

Sheikh Sabah: Riyadh Declaration 'gateway to our future' • Hajraf appointed new GCC chief



RIYADH: (From left) Secretary General of the GCC Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Kuwaiti Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Qatari Prime Minister Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Omani Deputy Prime Minister Fahd bin Mahmud Al-Said, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman attend the 40th Gulf Cooperation Council summit in the Saudi capital yesterday. — AFP

RIYADH: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday said the Riyadh Declaration is "the gateway to our future". Speaking during the concluding session of the 40th GCC summit in Riyadh, HH the Amir hoped that the coming meetings will be better than previous ones. The Amir thanked Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the Saudi government for the declaration and sponsorship of the gathering.

Earlier yesterday, HH the Amir voiced satisfaction with the positive and constructive steps taken so far in the context of efforts to forget the past. Addressing the GCC gathering, the Amir said the 40th summit, held in a favorable atmosphere, reflects resolve to adopt unified positions and commitment to Gulf unity. He voiced optimism that the meeting will come up with resolutions and recommendations that can undoubtedly contribute to promoting the Gulf march and fulfilling ambitions.

He stressed that the recent Gulf sports event in Qatar and the summit are clear-cut signs of common determination to ensure Gulf unity and maintain gains and accomplishments. In this context, HH the Amir congratulated Bahrain on winning the 24th Gulf Cup, wishing it more progress and success. The Amir added that he has always called for addressing recent threats to regional security and

stability in a calm and wise mode and through dialogue. "Due to this escalation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been hit by dreadful attacks which we condemned and denounced. We have also voiced support to our brothers in defending their security and stability," he said.

He cited Saudi Arabia's G20 presidency, the UAE's hosting of Expo 2020 and Qatar's organizing of the World Cup 2022 as a source of pride to the Gulf people, and a sign of world appreciation and confidence in the GCC countries. At the Arab level, HH the Amir said: "We took note of the agreement signed by the Yemeni government and Transitional Council under the sponsorship and with the praiseworthy effort of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

He hailed the Riyadh agreement as a gateway to the aspired peace process in Yemen. Concerning Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Algeria, HH the Amir hoped that they would overcome their current difficult and painful circumstances and restore security and stability. He also congratulated the Tunisian people on their recent successful presidential elections, voicing heartfelt greetings to President Kais Saied. The Amir concluded his speech by thanking Saudi Arabia for organizing the gathering and for its proper reception and hospitality.

Continued on Page 24

## Private sector 'integral part' of development

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Kuwait's private sector is an 'integral part' of the country's development plans, a minister said yesterday, placing great emphasis on an increasingly significant part of the economy. Addressing the New Kuwait 2019 Summit on behalf of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Center in Kuwait City, acting Finance Minister and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel said the private sector's contributions towards economic development is a notion embedded in the country's constitution, which also acknowledges the media's role in supporting national development plans.



Mariam Al-Aqeel

stitution, which also acknowledges the media's role in supporting national development plans.

The new aspect of the campaign focuses on the common perception of sustainable development, added Aqeel, saying the initiative aims to encourage the average citizen to contribute to the country's development plans. She emphasized that Kuwait's development plan is running on track, one that would lead the country towards a raft of reforms, including infrastructure repairs, which in turn will help create a more multifaceted economy.

Kuwait's strategic location serves as an incentive for the country to rise to regional prominence, said Kuwait Projects Company's Deputy CEO Faisal Al-Ayyar, who pointed out that the country possesses the capabilities needed to achieve the aforementioned goal. On Kuwait's ever-growing private

Continued on Page 24

## Abiy collects Peace Nobel, urges unity

OSLO: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed collected the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo yesterday, appealing for unity as ethnic violence flares in his country and reconciliation efforts with neighboring former foe Eritrea have stalled. Abiy, 43, won the Nobel for his efforts to resolve the long-running conflict with Eritrea. Announced back in October, the prize also honored his mediation efforts in eastern Africa and the democratic reforms he has undertaken in his country, long ruled by authoritarian leaders.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Abiy, expressing heartfelt congratulations. The Amir wished the Ethiopian prime minister everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.



OSLO: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali poses after he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize during a ceremony at the city hall yesterday. — AFP

Ethiopia saw spectacular progress in the months after he took power in April 2018, but the winds have since shifted: in addition to the stalled peace process with Eritrea, his reforms aimed at opening up Ethiopia have paradoxically given rise to a flare-up of ethnic tensions. Faced with these challenges, Africa's youngest leader called for unity as he picked up his award at Oslo's flower-

bedecked City Hall, in a formal ceremony attended by the Norwegian royal family and dignitaries.

"There is no 'Us and Them'," he said. "There is only 'Us', for 'We' are all bound by a shared destiny of love, forgiveness and reconciliation." On July 9, 2018, following a historic meeting in Eritrea's capital Asmara, Abiy

Continued on Page 24

## Protests rage in India over citizenship bill

GUWAHATI, India: Protestors in northeast India set fire to tyres and cut down trees to block roads yesterday in a shutdown across the region hours after lawmakers approved the government's new citizenship bill. The legislation, set to go before the upper house today, will fast-track citizenship claims from immigrants from three neighboring countries - but not if they are Muslim.

For Islamic groups, the opposition, rights groups and others this fits into Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist agenda to marginalize India's 200 million Muslims - something he denies. People in northeast India object for different reasons, fearing that large numbers of Hindu migrants from Bangladesh, who they say are intruders, will swamp their homeland.

Yesterday, the region - that is sandwiched between Bangladesh, China and Myanmar - was crippled by a general strike called by dozens of organizations, with buses off the roads and most schools and shops shut. "The bandh (strike) have drawn a total response in the northeastern states," said Samujjal Bhattacharyya from



NEW DELHI: Demonstrators display placards to protest against the government's Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) yesterday. — AFP

the powerful umbrella group the North East Students' Organization. "We have made it clear ... that CAB (the Citizenship Amendment Bill) will not be accepted and we are going to intensify our agitation," he told AFP. "Assam and northeastern states had already taken a huge burden of illegal foreigners," he said.

India's lower house passed the bill just after midnight following a fiery debate that saw one Muslim MP compare the government to the Nazis. Once law, it will make it much easier for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians fleeing Afghanistan, Bangladesh

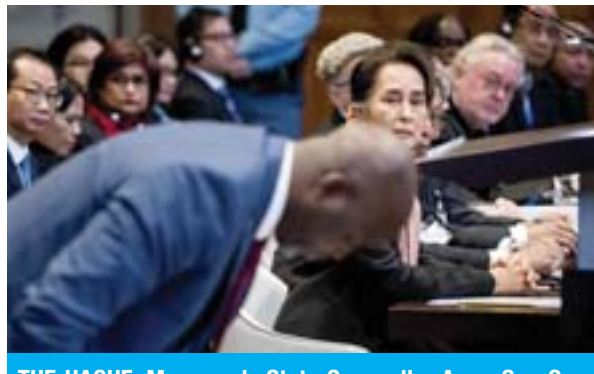
Continued on Page 24

## Suu Kyi told to 'stop genocide'

THE HAGUE: Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi faced calls for Myanmar to "stop the genocide" of Rohingya Muslims as she personally led her country's defense at the UN's top court yesterday. Myanmar's civilian leader sat through graphic accounts of mass murder and rape as the west African state of The Gambia set out its case at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Thousands of people back home in Yangon rallied in support of 74-year-old Suu Kyi, whose silence about the plight of the Rohingya has tarnished her international reputation as a rights icon.

Around 740,000 Rohingya fled to neighboring Bangladesh after a bloody crackdown by the Myanmar military in 2017 that UN investigators have already described as genocide. "Tell Myanmar to stop these senseless killings, to stop these acts of barbarity that continue to shock our collective conscience, to stop this genocide of its own people," Gambian Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou told the judges.

Muslim-majority Gambia accuses Myanmar of breaching the 1948 genocide convention and has asked the court, set up in 1946 to rule on disputes between UN member states, to take emergency measures to stop further violence. "Another genocide is unfolding right



THE HAGUE: Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi looks on as Gambian Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou sits before UN's International Court of Justice yesterday. — AFP

before our eyes yet we do nothing to stop it," added Tambadou, a former prosecutor at the tribunal into the Rwanda's 1994 genocide. "Every day of inaction means more people are being killed, more women are being raped and more children are being burned alive. For what crime? Only that they were born different."

Suu Kyi, who 28 years ago today was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, is set to speak in Myanmar's defense today. She is expected to argue that Myanmar was conducting legitimate operations against Rohingya militants and that the ICJ has no jurisdiction in the case.

Continued on Page 24



## Local

# Aggression on any GCC state is an aggression on all members: Gulf leaders

## GCC 40th summit concludes with 'Riyadh Declaration'



Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah upon his arrival to attend the summit.



RIYADH: Leaders of Gulf Cooperation Council countries attend the 40th GCC Summit in Riyadh yesterday. —Amiri Diwan photos

**RIYADH:** The 40th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit concluded yesterday with Secretary General Abdulatif Al-Zayani reading the 'Riyadh Declaration'. It emphasizes necessity to protect maritime of the Arabian Gulf from any threats, as the council notes measures taken by Saudi Arabia to protect its oil facilities, which stems from the Kingdom's keenness of a stable oil market, both for producing and consuming countries. "Any aggression on a GCC member state is an aggression on all member states," the Declaration reads. It also underlines the importance of achieving economic unity and customs integration, which would serve the Gulf's political and security coordination in light of regional and international variables.

The vision of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, laid the foundations for the integration system among GCC countries in all fields, which requires completion of procedures needed to guarantee intactness of member states' sovereignty and safety of their territorial waters, as well as economic areas in accordance with the joint defense treaty, the Declaration points out. The summit discussed a host of important issues of interest for the GCC march, in addition to reports and recommendations forwarded by the ministerial committees and action teams with regard to political, economic, social and legal aspects. It also reviewed a number of current regional and international issues and regional developments. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud speak while attending the summit.



GCC leaders attending the summit.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud during the summit.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud speak during the summit.

## Kuwait Amir receives Qatari PM in Riyadh



RIYADH: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Qatari Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Al Thani. — Amiri Diwan photo

**RIYADH:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday Qatari Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Al Thani at Dariya Palace in Riyadh. The Prime Minister conveyed greetings and appreciation of Qatari Amir Sheikh

Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, wishing His Highness good health and more progress for Kuwaiti people. His Highness relayed greetings to Sheikh Tamim, wishing him wellbeing and his country more progress. The accompanying delegation of His Highness the Amir attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Dignitaries cut the cake during the reception. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Kuwait optimistic about Gulf dispute resolution

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait remains optimistic in its bid to support resolving the dispute between Gulf neighbors, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said, adding reconciliation efforts are looking "positive." "We are not at all concerned about the environment that is accompanying the efforts to end the dispute, and we are

optimistic that this dispute will be something of the past in the near future," the Kuwaiti official said. Jarallah made the comments to reporters in Kuwait, during his attendance of a Qatar Embassy function held to celebrate the anniversary of the founder of Qatar Sheikh Jasim bin Thani's accession to the throne. —KUNA

## Hajraf, 2nd Kuwaiti as GCC chief

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Nayef Al-Hajraf has been confirmed as the next GCC Secretary General yesterday, becoming the second Kuwaiti to take the post since the bloc's inception in 1981. Hajraf has a vast experience in public and private sector management, education, and financial consulting. Prior to his appointment, he served as Kuwait's chief regulator of marketable securities in his capacity as the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and Managing Director of the Kuwait Capital Markets Authority (CMA) from 2014 to 2017. He has previously served as Kuwait's Minister of Finance for a brief period in 2012, and Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education from 2012 to 2014. His most recent cabinet post was also as Finance Minister from November 2017 until his resignation in November 2019.

Hajraf holds a PhD in accounting and finance from the University of Hull, UK and a Master's in accounting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, as well as a bachelor's degree in accounting from Kuwait University. Furthermore, he was Vice President of Gulf University for Science and Technology for Academic Services.

Chronologically, Abdullah Bishara (Kuwait) was the first secretary general of the GCC; serving for 11 years, from 1981 to 1993. He was succeeded by Fahim Al-Qasimi (UAE) who served from 1993 to 1996, Jamil Al-Hejailan (Saudi Arabia) assumed the position afterwards and stayed until 2002, and was followed by Abdurrahman Al-Attiyah (Qatar) who served between 2002 and 2011. The current GCC chief Abdulatif Al-Zayani (Bahrain) assumed the position in 2011 and is expected to step down in 2020. —KUNA



## Local

# Manpower authority to text employers about violations detected in inspections

## Fourth Ring Road repair to be completed by year's end

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower said it is currently working on linking all labor departments and investment branches at co-operative societies through an automated system. The authority added that both the authority and co-op administrations are currently discussing mandating that all laborers working in co-op investment branches should be sponsored by the main investment company.

The authority explained that various violation codes include code 72, which means suspending all the company's transactions except residency cancellation pending deportation; code 73, which means administrative suspension except transfers and residency cancellation pending deportation; and code 71 for non-existing firms or dossiers, cases which are usually subjected to investigation plus permanent suspension. In addition, the authority added that a new measure is currently in use - sending immediate text messages via SMS to employers in case of detecting any violation, which puts an end to paperwork.

The authority also noted that in case inspectors find that a firm is closed despite sponsoring laborers, the firm's file is suspended and legal actions are taken as per articles 10 and 138 of law number 6/2010. "In case the employer requests lifting the suspension, the firm is re-inspected to make sure that it is in operation and the laborers it sponsors work for it," the authority noted, explaining that employers will then sign affidavits that the firm will not be closed.

Meanwhile, well-informed sources told local dai-

ly Al-Anbaa that policies of replacing expats with citizens will be implemented according to a new criterion in 2020-2021 - to include graduates of universities with lower academic levels as per the ministry of higher education's updated academic accreditation register. The sources added that graduates of accredited universities who fail to present the equivalence of their degrees and accredit them will be replaced.

The sources added that it would be better for bodies responsible for changing the replacement conditions for the new fiscal year to disregard the date of recruitment to make sure graduates of accredited universities who already got the equivalence of their degrees remain in their positions. Notably, the sources predict that up to 4,000 expats will be terminated when the replacement starts by the beginning of the new fiscal year on April 1, 2020.

### Fourth ring road

In other news, official sources at the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) said the plan of repairing streets affected by the rain will remain in progress till the end of the month, adding that a special ameliorated substance is used in the new asphalt layers. The sources added that Fourth Ring Road repairs will conclude this month, while MPW has a plan ready to prevent a recurrence of last year's rain-

related mishaps. "All drains in Mangaf tunnel have been opened to prevent water accumulation," the sources said, adding that new drainage canals had been built to prevent the same at Sabah Al-Ahmad City, and that the main drainage grid in Mangaf is also ready. The sources said all other roads and streets will be repaired according to a long-term five-year schedule set between MPW and the contracted companies and contractors.

### Unregistered drugs

The Ministry of Health's (MoH) assistant under-secretary for food and medicine control Dr Abdullah Al-Bader said one of his inspection teams detected serious violations at a private clinic in Salmiya, where large quantities of smuggled medications that are not registered with MoH were seized, in addition to other drugs smuggled out of public hospitals and clinics.

Bader added that another inspection team found another quantity of unregistered drugs in other clinics, adding that the company selling those drugs was fined and that all the citations are currently subject to MoH's legal affairs investigations pending referral to the public prosecution.

### Rent allowance violations

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare submitted a primary report to the parliament concern-

ing the results of investigating housing applications and rent allowance payments. In this regard, official sources said it was noticed that thousands of citizens have housing applications filed in their names without having families, because they divorced before having children. This is a violation, because having a family is one of the authority's conditions.

The report added that after automating links with the Ministry of Interior (MoI), it was found that MoI had withdrawn the citizenship of some applicants and that rent allowance was still being paid to deceased citizens, noting that these cases had been referred to the Public Anti-Corruption Authority for further investigations.

Meanwhile, the housing authority explained that it processed 17,231 transactions in November including 668 new applications and 195 allocations in South Sabah Al-Ahmad and Jaber Al-Ahmad cities. The authority added that 473 citizens had filed attestation applications, responded to 2,150 inquiries, issued 4,790 'to whom it may concern' certificates to be sent to the Credit Bank and processed 1,033 rent allowance applications.

### MP's immunity

The legislative affairs committee rejected a request to lift MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli's parliamentary immunity to investigate two e-crimes, another proposal by MP Mohammed Al-Huwailah to pay Kuwaiti teaching staff members at the education and awqaf ministries and Kuwaitis working as librarians, technicians and social workers in various government bodies special rewards and allowances, in addition to writing off Credit Bank loans given to citizens who had died.

## Legal panel rejects request to debate general amnesty bill

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The National Assembly's legal and legislative committee yesterday rejected a request by two of its members to accord priority to the discussion of a draft law proposing a general pardon for people jailed over expressing opinion. Member of the committee MP Khalil Abul said the committee preferred that the National Assembly should vote to ask the committee to speed up the debate of a number of bills related to pardon.

A number of MPs have submitted bills calling to grant a general amnesty to activists jailed over taking part in protests or expressing opinions on social media deemed offensive. Hundreds of activists are either in jail or facing trial for committing such violations and a number of MPs have pressed the government to cooperate in issuing legislation that grants pardon to such activists.

Opposition MPs have linked their support to the new cabinet being formed by premier-designate His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and the government's coopera-

tion in issuing the law.

The opposition lawmakers are trying to secure amnesty for a dozen of former MPs and activists who have fled to outside the country, mainly in Turkey, for the past 18 months after the court of cassation sentenced them to several years in jail for taking part in storming the National Assembly building during a protest against corruption in 2011. Abul said that the committee rejected the request to study such laws and said it is better if the national assembly votes to speed up the debate of the draft laws.

Abul said the committee approved an amendment to the labor law in the oil sector stipulating that end of service indemnity must be calculated on the basis of the last salary. The committee also approved a proposal calling to exempt citizens from their credit bank loans after death.

Head of the assembly budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said yesterday that authorities have failed to implement a law to privatize the communications ministry, adding that the ministry budget has not changed despite of transferring its operations to the telecom public authority.



## KFAS concludes 'female entrepreneurs' workshop

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) recently concluded a three-day workshop that was attended by a number of Kuwaiti female entrepreneurs and businesswomen. The workshop, titled 'The Intensive Female Entrepreneur Program,' focused on developing business, understanding market and client requirements and setting work strategies. Emerging companies expert Lena Ramli, and the program's supervisor Julia Youngers lectured on the workshop.

Meanwhile, KFAS training and devel-

opment manager Mona Al-Bakr said that the workshop is one of KFAS' latest activities that have been allocated for women for the first time, adding that registration for the workshop exceeded expectations by four folds. Bakr added that KFAS' training programs which are held all year long target private sector employees, noting that they are designed to suit various occupational positions with the aim of creating a business environment that motivates and helps businesswomen develop their businesses.



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## Local

# Gulf Defense, Aerospace expo kicks off featuring 32 countries

## Eurofighter Typhoon maker among participating companies

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Two hundred and twelve leading international companies in the fields of defense and armament from 32 countries are participating in the 5th Gulf Defense and Aerospace (GDA) exhibition and conference, which kicked off yesterday in Kuwait. The three-day event is open to the public from 10:00am - 5:00 pm, and is held at halls 5, 6 and 7 at the Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref.

Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khudher noted that the fifth GDA falls as part of efforts to make Kuwait a financial and commercial center. "The exhibition is an opportunity to see the latest developments in defense and security industries," he noted during the opening event yesterday. Furthermore, he pointed out that the exhibition also presents a "valuable opportunity" to discuss and exchange experiences between military leaders "and choose what is appropriate for their tasks and future aspirations."

Maj Gen Ali Al-Shanafa, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army's Supply Authority, said meanwhile that the exhibition aims to attract young people in order for them to get acquainted with the military sector and national service. He urged university students to present their projects during the exhibition, and encouraged them to join the military corps.

In the meantime, Brig Gen Salah Al-Azmi, Head of the Organizing Committee of GDA, said that the first version of this exhibition was held in 2011. "Apart from international participants, different Kuwaiti public institutions are also participating in this event including the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, Kuwait Blood Bank, and others. We are glad that students from different universities are participating in this event and presenting great projects," he pointed out. "The participation of companies this year is 100 percent higher than it was in 2011. Meanwhile, only 20 countries participated in 2011, but today we have 32 countries participating, which is also about 50 percent higher," added Azmi.

GDA is an international event for defense, aerospace, homeland security and safety. At this business-to-business event, the exhibitors meet professionals from the industry. The opening ceremony witnessed the presence of the Saudi Chief of Staff Lt Gen Fayyad Al-Ruwaili, the UAE Chief of Staff Lt Gen Hamad Al-Rumaihi, and a number of senior officers in the Kuwaiti army. Italian company Leonardo, the producer of the Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jet, is also among the participants.



**KUWAIT:** A general view of visitors attending the Fifth Gulf Defense and Aerospace Exhibition yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A model of the Eurofighter Typhoon jet is displayed at the exhibition.



Members of the Kuwaiti military gather around a bullet display at the exhibition.



A visitor checks a rifle displayed at the exhibition.

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## KFSD carries out fire drills

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) carried out several fire drills yesterday as part of its plan to improve firemen's efficiency. Al-Hilali fire station carried out one exercise in cooperation with Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait in Sharq, while Kabd fire station carried out an exercise in cooperation with Kuwait National Guard. In the meantime, Shuhada and Madina fire stations carried an exercise at Nuzha Co-operative Society.

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‘No compromise’ on human rights in Philippines: Bono

## Bloomberg: Solving climate crisis requires leadership



PARIS: (From left) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and Russian President Vladimir Putin give a press conference after a summit on Ukraine at the Elysee Palace on Monday.—AFP

# Divisions exposed as Putin, Zelensky meet

## EU welcomes Ukraine talks, urges concrete progress

**PARIS:** Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday held their first face-to-face talks at a summit in Paris which agreed some measures to de-escalate the Ukraine conflict but clinched no major breakthrough on ending the five-year war. Host French President Emmanuel Macron, joined by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, hailed the progress after some eight hours of talks at the Elysee Palace on ending the conflict between pro-Moscow separatists and Ukrainians in the east of Ukraine.

Four-way talks at the Elysee Palace were followed by the first ever bilateral meeting between wily ex-KGB agent Putin - in power for two decades - and ex-comedian Zelensky who won the presidency this year. A joint statement by all four parties said they agreed to implement a full ceasefire and proceed with a new withdrawal of forces from conflict zones by March 2020.

Putin hailed the outcome as an “important step” towards a de-escalation in the east of Ukraine. But Zelensky candidly admitted that despite the impressive symbolism of his first meeting with Putin and the first such four-way summit in three years, he had wanted

more. “Many questions were tackled and my counterparts have said it is a very good result for a first meeting. But I will be honest - it is very little, I wanted to resolve a larger number of problems,” he said after the talks in Paris.

**‘Open wound’**

Thousands have been killed and one million have fled their homes since pro-Russia militias in eastern Ukraine launched a bid for independence in 2014 - kicking off a conflict that deepened Russia’s estrangement from the West. Separatists seized control of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions shortly after Russia’s annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea.

The issue of Crimea, whose seizure gave Putin a popularity boost at home but led to international sanctions being imposed against Moscow, was not on the table at this summit. The joint statement said the sides committed “to a full and comprehensive implementation of the ceasefire, strengthened by the implementation of all necessary ceasefire support measures, before the end of the year 2019”.

It added that three additional disengagement areas should be agreed in east Ukraine, “with the aim of disengaging forces and equipment by the end of

March 2020”. Zelensky said a new exchange of prisoners would take place between Ukraine and pro-Moscow separatists by the end of this year. But in a sign that more advances were needed, Macron said a new summit would be held in four months to take stock of progress on ending the conflict.

“The process is moving in the right direction,” said Putin, adding that “Russia would do all that it can so that this conflict comes to an end”. Macron argued that the sheer fact the meeting had taken place was an achievement. “The fact we are here together side-by-side is something important,” he said, describing the conflict as an “open wound at the heart of the European continent”. “We have a lot of work to do but I have the impression that there is goodwill to resolve the difficult questions,” said Merkel.

**Under pressure**

The Kremlin has sent signals that it is ready to work with Zelensky, whom Putin has described as “likeable” and “sincere”. But there was no sign of warmth between the two men at the midnight press conference, with the pair sitting at opposite ends of the table and with Macron and Merkel between them. Monday’s summit sought to implement

accords signed in Minsk in 2015 that called for the withdrawal of heavy weapons, the restoration of Kiev’s control over its borders, wider autonomy for Donetsk and Lugansk, and the holding of local elections. The key shortcoming of the summit appeared to be the failure to agree any timetable for the holding of the local elections - with Kiev failing to win concessions from Moscow - and also the lack of agreement on control of the border. The summit has been a hugely delicate event for everyone involved - but particularly for Zelensky, who came to power after starring in a comedy show about a school teacher who suddenly becomes president.

About 200 demonstrators spent the night in tents outside the Ukrainian president’s office, seeking to put pressure on Zelensky not to “capitulate” to his Russian counterpart. For Macron, the summit was a centerpiece of an increasingly bold foreign policy he is driving despite troubles at home, where transport workers have been on strike for days in a dispute over pension reforms. Macron, who shocked NATO allies last month by saying the alliance was suffering “brain death,” has made clear his belief that Europe needs a strategic partnership with Russia.—AFP

## Gunman kills self after deadly Czech hospital rampage

**PRAGUE:** A gunman killed himself yesterday after shooting dead six patients at a hospital in the eastern Czech city of Ostrava, in what the premier has called “an immense tragedy”. The attacker gunned down people at close range at the trauma ward of the Faculty Hospital in Ostrava, a steel hub located some 300 km east of Prague. Four men and two women died during the assault, which police said lasted only a few seconds.

Two other people were seriously wounded - one is in a critical condition after being shot in the head and the other is past the worst following surgery, rescue services said. A third person sustained light injuries. The gunman had chased children out of the waiting room before opening fire, according to the DNES broadsheet daily. Police said they had not yet determined what drove the 42-year-old to launch the attack but reports suggested he was mentally unstable.

“I was told the dead victims were people sitting in the waiting room of the trauma ward. Fortunately, there were not as many as usual,” Prime Minister Andrej Babis told local media in the immediate aftermath of the shooting. “The gunman was allegedly shooting from a close range, aiming at the head and neck.” The shooter then fled the scene in a silver Renault Laguna car, sparking a police hunt involving hundreds of officers and two helicopters. “His mother cooperated with the police - he came home, told her he had shot people and that he was going to shoot himself now,” Babis said at the site of the crime after travelling to Ostrava.

**‘A catastrophe’**

The man had turned the gun on himself inside the vehicle as police were about to capture him in a village just north-west of Ostrava, regional police chief Tomas Kuzel said. “We identified the gunman using hospital cameras. We deployed two helicopters, identified his car... and when one helicopter descended over the car, he shot himself in the head,” Kuzel told reporters. Interior Minister Jan Hamacek said the man died despite resuscitation efforts.

Police said the gunman had used the Czech-made nine-millimetre semi-automatic CZ 75 pistol in the attack, which took place shortly after 0600 GMT. “As far as we know, the man is not in our database of legal gun owners,” Kuzel said, adding there was no indication that he had an accomplice. The man had three entries in his criminal record for violence and theft, said Kuzel. Czech media identified the killer as a builder from the nearby Opava district.

His boss, named as Ales Zygula, told the public Czech Radio that the attacker had “decided he was seriously ill and that no one wanted to treat him”. “We noticed a slight change in his behavior,” he added. Prior to his death, police had urged “maximum possible caution” as they tweeted pictures of the man who had thick black hair and was wearing a red and black jacket and trainers.—AFP

## Algerian ex-PMs get heavy jail for corruption

**ALGIERS:** An Algerian court sentenced two former prime ministers to long jail terms yesterday in the first of a series of high-profile corruption trials launched after longtime president Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigned in the face of mass protests in April. The verdicts came just two days before Algeria is due to elect a president to replace Bouteflika in a vote bitterly opposed by the country’s nine-month-old protest movement, which sees it as a regime play to cling to power.

Former prime ministers Ahmed Ouyahia and Abdelmalek Sellal, who were both close to the ousted president, were sentenced to 15 years and 12 years respectively. It was the first time since Algeria’s independence from France in 1962 that former prime ministers were put on trial. The state prosecutor had sought 20-year prison sentences for the two ex-premiers. In all, 19 defendants were tried on charges ranging from money laundering to abuse of office and granting undue privileges in the nascent vehicle assembly industry.

### ‘Nepotism and favoritism’

The Algerian automotive sector got its start in 2014, via partnerships between foreign groups and large Algerian corporations, many of which are owned by businessmen linked to Bouteflika’s entourage. One former industry minister, Abdeslam Bouchouareb, who is on the run abroad, was sentenced in absentia

to 20 years. Two other former industry ministers, Mahdjoub Bedda and Youcef Yousfi, were handed 10-year terms. Businessman Ali Haddad, founder and CEO of private construction firm ETRHB and former head of Algeria’s main employers’ organization, was sentenced to seven years.

And three businessmen who own vehicle assembly plants - Ahmed Mazouz, Hassen Arbaoui and Mohamed Bairi - were sentenced to seven years, six years and three years respectively. The prosecutor denounced a sector dominated by nepotism and favoritism, describing businessmen who “managed front companies while benefiting from undue tax, customs and land benefits”. The automotive scandal cost the treasury more than 128 billion dinars (A975 million), according to the official APS news agency.

Defense lawyers boycotted the trial, alleging the proceedings were “politicized” and impacted by a climate of “settling scores”. The defendants protested their innocence and spent the trial shifting blame among themselves. Before the court retired to deliberate, former prime minister Sellal broke down in tears and begged for leniency, saying, “I don’t have much time left to live.” In closing remarks Sunday, the prosecutor said the trial sent the message that Algeria had changed this year and that “we are here to apply the will of the people”.

### ‘Children of the system’

But the high-profile prosecutions have done little to win over the protesters, who have continued to take to the streets since Bouteflika’s resignation, demanding the total dismantling of the military-dominated system that has ruled Algeria since independence. Many fear the trials are little more than a high-level purge in a struggle between still-powerful



Ahmed Ouyahia



Abdelmalek Sellal



## International

# Heroism, devastation after deadly volcano eruption in New Zealand

## Death toll mounts; relatives of the missing face agonizing wait

**WHAKATANE:** Tales of heroism, devastation and horrifying injuries emerged yesterday after New Zealand's smouldering White Island volcano exploded, killing an estimated 14 people and turning what should have been an intrepid day trip into a nightmare. The number of confirmed fatalities rose to six yesterday night after an injured person died in an Auckland hospital, police said.

Eight more people were presumed dead after Monday's eruption, while dozens of others injured were being treated in hospital burns units across the country. Among the 47 people caught on the island during the sudden blast were tourists from Australia, the United States, Britain, China, Germany and Malaysia, as well as local tour guides. As relatives of the missing faced an agonizing wait to discover the fate of their loved ones, police said conditions remained too dangerous for recovery teams to set foot on the volcano.

Amid questions about how tourists were allowed on the island, police said they were opening an investigation into the circumstances of the deaths and injuries - but they backtracked on suggestions it could lead to criminal charges. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern praised the crews of four rescue helicopters for landing on the island soon after the eruption. "Those pilots made an incredibly brave decision under extraordinarily dangerous circumstances in an attempt to get people out," she told reporters.

Intensive care paramedic Russell Clark was among those dispatched by helicopter to the volcano, which sits semi-submerged 50 kilometers out to sea. He was confronted by an "overwhelming" and "shocking" scene of devastation. "We didn't find any survivors," he told TVNZ, recalling a dust-covered helicopter grounded with its rotor blades damaged. "It was like... I've seen the 'Chernobyl' mini-series and it was just everything was just blanketed in ash. 'I can only imagine what it was like for the people there at the time - they had nowhere to go and an absolutely terrible experience for them.'"

New Zealander Geoff Hopkins' tour boat was leaving the island when a huge plume burst from the volcano - at

what scientists said was supersonic speed - followed by a "menacing" cloud of grey ash. Despite the danger, Hopkins said the boat moved closer to the shore after seeing survivors jump from the island into the sea to escape. "I don't think there was anyone that came off who wasn't badly burnt," he told the New Zealand Herald, describing how victims screamed and went into shock as fellow tourists tried to tend to their blistered skin.

### 'Very hard day'

Top New Zealand health official Pete Watson said 27 of the 34 survivors were being treated for burns to more than 71 percent of their bodies. "It's important not to underestimate the gravity of the injuries suffered," he said. After an initial rush, concerns about further eruptions, poisonous gases and choking ash stalled efforts to recover bodies.

The risks were underscored yesterday when a large-but-harmless 5.0 magnitude earthquake struck to the east of the disaster zone. Ardern said New Zealanders were mourning alongside those from overseas whose nationals were caught up in the disaster. "To those who have lost or are missing family and friends, we share in your unfathomable grief and in your sorrow," the prime minister said, just months after managing another national crisis during Christchurch's deadly twin mosque attacks. Many of the victims are believed to be Australian and Prime Minister Scott Morrison warned his compatriots to brace for the worst. He said there were fears that three of the five dead were Australian, and another eight citizens were unaccounted for. "This is a very, very hard day for a lot of Australian families whose loved ones have been caught up in this terrible, terrible tragedy," he told reporters in Sydney.

The Malaysian government said one of its citizens had died and two British women were confirmed among those injured. With the island off-limits, Adelaide man Brian Dallow was anxiously awaiting news about his son Gavin, daughter-in-law Lisa, and her daughter Zoe Hosking, 15. "All we know at the moment is they were on



**WHAKATANE, New Zealand:** New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (right) hugs a first responder from the St John's ambulance team at the Whakatane Fire Station yesterday. — AFP

the island and they're been confirmed as missing," he told AFP. "As far as we know they didn't get back on the ship." The eruption at White Island - also known as Whakaari - occurred on Monday afternoon, spewing a thick plume of white ash 3.6 kilometers (12,000 feet) into the sky. At the time, visitors included a group of more than 30 from a Royal Caribbean cruise ship, the Ovation

of the Seas, which left Sydney on a 12-day voyage last week. The island in the picturesque Bay of Plenty attracts more than 17,000 visitors every year and is marketed as an experience for the adventurous traveler. But the volcano's threat level had been raised in recent days, leading to questions about whether tour groups should have been allowed to visit. — AFP

## Toxic bushfire haze blankets east Australia

**SYDNEY:** Toxic haze blanketed Sydney yesterday triggering a chorus of smoke alarms to ring across the city and forcing school children inside, as "severe" weather conditions fuelled deadly bush blazes along Australia's east coast. Fire engines raced office-to-office in the city centre with sirens blaring, as inland bushfires poured smoke laden with toxic particles into commercial buildings.

Emergency services responded to an "unprecedented" 500 automatic call-outs inside a few hours according to New South Wales Fire and Rescue's Roger Mentha. A regional fire headquarters miles from the nearest blazes was itself evacuated while throngs of mask-wearing commuters choked their way through thick acrid air and the organizers of a harbor yacht race declared it was unsafe to proceed.

"The smoke from all the fires is just so severe here on the harbor that you just can't see anything, so it's just too dangerous," said spokeswoman Di Pearson of an event that normally foreshadows the famed Sydney-Hobart yacht race. "The vision is just so poor." Some of the city's commuter ferries were also cancelled "due to thick smoke" and school kids were kept inside at breaktime and sent home early as pollution levels soared far above "hazardous" levels.

For weeks the east of the country has



**SYDNEY:** Tourists wearing masks take photos as the Opera House is enveloped in haze caused by nearby bushfires yesterday. — AFP

been smothered in smoke as drought and climate-fuelled bushfires have burned. But the scale of the problem yesterday shocked even hardened residents. Bruce Baker - an 82-year-old who lives in Gosford, north of Sydney - said he was skipping his daily morning walk because of the smoke. "This is the worst it's been, for sure," he told AFP. "It dries your throat. Even if you're not asthmatic, you feel it."

Authorities recommended that the vulnerable cease outdoor activity altogether and that everyone stay inside as much as possible, although one couple braved the toxic air to get married on the waterfront in front of Sydney Harbour Bridge shrouded in smog. A cricket match between New

South Wales and Queensland also went ahead, despite a barely visible ball. Yesterday had been expected to bring strong winds and high temperatures that made for "severe conditions where embers can be blown ahead of the fire into suburbs and threaten properties."

But New South Wales Rural Fire Service said "deteriorating fire conditions have been delayed by a thick blanket of smoke" over the east of the state. As the day developed there were nearly 100 bushfire incidents in the state of New South Wales alone and dozens more in Queensland. Total fire bans were put in place across much of the east of the country and in large parts of western Australia.

Temperatures in some inland areas eased past 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit).

### The 'big dry'

To the northwest of Sydney, several fires already burning for weeks have combined to create a "megafire" that has already destroyed 319,000 hectares of land, mostly inside national parks. Prime Minister Scott Morrison - who for weeks has not commented on the smoke haze - defended his government's handling of the fires and said there were no plans to professionalize the countryside's largely volunteer force. "Our policy is sensible when it comes to addressing and taking action on climate change. Our actions on climate change are getting the results they're intended to get," he said. Morrison's conservative coalition has been criticized by former fire chiefs for failing to heed warnings about climate change. The crisis has been propelled by a prolonged drought that has made vegetation tinder dry. The Bureau of Meteorology has reported that Australia experienced its driest November on record this year.

The "big dry" has left farmers desperate and small towns facing the prospect of running out of water completely. A swathe of the east of the country has seen "rainfall deficiencies" since early 2017 - almost three years. Many dams in New South Wales are empty and almost all are well below capacity. Firefighters south of Brisbane recently reported 1,000 liters of water were stolen from tanks at their station. Amid the shortage, yesterday also saw the toughest water restrictions in a decade being introduced for Sydney - with curbs on everything from hosepipe use to washing cars. — AFP

## Turkey says ready to send troops to back Libyan govt

**ANKARA:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday he was ready to send troops to Libya if requested by the internationally recognized government in Tripoli. "On the issue of sending soldiers... If Libya makes such a request from us, we can send our personnel there, especially after striking the military security agreement," he said in a televised appearance. Turkey signed a military agreement last month with Libya's Government of National Accord, led by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj.

It came after media reports that Russia had sent 200 mercenaries to support Libya's military strongman Khalifa Haftar, who is seeking to unseat the Tripoli-based government. Russia has denied the reports, but Erdogan said: "There is a security company from Russia (in Libya) called Wagner. This company sent its security staff there." The Wagner Group is a shadowy private security firm and thousands of its security contractors are believed to be in foreign conflicts from Syria to Ukraine to the Central African Republic.

At the same time as the military deal, Turkey also signed a controversial maritime jurisdiction agreement with Sarraj, giving sweeping rights for Turkey to explore for oil in the Mediterranean. "With the new line drawn (by the maritime agreement), we will take steps to protect the interests of Libya, Turkey and the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus). — AFP

## Pompeo raises detained American case with Egypt

**WASHINGTON:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday raised with Egypt the case of a New York taxi driver held for six years by the close US ally. The State Department said Pompeo brought up human rights as he discussed the "strong strategic partnership" with Egypt in a meeting with Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. "The secretary also raised concerns over press freedom, human rights and Americans detained in Egypt, including Moustafa Kassem," the State Department said in a statement.

Kassem, who is originally from Egypt, was arrested in 2013 on a visit back to Cairo as authorities cracked down on protests against the now president, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who had seized power in a coup. Kassem denied he was joining protests, saying he had gone out shopping during the visit back from New York to see his wife and two young children. He was nonetheless sentenced last year in a mass trial with hundreds of defendants to 15 years in prison on charges of trying to overthrow the government, according to his lawyers.

President Donald Trump has developed a warm relationship with Sisi, who overthrew an elected Islamist and has taken a hard line against the Muslim Brotherhood. But human rights groups say Sisi has clamped down heavily on freedoms, with the Committee to Protect Journalists saying Egypt is the third biggest jailer of journalists in the world after China and Turkey. Pompeo last month called publicly on Egypt to "respect freedom of the press and release journalists" after a raid on news outlet Mada Masr, whose journalists were ordered to unlock and hand over their phones and laptops.

### More talks on dam

The Egyptian foreign minister was in Washington for the latest talks involving Ethiopia and Sudan to resolve a rift over a massive dam that Ethiopia is building on the Nile. Sisi asked for Trump's mediation out of fear that the Grand Ethiopian



**WASHINGTON:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (right) shakes hands with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry at the Department of State on Monday. — AFP

Renaissance Dam would disrupt the river that provides more than 90 percent of parched Egypt's drinking water. In a joint statement, the three countries agreed to keep working to their goal of a January 15 deal and said that two further meetings would focus on technical details. The three foreign ministers "recognize that there are substantial benefits to all three countries in developing rules and guidelines to address drought conditions," said the statement released by the US Treasury Department, which is leading the mediation. — AFP

## Caring killer whale grandmothers help calves survive

**WASHINGTON:** Doting killer whale grandmothers help their grand calves survive, particularly in times of food scarcity, scientists reported Monday in a paper that sheds new light on the evolutionary role of menopause. Orca females stop reproducing in their thirties or forties but can continue to live for decades more, a phenomenon known only to exist in humans and four other mammal species, all of which are whales.

It has been suggested that the trait evolved because it allowed post reproductive females to help their wider kin - referred to as the "grandmother effect" in people, but the theory had not been tested in whales until now. "This is the first non-human example of the grandmother effect in a menopausal species," senior author Daniel Franks from the University of York said. "It has also been shown in elephants, but they are able to reproduce until the end of their lives. We currently know of only five species that go through menopause: the others are short-finned pilot whales, narwhals and belugas."

Writing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Franks and colleagues examined more than 40 years of census data on two killer whale groups off the coasts of the US state of Washington as well as Canada's British Columbia. The individuals were identified by their unique fin shapes, saddle patches and the presence of nicks and scratches, and sexed by the distinct pigmentation around their genitals as well as adult fin size. Their relations to one another were inferred through observations of social organiza-

tion, and mothers identified by their repeated association with their young calves.

### Babysitting

The team, which also included scientists from the University of Exeter, the US Center for Whale Research and Canada's Pacific Biological Station, focused on 378 individuals known to have a maternal grandmother. They found that those whose grandmother died within the last two years had a mortality rate 4.5 times higher than those with a living grandmother, in the two years following her death. The effect was significantly amplified in years of fish scarcity, which the researchers judged through data on annual catches of Chinook salmon, and diminished in years of plenty.

"We have previously shown that post-reproductive grandmothers lead the group around foraging grounds, and that they are important in doing that in times of need, when the salmon are scarce," Franks explained. "They are also known to directly share food with younger relatives. We also suspect babysitting," he added. While the researchers identified a grandmother effect was at play, these benefits alone do not explain why orca females lose reproductive capacity at midlife: elephant grandmothers help their grandchildren too while continuing to breed until they die.

The team wrote that continued reproductive capacity might come at a cost for whales and for humans, such as intergenerational conflict between mothers and their daughters in competition for males. "In killer whales, when mothers and daughters cobreed, the calves of mothers from (the) older generation have significantly higher mortality," the paper said. Moving forward, the researchers would like to hone in more precisely on how members of the close-knit family-based species help and harm each other, using drones to examine these behaviors. — AFP



## International

# Labour seizes on healthcare scandal ahead of election

## Johnson criticized for response to photo of sick child

**LONDON:** Britain's main opposition Labour party yesterday sought to pile pressure on the ruling Conservatives over state-run healthcare in a bid to exploit a government weakness and divert attention from its message on Brexit. Opinion polls show Johnson's Conservatives enjoying a comfortable lead before an election that Prime Minister Boris Johnson has called the "most important in a generation". Johnson's minority government hopes to secure a parliamentary majority tomorrow to help him pull Britain out of the European Union by the end of next month.

But a ruling party memo published by the pro-Conservative Daily Telegraph newspaper warned that just 40,000 votes in 12 constituencies could see Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn becoming prime minister. The veteran socialist is trying to stage a late surge by focusing on Tory funding of the taxpayer-funded National Health Service (NHS) since the party came to power nine years ago.

Labour claims nearly 4,700 deaths recorded between Oct 2018 and Nov 2019 could be attributed to "patient safety incidents" that resulted from NHS staffing constraints. "The NHS has to be properly funded and at the moment it isn't," said Corbyn, who has warned that the Tories want to sell off the NHS to private firms, threatening its key principle of free treatment for all. "All research shows there's a very large number of hospitals where patients are at risk because of staff shortages, because of a lack of equipment, because of poor maintenance of hospital buildings," he told BBC television. "It is a serious issue."

### Tactical win

Studies suggest that voters place the fate of the NHS as the second-most important issue behind Brexit and Britain's relations with the rest of the world. They

also point to a general mistrust of Corbyn's non-committal position on Brexit - and frustrations over the Conservatives' handling of the NHS. Johnson has almost exclusively focused on his government's determination to "get Brexit done" and honor the result of the 2016 referendum on European Union membership.

The Politico news site said "any day that the conversation is about the pressure on the NHS is a tactical win for Labour", with swing voters seen as key to victory tomorrow. "For the campaign to have been dominated so far this week by a row over (accident and emergency) departments is fairly disastrous for the Conservatives," it added.

### 'Heartbreaking image'

Britain's partisan media has assumed a dominant role in the final stretch of a manic five-week campaign that has seen Corbyn and Johnson spend most of their time on the road. The Labour-supporting Daily Mirror newspaper devoted its first seven pages yesterday to the health of the NHS, a day after publishing a front-page photo of a small boy with suspected pneumonia who was forced to sleep on a hospital floor. It followed up with another of a sick baby resting in an armchair because of a lack of beds. "Another day, another heartbreaking image of a sick child that shames the (Conservatives) of starving the NHS of cash," the newspaper wrote.

Johnson drew criticism on Monday when he was confronted on camera and asked to comment on the photograph of the boy on a journalist's phone. He refused and instead grabbed the reporter's phone and put it in his pocket. He eventually looked and said it was a "terrible, terrible photo" before giving back the phone. "On the whole I think patients in the NHS have a much, much better experience than this poor kid has had," he added, before saying: "I am



**MORECAMBE, United Kingdom:** Opposition Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn reacts as he makes a Christmas gift in a reindeer-themed bag during a campaign event at Sandylands Community Primary School yesterday. —AFP

sorry to have taken your phone."

Opposition parties were quick to share the footage on social media, saying it showed Johnson had no empathy for patients. Health minister Matt Hancock later made an unscheduled visit to the hospital in the central English city of Leeds, saying he had been

"horrified" by the picture. Asked if he had come because the Conservatives were panicked by the possible impact of the photo on the campaign, Hancock said: "No, what people want to see is the substance of increased investment...making sure we are dealing with the problems." —Agencies

## Christmas repeats: UK PM copies 'Love Actually' spoof

**LONDON:** Boris Johnson yesterday faced claims of plagiarism after copying a spoof version of a scene from the hit Christmas film "Love Actually" as part of his election campaign. Britain's prime minister is seen in a social media clip taking the part of actor Andrew Lincoln, who turns up to profess his undying love for Keira Knightley by showing her flashcards. One of the cards Johnson shows a householder in his "Vote Conservative Actually" clip says: "With any luck, by next year we'll have Brexit done (if Parliament doesn't block it again)."

"Your vote has never been more important, the other guy could win, so you have a choice to make between a working majority or another gridlocked hung parliament." The clip has been seen more than 1.5 million times since it was posted on Johnson's Twitter account on Monday, two days before Britain votes in its third election in four years.

But a candidate with the main opposition Labour party, Rosena Allin-Khan, had already posted her version of the scene on Nov 22, as part of her re-election campaign. "With any luck next year I'll be your MP," the candidate for a London constituency tells a man on the doorstep, as Christmas carols play on portable speakers. "And our country won't be run by these puppets," she adds, showing another card with photographs of Johnson, members of his government and US President Donald Trump.

Allin-Khan called Johnson's version a "copycat" of her original clip. A third online parody of the scene has Johnson as the householder answering the door to Trump, who tells him: "With any luck by next year you'll be selling off the NHS." —AFP

## Co-inventor of barcode Laurer dies aged 94

**MIAMI:** US engineer George J Laurer, who co-invented the barcode and helped to transform the retail world in the 1970s, has died at age 94. The former IBM employee's funeral was held Monday in his hometown of Wendell, North Carolina, according to a family obituary. He died at home last week. Laurer is recognized as the co-inventor of the Universal Product Code (UPC), or barcode, which can be found on millions of products, services and other items for identification.

The marking - made up of black bars of varying thickness and a 12-digit number - can be scanned, quickly identifying the product and its price. In 1969, Laurer rose to become senior IBM engineer and scientist in Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina, according to a tribute posted on the company's website.

"Only a few years later, in 1973, Laurer went on to spearhead the development of the now-ubiquitous Universal Product Code (UPC) symbol that revolutionized virtually every industry in the world," it said. Fellow IBM employee Norman Woodland, who died in 2012, is considered the pioneer of the barcode idea, which he initially based on Morse code. Woodland patented the concept in 1952 but was unable to develop it - years before low-cost laser and computing technology. —AFP

## Irish govt stumbles as election looms

**DUBLIN:** As political chaos reigned across the sea in Britain, Ireland's two main parties have been working together to limit the damage of Brexit - but not for much longer. The alliance is cracking and both are now preparing for an election early next year, with Prime Minister Leo Varadkar's ruling Fine Gael party in a ramshackle state. Beset by scandal, the centre-right party may even be forced from power before its pact with the main opposition Fianna Fail expires. But Varadkar could win a boost if Britain, which holds its own election tomorrow, can break the political deadlock over leaving the European Union. As Britain's closest neighbor, EU member Ireland stands most to lose from a disorderly divorce.

### A Brexit bonus?

Fianna Fail initially agreed to prop up Varadkar's Fine Gael-led minority government in 2016, and the two sides pledged to extend the alliance through 2019 as Brexit headwinds grew worse. Britain's EU exit risks huge economic

disruption across the Irish Sea, particularly when it appeared earlier this year that it might leave the bloc with no new arrangements in place. But if Prime Minister Boris Johnson is re-elected this week with a parliamentary majority, he promises to get Britain out of the bloc on January 31 with a deal.

The end to this period of prolonged uncertainty could give Varadkar a popularity boost, as the leader who avoided a no-deal divorce. An October Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI found Varadkar had a 51 percent approval rating after key Brexit talks with Johnson, up 15 points in five months.

### Embarrassments

After nine years in power, Fine Gael highlights its stewardship of the economy following a ruinous recession, as well as a new era of momentous social change. As a mixed-race, gay and young prime minister, Varadkar himself is the embodiment of a leader keyed into the progressive attitude of a liberalising Ireland. He took the Roman Catholic country known for deep religious conservatism into the landmark 2018 referendum that ended the ban on abortion.

But the party has been hit by a series of scandals and its poll ratings are suffering. Mid-November results from a Business Post/Red C poll indicated sup-

special treatment," he said, taking aim at long-standing policies as well as new ones put in place by Trump.

The money saved could be invested in clean energy "to create a lot of jobs," he added. "If we take these steps, I'm really optimistic we can succeed." Bloomberg arrived at the 196-nation talks, set to close Friday, along with A-list actor Harrison Ford and outgoing Bank of England Governor Mark Carney, newly appointed as the UN's Special Envoy for Climate Change and Finance. In the wake of the 2015 Paris Agreement, Carney and Bloomberg launched an initiative encouraging businesses to evaluate and communicate their exposure to climate risk.

"Businesses understand what's at stake and they are not waiting for better leadership in Washington," Bloomberg said. Sebastian Treyer, director of environmental watchdog IDDRI, told AFP that Bloomberg's appearance would "boost morale" at the talks. "The 'we are still in' message is very important and to have a personality such as his is very important, particularly since he has a lot of influence in the New York finance community."

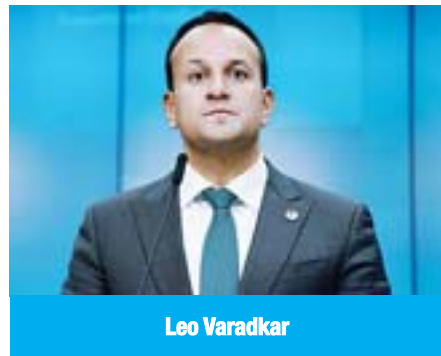
### 'Desperate for leadership'

Last week, Nancy Pelosi headed a 15-strong US Congressional delegation that

port for Fine Gael at 30 percent, with a strong lead over Fianna Fail on 24 percent. But Fine Gael was down two points as Fianna Fail remains constant. Last month, Fine Gael lawmaker Maria Bailey was deselected from the party after a row over her decision to sue a hotel for a personal injuries claim.

Bailey fell from an indoor swing whilst holding a bottle of beer in 2015 and claimed she suffered a back injury. But she ran a 10-km race in under an hour three weeks later. With Fine Gael pushing to reform Ireland's "compensation culture", her actions have been an acute embarrassment. Last week MP Dara Murphy also resigned from the party, after reports he drew a salary and expenses whilst largely absent, working in Brussels with the European People's Party.

A Fine Gael candidate in a recent by-election, Verona Murphy, also apologised after telling the Irish Times that members of the Islamic State terror group formed "a big part of the migrant population" in Ireland. Fine Gael failed to win any of the four seats up for grabs in the by-elections but two went to Fianna Fail. "The precious commodity that is political momentum lies not with the government party but with the opposition," wrote state broadcaster RTE's political correspondent Micheal Lehan.



**Leo Varadkar**

### 'End of the line'

Fine Gael is also being grilled for growing concerns about healthcare and housing. Key infrastructure projects including a national broadband plan and a children's hospital are running at inflated costs. Some 215,000 children are on waiting lists for healthcare services, with more than one in four waiting for longer than a year, RTE reports. Meanwhile, the number of homeless families has increased by 380 percent since Oct 2014, according to charity Focus Ireland.

Rents have risen for 14 consecutive quarters, according to property website Daft. Last week a confidence motion was brought against housing minister Eoghan Murphy. With the support of independent MPs, he won by just three votes. "It is abundantly clear the administration has reached the end of the line," wrote Irish Times political editor Pat Leahy. —AFP

## Bloomberg: Solving climate crisis requires leadership

**MADRID:** The world doesn't need a miracle to tame global warming, just leadership, US presidential hopeful Michael Bloomberg told UN climate talks yesterday in Madrid, calling for an end to government handouts to oil, gas and coal companies. The self-made billionaire and former mayor of New York took a detour from his bid to capture the Democratic Party nomination and run against Donald Trump, who has aggressively promoted fossil fuels and dismissed climate change as a hoax.

"Beating climate change won't require a miracle, it won't require limitless resources, it will require leadership and common sense," Bloomberg told a roundtable on climate finance organized by the Spanish government. "The next president of the United States should end all subsidies to fossil fuel companies and fossil fuel extraction, and that includes tax breaks and other

## Amazon alleges Trump abused power in huge Pentagon contract

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Amazon is alleging that US President Donald Trump abused the power of his office to deny the company a massive military cloud computing contract, court documents released Monday showed. The technology giant is challenging the awarding of a \$10 billion Pentagon cloud computing contract to

Microsoft, alleging "unmistakable bias" in the process.

The 10-year contract for the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure program, better known as JEDI, ultimately will see all military branches sharing information in a system boosted by artificial intelligence. A heavily redacted filing detailed alleged errors that ended with Microsoft being chosen over its Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud computing division, part of the technology group led by Amazon chief Jeff Bezos, a frequent target of the US president.

"They were the result of improper pressure from President Donald J. Trump, who launched repeated public and behind-the-scenes attacks to steer the JEDI contract away from AWS to harm his perceived political enemy - Jeffrey P Bezos," the fil-



**MADRID:** Democratic presidential hopeful Michael Bloomberg speaks during an event on sustainable finance within the UN Climate Change Conference COP25 yesterday. —AFP

brought the same message to the struggling UN talks, where major economies have balked at boosting pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Elan Strait, director of US climate Campaigns WWF said. "The world is desperate to hear real American leadership on climate change."

ing maintained. "DoD's substantial and pervasive errors are hard to understand and impossible to assess separate and apart from the president's repeatedly expressed determination to, in the words of the president himself, 'screw Amazon.'"

The bid protest filed in US Court of Federal Claims urges that the rival JEDI bids be re-evaluated and a new decision reached. "The question is whether the president of the United States should be allowed to use the budget of DoD to pursue his own personal and political ends," Amazon said. Amazon was considered the lead contender to provide technology for JEDI, with AWS dominating the cloud computing arena and the company already providing classified servers for other government outfits including the CIA. —AFP



## International

# Rohingya pray for justice at Myanmar genocide hearings

## Bangladesh starts fencing Rohingya camps

**THE HAGUE:** Members of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority prayed for justice on the eve of hearings at the UN's International Court of Justice during which leader Aung San Suu Kyi will defend the country against genocide charges. Gambia launched proceedings against the Buddhist-majority Myanmar in November, accusing it of violating its obligations under the 1948 Genocide Convention. It is only the third genocide case filed at the court since World War Two.

During three days of court proceedings Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace laureate, is expected to repeat denials of genocide and argue that military operations in question were a legitimate counterterrorism response to attacks by Rohingya militants. This week's proceedings before a panel of 17 judges will not deal with the core allegation of genocide, but Gambia has requested a court order for Myanmar to halt any activity that may aggravate the dispute.

Gambia will argue that Myanmar's forces carried out widespread and systematic atrocities under a campaign known as "operation clearance", from August 2017 that constituted genocide. Its court petition accused Myanmar of genocidal acts "intended to destroy the Rohingya as a group, in whole or in part, by the use of mass murder, rape and other forms of sexual violence, as well as the systematic destruction by fire of their villages, often with inhabitants locked inside burning houses."

More than 730,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar in 2017 after the military-led crackdown and were forced into squalid camps across the border in Bangladesh. Hasina Begum, 22, said she was among many women raped by Myanmar soldiers who also burned down her village. "They have done these things to me, to my relatives and my friends. I can tell them face to face, looking them in the eyes, because I am not lying," she told Reuters.

Leaving the refugee camp in Bangladesh for the first time since she fled, Hasina arrived in The Hague on Monday with two other victims and an interpreter. "I feel great," Hasina said from her hotel room on the eve of hearings. "Myanmar military raped many of our women. We want justice with the help of the international community."

Back at the camp, some Rohingya said they were praying to see justice delivered, while others posted on Twitter that they intended to fast to mark the event. The United Nations has said the campaign was executed with "genocidal intent". While the

United States stopped short of calling it genocide, it said the acts amounted to "ethnic cleansing" and imposed sanctions against military leaders.

Gambia, a tiny, mainly Muslim West African country, will argue that by either enabling or failing to prevent genocide Myanmar failed to meet its requirements under the convention. The tribunal, also known as the World Court, has no enforcement powers, but its rulings are final and have significant legal weight.

Meanwhile, the Bangladeshi military has started erecting fences around camps housing hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees despite complaints from community leaders and rights groups. An AFP correspondent yesterday saw troops in military fatigues erecting pillars for barbed-wire fences around one large camp at Balukhali in the southeastern border district Cox's Bazar. Bangladesh's refugee commissioner Mahbbub Alam Talukder confirmed to AFP that construction had begun but declined to comment further.

Army chief General Aziz Ahmed said late last month that army engineers had begun erecting the pillars and that the military has "placed orders" for barbed wire. The camps house nearly a million members of the mostly Muslim Rohingya minority, around 750,000 of whom fled a military offensive in neighboring Myanmar in Aug 2017.

Frustration has been growing in Bangladesh about hosting the refugees, particularly since the latest attempt to repatriate them to Myanmar failed in August. The refugees are already forbidden to leave the camps although their sprawling nature means authorities have been unable to police all their movements. New checkpoints on the main roads leading to the camps stop Rohingya and send them back to the settlements when they try to travel to other parts of Bangladesh.

It has imposed a blackout on high-speed Internet in the Rohingya settlements, confiscated SIM cards and mobile phones used by the refugees, and filed cases against hundreds for illegally obtaining citizenship cards. The move to construct barbed-wire fences has been condemned by Rohingya leaders who said they would create a "panic" among the Rohingya. "It will restrict our movement. We have to walk a long distance to get food rations from the authorities," said Mohammad Hashim as he watched troops digging holes for pillars. "The children won't be able to play anymore."



UKHIA, Bangladesh: A Rohingya balloon seller walks along a street in Balukhali refugee camp yesterday. —AFP

### 'Big prison'

Earlier rights groups also condemned the move, saying the fencing could transform the camps into "a big prison". "The Bangladesh government shouldn't turn Rohingya refugee camps into open air prisons. Barbed wire and guard towers should be reserved for criminals, not people who fled Myanmar to escape from mass atrocities," Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said in a comment to AFP.

"The Bangladesh government now risks squandering the global goodwill it had earned when it allowed the Rohingya to cross into safety," he added.

UN experts have expressed serious concerns about these restrictions. Local resident Abdul Gaffar, who lives near the Balukhali camp, also complained. "The pillars erected for fencing were constructed on the locals' paddy field. Many locals living here will also be trapped inside fences," he said. —Agencies

## US, North Korea on collision course as deadline looms

**WASHINGTON:** Tensions are quickly rising between the United States and North Korea, which has ramped up pressure as it demands concessions by President Donald Trump's administration by the end of the year. The United States called a UN Security Council meeting for today on North Korea's series of rocket launches, the latest return to antagonism as diplomacy languishes. Monday's announcement came two days after North Korea claimed to have carried out a "very important" but otherwise unspecified test, in a hint that it may have further actions in store.

Trump has met three times with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to discuss Pyongyang's nuclear program, describing him a friend and hailing the comparative calm achieved since 2017 when fears were growing of all-out war. But North Korea is seeking a comprehensive deal that includes sanctions relief, especially with Trump heading next year into a potentially difficult re-election fight.

### Insults back

Trump said Saturday that Kim has "too much to lose, everything actually, if he acts in a hostile way" and said

he would be "surprised if North Korea acted hostilely". In a rare personal attack on Trump since the start of diplomacy, Kim Yong Chol, a longtime aide to the top leader, called the US president a "heedless and erratic old man" and condemned his "odd words and expression". If Trump is not "astonished" by North Korea's response, "we will be irritated," Kim said in a statement quoted by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The United States, which holds this month's presidency of the Security Council, called Wednesday's meeting to give a "comprehensive update" on the Korean peninsula and postponed a session on the authoritarian state's human rights record, a State Department spokesperson said. The meeting will look at "recent missile launches and the possibility of an escalatory DPRK provocation," the spokesperson said, referring to the North by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Security Council also met last week behind closed doors at the best of European nations to condemn 13 missile tests by North Korea.

### North Korea 'in a box'

Frank Aum, a senior expert on North Korea at the US Institute of Peace, said Pyongyang is raising the temperature as it believes the United States is in no rush to make a deal. "I think they have decided, we don't want to play the US game, where the US gets all the benefits of reduced military tensions and North Korea gets no benefits," said Aum, who formerly advised the US defense secretary



SEOUL: A signpost showing the directions and distances from Seoul to Washington and Pyongyang is displayed in a park yesterday. —AFP

about the authoritarian state.

But the North Koreans have "put themselves in a box" and could alienate China, their main diplomatic ally and aid provider, if they take major action such as a new nuclear test or a long-range ballistic missile test, Aum said. "They have to respond to the end-of-year deadline passing, otherwise it looks pretty stupid, but at the same time they can't respond too robustly, otherwise they will get a hard response back from the US and also China," Aum said. He said the United States and North Korea could work out an interim deal which does not satisfy either side but serves as a base and avoids a flare-up. —AFP



MANILA: U2 frontman singer Bono speaks to the media during a signing ceremony yesterday. —AFP

Duterte is very popular. He doesn't need me on his side." U2 are in Asia for their Joshua Tree Tour 2019 that will wrap up in the Indian city of Mumbai on Sunday. Earlier stops included Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, as well as Singapore, Tokyo and Seoul.

Bono was not the first outspoken musician to speak out against Duterte's drug war. In 2016, American singer James Taylor cancelled his planned Manila concert to protest extrajudicial killings in the country. Duterte's drug war has killed over 5,500 alleged dealers and users who fought back during arrests, but watchdogs say the actual toll is at least four times higher. International Criminal Court prosecutors have launched a preliminary probe of the killing, and the UN's top rights body voted in favor an in-depth review. —AFP

strangers," said Jennifer Thomson, who worked on the study, published in the journal Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters.

"Even if they hadn't experienced that directly, the psychological stress of that was quite real," added Thomson, a lecturer in comparative politics at Britain's University of Bath. The centuries-old Hindu practice known as chhaupadi was outlawed in 2005, but penalties including a fine and jail time were only introduced last year after the deaths of a teenager and a mother and her sons led to a parliamentary investigation. —AFP

## Duterte to lift martial law in S Philippines

**MANILA:** President Rodrigo Duterte will lift martial law in the southern Philippines by year's end, his spokesman said yesterday, more than two years after it was imposed in an attempt to stop the Islamic State group gaining a foothold there. Duterte put the Mindanao region under military rule in May 2017, hours after gunmen flying the black IS flag seized the mainly Muslim city of Marawi, sparking a five-month battle that left 1,200 people dead.

"The (presidential) palace is confident on the capability of our security forces in maintaining the peace and security of Mindanao without extending martial law" beyond Dec 31, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a statement. Duterte's security advisers had apprised him of the "weakening of the terrorist and extremist rebellion, a result of the capture or neutralisation of their leaders, as well as the decrease in the crime index," Panelo added.

Martial law had allowed the military to establish control with measures like curfews, checkpoints and gun controls in a nation where many civilians own firearms, either legally or illegally. Suspects could also be detained for longer periods without criminal charges being filed in court. However martial law is a contentious issue in a country ruled for 20 years by the late deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who Duterte has hailed as the greatest leader the Asian nation ever had. —AFP

## 8 in 10 girls in Nepal forced to sleep outside during periods

**KATHMANDU:** Teenage girls are still being forced to sleep outside during their periods in parts of Nepal despite a string of deaths and a law banning the ancient

custom, researchers said yesterday. A new study published days after the latest victim suffocated to death found nearly eight out of 10 girls in Karnali, a province in western Nepal where the practice is prevalent, were banished from their homes while menstruating.

Because menstruating girls and women are viewed as impure, many have to sleep in huts, where they are at risk of being raped, bitten by snakes or dying from carbon dioxide poisoning from fires lit to keep warm. "The women and girls we spoke to were terrified of snakes and animals coming in at night, or of being attacked by

## Mahathir pledges to step down for Anwar, but not before November

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad, the world's oldest prime minister, promised yesterday to hand over power to anointed successor Anwar Ibrahim in spite of new sexual assault allegations against him. Mahathir, 94, told Reuters in an interview that he would not hand over before a summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries that Malaysia is to host in November but could be ready after that.

"I made a promise to hand over and I will, accepting that I thought that a change immediately before the APEC summit would be disruptive," Mahathir said. "As far I'm concerned, I'm stepping down and I'm handing the baton to him. If people don't want him, that is their business, but I will do my part of the promise... irrespective of whatever allegation. I made my promise, I keep my promise." Asked if a handover could come in Dec 2020, Mahathir said: "We'll look at that when the time comes."

The turbulent relationship between the two men - allies turned fierce rivals who later reunited to win power - has shaped politics in the Southeast Asian country for decades. Mahathir was unexpectedly elected in 2018 as the head of a coalition government whose largest party is led by Anwar, 72, who has been jailed twice on separate counts of sodomy and for corruption - charges he says were political. Last week, Anwar denied fresh allegations by a former aide that he had tried to force him to have sex - describing the accusations as "politics at its worst".

It is Mahathir's second stint as Malaysia's premier, a post he previously held for 22 years from 1981 to 2003. Anwar was his deputy from 1993 to 1998, when the two fell out. Anwar was jailed the following year. Although Mahathir promised to hand over to Anwar during the 2018 election campaign, doubts grew over his intentions when he later said he needed more time to steer the heavily-indebted country out of its troubles first. Mahathir said he hoped for an out-of-court settlement with Goldman Sachs soon over the IMDB scandal that sent Malaysia's debt soaring. He also raised the possibility of selling stakes in state energy firm Petronas to oil and gas-rich provinces.

### Not tired

Firing back responses to questions from his perch on a sofa in his palatial office at Putrajaya on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Mahathir said he did not feel tired despite his age because he was satisfied by his work. "I try to do some minor exercise, but mainly I keep my weight stable," he said. "I've been 62 kilos for the past 30 or 40 years, it doesn't change. I don't eat very much, and I don't eat... when food tastes nice. I don't overeat."

As well as planning to be the first leader in the world to host the APEC summit twice, Mahathir has been pushing to cement his legacy as a leader in the Muslim world. A summit in Kuala Lumpur next week would bring leaders from Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and other Muslim countries, officials said. Mahathir said the meeting would look into situations where Muslims were being oppressed.

That would include allegations of rights abuses against Uighur Muslims in China's Xinjiang region, Mahathir said, while adding prospects for action by the Muslim world were limited. "Taking a stand is one thing, doing something that can improve this situation is another thing. You take a stand which may well result in more pressures being applied and it is not going to do us any good," he said. "The Muslim world cannot challenge anybody. We are very weak. Anybody can manipulate us, they can even make us fight each other. That's how we are." —Reuters



## Analysis

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## Refugee girls in Chad embrace school as path to university opens up

Mouna Issahk is one of seven mothers at her secondary school in Chad. At age 20, she carries her baby girl across the hot sand of their refugee camp and shushes her in crowded classrooms. Issahk grew up in the remote camp near the town of Iriba, where about 25,000 Sudanese people have lived in limbo since fleeing the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region in 2004. Her camp, Touloum, is one of 12 in eastern Chad. It is a harsh, desert landscape where most girls marry as teenagers and spend a lifetime growing food and fetching water.

But a rare scheme that helps refugees attend Chadian universities is getting more people in school - especially girls and young women who have started to envisage a different future. "Our husbands want us to stay home, but if you want to take good care of your children you have to be educated," said Issahk, who dreams of becoming a doctor, bouncing her six-month-old on her knee in a sparse concrete school building.

The camp's school system was transformed five years ago, when Chad turned its refugee schools - mostly makeshift classes held in tents - into accredited public institutions, meaning they benefit from state resources. Chad hosts about 440,000 refugees and is the first country in West and Central Africa to have fully integrated them into its national education system - a step the United Nations' refugee agency (UNHCR) hopes other states will take. Refugee education is among the issues on the agenda for this month's inaugural Global Refugee Forum, a two-day UN conference to showcase best practices. "The goal now is to include refugees in national education systems right from the start," said Charlotte Berquin, an education officer for the UNHCR in West and Central Africa. Refugee camps were initially intended to be temporary settlements, a place of safety for people fleeing war with the assumption that they would eventually return home, she said. But as conflicts in Africa become more protracted their role has changed. Attending separate schools no longer makes sense for refugees displaced for 15 years, as the Sudanese are in Chad, and can hurt their chances of success in the host country, Berquin told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

### More teachers

Only one in four Chadian boys and half as many girls attend secondary school, according to UN data. Poverty, lack of access and child marriage contribute to the low rates. Part of the problem in Iriba and the surrounding region is a lack of teachers, said government school inspector Ali Tom. Few Chadians coming out of teacher training want to be sent to the remote, difficult district, he said. But the refugee camps have a different problem: A surplus of eager, educated youth who want jobs.

With the new education strategy, refugees can attend Chadian teacher training schools, become certified by the state and return to teach in the camps where they earn a small salary. "When we arrived in 2004, I was one of only seven teachers who started teaching in the camp," said Fathya Ali Souleymane, who was a teacher in Sudan before she fled to Chad and is now director of the primary school in Touloum camp.

"Now we have many teachers," she said, proudly adding that some include students she taught in the camp over a decade ago. Chad trained 635 refugee teachers between 2014 and 2018, according to UNHCR, mostly refugees from Sudan and Central African Republic who arrived in Chad with no qualifications. The program has prioritized women, since female teachers tend to boost the number of girls in school, said Berquin.

In the three refugee camps in Iriba, women make up about 42 percent of primary and secondary school teachers and more girls go to school than boys at all levels. Outside the camps, there are only three female teachers in all 93 schools of the Wadi Fira department, and boys outnumber girls, said state inspector Tom. "To improve education, we must first involve women," said Tom, attributing the differences between local schools and refugee schools to the sensitization done by aid agencies in the camps. Since the schools in the refugee camps are now public, some Chadian students attend.

In most West African countries refugees are allowed to attend public schools, but in practice often miss out because they are not included in national plans which determine where schools, teachers and materials are needed, said the UNHCR. Five years on, the program in Chad has seen success, but is not without challenges. Making the refugee schools public meant switching them from a Sudanese to a Chadian curriculum, which some parents were not happy with, said school director Souleymane. The refugees cannot afford university without a scholarship and there are not enough for all the qualified students, said Dominique Niava, the UNHCR's education specialist in Iriba. — AFP

**All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.**



An Iraqi woman prepares traditional bread on the sidelines of ongoing anti-government protests at Tahrir Square in the capital Baghdad yesterday. — AFP photos

## Medic, driver, witness, baker: Faces of uprising

Tears roll out from behind Ayat's oversized glasses but her hands, facing the sky, are steady. Her friends are gone, killed protesting Iraq's government, but their "revolution" continues. "Peace be upon you and on your two rivers, Iraq," sings Kazem Saher as young demonstrators mourn their peers in the epicenter of the anti-regime movement in Baghdad's Tahrir Square.

They stand somber and motionless under the imposing "Liberty Monument", as if mirroring the bronze figures on the long marble slab above them retelling Iraq's tumultuous history. Ayat, a medic, is but one of the characters in this new chapter, along with social media activist Ali, the beloved baker Khayriya and Hussein, who transports wounded demonstrators on his three-wheeled rickshaw.

### The medic

By candlelight on a chilly Baghdad evening, Ayat honors the hundreds who have died in protest-related violence since demonstrations erupted on Oct 1. But by morning, she is hard at work, trying to make sure she won't have to mourn anyone else. The 23-year-old medical student twists her long black hair into a bun and heads to the streets near Tahrir where security forces fire tear gas, smoke grenades and sometimes live rounds at teenage protesters.

There, she treats lanky young demonstrators choking on tear gas and others bleeding from bullet wounds. She keeps a stethoscope around her neck, a medical mask on her face and wears a motorcycle helmet. "At any moment, they could fire on us," says Ayat, donning a white lab coat stitched with her blood type, O-. "At any moment, we could die."

### The driver

When a protester is too badly hurt for Ayat to treat, Hussein and his tuk-tuk motor rickshaw come to the rescue. The 18-year-old has been driving the cherry red three-wheeler as a taxi for two years, earning a small income for his family living in a poor quarter of Baghdad. But since protests began two months ago, the vehicles once looked down on as a working class necessity have become a symbol of the uprising - and their drivers, heroes.

With one unceasing honk of his horn, Hussein zips around sharp turns and clusters of protesters to come to a screeching halt at the frontlines. Protesters and medics

flock to him, lay coughing, bleeding or unconscious protester on the back bench before Hussein speeds off to a field clinic or hospital. "The tuk-tuk driver takes wounded people to the hospital all on his own. He brings food. He brings everything to those on the frontline," says Hussein proudly. It comes with risks: Riot police have damaged his tuk-tuk, and Hussein was recently stopped and beaten. He makes \$10-\$15 per day for the life-saving work but the real reward, he says, is feeling that he is part of "a big family".

### The witness

Ali, too, has his mission: Documenting the clashes on his smartphone and sending the reports to media outlets, rights groups and Iraqis abroad. He wears a helmet, a cargo vest and a black-and-white checkered keffiyeh as a scarf to protect his mouth and nose from tear gas, but also to hide his face. Young activists like Ali have been repeatedly threatened and fear having their photographs taken by suspicious men near Tahrir.

"Despite the threats, the repression, the intimidation and the campaign of terror, we're staying," says the lanky 21-year-old with green eyes and wispy facial hair. He wants to document everything: "every bullet fired by the state or militias, every tear gas canister, every flash bang." Authorities "say they're not firing live rounds," Ali says, "but we see them and film them every day."

### The baker

To revolt, one must eat. That's something Khayriya, who travelled with her children from her hometown in southern Iraq, understands perfectly. Amid the chaos of Tahrir square, Khayriya kneads dough, lovingly lays out balls of it on a baking sheet and slides it into a portable oven she brought with her. The veiled woman in her fifties hands out loaves to hungry protesters or lays down slices of bread on plastic plates, topping them with a traditional Iraqi spiced vegetable stew.

From morning until night, she bakes, serves and shares a bite with protesters who are re-energised her aromatic pastries. Her monthly pension of \$150 can barely feed her family in oil-rich Iraq, where one in five people live below the poverty line. "We should have everything we need," she says. "Iraq is not a small country. And we're Iraqis, are we not? We have the right to our share."



Tuk-tuks are seen as Iraqis gather in Tahrir Square yesterday.

### Their dreams

The movement has already outlasted the expectations of the most ardent protesters - but it has yet to fulfil their aspirations. "I dream of nice schools and hospitals, of a relaxing life," says Hussein, after a long day ferrying wounded in Tahrir. "A salary, something to start a family with." He sits on the edge of Baghdad's river Tigris, watching the red-hot sunset in a T-shirt with the English logo "Never look back". "So my future son could go to a peaceful school, so that we live in security, so we feel good and don't have war, or sectarian violence or any of that," he says. With the sun dipping just below the opposite bank, Hussein sighs. "I dream of having a country and of living free." — AFP

## Algeria's unwanted presidential election

Algerians are being asked to vote tomorrow in a presidential election bitterly opposed by the country's nine-month-old protest movement, which sees it as a regime ploy to cling to power. While no opinion polls have been published, observers expect high levels of abstention, in keeping with previous elections in a political system seen by voters as rigid and unaccountable. Historian and Maghreb specialist Karima Direche predicts that low turnout will make the election "a total fiasco".

Overseas polling booths for expat Algerians opened Saturday, but have been almost empty - the few who do cast their ballots often facing a barrage of insults from protesters. Direche, of France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), said that despite being traditionally conservative and close to the regime, today the diaspora "is mobilized against the election".

Ageing president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's February announcement that he would seek a fifth term in office sparked an unprecedented mass protest movement that by April forced him to resign. Protesters continued with their weekly rallies, demanding the total dismantling of the military-dominated system that has ruled Algeria since independence in 1962. The military high command, which has long wielded power from behind the scenes, was forced to take a frontline role in government - but rejected the demands of protesters and civil society for sweeping reforms.

It has paid little attention to demands to replace the constitution that served to legitimize Bouteflika's grip on power. Instead, the army has pushed for an election to pick a replacement for Bouteflika, saying it is the only route to resolving the political crisis. A previous poll set for July 4 was abandoned for lack of viable candidates and interim president Abdelkader Bensalah's term technically ended five months ago. A caretaker government, appointed by Bouteflika two days before he quit, remains in post, led by his longtime ally Nouredine Bedoui.

### 'War of attrition'

On the street, Algerians staged vast rallies for their



Algerian protesters shout slogans during an anti-government demonstration in the capital Algiers yesterday. — AFP

last weekly Friday protest ahead of the vote, once again calling on army chief Ahmed Gaid Salah to scrap the poll. They also sought to disprove Gaid Salah's assertions that there was "popular momentum" in support of the election. The five candidates in the poll have run low-key campaigns. All are considered "children of the system", having either supported Bouteflika or participated in his government - two as ministers and two as prime ministers.

Protesters accuse them of protecting the regime by standing for election. They have struggled to attract audiences at their campaign events, held under heavy police protection, as well as being loudly heckled and having their posters graffitied. After two years of rigged elections, few in Algeria are convinced by assurances

from an administration still controlled by Bouteflika loyalists that the poll will be fair and transparent. That is despite a minor change to the electoral law transferring oversight from the interior ministry to an "independent" electoral authority.

Whoever becomes Algeria's next president is "already discredited", according to Direche. "He will not be recognised by the public and will have a real problem of electoral legitimacy," she said, adding that the protest movement would likely continue its "war of attrition" long after the poll. The incoming head of state will be forced to deal with increasingly organized opposition forces that have emerged from the movement, she said. "The army wants to ensure continuity of power, as it existed under Bouteflika, but it is now impossible." — AFP



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**12** Unimoni Exchange launches online money transfer service**13** Sterling shrugs off weak GDP data, cements gains**14** Hashes, hedges: Power-hungry crypto miners court investors**RIYADH:** A general view of the Saudi budget forum in Riyadh yesterday. Saudi Arabia passed its 2020 budget, projecting a widening deficit in the face of tumbling oil prices and production cuts that have hit the top crude producer's revenues. — AFP

# Saudi projects higher budget deficit

## Kingdom cuts spending, passes 2020 budget

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia passed its 2020 budget on Monday, projecting a widening deficit in the face of tumbling oil prices and production cuts that have hit the top crude producer's revenues. The kingdom projected a shortfall of \$50 billion for the year, up \$15 billion its 2019 budget, according to an official statement read out on state TV. It predicted next year's deficit would grow to 6.4 percent of GDP, up from 4.7 percent in 2019. The statement released after a cabinet meeting chaired by King Salman said Riyadh would also cut spending for next year in a rare belt-tightening measure.

Spending was set at \$272 billion, down 7.8 percent on 2019 estimates, while revenues were estimated at \$222 billion, also lower by 14.6 percent. Income from oil was projected at \$136.8 billion, down from \$160.5 billion in 2019, the finance ministry said. Oil prices have remained sluggish at around \$64 a barrel, despite additional production cuts agreed by producers' cartel OPEC and its allies last week. Oil income accounts for about two-thirds of Saudi public revenues.

King Salman said his government is determined to continue to diversifying its sources of income and shift the kingdom away from reliance on oil. The finance ministry reported that the kingdom spent \$279.5 billion and had revenues of \$244.5 billion in 2019, both lower than projections, leaving the shortfall at \$35 billion. Saudi Arabia, which pumps just under 10 million barrels per day, has posted a budget shortfall since 2014, when oil prices crashed, accumulating \$358 billion in deficits up to the end of 2019, official figures show.

The finance ministry has projected that spending will continue to contract until 2022 as a result of weak oil prices and production cuts. In order to plug the growing budget shortfall, Saudi Arabia withdrew from its reserves, borrowed from domestic and international markets and last month, floated 1.5 percent of state energy giant Aramco. That generated some \$25.6 billion in the world's biggest ever stock sale.

### Economic diversification

Last week, OPEC and its allies agreed to

an additional output cut of 500,000 barrels per day, set to start next month, along with an already agreed reduction of 1.2 million bpd. Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said the kingdom would unilaterally trim another 400,000 bpd to support sagging prices. Saudi Arabia has also introduced reforms and subsidy cuts as part of its Vision 2030 economic transformation plan to reduce the country's dependence on oil. The kingdom has slashed power and fuel subsidies as well as imposing fees on expatriate visas and implementing a five-percent value added tax.

The International Monetary Fund in October cut the forecast for Saudi GDP growth in 2019 to just 0.2 percent from 1.8 percent a few months earlier. London-based Capital Economics said last week the Saudi economy could shrink this year due to low oil prices and production cuts. Fitch Ratings in September downgraded its Saudi rating by a notch over rising regional tensions following unprecedented attacks on Saudi oil

**RIYADH:** Participants attend the Saudi budget forum in Riyadh yesterday. — AFP

installations. The agency said continued fiscal deficits also contributed to the downgrade. Over the past five years, Saudi Arabia

has been embroiled in a devastating war in neighbouring Yemen, amid heightening tensions with regional arch-rival Iran. — AFP

## US trade offensive takes out WTO as global arbiter

**BRUSSELS:** US disruption of the global economic order reaches a major milestone yesterday as the World Trade Organization (WTO) loses its ability to intervene in trade wars, threatening the future of the Geneva-based body. Two years after starting to block appointments, the United States will finally paralyse the WTO's Appellate Body, which acts as the supreme court for international trade, as two of three members exit and leave it unable to issue rulings.

Major trade disputes, including the US conflict with China and metal tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump, will not be resolved by the global trade arbiter. Stephen Vaughn, who served as general counsel to the US Trade

Representative during Trump's first two years, said many disputes would be settled in future by negotiations.

Critics say this means a return to a post-war period of inconsistent settlements, problems the WTO's creation in 1995 was designed to fix. The EU ambassador to the WTO told counterparts in Geneva on Monday the Appellate Body's paralysis risked creating a system of economic relations based on power rather than rules. The crippling of dispute settlement comes as the WTO also struggles in its other major role of opening markets. The WTO club of 164 has not produced any international accord since abandoning "Doha Round" negotiations in 2015.

### America first

Trade-restrictive measures among the G20 group of largest economies are at historic highs, compounded by Trump's "America First" agenda and the trade war with China. Phil Hogan, the European Union's new trade commissioner, said on Friday the WTO was no longer fit for purpose and in dire need of reforms going beyond just fixing the appeals mechanism.

For developed countries, in particular,

the WTO's rules must change to take account of state-controlled enterprises. In 2017, Japan brought together the United States and the European Union in a joint bid to set new global rules on state subsidies and forced technology transfers. The US is also pushing to limit the ability of WTO members to grant themselves developing status, which for example gives them longer to implement WTO agreements.

Such "developing countries" include Singapore and Israel, but China is the clear focus. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross told Reuters last week the United States wanted to end concessions given to then struggling economies that were no longer appropriate. "We've been spoiling countries for a very, very long time, so naturally they're pushing back as we try to change things," he said. The trouble with WTO reform is that changes require consensus to pass. That includes Chinese backing.

Beijing has published its own reform proposals with a string of grievances against US actions. Reform should resolve crucial issues threatening the WTO's existence, while preserving the interests of developing countries. Many observers believe the WTO faces a pivotal moment in

**GENEVA:** Delegates are seen prior to a general council meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) yesterday at the trade intergovernmental organization headquarters in Geneva. — AFP

mid-2020 when its trade ministers gather in a drive to push through a multinational deal - on cutting fishing subsidies. "It's not the

WTO that will save the fish. It's the fish that are going to save the WTO," said one ambassador. — Reuters



# Global stock markets dip as tariff deadline approaches

## Markets wary of Dec 15 tariff deadline

**LONDON:** Global stock markets fell for a second day yesterday, as caution over a Dec 15 deadline for the next round of US tariffs on Chinese imports weakened risk appetite and limited outsized market moves. Following their counterparts in Asia, European shares fell for a second day, with the pan-European STOXX 600 index down 1.09% at 1206 GMT. Germany's DAX fell 1.44% to its lowest in a week.

The MSCI All-Country World Index, which tracks shares across 47 countries, was down 0.2%. US stocks futures were down about 0.3%. Market uncertainty before the tariff deadline was reinforced by comments from US Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue on Monday, who said President Donald Trump did not want to implement tariffs but did want to see "movement" from China.

The deadline looms over a series of events this week, with markets also awaiting the UK election tomorrow and US and European Central Bank meetings. Euro zone government bond yields were mostly steady, refusing to budge from recent ranges. Germany's benchmark Bund yield inched up to -

0.29%, moving in a three-basis- point-range. Italian 10-year bond yields, which fell on Monday, were flat on the day at 1.39%.

In the euro zone, Christine Lagarde holds her first meeting and news conference as ECB chief tomorrow. "Expectations for policy action from the ECB and Fed are subdued," said Commerzbank rates strategist Rainer Guntermann. "Lagarde's communication style will be watched closely, but that's unlikely to lead to any repricing in bond markets." Germany's ZEW research institute said its monthly index on economic morale among investors rose to 10.7 from -2.1 a month earlier, much higher than forecast by economists.

The reading pushed up a market gauge of euro zone inflation expectations to its highest in a month and boosted the euro, which last traded 0.15% higher at \$1.1082. Yesterday, the US two-year yield, a sign of market expectations of Fed fund rates, was at 1.619%, down from its close of 1.627% on Monday. The 10-year Treasury yield was at 1.8138% from a US close of 1.8225% on Monday.

With investors reluctant to make big bets, MSCI's

broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan was 0.25% lower. China's benchmark Shanghai Composite index was higher by 0.1%. New data in China showed producer prices fell in November but consumer prices spiked, complicating efforts to boost demand as economic growth slows. Australian shares were down 0.34%. Japan's Nikkei fell 0.08%. Tepid trade followed weakness on Wall Street overnight. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.38% to 27,909.6, the S&P 500 lost 0.32% to 3,135.96 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 0.4% to 8,621.83.

Investors were also keeping an eye on the US Federal Reserve. The Fed is expected to leave rates unchanged at its two-day policy meeting, which ends Wednesday. Analysts say investors will be watching policymakers' forecasts for future US economic growth. Investors have focused this year on the risks of the UK crashing out of the European Union without a deal and a sharp escalation in trade war tensions, said Frank Benzmira, head of equity strategy at Societe Generale.

"What you have seen since the end of the third

quarter and the beginning of the fourth quarter was these two risks were receding ... And now this week you see those two concerns coming back on the market," he said, adding that he expected their effect would be short-term. Sterling, which reached its high-est against the dollar since April on Monday at \$1.3180, added 0.3%, last changing hands at \$1.3169. Expectations of a Conservative Party victory in tomorrow's UK election have powered a rally in the pound, but options markets indicate worries of a post-election retreat.

The dollar index, which tracks the US currency against a basket of six other major currencies, was down 0.14% at 97.506. Worries over trade continued to push oil prices lower. Data released on Sunday showed that Chinese exports declined for a fourth straight month, underscoring the impact of the trade war between the US and China, which is in its 17th month. Global benchmark Brent crude fell 0.54% to \$63.90 a barrel and US West Texas Intermediate crude dipped 0.54% to \$58.7 a barrel. Gold rose 0.4% to \$1,467.31 per ounce. —Reuters

## KFH announces winners of ‘Win with Hesabi’

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the 5th draw of 'Win with Hesabi' campaign that offers 3 Jeep Wrangler Sport cars and 120 cash prizes worth KD250 each. The draw was held at KFH Headquarters under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The winners are: Maram Alazemi, Hajar Mohammad, Soud Alazemi, Norah Alajmi, Rakan Alajmi, Munirah Alkudri, Abdulwahhab Alawadhi, Mohammad Almutairi, Nadrah Jasem and Fatemah Ali.

This campaign comes as part of KFH continuing efforts to add value to Hesabi customers including advantages, discounts, prizes and exclusive rewards. Once the social allowance is transferred to Hesabi program, customers enter the monthly draw on 10 prizes of KD250 each, in addition to 3 special draws on Jeep Wrangler Sport cars.

KFH offers "Hesabi for Youth" with a variety of privileges as part of its continued endeavor to provide adequate customer care, innovate new products and services and fulfill the needs of all customers of various age categories and interests. Services and products are tailored to suit customers' needs and provide distinguished service as per global standards regarding quality, accuracy and speed.

Hesabi" program has been designed to meet the needs of youth and aspire for their active life style. This program presents for youth many exclusive offers and a wide range of privileges including Hesabi ATM card with a unique design, eligibility to issue Hesabi pre-paid card (as per credit regulations of KFH), distinguished offers and discounts etc.

KFH continues to launch marketing campaigns to reward youth customers. Hesabi for Youth represents the ambitions and expectations of youth category and copes with KFH aspirations to attract the largest portion of youth who represents the major part of Kuwaiti society. Also, the account represents KFH initiative to diversify banking services and products.

## Unimoni launches online money transfer service

**KUWAIT:** Unimoni Exchange WLL (Unimoni Kuwait), a renowned financial solutions provider and a Finablr company, yesterday announced the launch of its online money transfer service as part of its digital offering in Kuwait. With the introduction of the new online service, customers can now send money using the Unimoni Kuwait mobile app or website at competitive exchange rates, seamlessly and securely from anywhere, anytime.

Unimoni Kuwait's mobile app, available on iOS and Android, comes with a user-friendly interface that includes features such as real-time transaction tracking, rate alert through email and SMS, voice command and secure login options using One Time Passwords (DTP), fingerprint or face recognition. Registered customers of Unimoni Kuwait can directly log in to the mobile app (Unimoni Kuwait) or website (kw.unimoni.com) and send money straight away. New customers have to complete a simple one-time registration process, at any of the conveniently-located

Unimoni Kuwait branches before using the online money transfer service.

Commenting on the launch, Pradeep Kumar, Group Chief Executive Officer of Unimoni, said, "Technology continues to seep into human lives to the extent that it adds convenience and provides greater control to individuals. As a group, we are focused on empowering people all over the world to fulfill their aspirations by providing them with cutting-edge financial products and services, delivered through omni-channel touchpoints. The launch of our online service in Kuwait is a significant milestone, one that enables us to elevate our customers' money transfer experience to new heights through technology."

Vivek Nair, Country Head of Unimoni Kuwait, said, "Technology-enabled services are making strong inroads into Kuwait, engaging more people through intuitive user experiences. Our new online money transfer service seeks to meet the evolving needs of customers, who prefer to have access to financial services anytime and from anywhere, as part of an enhanced user experience.

We are grateful to the Central Bank of Kuwait and our well-wishers for their continued support in our endeavour to bring a wide portfolio of products to the market." Unimoni Kuwait operates through 12 retail outlets in the country and offers a range of money transfer and foreign Currency exchange solutions for retail and corporate customers.



## Algeria: Oil-dependent country hit by protests

**PARIS:** The North African country of Algeria, where a contentious presidential election is set for tomorrow, has been the scene since February of massive demonstrations against a regime seen as corrupt. Here are some key facts about the oil-dependent nation of 42 million people.

**Former French colony**

A French colony since 1830, Algeria became independent in 1962 after a bloody war which lasted nearly eight years. In 1963, Ahmed Ben Bella, secretary general of the National Liberation Front (FLN) which had led the struggle against French rule, became the first president. Two years later the FLN's Houari Boumediene overthrew and jailed Ben Bella, continuing to run Algeria as a one-party state until his death in 1978. Colonel Chadli Bendjedid was then elected president, a post he held until 1992.

**Civil war**

In 1988, protests rocked the capital Algiers,

prompting the authorities to declare a state of emergency. The army clamped down on demonstrators but introduced political reforms which brought an end to the single-party system. However, when the country held its first multi-party legislative poll in 1991, the army stepped in to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) winning and setting up an Islamic state. That sparked a civil war which killed some 200,000 people between 1992 and 2002, with the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) claiming responsibility for many civilian massacres.

**Bouteflika years**

At the height of the war, FNL stalwart Abdelaziz Bouteflika won the 1999 presidential election. He was backed by the army and launched a reconciliation programme that saw thousands of Islamist fighters lay down their arms. Bouteflika went on to win re-election in 2004 and 2009. He suffered a stroke in 2013 which confined him to a wheelchair, but despite his poor health was elected for a fourth term. His bid for a fifth term in the April 2019 elections sparked massive street protests and saw him lose the support of key loyalists, including armed forces chief Ahmed Gaid Salah. He finally submitted his resignation on April 2 but protesters continue to demand an overhaul of the entire political establishment.

**Oil-dependent**

Socialist until the early 1990s, Algeria's economy remains subject to a high level of state intervention. The oil wealth subsidises fuel, water, health care, housing and basic goods. Algeria is Africa's third biggest crude producer and among the 10 biggest producers of natural gas. Those exports make up more than 95 percent of external revenue and contribute 60 percent of the state budget. It currently produces around one million barrels of oil a day, according to official figures. In late 2018, analysts at the International Crisis Group estimated that urgent reforms were needed to diversify the economy. In November 2019, Algeria's parliament adopted a controversial law aimed at boosting investment in the oil and gas sector.

**Africa's biggest country**

Algeria is Africa's biggest country and desert makes up more than five-sixths of its territory. More than 80 percent of the population lives on the coast, including in the capital Algiers. Nearly 54 percent is younger than 30. It counts some 10 million ethnic Berbers, most living in Kabylie, a mountainous region to the east of Algiers. Although widely spoken, French is not one of Algeria's official languages—which are Arabic and the Berbers' Tamazight. —AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.		Egyptian Pound - Transfer		18.892	Chinese Yuan Renminbi	43.610	Chinese Yuan	0.041864	0.045364
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		Yemen Riyal/for 1000		1.222	Thai Bhat	11.010	Hong Kong Dollar	0.036783	0.039533
US Dollar Transfer		Tunisian Dinar		110.640	Turkish Lira	52.740	Indian Rupee	0.003604	0.004376
Euro		Jordanian Dinar		429.580	Singapore dollars	223.154	Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Sterling Pound		Lebanese Lira/for 1000		0.203	BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL				
Canadian dollar		Syrian Lira		0.000	CURRENCY		BUY	SELL	
Turkish lira		Morocco Dirham		32.162	British Pound	0.392729	0.406629	0.406629	
Swiss Franc		Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd			Czech Korune	0.005163	0.014463	0.014463	
US Dollar Buying		Rate for Transfer		Selling Rate	Danish Krone	0.040952	0.045952	0.045952	
Japanese Yen		US Dollar		303.890	Euro	0.328969	0.342669	0.342669	
Indian Rupees		Canadian Dollar		230.380	Georgian Lari	0.103266	0.103266	0.103266	
Pakistani Rupees		Sterling Pound		401.130	Hungarian 0.000923	0.001113	0.001113	0.001113	
Srilankan Rupees		Euro		337.890	Norwegian Krone	0.029200	0.034400	0.034400	
Nepali Rupees		Swiss Frank		302.835	Romanian Leu	0.053437	0.0702287	0.0702287	
Singapore Dollar		Bahrain Dinar		808.155	Russian ruble	0.004773	0.004773	0.004773	
Hongkong Dollar		UAE Dirhams		83.140	Slovakia	0.009092	0.019092	0.019092	
Bangladesh Taka		Qatari Riyals		84.380	Slovedish Krona	0.027871	0.032871	0.032871	
Philippine Peso		Saudi Riyals		81.935	Swiss Franc	0.301221	0.312221	0.312221	
Thai Baht		Jordanian Dinar		429.905	Australian Dollar	0.199203	0.211203	0.211203	
Malaysian ringgit		Egyptian Pound		18.870	New Zealand Dollar	0.193098	0.202598	0.202598	
GCC COUNTRIES		Sri Lankan Rupees		1.677	Canadaian Dollar	0.224432	0.233432	0.233432	
Saudi Riyal		Indian Rupees		4.289	US Dollars	0.300150	0.305450	0.305450	
Qatari Riyal		Pakistani Rupees		1.691	US Dollars Mint	0.300650	0.305450	0.305450	
Omani Riyal		Bangladesh Taka		3.537	Bangladesh Taka	0.002990	0.003791	0.003791	
Bahraini Dinar		Philippines Pessso		5.990					
UAE Dirham		Cyprus pound		18.080					
ARAB COUNTRIES		Japanese Yen		3.795					
Egyptian Pound - Cash		Syrian Pound		1.590					
		Nepalese Rupees		2.669					
		Malaysian Ringgit		73.955					



## Business

# South Africa power crisis shuts down mines across the country

## Power crisis at state firm Eskom damaging economy

**JOHANNESBURG:** Power blackouts in South Africa caused by flash flooding have shut down mining operations across the country, several mining companies said yesterday. Harmony Gold, Impala Platinum, and Sibanye-Stillwater all said they had been forced to cut production since Monday owing to power shortages. "There are very few underground mines that operated overnight and will be operating normally today," said a spokesman for the Minerals Council, an industry body.

Eskom said yesterday it planned more load-shedding - a South African term for planned power cuts - due to flooding that has interrupted coal-fired power generation, but added the crisis was manageable. Heavy rains across parts of South Africa have submerged whole neighbourhoods, leading to mass evacuations. The losses to mining output - a mainstay of South Africa's exports - highlights the economic impact of the crisis at ailing state utility Eskom, which has been struggling to keep the lights on for more than a decade.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has made turning Eskom and other failing state firms around a cornerstone policy, but he faces opposition from unions and interests within his ruling African National Congress. "The ongoing load shedding is devastating for the country ... causing our economy great harm and disrupting the lives of citizens," he said in a statement yesterday. "The energy challenges in this country will not be resolved overnight." On Monday the country suffered power cuts of up to 6,000 megawatts (MW) after heavy rain and flooding triggered failures at its 4,800 MW Medupi coal fired plant.

### 'Manageable crisis'

Harmony Gold called off its underground shifts, saying it would resume as soon as Eskom could provide assurance power supply would be more reliable. Impala Platinum had shut production at its Rustenberg and Marula mines owing to power cuts that left it functioning at 20%-30% of normal power. A spokesman for the platinum miner said: "We certainly can't risk any attempt at production with this level of power."

Sibanye-Stillwater shut all its deep-level mines on Monday, but aimed to send miners back underground for the afternoon shift yesterday. "The outlook for this week is to maintain load shedding because of the weather, because of the coal handling challenges that we've got. Also we have a number of units on unplanned breakdown that need to return," Eskom's chief operations officer Jan Oberholzer told eNCA news channel. "We believe it is a manageable crisis," Oberholzer said. "Four thousand megawatts of the problem we had yesterday was due to flooding."

Problems at Eskom have been magnified by delays and cost overruns at two giant coal-fired plants, Medupi and Kusile, which were touted as a solution to power woes when construction began a decade ago. South Africa's GDP shrank by 0.6% in the third quarter, the second contraction this year, partly in response to uncertainty over power supply. Its credit rating is teetering on the brink of junk because of its economic problems and the high cost of government bailouts of failing state firms. All credit rating agencies but Moody's have cut the country's rating to below investment grade. — Reuters



**EKURHULENI:** A SAA (South African Airways) aeroplane is seen at the O R Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. — AFP

### BUSINESS ANALYSIS

## The new emerging market landscape

By Manraj S Sekhon, CFA

Emerging markets are at a rare inflection point with multiple crosscurrents. A combination of the ultra-loose monetary policy hangover from the global financial crisis, a low global growth environment from weak manufacturing and industrial activity, the continued rise of the consumer, and the disruption and opportunities of the new economy have provided a heady mix.

### Addressing uncertainties

While market sentiment in 2019 was weighed down by easing growth concerns, emerging market growth is forecast by the International Monetary Fund to accelerate in 2020 and remain more than double that of developed markets. Improving fiscal, economic and monetary policies and a renewed focus on structural reforms in many emerging markets has been gaining traction. Supported by more conducive monetary policies in developed economies and easing inflationary pressures, central banks in emerging markets generally turned more dovish in 2019. We expect this trend to continue in 2020, as policymakers have greater flexibility in stimulating economic activity.

Although US-China trade tensions have deescalated in the short term on rising expectations of a partial trade deal and plans for both countries to scale back tariffs, we expect the broader economic conflict to remain for some time. The impact from the trade conflict has not been limited to China. While US imports from China over the last year declined \$35 billion to \$497 billion, China's imports from the United States decreased by more-\$40 billion to \$125 billion. Therefore, we believe a comprehensive agreement remains in the best interests of both sides. The Trump administration will be acutely aware of this heading into an election year.

### Opportunities in 2020

China's initiatives to strengthen and diversify its economy have been largely overshadowed by trade and slowing growth fears. The government's focus on economic

restructuring and long-term sustainable growth has led to an acceleration in the implementation of structural reforms and widespread industry consolidation, as well as the development of local supply chains in the technology space to replace US sources. China will be a frontrunner in the 5G arena and is expected to have some 600 million 5G subscribers by 2025, or about 40% of the forecasted 1.6 billion subscribers globally.

Together with artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, this will help drive growth in China's new economy as it strives to become less reliant on the United States. In our view, China will emerge stronger and more self-reliant with multiple pillars of economic support through this crisis. Taiwan is seeing some spillover benefits from the trade war as its companies start onshoring some operations. Government incentives to attract operations back to Taiwan mean that this will have ripple effects on the domestic economy.

As one of the largest and fastest growing markets for digital consumers, India is a market where disruptive technology is driving productivity and deflation more than generally expected, with value accruing to end-users. Key reforms-including the recent reduction in corporate tax rates, measures to improve the regulatory environment and monetary easing-will likely steady the economy. In Brazil, optimism surrounding the government's economic agenda has resulted in a more favorable investment climate. While the country's economic recovery has been slower than expected, we believe government and central bank efforts are improving the country's longer-term growth potential. Inflation has remained under control, allowing the central bank to ease rates to record lows to stimulate the economy. Social security reform is key to stimulating investment and credit, which will help improve economic activity and can significantly reduce Brazil's fiscal deficit. A major privatization plan has also been announced, and tax and other structural reforms should improve the ease of doing business.

### New emerging market landscape

The emerging market landscape continues to transform as policymakers focus on building resilience during times of stress. Emerging market economies are more diversified now-with domestic consumption and technology offering new drivers of growth-and are growing less reliant on

low-cost manufacturing and commodities. Since the turn of the century, we have witnessed a significant increase in the trade value of high-tech goods being exported by emerging market countries. We have also seen how companies are using innovation and technology to leapfrog and disrupt traditional business models. Areas such as e-commerce, digital banking and mobile computing will be fundamental drivers of emerging markets for years to come. Equally, fields such as AI, autonomous driving, robotics and the "Internet of Things" continue to attract investment, signaling strong longer-term prospects.

### Staying the course

Much noise and conflicting signals dominated 2019, which led many investors to limit their risk appetite and discount the long-term growth drivers in emerging markets. While some of these uncertainties may persist in the near term, we believe it is essential to stay the course. The markets are just beginning to realize opportunities from technology disruption and the transition of businesses away from traditional models. We believe the investment scope in the emerging world is wide and promising for investors who can overlook near-term volatility and invest for the longer term.

### What are the risks?

All investments involve risks, including possible loss of principal. Stock prices fluctuate, sometimes rapidly and dramatically, due to factors affecting individual companies, particular industries or sectors, or general market conditions. Special risks are associated with foreign investing, including currency fluctuations, economic instability and political developments. Investments in developing markets, of which frontier markets are a subset, involve heightened risks related to the same factors, in addition to those associated with these markets' smaller size, lesser liquidity and lack of established legal, political, business and social frameworks to support securities markets. Because these frameworks are typically even less developed in frontier markets, as well as various factors including the increased potential for extreme price volatility, illiquidity, trade barriers and exchange controls, the risks associated with developing markets are magnified in frontier markets.

*Sekhon is Chief Investment Officer for Franklin Templeton Emerging Markets Equity*

## Ted Baker CEO quits as shares pummels

**LONDON:** Ted Baker's chief executive and chairman quit yesterday as the British fashion retailer warned its full-year profit will fall more than expected and suspended its dividend due to weak Black Friday sales, sending its shares to a 16-year low. Pressure has mounted on Ted Baker's management team since it disclosed a week ago that it may have overstated inventory by as much as 25 million pounds (\$32 million).

Lindsay Page is leaving after just eight months in charge of Ted Baker, which has been struggling with weak consumer demand and misconduct allegations against its founder and former CEO Ray Kelvin, which he has denied. "The last 12 months has undoubtedly been the most challenging in our history," Ted Baker said in a statement as its shares fell as much as 30% to 16-year lows.

In contrast to some other British retailers, Ted Baker said its performance during November and the Black Friday sale period was below expectations, leading it to cut its pre-tax profit forecast to a minimum of 5 million pounds. Ted Baker reported a pretax profit of 50.9 million pounds last year, its first annual profit drop in ten years. Ted Baker said its recently appointed Chief Financial Officer Rachel Osborne will take over as interim CEO, while Sharon Baylay will become acting chair after the departure of chairman David Bernstein.

Page, who has been with Ted Baker for more than 20 years, recently described business conditions as the worst in decades amid lacklustre sales. His appointment as CEO in April was seen as a turning point for Ted Baker, which was trying to move on from the bad publicity prompted by Kelvin's habit of hugging colleagues. Ted Baker was also in the process of shaking up its board as part of a wider push to foster a change in corporate culture. — Reuters



**WREXHAM:** Pedestrians walk past an empty shop unit for 'Sale/To Let' in the town centre in Wrexham. — AFP

## Sterling shrugs off weak GDP data, cements gains

**LONDON:** Sterling edged higher yesterday, cementing recent gains as traders shrugged off weak economic growth data and kept an eye on the final days of campaigning before Britain's general election tomorrow. The pound on Monday reached a seven-month high against the dollar and a two-and-a-half-year high versus the euro as investors ramped up their bets the governing Conservative Party would win a majority in tomorrow's election.

Sterling held most of those gains even though data showed Britain's economy grew at its slowest annual pace in nearly seven years in October, just 0.7%. "The latest batch of economic data from the UK provides a fairly neg-

ative view on the recent levels of activity with the main takeaway being a flat GDP reading for the month of October," said David Cheetham, chief market analyst at online broker XTB.

Industrial output fell by 0.7% in the three months to October and services grew by 0.2%, its weakest increase since June, the data also showed. "Sterling price action is all about the upcoming parliamentary election and real economic data should continue to play second fiddle," ING analysts said in a note sent to clients. In early London trade, the pound was up 0.2% at \$1.3157, close to Monday's high of \$1.3180. Against the euro the pound rose 0.1% to 84.18 pence, not far from the two-and-a-half-year high of 83.94 pence touched on Monday. Polls predict a Conservative Party majority, which many investors believe would lift some of the political uncertainty that has hampered the British currency. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party has vowed to take Britain out of the European Union on Jan 31. Cheetham at XTB noted that the biggest driver for the pound yesterday could come at 2200 GMT when a new YouGov poll is released. — Reuters

## US manufacturers see higher 2020 sales despite trade cloud

**NEW YORK:** US manufacturers expect a bounce in revenues in 2020 despite lingering unease over trade tariffs that are prompting supply chain shifts, according to an industry survey released Monday. The semi-annual survey painted a mixed picture for US manufacturers overall, with companies forecasting flat employment and lower capital spending but higher overall sales. That could spell at least some relief for a sector hit hard by President Donald Trump's trade war with China, and that country's slowing economy.

The projected 4.8 percent bump in manufacturing revenues was "one of the more surprising" figures in the semi-annual survey, said Timothy Fiore of the Institute for Supply Management, which released the report. Fiore noted that manufacturers had overestimated sales in the last survey in May, projecting that 2019 revenues would rise 4.0 percent. At this point the increase is expected to come in at 1.9 percent, the report said.

The upbeat revenue forecast could reflect manufacturers' belief that they are now "at the maximum impact" as far as items that could be affected by trade conflicts after Trump administration tariffs on steel and aluminum and a series of measures on Chinese goods. But Fiore also noted that Trump last week reinstated tariffs on metals from Brazil and Argentina and announced new tariffs on French goods. "Trade continues to weigh on the supply community," Fiore said.

Manufacturing has emerged as a vulnerable part of the US economy amid myriad trade tariffs and threats from Trump, with up-and-down talks with China especially worrisome to the business community. Weak US manufacturing figures have also reflected company-specific issues such as the Boeing 737 MAX crisis that has forced the aviation giant to cut production on the plane and the General Motors strike, which ended in late October.

The survey showed more than half of the respondents in manufacturing have either changed their production footprint or are evaluating new sources of supply because of US tariffs. The figures were slightly lower among non-manufacturing companies surveyed, with 43.9 percent evaluating new sources of supply and 1.3 percent having already shifted supply. The report overall suggested the services sector would continue to outperform manufacturing, with companies projecting modest increases in both capital spending and employment. — AFP



**MIAMI:** A 'Now Hiring!' sign is seen in front of a Speedway gas station in Miami, Florida. Hiring in the US private sector slowed sharply in November as small businesses, manufacturers, retailers and construction firms shed workers. — AFP



## Business

# Hashes, hedges: Power-hungry crypto miners court investors

## Miners look to hedge swings in computer power

**LONDON:** The old image of bitcoin miners is of young techies in their bedrooms, hunched over laptops that solve maths puzzles to earn new coins. Now they're more likely to be savvy startups with ultra-high-speed chips and massive, power-guzzling machines. And, in a new development, they're beginning to look to financial derivatives to hedge against the wild swings in their electricity needs that can turn profits to dust.

The growth of a market for such tools could accelerate investment in cryptocurrency mining, originally the preserve of lone enthusiasts but now a capital-intensive industry that is expected to see growing demand for digital coins. Crypto miners must draw on increasingly large amounts of computing power as they compete against others to solve the complex mathematical equations to build the blockchain and earn rewards in the form of new digital coins.

Startups have largely been defenceless against changes in so-called "hashrate" - in short, a fluctuating measure of the processing power of the entire bitcoin network that dictates how much power miners need to produce new coins. A spike in hashrate means more electricity is required, ramping up production costs and eating into eventual profits of coins sold.

This wildcard could become a major obstacle for startups to attract much-needed investment from institutions and markets. The answer, seven cryptocurrency

miners and industry players told Reuters, are derivatives that allow miners to hedge the hashrate. In theory, that would give clearer projections of cashflow - a prerequisite for would-be investors.

The miners and crypto traders, spread from the United States and Canada to Britain and Hong Kong, said a market for such products, though in a very early form, was emerging and would grow in importance. "The trend in hashrate is upwards. Unless miners increase production, they will get fewer bitcoin with the same power," said Michel Rauchs, author of a Cambridge university study on cryptocurrency miners.

"With hashrate derivatives, they can price in risk," London-based DAG Global, which pitches itself as a cryptocurrency merchant bank, said miners were showing strong interest in the firm's products for hedging hashrates. "As the hashrate changes, you can go from being profitable to losing money very quickly," said Robert Andersen, who leads DAG's digital asset sales. "The contract insures you against that. It's like insurance, and for that you pay a premium."

Another firm, crypto trader GSR, said it has been working on similar products but, given the early stage of the market, was not yet ready to offer them. "We're building products around hashrate and difficulty," said co-founder Richard Rosenblum. "It's going to take more than a few months for there to be significant liquidity," he said, cautioning that a market could take a few years to develop. And for sure, the market is at a very early stage. Firm figures are hard to come by, but some crypto players say it likely totals around \$50-\$100 million dollars a year.

valuing the firm at around \$2 billion.

While this is an indication of capital market appetite, Canaan is one of only a handful of giant, global crypto miners. Many others are smaller outfits that would likely have to work harder to convince investors they can manage their risks. Still, said Marco Krohn, co-founder of Hong Kong-based Genesis Mining, which produces bitcoin from Iceland to Kazakhstan, hundreds of millions of investment dollars could be up for grabs.

"You need to leverage the traditional financial markets - and these people ask questions. They tend to be risk averse." To attract such investors, mining firms told Reuters they are looking more closely at controlling their risks - both on hashrates and prices - via financial tools. "The adoption of derivatives in the mining community has definitely increased in recent months," said Kevin Shao, a manager at Canaan's blockchain unit, speaking through an interpreter.

It may be early days for crypto mining hedging tools, but changes are definitely afoot, said US firm BitOoda, which has since April brokered a product known as a "difficulty swap". Sam Doctor, the company's chief strategist, said the market for such products was growing more liquid, with the length of contracts also on the rise. "There are more players on the sidelines watching how these trades perform before they take the step of trading themselves." —Reuters



### Startups developing derivative products

#### Winning over investors

For traditional investors, hunting high-yielding returns in an era of ultra-low interest rates, crypto miners could

offer a tempting proposition. With bitcoin trading at around \$7,500, the 1,800 bitcoin that can be produced on any given day equates to an annual market of around \$5 billion a year. And many investors want a slice. In an major example of a crypto mining company going public, last month Chinese giant Canaan launched a \$90 million initial public offering on the Nasdaq.

## Ooredoo launches Apple Carrier Billing

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait, the first to launch innovated digital services in Kuwait launched Apple Carrier Billing on December 5, 2019. Customers will have the option to pay for apps in the App Store and iCloud storage directly from their mobile phone account. The service will be available to all Ooredoo Kuwait's customers for both post-paid and prepaid plans. The launch of the service sees Ooredoo take towards a dynamic new step in meeting its customers where they are, while developing its financial services offerings.

Using Ooredoo's direct carrier billing service is very simple. Customers with a new or existing Apple ID can select "Mobile Phone" as their payment method in account settings on the App Store or iCloud from their iPhone, iPad, iPod touch, Apple Watch, Mac or on iTunes from their PC. The new payment option will be configured automatically and immediately allows for one-payment purchasing from any Apple product. Mijbil Al-Ayoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait, commented "We are keen on providing our customers with the latest services from Apple that best suit their needs."

Ooredoo has been at the forefront of digital transformation by launching products and services such as cellular connectivity for Apple Watch. The launch of carrier billing is another strong step in this direction by offering a new payment method to our customers. For more information, please contact 121, our team will answer all inquiries around the clock 7 days a week. Or visit our website [www.ooredoo.com.kw](http://www.ooredoo.com.kw) or the nearest shop to you, or simply use our App 'MyOoredoo' for updates and more.



Mijbil Al Ayoub

## HUAWEI nova: New star on the scene

**KUWAIT:** Our galaxy spans 100 thousand light years, and is made up of approximately 200 billion stars, each of which emits a unique glow and serves as the center of its own domain. Stars burn, fizzle out, and reform over the course of millions, or even billions of years. In the fast-moving smartphone market, however, this cycle of rebirth and reinvention occurs within a much quicker time frame. Over the past two years, the HUAWEI nova series has been the new star that shines the brightest, furnishing cutting-edge Huawei capabilities, including flagship-level Kirin chips, GPU Turbo technology, powerful battery life, and riveting features through a stylish, youthful filter.

#### HUAWEI nova 3

Indeed, the series' dazzling designs have made it a sensation among young consumers, with skyrocketing global sales. HUAWEI nova has assumed its place alongside the more established P and Mate series, blazing a trail as a pioneering product line with a distinctive aura. But unlike the distant stars in the

night sky which represent powerful forces beyond the reach of humanity, HUAWEI nova puts star-like qualities fully within our grasp!

#### Wholly new selfie experience

HUAWEI nova smartphones pack top-notch hardware and computing to back up their burgeoning reputation. As futuristic AI photography and enhanced front cameras have helped drive the current golden era of selfie photography, a phenomenon that has only been accelerated by the presence of social media, each new generation of HUAWEI nova phones has packed innovative hardware. The nova 2s incorporated dual front cameras, the nova 3 unveiled 24 MP AI poster-quality selfies, and the nova 4e made the leap to 32 MP ultra-HD resolution.

A beauty algorithm provides the cherry on top, elevating nova selfies into works of art. Painstakingly developed, advanced facial mapping models have enabled the rapid progression from simple nude makeup effects, to 3D beautification, to AI micro-adjustments. The latter furnishes finely-tuned, professional-level effects that accentuate the natural beauty of any subject, integrating the fleeting joys of youth with the timeless nature of photography.

#### Lighting the way to a brighter future

For many young people, smartphones



have become more than just fun and functional devices, but as the extension of the user's personality. Design is now more important than ever, as many people now buy phones as an expression of independence, and to take part in an unconventional user experience. Huawei's bold aesthetics meet such demands for out-of-the-box designs that stand out from the ordinary.

From the candy-reminiscent color schemes on the nova 2s, to the nova 3's purple and blue tones, and the intricate double-layer of reflective film on the nova 4, HUAWEI nova has always been at the forefront of design innovation. This trendsetting nature and unrelenting commitment to reinvention matches the ethos of young consumers in 2019, who take smartphones for granted as essen-

tial in daily life, but still desire new and novel ways to interact with their devices.

#### HUAWEI nova 3, Primrose Gold edition

A Strong "Core" to Power Boundless Leisure- Packed with high-performing Kirin chips and revolutionary GPU Turbo graphics processing technology, Huawei nova smartphones serve as premium gaming devices. Their proprietary Histen sound effects provide for lifelike and immersive gameplay, making a nova phone user the life of any party. And that in essence, is what HUAWEI nova is all about: making every user the center, around which their world orbits. A new Super Nova might be coming- It is rumored that Huawei will be bringing the new HUAWEI nova 5T to the State of Kuwait soon.

## Gulf Bank's winner claims cash prize up to 12 times his salary

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank has announced the winner of its eleventh monthly Salary Account draw of the year. This month's lucky winner, Meshari Humoud Alshammari, will take home a cash prize of up to 12 times his salary. The Salary Account draw took place at Gulf Bank's Jabriya branch in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

With the 2019 Kuwaiti Salary Offer, new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the monthly draws, giving them the chance to win cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary. Customers are also enrolled in a yearly draw of Kuwait's largest salary prize, a cash prize of up to 100 times the winner's salary.

Gulf Bank's Salary Account also gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank, or an



interest-free loan of up to KD 10,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and are eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank.

Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a Visa or MasterCard credit card free of charge for a year. They can also apply for a loan of up to KD

70,000 or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000. To find out more about Gulf Bank's Salary Account, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 58 branches or log on to [www.e-gulfbank.com](http://www.e-gulfbank.com). Customers can also contact the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 or direct their queries through the WhatsApp service on 65805805 for assistance and guidance.

### NBK Macroeconomic Outlook

## Egypt's economy is on a favorable trajectory

**KUWAIT:** Egypt has achieved its key objective of macroeconomic stability under the authorities' reform program. Economic growth is expected to remain robust, and inflation should trend lower over the forecast period. The budget deficit and the external current account are expected to improve further in 2020-2022. Large debt servicing costs and a relatively weak private sector are major risks to the otherwise promising outlook.

#### Egypt's economy

Egypt has successfully completed its 3-year IMF supported reform program, achieving its key objective

of macroeconomic stability. Economic growth has continued its robust trend, reaching 5.6% in the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year (FY19/20). Looking ahead, we expect growth to improve but at a slower pace compared to recent years.

Real GDP growth will remain strong at around 5.5% in FY19/20 and average about 5% for the next couple of years. It will be supported by a strong pick-up in capital spending, a further improvement in the tourism sector and continued increases in natural gas production, which could turn Egypt into a net gas exporter in the short-run. Egypt will likely move to a new precautionary non-financial program in which the IMF will play an advisory role, providing important policy and technical support. Coupled with the authorities continued commitment to reforms, such a program should help sustain Egypt's economic gains.

#### Slowing inflation

Despite the energy subsidy cuts adopted at the start of the fiscal year in July 2019, urban inflation started to decelerate faster than expected. It stood at 3.1% y/y in October 2019, the lowest reading since

October 2005. This was driven by the state's efforts to ensure an adequate food supply and by continued strengthening of the EGP, which gained about 10% against the USD in 2019, helping to curb import price pressures.

We expect inflation to remain low in the single digits by 2022. These projections, however, are subject to uncertainty related to movements in the oil price, the exchange rate, and food price volatility, which has a large weight in the consumer basket. Slowing inflation has provided some space for the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) to cut its interest rate four times in 2019 by a cumulative 450bps. And while there is still more room for further cuts, we do, however, expect the CBE to remain prudent and move cautiously—perhaps cutting the rate by 300–400 bps in 2020—if inflation remains subdued.

#### High debt servicing costs

The authorities continue to make progress in fiscal consolidation. Despite the recent increase in government salaries and pensions in July 2019, the primary budget surplus is estimated to have reached 1.5% of GDP in FY18/19 from 0.2% a year

ago. We expect this trend to continue, with the primary surplus averaging 2.5% of GDP over the next couple of years.

The overall budget deficit remains relatively high standing at 8.2% of GDP in FY18/19, due mainly to high debt service costs. In fact, interest payments have increased in recent years, reflecting both the rise in outstanding public debt and higher domestic funding costs. We expect the fiscal deficit to narrow further to 7.5% of GDP in FY19/20 and reach 6% by FY21/22, thanks to higher revenues (taxes and gas) and energy subsidy reforms.

Public debt declined from 108% of GDP in FY16/17 to an estimated 92% of GDP in FY18/19, driven by cuts to benchmark interest rates and the move towards more international debt that carries lower interest rates. With lower budget financing needs, public debt is expected to fall to around 80% of GDP by FY21/22, but the structure of the debt will be tilted more toward external debt. In this context, the government plans to issue during the current fiscal year about \$7.0 billion multi-currency denominated international bonds to benefit from the historically low global interest rates.

#### The external sector

Egypt's external current account improved following the adoption of the reform program, with the deficit dropping from 6.1% of GDP in FY16/17 to 2.7% in FY18/19. It should shrink gradually to around 2% of GDP in FY21/22 on account of further growth in remittances and tourism as well as increase in gas revenue.

#### Promising outlook

Egypt made commendable progress under its bold adjustment program and was able to restore macroeconomic stability in a relatively short time. Egypt's unwavering commitment to reform should now translate into a second-generation set of measures that focus on deep-rooted structural rigidities reflected mainly in the still dominant public sector. Egypt will need to focus on improving the business environment and developing the private sector to become the primary driver of economic growth. Addressing poverty and strengthening social safety nets will make it easier to forge ahead with the rest of the agenda over the next three years.



## What's On

# Sheraton Kuwait Hotels celebrate the Global Customer Appreciation Week 2019



Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait, celebrated the Global Customer Appreciation Week with a HALO event held at the Diamond Grand Ballroom with an attendance of more than 350 Marriott International clients from government institutions and corporations in Kuwait in recognition of their continued loyalty and support.



Fahad Abushaar



During the event, guests were received by the Executive Management and the Sales Team. A welcome speech was rendered by Mounir Amer, the General Manager of Four Points Hotel, explaining the details of the renovation plan of the Sheraton Hotel is undergoing in coordination with the mother company and Marriott International Company to complete the ongoing work for the next three years. In addition to the renovation

work, he added "the project to upgrade the level of services that would provide a clear picture for the Kuwait hotel industry to see"

Mazen Al Mhna, the Assistant Executive Manager of Sheraton Kuwait Hotel, welcomed the guests and expressed his gratitude to all those who participated in the GCAW HALO Event 2019 and extended his great appreciation to companies and organizations for their

continued support and loyalty, adding that our goal is to strengthen our relations with our customers and improve the level of services.

Guests were also treated to a live sand painting show to recall the 50-year mark of the hotel, followed by a special dinner attended by a team of skilled chefs with rich dishes from Sheraton Kuwait's diverse restaurants.

This week gives us the opportunity to thank our

guests by dedicating the entire week to this goal. Marriott International, as the world's favorite hotel chain, has created a wonderful world of travel through the Marriott Bonvoy's latest loyalty program. With 30 brands, members can enjoy exclusive benefits in more than 7,000 hotels and resorts across the world with exceptional range of brands in 131 countries around the world, pursuant to Marriott International's vision to provide you with the best services that help customers meet all the needs and requirements of you and your guests here at Kuwait, we are also happy to help you book groups or meetings at any Marriott International hotels worldwide.

On the sidelines of the Global Customer Appreciation Week, Fahad Abushaar, General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait Hotels, said that this time of year is an opportunity for us to thank our guests and customers personally, and to bring something back to the communities in which we live and work. Leading in the exceptional hospitality industry for entrepreneurs and guests of Kuwait and today we continue the process of development and innovation to provide more luxury experiences for our guests.



## CBK's 2020 calendar reflects ancient Kuwaiti history



Sheikhah Nouf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah

With the approach of the new year - 2020, The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced issuing its new 2020 calendar including a number of artistic paintings reflecting the development Kuwait witnessed in various cultural, artistic, literary, economic and educational fields over the past decades.

As usual, CBK stressed the significance of highlighting that phase in Kuwait's history painted by artist, Yaqoub Yousif Ibrahim.

In this regard, CBK's executive manager of the corporal communication division, Sheikhah Nouf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah said: "CBK has been annually issuing a calendar highlighting the main events in Kuwait's history to be used as a reference that does not expire by the end of the year". Al-Sabah added that CBK's 2020 calendar includes several paintings of events that took place in the previous century, which was full of achievements, such as founding the Kuwaiti army and educational development.

Al-Sabah also noted that CBK's calendar and all other publications and heritage reviving activities are part of the bank's long history and efforts exerted to revive the ancient Kuwaiti heritage to remind new generations of both the heritage and the major events in Kuwait's history and keep them alive in minds forever.



## TIES Centre

The TIES Center cordially invites you to another session on the Stories of Prophets tomorrow, December 12th, at 7 pm. In this class, we will learn why Allah (SWT) was angry with the seventy most righteous men among the Israelites who went to repent on behalf of the calf-worshippers, their destiny, and Musa's supplication.

We will also discuss Haroun's admonition to the calf-worshippers, what Allah (SWT) said of His mercy, and examine the various types of guidance.

Finally, we will discuss the qualities of those who deserve Allah's exclusive mercy, and ponder the authentic questions Musa (AS) asked Allah (SWT), eliciting a lot of lessons that, if implemented sincerely, will transform our lives. Come and learn more about the life and times of Prophet Musa (AS) in a serene and relaxed environment.

## Burgan Bank organizes school field trip for Iqra'a Bilingual School



Burgan Bank, one of the highest contributors to progress in society, recently welcomed young students from "Iqra'a Bilingual School" to its Head Office as part of an educational tour. The school field trip was managed by the Senior Branch Manager Ahmad Al Rebian & Area Sales Manager Mohammad Al Qenaei, who provided the children a learning experience in the world of banking.

Burgan Bank believes in empowering the kids with a solid foundation in educational and first hand instructive knowledge by broadening their academic development beyond the limits of a classroom. During the tour, the children had the opportunity to meet with the different sections responsible for

ensuring a successful business through their respective tasks such as the tellers, customer service etc. Burgan Bank seeks to create a conscious and educated generation that benefits the society

Supporting education falls under Burgan Bank's CSR strategy, through its program: 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. Burgan Bank sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.



## Health &amp; Science

# Brazil milks deadly snakes for their life-saving venom

**SAO PAULO:** Gripping the deadly snake behind its jaws, Fabiola de Souza massages its venom glands to squeeze out drops that will save lives around Brazil where thousands of people are bitten every year. De Souza and her colleagues at the Butantan Institute in Sao Paulo harvest the toxin from hundreds of snakes kept in captivity to produce antivenom.

It is distributed by the health ministry to medical facilities across the country. Dozens of poisonous snake species, including the jararaca, thrive in Brazil's hot and humid climate. Nearly 29,000 people were bitten in 2018 and more than 100 died, official figures show. States with the highest rates of snakebite were in the vast and remote Amazon basin where it can take hours to reach a hospital stocked with antivenom. Venom is extracted from each snake once a month in a delicate and potentially dangerous process. Using a hooked stick, de Souza carefully lifts one of the slithering creatures out of its plastic box and maneuvers it into a drum of carbon dioxide. Within minutes the reptile is asleep. "It's less stress for the animal," de Souza explains. The snake is then placed on a stainless steel bench in the room where the temperature hovers around 27 degrees Celsius (80 degrees Fahrenheit). De Souza has a few minutes to safely extract venom before the snake begins to stir. "It's important to have fear because when people have fear they are careful," she says.

## Antivenom 'crisis'

The snakes are fed a diet of rats and mice that are raised at the leafy institute and killed before being served up once a month. After milking the snake, de Souza records its weight and length before placing it back in its container. The antivenom is made by injecting small



**SAO PAULO:** A highly venomous Golden Lancehead snake is seen at the Butantan Institute - which supplies the Ministry of Health, with many snakes' venom for its distribution countrywide- in Sao Paulo. — AFP



**A highly venomous Golden Lancehead snake is seen at the Butantan Institute.**

amounts of the poison into horses - kept by Butantan on a farm - to trigger an immune response that produces toxin-attacking antibodies. Blood is later extracted from the hoofed animals and the antibodies harvested to create a serum that will be administered to snakebite victims who might otherwise die.

Butantan project manager Fan Hui Wen, a Brazilian, says the institute currently makes all of the country's antivenom

- around 250,000 10-15 milliliter vials per year. Brazil also donates small quantities of antivenom to several countries in Latin America. There are now plans to sell the life-saving serum abroad to help relieve a global shortage, particularly in Africa. About 5.4 million people are estimated to be bitten by snakes every year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Between 81,000 and 138,000 die, while many more

suffer amputations and other permanent disabilities as a result of the toxin. To cut the number of deaths and injuries, WHO unveiled a plan earlier this year that includes boosting production of quality antivenoms. Brazil is part of the strategy. It could begin to export antivenom as early as next year, Wen says. "There is interest for Butantan to also supply other countries due to the global crisis of antivenom production," she says. — AFP

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### OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY

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

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- Ovarian problems e.g. cysts
- Problems of the fallopian tubes
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- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
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**Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**  
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- 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:**

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- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
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- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- Surgery for reflux disease
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**Dr. Hani Haider**  
General Surgery Consultant  
<http://www.international-clinic.com>  
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**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

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- Single Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
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- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistaloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve-Gastroectomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernia Surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

- American Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- American Board of Colo-Rectal Surgery
- American Board of Surgical Critical Care

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

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**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

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

**Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368**  
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Consultant of General Surgery  
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**Academic Certificates - Training**

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

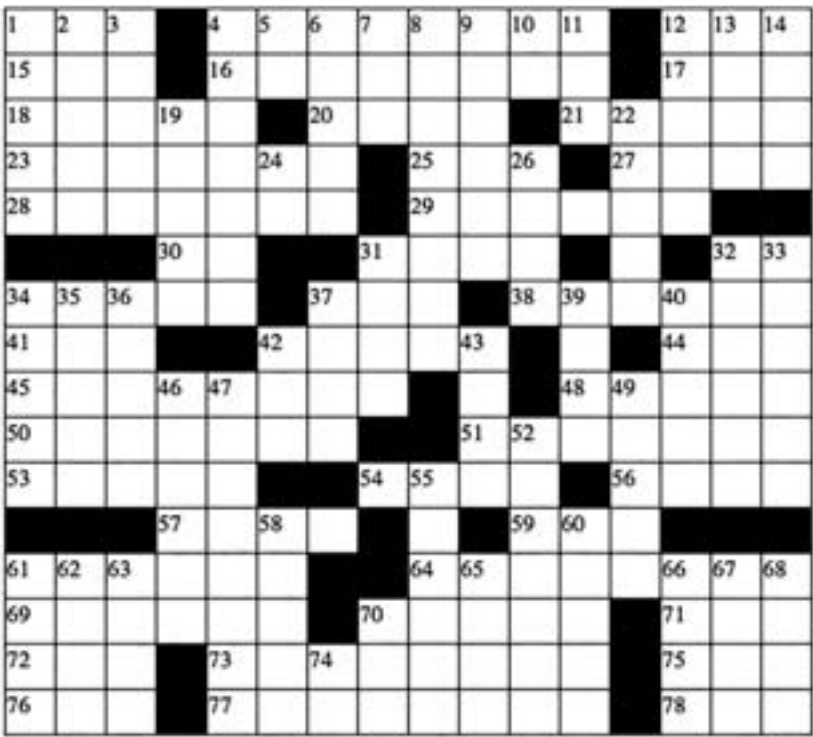
**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

**email: wbuhaimeed@gmail.com Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228**  
**Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 -Closer Center Mazaya Building**



CROSSWORD 2382



ACROSS

- 1. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
- 4. A salt or ester derived from silicic acid.
- 12. A barrier constructed to contain the flow of water or to keep out the sea.
- 15. An engineering university in Cambridge.
- 16. Brilliantly colored Asian pheasant having wattles and two fleshy processes on the head.
- 17. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- 18. The mission in San Antonio where in 1836 Mexican forces under Santa Anna besieged and massacred American rebels who were fighting to make Texas independent of Mexico.
- 20. Something causes misery or death.
- 21. A unit of elastance equal to the reciprocal of a farad.
- 23. A republic in southeastern Europe.
- 25. Hormone released by the hypothalamus that controls the release of thyroid-stimulating hormone from the anterior pituitary.
- 27. Fallow deer.
- 28. The basic unit of money in Mozambique.
- 29. A permanent council of the United Nations.
- 30. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- 34. Fishtail palm of India to Malay Peninsula.
- 38. A small vessel with a rim curved to fit the orbit of the eye.
- 41. A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
- 44. The ball-shaped capsule containing the vertebrate eye.
- 45. A submerged bank of sand near a shore or in a river.
- 48. Produce a literary work.
- 50. (chemistry) Relating to or containing an alkali.
- 51. Loss of the ability to swallow.
- 53. City in Sudan.
- 54. The center of an object.
- 56. In or of the present month.
- 57. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
- 59. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- 61. A state in northwestern North America.
- 64. A person with a strong desire for something.
- 69. Aristocratic Italian family of powerful merchants and bankers who ruled Florence in the 15th century.
- 71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 72. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- 73. Dry brandy distilled in the Armagnac district of France.
- 75. An ancient Hebrew unit of capacity equal to 10 baths or 10 ephahs.
- 76. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
- 77. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- 78. Used of a single unit or thing.

DOWN

- 1. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
- 2. German poet (born in Austria) whose imagery and mystic lyricism influenced 20-th century German literature (1875-1926).

- 3. The beginning of anything.
- 4. Seeming unaffected by pleasure or pain.
- 5. A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
- 6. A brief description given for purposes of identification.
- 7. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- 8. Lack of respect accompanied by a feeling of intense dislike.
- 9. A short synopsis.
- 10. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
- 11. Either extremity of something that has length.
- 12. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimat- ter and the positron (1902-1984).
- 13. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- 14. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 19. A member of a North American Indian people living east of the Sacramento riv- er in California.
- 22. The clay from which adobe bricks are made.
- 24. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- 26. Socks and stockings and tights collec- tively (the British include underwear as hosiery).
- 31. Tough protective covering of the woody stems and roots of trees and other woody plants.
- 32. English botanical writer and publisher (1746-1799).
- 33. Pleasantly (even unrealistically) opti- mistic.
- 35. A republic in southern Europe on the Italian Peninsula.
- 36. A form of Japanese poetry.
- 37. A bluish-white lustrous metallic element.
- 39. A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHWH.
- 40. Expandable metal or wooden wedge used by printers to lock up a form within a chase.
- 42. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- 43. Showing characteristics of age, especially having gray or white hair.
- 46. The basic unit of money in Gambia.
- 47. Raspberry native to eastern North America having black thimble-shaped fruit.
- 49. A bar or bars of rolled steel making a track along which vehicles can roll.
- 52. A tricycle (usually propelled by ped- aling).
- 55. Nicaraguan statesman (born in 1945).
- 58. The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
- 60. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
- 62. A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic ele- ment.
- 63. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- 65. A Loish language.
- 66. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- 67. Very dark black.
- 68. Not widely known.
- 70. Cooking utensil consisting of a wide metal vessel.
- 74. A form of address for a man.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are focused and determined to take care of business. You will not let anything, nor anyone stand in your way. You want to get things accomplished and crave organization. You may feel as though there is a place for everyone and everything in your life and you are determined to make sure they are in it. You have zero tolerance for anything or anyone that does not conform to your way of thinking. This could be a very productive time in your life. You will be able to move mountains if you maintain this level of organiza- tion and determination. Your health becomes an additional focus for you as you need to be at your best to accomplish all you have set as goals for your- self. This is a great time and you are making good decisions.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Whether a surprise is good or bad today depends on how you choose to look at life. You can always choose to look at things with a positive atti- tude. Assume things will turn out in your favor and make them happen. Hard work and determination have always been two of the great qualities you possess. You are able to make anything you attempt to do look easy. Others are often envious of your talent. Be sure and keep your workday stress free today. You can use humor to accomplish this, Taurus. You are known for that great sense of humor.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

It seems as if those around you have let down their guard. You may find those close to you truly letting you in and openly sharing more than usual. It seems you have earned the trust of many. You may be seen as someone trustworthy and caring. At every turn you feel there is someone seeking your advice or sharing a story. Do not take on the emotions of others. You are wise and will be able to give great advice, but be careful to not become too involved in the drama. You may have an opportunity today to air out your differences with an old friend. Bury the hatchet and be thankful for a new beginning. Gemini. This friendship could be very beneficial to you in the future.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It may be time to reorganize and restructure your world. You may find you have a new attitude and this gives you a new outlook on life. Happiness is what you seek. A true need to be free from want. You are a hard worker and will find your efforts are not going unnoticed. This is a time to be more conservative. Be sure and focus on the security of your future. The only person you can depend on taking care of you is YOU. Cancer. Keep your thoughts, energy, and focus posi- tive and you will move mountains. This is a great time in your life, enjoy.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

If you take a bottle of soda and shake it up, it will inevitably explode! Your home life seems as if someone has been shaking the bottle. You are on the brink of a blow up concerning your home and family life. It seems the more you do, the more others expect. You may find others having expectations of you that are not humanly possible to achieve. Keep your cool and do only what you can do. Avoid conflict, as this may be your breaking point. Always remember you can not take back words after they are spoken, Leo. Bite your tongue.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find yourself at odds with those around you today. You could encounter obstacles and other bumps in the road that slow your progress and cause you to have to sit back and reevaluate your choices and decisions. You may find you feel you are being deceived or misled by someone who has authority over you. You may feel as if the actions you are being asked to take in the workplace go against your values. This is a time to sit back and watch, rather than speak and a time to put deep thought into your decisions before you act. This may leave you in a disapprov- ing mood and your day overall could bring a level of frustration that leaves you feel- ing defeated. Chin up, Virgo, things will be back to normal soon.

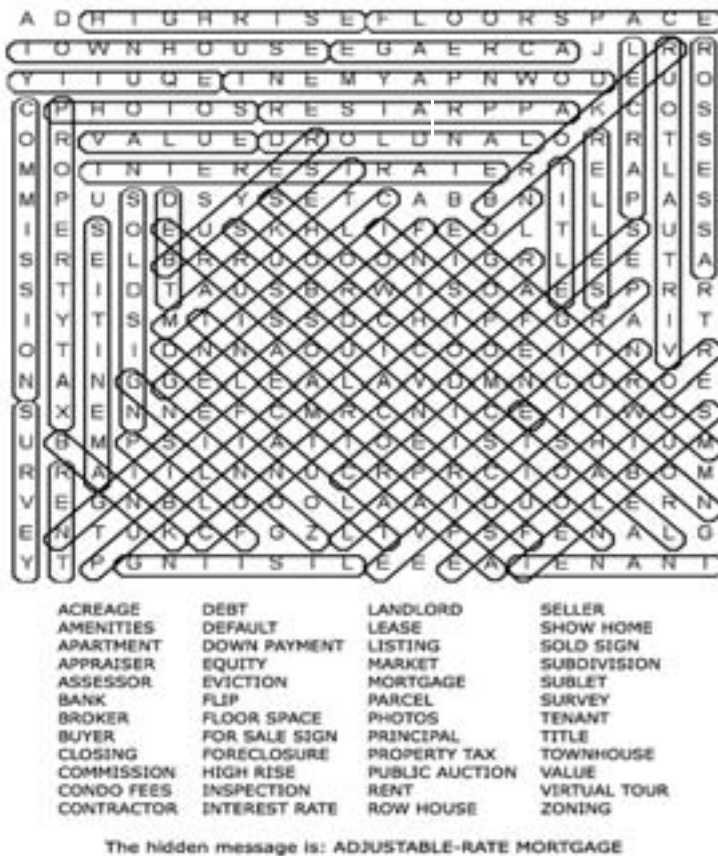
Wordsearch Puzzle

Refrigerator

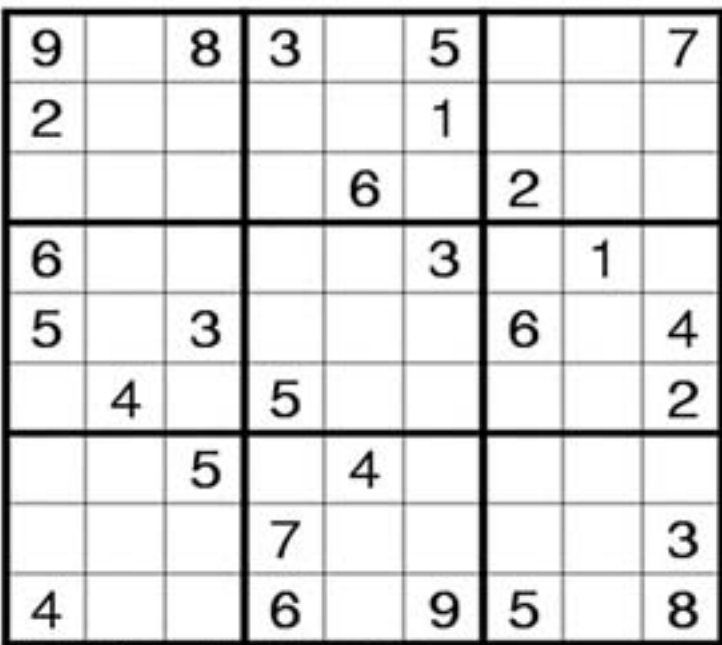
Find and circle all of the refrigerator items that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional item found in many refrigerators.



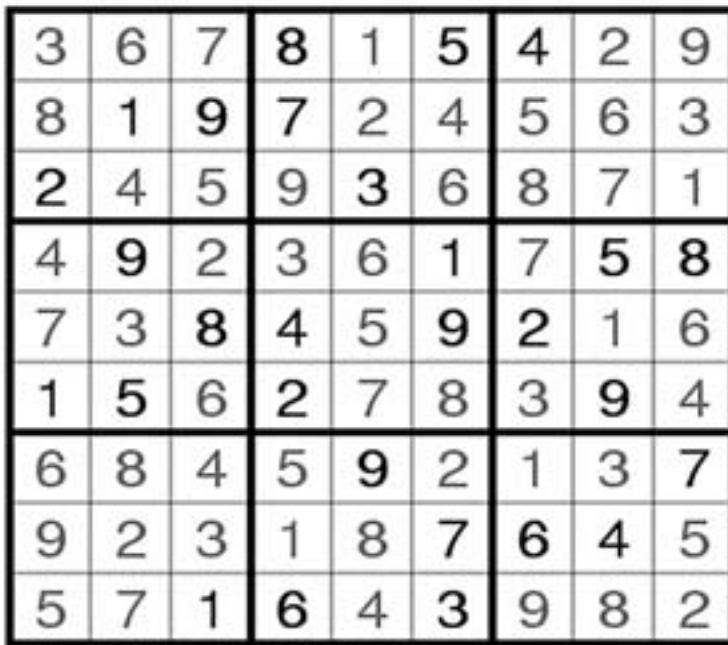
Real Estate 2



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2019



(From left to right) Golden Globe Ambassador Dylan Brosnan, Actress Dakota Fanning, Actor Tim Allen, Actress Susan Kelechi Watson and Golden Globe Ambassador Paris Brosnan pose on stage after the 77th Annual Golden Globe Awards nominations announcement at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills. — AFP Photos

## NETFLIX DOMINATES GOLDEN GLOBES NOMS; 'MARRIAGE STORY' SCOOPS SIX

Hollywood disruptor Netflix dominated the Golden Globe nominations Monday as its heart-wrenching divorce saga "Marriage Story" grabbed six nods including best drama, kicking off the race for the Oscars. The streaming giant, which has spent billions to lure the industry's top filmmaking talent and fund lavish awards season campaigns, trounced the traditional Tinseltown studios with a whopping 17 film nominations.

"I'm not surprised by the dominance-I'm surprised by how massive the dominance is," Lorenzo Soria, president of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, told AFP at the Beverly Hills ceremony. "The announcements this morning are sort of like a coming-of-age of the streaming services." "The Irishman," Martin Scorsese's three-and-a-half-hour gangster epic also from Netflix, secured five nominations, ending tied for second with "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood," Quentin Tarantino's nostalgic love letter to 1960s Tinseltown.

The nominations traditionally see the stars and movies destined for awards success start to break away from the competition-the Globes are seen as a major bellwether for February's Academy Awards. "Marriage Story" earned nominations for its stars Scarlett Johansson and Adam Driver, and for its screenplay, but Noah Baumbach missed out as director. The film portrays how a seemingly stable love can be ripped apart after Johansson's actress moves from New York to Los Angeles, calling in the lawyers as she separates from a self-absorbed theater director played by Driver.

Scorsese was nominated for best director for "Irishman" but there was no best actor nod for his leading man Robert De Niro. Instead, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci were selected for supporting roles. For "Once Upon a Time..." stars Leonardo DiCaprio



Giant Golden Globe trophy are set on stage ahead of the 77th Annual Golden Globe Awards nominations announcement at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills.

and Brad Pitt made the acting shortlists, along with Tarantino for directing. The film helped Sony to reach eight nominations and finish second overall.

### 'Not our people'

Netflix's "The Two Popes," which imagines a series of debates between the strict, conservative Pope Benedict and his charismatic successor Francis, also performed well for the streamer, picking up acting nominations for Jonathan Pryce and Anthony Hopkins.

And Eddie Murphy's comeback vehicle "Dolemite Is My Name" added a further two nomi-

nations for Netflix on the comedy side. The streamer managed three film nods last year, for Mexican black-and-white drama "Roma." The Golden Globes, which feature separate awards for dramas and musicals/comedies, are known for favoring star-studded movies that perform well at the box office, often with scant regard for critics' reviews.

Dark comic book tale "Joker," which has grossed over \$1 billion worldwide despite polarizing critics, was nominated for best drama, best actor (Joaquin Phoenix) and best director (Todd Phillips). But the HFPA's 90-odd members once again did not select any female directors, with "Little Women" helmer Greta Gerwig notably absent. "These are not our people and they do not represent us," tweeted Alma Har'el, director of the snubbed childhood drama "Honey Boy." "Do not look for justice in the awards system. We are building a new world."

### Star power

Underlining its supremacy, Netflix also secured the most television nominations, with 17. The latest series of royal family drama "The Crown," which features an all-new cast led by Olivia Colman, secured a joint-top four nominations. Rival HBO managed 15, although the much-maligned final season of "Game of Thrones" earned just a single nod, for lead actor Kit Harington. New streaming platform Apple TV+, launched last month, secured its first nominations, for flagship launch program "The Morning Show."

Lead actresses Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon, who also executive-produced the series about a morning news program hit by a #MeToo scandal, were both nominated. And Meryl Streep broke her own record to bag a 34th Globe nomination for HBO's "Big Little Lies." Monday's



Presenter Dakota Fanning speaks at the 77th Annual Golden Globe Awards Nominations Announcement at The Beverly Hilton Hotel.

nominations were announced at an early-morning ceremony by actor Tim Allen ("Toy Story") and actresses Dakota Fanning ("I Am Sam") and Susan Kelechi Watson ("This Is Us").

The 77th Golden Globes will take place in Los Angeles on January 5, two days before voting for Oscars nominees ends. Nods for Beyonce, Taylor Swift and Jennifer Lopez across best original song ("The Lion King," "Cats") and best supporting actress ("Hustlers") categories will lend further star power to the gala. The show will be hosted by British comedian Ricky Gervais, returning for a record fifth time. — AFP







Tourists are massaged at the Wat Po Thai traditional massage centre.



A Thai instructor (left) trains his student from Hong Kong at the Wat Po Thai traditional massage school, outside the Wat Po temple complex in Bangkok. Widely practiced across Thailand, from upscale Bangkok spas and Phuket beachfronts to modest local businesses, "nuad"-meaning massage-is up for review for inclusion by UNESCO's committee during its December 9-14 meeting in Bogota.



A Thai instructor (centre left) trains her students from Chile (centre right), France (front right) and a Thai (front left) at the Wat Po Thai traditional massage school.



Tourists get a massage at the Thai traditional massage centre inside the Wat Po temple complex in Bangkok.

# No pain, no fame: Thai massage could get UNESCO status

At Bangkok's Reclining Buddha temple Krairath Chantarasri says he is a proud custodian of a 2,000-year-old skill - the body-folding, sharp-elbowed techniques of Thai massage, which this week could be added to UNESCO's prestigious heritage list. From upscale Bangkok spas and Phuket beach fronts to modest street-side shophouses, "nuad Thai"-or Thai massage-is ubiquitous across the kingdom, where an hour of the back-straightening discipline can cost as little as \$5.

This week it may be added to UNESCO's list of "Intangible Cultural Heritage" when the body meets in the Colombian capital of Bogota (December 9-14). Krairath, who teaches at the Reclining Buddha School inside the famed Wat Pho temple, helps thousands of Thai and foreign students who flock to the centre each year.

The son of a masseuse, he takes great pride in his role sharing the ancient discipline at a temple whose certification is a proud banner for any massage shop. "I'm a continuation of our collective knowledge," the 40-year-old told AFP. At Wat Pho's complex, trainees run through a catalogue of moves targeting the body's acupuncture points with thumbs, elbows, knees and feet also incorporating deep stretches and contortions.

Originating in India, doctors and monks were said to have brought these methods 2,500 years ago to Thailand, passing its secrets from master to disciple in temples and

later within families. Under Thailand's King Rama III in the nineteenth century, scholars engraved their knowledge of the field onto the stones of Wat Pho. But the practice really took off in 1962 thanks to the formation of the school, which has since trained more than 200,000 massage therapists who practice in 145 countries.

**Turning the tables**

Massage employs tens of thousands of Thais. The school's director Preeda Tangtrongchitr says they usually see an uptick of interest from Thais when the economy is bad. "For many people who are disabled or in debt, this job is an opportunity because it requires no material-only

their hands and knowledge," he says.

Today a therapist at a top-end spa can charge around \$100 an hour inside Thailand, two or three times more in London, New York or Hong Kong where the Thai massage brand is booming. But the training is "demanding", says Chilean Sari, a professional masseuse who travelled to Bangkok to learn the discipline. "The technique is very precise, there are so many things to be aware of," the 34-year-old told AFP, as she made rotations with her palm on a fellow student's skull.

The teachings focus on directing blood circulation around problem areas to solve muscle aches-sometimes drawing winces from clients unaccustomed to the force applied. Studies have shown it can help relieve back pain, headaches, insomnia and even anxiety. For Matthieu Rochefolle, a nurse from Lyon, France, adding Thai massage techniques to his repertoire of skills could help his elderly patients aching for relief. "It could also allow me to earn a little more," he says. — AFP



A tourist gets a massage at the Thai traditional massage centre inside the Wat Po temple complex in Bangkok.

# Revving up to a new speed record in Kalahari

A loud hiss rips through the stillness of southern Africa's Kalahari Desert. It sounds like a fighter jet flying low over the Hakskeen Pan, an isolated dry lake bed in South Africa's Northern Cape province, near the Namibian border. Then a thick cloud of sand appears on the horizon, growing steadily as it draws near. In the blink of an eye, a racing car shoots by with a deafening screech and pelts towards the opposite end of the salt pan. The "Bloodhound" is gearing up to try to break the current land speed record, which stands at 760 miles per hour (1,223.657 kilometres per hour). There's still a way to go before the super racer is ready for that attempt, but today driver Andy Green is pleased.

"We have reached 904 kph (561.72 mph)," he says, beaming as he lifts himself out of the cockpit, helmet in hand. "First thing in the morning, plenty of thrust, nice calm wind, so the car ran absolutely straight." The British-built Bloodhound stands sleekly behind him, dust still hovering in its wake. The white parachute that helps it brake lies crumpled on the cracked ochre soil. "Good parachute deployment," adds the Briton, as the vehicle is towed into a large air-conditioned tent nearby. "That's pretty much the perfect run," he says.

**'Jet engine with wheels'**

The Bloodhound was designed exclusively for speed - the team hopes, if possible, to get up to 1,000 mph. The vehicle resembles a wingless jet on aluminium wheels, with a long white body topped by an engine and a stabiliser. Its design is miles ahead of the bullet-shaped electric car in which French aristocrat Gaston de Chasseloup-Laubat set the first land speed record on December 18, 1898 — pushing the vehicle's spoke wheels to 63.15 kph. "You can call it that, a jet engine with wheels, but it's far more sophisticated than that," said Stuart Edmondson, head of Bloodhound operations.

Chief engineer Mark Chapman described the racer as "part Formula 1" and "part jet fighter". "The car, as it is a car, has a steering wheel, has a throttle pedal, has a brake pedal," he told AFP. The engine, built by Rolls Royce, once powered a Royal Air Force (RAF) Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jet. It was recycled from three decommissioned versions of the Typhoon's engine, released by Britain's defence ministry, "without the handbooks", chuckles a Bloodhound team member.

"It's a car designed to go at 1,600 kph," said Chapman, adding that at top speed it would be almost 400 kph faster than a

Typhoon at the same altitude. "The big issues were aerodynamics, keeping it on the ground," he said. "You don't want it to be a plane." As the engine's nine tons of thrust are still unable to break the sound barrier, Chapman and his team plan to give it a boost with... a rocket engine. Green is not intimidated by the prospect. The 57-year RAF pilot has held the current land speed record since 1997.

**Skating**

"It's a very different sensation, to flying a fighter jet, Green told AFP. "A very different environment... (and) vehicle." But the skills and the "second by second" decisions needed to stay in control are like flying a jet fighter "at the limits of its performance", he added. Green said the main difficulty was keeping the land vehicle steady. "The car starts to move around at about 300 kph, at 350 kph it starts to almost skate on the surface," he said. "It's like driving on hard packed snow in a normal car." At such high speed, the slightest mistake or technical glitch can be fatal.

In August, the American professional racer Jessi Combs was killed during a test-run for a land-speed record attempt in Oregon's Alvord Desert in the United States. In the Kalahari, safety is managed by the

Bloodhound team's only female member, Jessica Kinsman. The 39-year-old air traffic controller makes sure to minimise any source of danger along the 16-kilometre desert track. Nothing escapes her eagle eyes, be it the wind factor, obstacles or a slight anomaly in the vehicle's motion.

"Here, it's almost an airfield, there is a runway, there is an aircraft, more or less," said Kinsman comparing the car to a plane, from her viewpoint overlooking the desert in the elevated glass-faced control station. "We have the final say on a number of things," she added, with a smile. Meanwhile, a man discreetly oversees the mechanics as the team busies itself around the Bloodhound in the cool-aided tent. Ian Warhurst is the racer's proud owner. He saved the failing project last year by buying the Bloodhound, which was on the verge of being dismantled and sold as spare parts.

**'Inspiration'**

"I have certainly spent sums of seven figures (in pounds) to get here," Warhurst told AFP. Ex-owner of a turbocharger manufacturer in Britain, he said that amount was "nothing" compared to money "you need to spend for projects like, say, Formula 1 teams". Warhurst, 50, who retired last year after

making his fortune, defended his new carbon-intensive hobby as a source of "inspiration". Breaking the record "would obviously be an amazing thing", he said.

"But it's the journey to get there that is really exciting." And he said that he hoped the team's work would inspire others to advance new technologies, especially in becoming carbon neutral. "So if we can help to inspire engineers to do that, then we're doing our part," Warhurst said. The millionaire said that he hoped the tests in South Africa would help attract other investors.

This desert tryout, which took place between late October and mid-November, has seen the Bloodhound's speedometer needle creep up to 1,010 kph. The car is now headed back to its home base in Britain for more tweaking and the new rocket engine, before its expected return to the Kalahari by mid-2021 for another attempt. Green is already excited at the thought. "I'm very confident there is nothing on the planet with the capability that Bloodhound car has," he said. "I'm confident we are going to break the record." — AFP



Jet-propelled British Bloodhound LSR (Land Speed Record) cars are pictured during preliminary tests at Hakskeenpan in the Northern Cape Province. — AFP



# Revered by Aztecs, Mexican hairless dog in style again in the hipster era

At a stately museum in Mexico City, priceless paintings by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera share pride of place with an unruly pack of hairless black dogs: Mexico's prized xoloitzcuintle. The 13 dogs who reside on the leafy grounds of the Museo Dolores Olmedo are the direct descendants of ones that belonged to Kahlo and Rivera, whose searingly intimate portraits (her) and sprawling murals (him) made them the towering power couple of 20th-century Mexican art.



A Xoloitzcuintle (Ancient Mexican hairless dog) rests on the grass at the garden of the Dolores Olmedo Museum in Mexico City. — AFP photos

Kahlo and Rivera were proud of their Mexican heritage, which made the xoloitzcuintle - a tongue-twister pronounced something like show-low-eats-QUEEN-t-lay - an obvious choice for the family dog. They even put their dogs in their paintings - some of them now on display at the museum where their great-

great-grandpuppies reside.

"Xolos," as they are known for short, are a quintessentially Mexican dog. The ancient species goes back 7,000 years and was first domesticated around 5,500 years ago. The Aztecs named the dog for the god of death, Xolotl, combined with "itzcuintli," or dog. They had themselves buried with xolos so the dogs could guide them to Mictlan, the underworld where they believed life continued after death. The dogs have gone in and out of style since

tion and model to Mexican artists, it has also joined the list of icons that represent Mexican identity, such as Day of the Dead skeletons, Frida Kahlo and the Aztec calendar," said Maria Olvido Moreno, an art historian at Mexico's largest university, UNAM.

### Doggy survivors

Xolos lack hair - though some do have a mohawk on top of their head - because of a genetic mutation that makes their organisms unable to read the DNA for fur, according to experts. They are also known for missing premolar teeth, which leads to another characteristic look: their pink tongues can often be seen lolling out of their mouths. Additionally, their bodies are particularly warm. In ancient times, people with rheumatism or asthma would press the dogs to their bodies as treatment.

By the time, Mexico launched its war for independence from Spain in 1810, the xolo was on the brink of extinction. The Spaniards had spurned the animals as a symbol of what they considered pagan beliefs, and even killed and ate them. But xolos were able to survive largely thanks to the mountains of southern Mexico, a remote region where they lived in the wild before being re-domesticated by indigenous peasant farmers.

But the dogs' big cultural comeback came after the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The revolution ousted dictator Porfirio Diaz and his Europhile ruling class. The new Mexican cultural elite, including Kahlo and Rivera, set about reclaiming long-stigmatized symbols of indigenous identity - not least the xolo. Kahlo (1907-1954) and Rivera (1886-1957) can be seen proudly posing with and cuddling their xolos in black-and-white photos from the mid-20th century.



Xoloitzcuintles (Ancient Mexican hairless dogs) rest by a Xoloitzcuintle statue at the garden of the Dolores Olmedo Museum in Mexico City, Mexico.

Rivera gave a pair of them to their friend Dolores Olmedo, a businesswoman, philanthropist and art collector. Those are the ancestors of the dogs that now roam the grounds of the museum Olmedo established in her former home, which hosts the world's largest collection

of Kahlo and Rivera paintings. There is a statue in the dogs' honor on the museum grounds, and a professional caretaker just for them. "To us, these dogs are living works of art, just like Rivera's and Kahlo's paintings," said curator Josefina Garcia.

### 'Coco' and rock stars

Xolos have become cool once again in the 21st century - the dog of choice for 20- and 30-somethings proud to embrace their Mexican heritage. They have had articles devoted to them in such places as the style pages of The New York Times, were declared an official "icon of Mexico City" in 2016 and are the preferred pooch for residents like Ruben Albarran, frontman for famed rock band Cafe Tacvba. "They have this link to Mexican culture that I love," Albarran told AFP. A xolo also featured prominently in Disney-Pixar's 2017 movie "Coco", which won the Oscar for best animated film.

"Xolos are a good choice for people who are interested in Mexican identity. And a hairless dog makes an excellent pet for fast-moving Mexico City. They can live in an apartment and are easy to care for," said Raul Valadez, an expert at UNAM's paleozoology lab. Proud xolo owner Oscar Gamas, a 43-year-old audio designer in Mexico City, said he, like many people, first got interested in the dogs for their "symbolism." But then he fell in love with his dog Deck's reserved yet fiercely loyal and protective personality. "When you live with one, you discover they have a personality that really sets them apart," he said. — AFP

## CHRISTMAS IN ICELAND MEANS A 'FLOOD' OF BOOKS UNDER THE TREE

In the land of the Sagas, it isn't Christmas if there isn't a deluge of books under the tree - literally. The Jolabokaflod, or Christmas Book Flood, is a much-loved tradition that has been celebrated in Iceland since 1945. It's a bit like Britain's "Super Thursday", when hundreds of hardbacks hit the shelves on the first Thursday of October, but much bigger: two-thirds of books in Iceland are published in November and December. Hundreds of new titles go on sale in bookshops and supermarkets at reduced prices, a yuletide custom that has also become vital for the publishing industry's survival.

Gudmundur, have already picked the books they want out of the "Bokatidindi", an 80-page catalogue of novels, poetry and children's books distributed free of charge to all households. The 2019 catalogue features 842 new titles. Almost seven out of 10 Icelanders buy at least one book as a Christmas gift, according to the Icelandic Publishers Association.

### 'To be Icelandic is to read'

Iceland's literary tradition was born about 900 years ago with the Sagas, widely seen as a gem in world literature and still studied in school by Icelandic children

Danish rule. The custom "has something to do with the importance of literature during the Icelandic fight for independence and the Icelandic search for identity: part of being an Icelander was to read books," said Halldor Gudmundsson, an author and the former head of Iceland's biggest publisher, Forlagid.

While books are increasingly being published at other times of the year, the Jolabokaflod remains crucial for the publishing industry, accounting for 40 percent of book sales in 2018, according to Statistics Iceland. "It's so important that if this tradition dies, Icelandic publishing

most titles per capita behind Britain, according to the International Publishers Association.

Around one in 10 Icelanders publishes a book in their lifetime. And they're big readers. The country counts more than 83 libraries - one for every 4,300 inhabitants. More than 90 percent of Icelanders read at least one book a year, and half read more than eight a year, according to a 2013 study from Bifrost University. In particular, the country has a thriving appetite for crime fiction and boasts a host of crime writers, who over the last couple of decades have placed it on the world map of police detective novels alongside their Swedish, Norwegian or Danish counterparts.

### Industry struggles

Some books are bought during the Jolabokaflod at supermarkets, where bookshelves are set up near the produce, frozen foods or bread sections, at hard-to-resist prices. At full price, the average hardback costs 6,990 kronur (about 52 euros, \$57), more than twice the cost in France or Britain. "You can't buy books all year because you would just go broke," says Brynjolfur Thorsteinsson, a 28-year-old sales assistant at Mal og menning, one of Iceland's oldest bookshops in Reykjavik.

Part of the high cost comes from the value-added tax (VAT) on books, hiked from seven to 11 percent in 2015, which comes on top of already high printing and import costs - as Iceland has almost no forests, books have to be printed abroad. The high prices have had a negative impact on the book market, with sales almost slashed in two since 2010. In a bid to support the industry, the government decided this year to reimburse 25 percent of the production costs for books published in Icelandic, for both original and translated works. — AFP

### Writing is in Icelanders' blood

The deluge of books can however make it difficult for authors to break through. "Unfortunately, so many good books just drown in the flood," admits thriller writer Lilja Sigurdardottir, whose works have been translated into English and French. Iceland may be the most sparsely populated country in Europe, but it publishes the



Visitors check out the Iceland pavilion featuring giant projections of people reading, at the Frankfurt Book Fair, where Iceland was the guest of honour. — AFP photos

On Christmas Eve, Icelanders traditionally exchange books and spend the evening reading - perhaps curling up by the fireside with the latest crime novel by Arnaldur Indridason, who's topped best-seller lists for the past two decades in his native country of 360,000 people. "Literature is very important in Iceland and it is, I guess, the art form that is something the whole public can relate to," artist and mother-of-two Sigrun Hrolfsdottir, who lives in Selfjarnarnes, a small district in the Reykjavik area, told AFP.

Her daughter and son, Duna and

today. The Icelandic Sagas describe events among inhabitants of Iceland in the 10th and 11th centuries. Written in the 13th century, they focus on history, especially genealogical and family history, reflecting the settlers' struggles and conflicts. The Jolabokaflod dates back to the end of World War II, when Iceland, a poor country, imposed strict currency restrictions that limited imports.

But paper remained affordable, so books became the Christmas gift of choice. Iceland had also just gained independence after seven centuries of Norwegian and

## Great day for losers: Wimpy Kid author gets French medal

The Wimpy Kid has finally done good - and his creator Jeff Kinney has even got a medal from France to prove it. The American creator of the bestseller "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" books was made an officer of France's Order of Arts and Letters on Monday, an honour also conferred on Nobel laureates T. S. Eliot and Seamus Heaney as well as music megastars such as Bono and David Bowie. As the medal was pinned to his chest, Kinney, 48, said he never expected his stories to become such a cult children's hit, selling more than 200 million copies worldwide and spawning four movies. In fact, the cartoonist said that the misadventures of 12-year-old weakling Greg Heffley was initially aimed at adults nostalgic for their middle-school years.

But the geeky loser was quickly adopt-

ed as a hilarious anti-hero by a generation of children and teenagers. "I always wanted to be a newspaper cartoonist," Kinney confessed. "But I didn't have the artistic talent." His eureka moment came "one day when I realised if I drew at my talent level, which was at the level of an 11- or 12-year-old boy," it might work. "The biggest surprise to me is being published at all, because the format was so unusual I didn't think it would be published."

### The kids are cool

"I fully expected 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' would be rejected. So I think it's crazy it's in 64 languages now and I'm thrilled that it's translated into French," he told reporters. Three million copies of the books have been sold in France alone. "I think this is really incredible. I grew up in

Maryland and I studied French when I was in 7th grade and I never could have imagined coming here and being honoured in this way," Kinney added.

The father-of-two said he is convinced that children are much more rounded than they were when he was growing up. "I think that kids self-identify with being a nerd or a wimp in a way that they didn't when I was growing up. "I think that kids are much more comfortable in their own skin these days, and that's a really good thing," he added. Kinney, who has become an advocate for limiting screen time for children, has opened a community bookshop called An Unlikely Story in his adopted hometown of Plainville, Massachusetts, where he also has his studio. — AFP



A man stands in front of paintings by Pierre Soulages during a press visit prior to the exhibition's opening at the Louvre museum, in Paris. — AFP

## Man in black: Soulages gets Louvre tribute for 100th birthday

They call him art's man in black. Artist Pierre Soulages has painted primarily in black for eight decades - foreswearing all other colours since 1979. Now the Louvre museum in Paris is marking his 100th birthday with a rare tribute to a living artist. Twenty works - out of more than 1,700 canvasses he has produced over his long career - will be shown in a special three-month show, which opens Wednesday. The French master, still working despite turning 100 on Christmas Eve, may yet make the opening in the face of a national strike which has paralysed France's rail network.

The Pompidou Centre in Paris, which staged a huge Soulages retrospective in 2009, is also getting in on the celebrations by showing 14 of its collection of 25 paintings. Having worked mostly in black since 1946, Soulages began his voyage to the dark heart of the colour in 1979 with a series of paintings called "outrenoir", or beyond black. Since then, no other colour has appeared on his canvasses. Naturally, he also dresses in black. "Black is never the same because the light is always changing it," Soulages told AFP in his studio earlier this year.

### Dark obsession

He described black as "a very active colour" that "lights up when you put it next to a dark colour". "Black isn't the colour of mourning, white is," he said in his spotless atelier in the Mediterranean town of Sete. Soulages is France's most celebrated and expensive artist, with one of his black canvasses selling for 9.6 million euros (\$10.5 million) at auction in Paris last month.

He is also the first living painter ever to be exhibited at the Hermitage museum in Saint Petersburg. Hailed as "the world's greatest living artist" by former French president Francois Hollande, Soulages admits to being a fierce perfectionist. If a painting is not 100 percent satisfactory, it will never see the light of day. "I burn the canvas outside. If it is mediocre, it goes," he told AFP.

The Louvre exhibition will trace the development of Soulages's work from the end of World War II to the present day. His principal technique involves scraping, digging and etching thick layers of paint with rubber spoons or tiny rakes to create different textures that absorb or reject light, subtly changing the monotonous black. Born in 1919 in Rodez, southern France - where a museum is now dedicated to his work - even as a child he was obsessed with black. — AFP





David Datuna, the performance artist who ate a banana Saturday afternoon in Miami at Art Basel, speaks during a press conference in New York. — AFP

# Banana-eating performance artist was ‘hungry’

Performance artist David Datuna waited two hours until “I was hungry” before eating a pricey banana artwork in Miami, he explained with laughter on Monday after returning to New York. “It’s the first time one artist eats art of another artist,” he said in a mirth-filled press conference. The Tbilisi-born Datuna, who has lived in New York for 22 years, shook up the Art Basel Florida modern art show Saturday when he ate the real banana that had been plastered to the wall as part of a work by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. The work had been sold for \$120,000. In spite of the price, “it tasted like a regu-

lar banana,” Datuna said. Datuna added that he didn’t need the publicity. But he basked in his latest exploit, boasting that a video of his “performance” had generated 40,000 to 50,000 messages on Instagram, many of them congratulatory. Georgian-born artist Datuna praised Cattelan, who is perhaps best known for his work “America,” a toilet made of 18-carat gold. Cattelan’s ideas are “genius,” said Datuna, who has never met the Italian. “But I like also what I did.” Datuna has previously shown works at the Smithsonian Institute’s National Portrait Gallery in Washington and recently

opened a gallery in Long Island City, New York. In June 2017, shortly after President Donald Trump announced he would withdraw the US from the Paris climate agreement, Datuna created a work with Trump’s name in dry ice on a Manhattan sidewalk. The installation, titled “this too shall pass,” gradually melted as New Yorkers gawked at the work. Datuna said he has planned his next surprise for the Super Bowl, the National Football League championship on February 2, also in Miami. — AFP

# Child’s play: Coding booms among Chinese children

Wearing a pair of black-rimmed glasses and a red T-shirt, an eight-year-old Chinese boy is logged in for an online coding lesson - as the teacher. Vita has set up a coding tutorial channel on the Chinese video streaming site Bilibili since August and has so far garnered nearly 60,000 followers and over one million views. He is among a growing number of children in China who are learning coding even before they enter primary school. The trend has been fuelled by parents’ belief that coding skills will be essential for Chinese teenagers given the government’s technological drive.

“Coding’s not that easy but also not that difficult - at least not as difficult as you have imagined,” says Vita, who lives in Shanghai. The little boy uses his channel to patiently take his students - who are mostly children older than him and young adults - step-by-step through an Apple-designed coding app called Swift Playgrounds Explaining as he goes, he sometimes deliberately makes mistakes to help show common errors to avoid.

“When I am teaching, I am learning new things at the same time,” adds Vita. China has been making huge investments in robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI), with the government issuing in 2017 an AI development plan which suggested programming courses be taught in both primary and secondary schools. China published its first AI textbook last year, while eastern Zhejiang province listed programming as one subject for its college entrance examination.

For Vita it was his father, Zhou Ziheng, who has been his main support, editing his videos and helping to run the channel. Zhou, a freelance translator of scientific

and technology books, started to teach his son how to write codes when he was five years old. “I learnt coding when I was young, so I always believed that Vita learning coding at this age was something normal,” he said. When Vita was four, they started off by playing some coding-related games together, which used icons to replace codes.

After seeing that Vita played these games very well, Zhou decided to help him work on some real codes. This summer, Vita surprised his father by successfully rewriting the codes in an app which didn’t work in an updated system by himself. “I suggested to him to record how he rewrote these codes,” said Zhou, and the idea for online classes was born. Most comments on Vita’s online videos express amazement that he can write code and even teach others at such a young age. “I just learnt how to use the computer when I was eight,” wrote one.



Parents and guardians wait outside a children’s computer coding training centre in Beijing.



Zhou Ziheng (center) and his son Vita (left) walks home in Shanghai. Wearing a pair of black-rimmed glasses and a red T-shirt, an eight-year-old Chinese boy is logged in for an online coding lesson as the teacher.



A pupil (left) reads a book outside a classroom as a woman waits to attend a class at a children’s computer coding training centre in Beijing. — AFP Photos

# Paris Opera ballet dancers hang up shoes in protest

When tens of thousands of French workers downed tools and took to the streets in protest against pension reform last Thursday, in their midst was a seemingly unlikely group of aggrieved picketers: ballet dancers from the Paris Opera. More accustomed to gliding across stages to orchestral melodies than pounding the pavement to the rhythm of angry chants, the dancers doffed their pointe shoes to defend a special retirement regime they have enjoyed since 1689 under the reign of the Opera’s founder, the Sun King Louis XIV.



In this file photo, Juice WRLD performs during McDonaldis Beat Of My City Chicago in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Though by no means their first strike, “in 20 years with this company, this is the first time that I saw dancers in the streets,” said Alexandre Carniato, a dancer and troupe representative on pension matters. Of 154 dancers employed at the prestigious opera house, “we were 120 who demonstrated, from the corps de ballet to the principals,” he told AFP.

The arts have been a major casualty of the strike, which caused the cancellation of several top ballet, opera, and theatre shows in Paris, disappointing tourists and locals who need to book long in advance for the pricey seats. The Opera said 11 shows have been cancelled at both its historic Garnier stage and the modern Bastille venue since the strike started last Thursday, representing a loss of 1.8 million euros (\$2 million) in ticket revenues. The performances cancelled have included the great classical ballet “Raymonda”, the modern ballet “Le Parc” and a hugely ambitious new production of Borodin’s opera “Prince Igor”. And it is far from the only French cultural institution to take a hit. The Comedie-Francaise, France’s most prestigious theatre — which also has a special pension regime - cancelled performances as some of its staff went on strike.

## Hired at 16

Carniato has just a year left before the obligatory retirement age of 42 for Paris Opera dancers brings the curtain down on his career. The limit was set by taking into account the physical arduousness of the job, the high injury risk, and the assumption that most dancers cannot not continue performing at their best beyond a certain age. “The Paris Opera Ballet is the only employer in France to train its future employees from the age of eight,” tweeted dancer Adrien Couvez, adding the rate of work accidents in the sector “are among the highest in France.”

From the moment a dancer “is hired by the Opera at 16, we have work days that last from 9:00 am to 11:30 pm... The older one gets, the more one worries about not being able to keep it up,” said Carniato. “At 40, some already have titanium (replacement) hips.” Carniato said he would earn a pension of 1,067 euros (\$1,180) per month from next year, which would augment what he expects to be a salary of about 1,200 if he manages to find work as a school teacher. “The biggest concern is finding a new job at the age of 42,” he said. These, the dancers say, are among the reasons for the special pension provision they now fear will be taken away. But they are defending a regime that is envied by counterparts dancing for highly regarded ballet companies in cities like Bordeaux or Toulouse. “The dancers of the Paris Opera are the only ones in France with this advantageous retirement age of 42 years,” tweeted Marc Ribaud, ballet director at the Opera of Nice in southern France. “All the other dancers have mainly part-time jobs with nothing at the end of it!”

## Musicians on strike too

The government’s reform plan seeks to unify 42 separate pension schemes into a single points-based system for all workers, which it says will be fairer, with fewer exceptions for certain sectors - including rail workers who retire earlier than most. The French state covers half of the Paris Opera’s pension fund, about 14 million euros per year. On top of its dancers, several other Opera workers are also on strike, including musicians and machine operators. French Culture Minister Franck Riester confirmed to BFM TV that the Paris Opera’s special regime would disappear. “But does this mean that we will not take into account the realities of... certain jobs? Of course not,” he said, without giving details. — AFP

# Juice WRLD death sends shudder through ‘SoundCloud rap’ world

The shock death of artist Juice WRLD has renewed mainstream focus on the “SoundCloud rappers,” a hip hop subgenre whose angsty, jagged sound has taken the internet - and the charts - by storm. The unpolished movement takes its name from the Berlin-headquartered platform where its artists launched to fame, a streaming site started in 2007 that lends itself to discovery without the traditional gatekeepers. But once seen as hip hop’s disruptors, the scene is increasingly succumbing to a tragic fate: rapper Juice WRLD’s weekend death, causes still unknown, was only the latest to strike the subgenre.

The DIY site SoundCloud once was rap’s Wild West, where wannabe musicians uploaded their rough, often emotionally vulnerable music, promoting it to their digitally savvy fan base elsewhere on social media. The movement’s aesthetic fed the music’s virality: neon-dyed dreads bloomed from rappers’ skulls like mushrooming highlighter bouquets, as their signature facial tattoos promoted traction on sites like Instagram. The young crop of

rappers cultivated a lo-fi sound with a case of the blues, often centering on depression’s wounds - and the prescription drugs that can dull the ache.

“Numb the pain, take these Percs to the mouth and the nose,” crooned Juice WRLD in his song “HeMotions,” off the 2019 album “Death Race For Love.” “I’m not a drug addict, got it all wrong / I’m just a love addict ‘til my heart gone.” The artists regularly cite use of the anxiety drug Xanax, the painkiller Percocet, and the concoction known as “lean” or “purple drank.” The brew that originated in the US south is typically prescription-grade cough syrup - which contains the opiate codeine - mixed with soda, and sometimes also hard candy or alcohol.

## Art, fast and dirty

In recent years the SoundCloud rappers took their chaotic energy mainstream, as the buzzy scene triggered bidding wars among labels to sign music’s latest shiny object. According to US media, rough estimates of major deals included \$8 million to the hyperactive 19-year-old Lil Pump and

\$10 million to XXXTentacion, who signed weeks before his murder in 2018. Streaming’s reign set the stage for the SoundCloud rappers’ volcanic rise, allowing artists to evade the industry’s traditional power brokers and drop music whenever they wanted. SoundCloud is also a haven for DJs, and 17-year-old breakout superstar Billie Eilish first went viral there.

But rap is the dominating force in the industry today, accounting for about a quarter of on-demand streams in 2018, according to market monitor BuzzAngle. Rappers “as a group are making music about what’s happening today - and making it available,” said Larry Miller, director of New York University’s music business program. “I think they got the power of free, or cheap, music-making tools and free music distribution faster and in larger numbers than other genres did,” he told AFP. “They are just putting the art out there - and doing it fast.”

## Emotionally raw

But though the SoundCloud rappers appeared a burgeoning force, the movement appears to be imploding. A hip hop mutation with a punk spirit, many of its figures lead volatile, sometimes crime-ridden lives. Its outlaw artist XXXTentacion - who broke out with the lurid hit “Look At Me!” - was murdered at age 20. He already had a string of charges to his name, including false imprisonment and domestic abuse for allegedly beating his pregnant girlfriend.

And the 23-year-old Tekashi69, seeking leniency on racketeering and weapons

charges, this year was a star government witness at the trial of alleged former gang associates. Others have succumbed to the demons evoked in their art: Juice WRLD’s death followed the passing of fellow rapper Lil Peep, sometimes dubbed SoundCloud’s Kurt Cobain, who suffered an accidental overdose of fentanyl and Xanax in 2017.

Though the musical movement is sometimes overshadowed by associated drugs and violence, lyrically the subgenre marked a shift for hip hop. The bars get emotionally raw, and are sometimes less akin to traditional hip hop than 2000s-era emo rock bands like Panic! at the Disco. Juice WRLD - whose breakout hit “Lucid Dreams” last year stayed for months in the top 10 of Billboard’s hottest songs - was particularly known for exploring weighty themes including mortality and heartache, contrasting foreboding beats with tender, melodic hooks.

“I feel like people are not afraid to touch on all their emotions,” the rapper told NPR prior to his death, in an unpublished interview the outlet released in part upon his passing. “Back in the day, especially when everybody was trying to act hard all the time, I feel like people just wasn’t touching on that side of their life,” he continued. “I feel as though some of the people now are more mature and more grown than the people back then because they talk about everything that they went through.” “Everything, not just the violence.” — AFP



# Classifieds

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

**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:** Partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate north easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

**BY NIGHT:** Rather cool and Partly cloudy with light to moderate north easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

WEATHER WATCH			Fog	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<b>SFC. CHART</b> 10/12/2019 0000 UTC 	
KUWAIT CITY	19 °C	15 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	19 °C	14 °C		
ABDALY	18 °C	09 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	18 °C	13 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	20 °C	16 °C		
AHMADI	18 °C	17 °C		
NUWAISIB	20 °C	18 °C		
WAFRA	19 °C	14 °C		
SALMY	18 °C	09 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST					
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.	
Wednesday	12/11	Mostly Sunny	22 °C	13 °C	VRB-NW 08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	12/12	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered rain, later on	22 °C	12 °C	VRB-SE 08 - 28 km/h
Friday	12/13	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rising dust with a chance for rain that might be	23 °C	15 °C	SE-NW 20 - 50 km/h
Saturday	12/14	Partly cloudy and Rather cool	21 °C	11 °C	N-NW 08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:07
Sunrise	06:32
Zuhr	11:41
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:50
Isha	18:12

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	20 °C
MIN. Temp.	07 °C
MAX. RH	94 %
MIN. RH	31 %
MAX. Wind	NE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## REQUIRED

### Manicurist/Pedicurist

For a well-known salon  
*Timing 9am – 1pm / 4pm – 8pm*

Please call

**22635544**

## REQUIRED

### Receptionist cum Bookkeeping

For a well-known salon  
*Timing 9am – 1pm / 4pm – 8pm*

Please call

**22635544**

### SHARING ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation for Filipino ONLY Farwaniya block 4, near Big Jamiya, available on December 25, Contact 55571873. 11-12-2019

have changed my name as Sadia Sumbul (new name) for all purposes. (C 5695) 10-12-2019

**I, John Ivon D Souza** (old name) S/o Domnic Dsouza residing at Door No. 4-56(1), Sonu compound, Padubelle Post, Via Shirva, Kaup Taluk Udipi District of Karnataka. Have changed my name as John Ivon Dsouza (new name) for all purpose vide affidavit dated 05-12-2019 sworn before notary Nagaraja Hegde, Udupi. 9-12-2019

### CHANGE OF NAME

**I, Sumbul Sadia** (old name), D/o Mohammad Mokhtar Ahmad, resident of new Azimabad colony Sandalpur road, Mahendru, Bahadurpur, Patna, Bihar, Passport No. 52395655

**EMERGENCY ☎ 112**

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CivilID card is **1889988**



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

## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 11/12/2019					Departure Flights on Wednesday 11/12/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	QTR	1075
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	UAE	871	Luxembourg	12:45	IGO	1756
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	KAC	774	Dubai	12:45	NIA	1504
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	JZR	212	Riyadh	13:35	KIS	6033
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	RBG	213	Jeddah	13:45	TBZ	6606
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00	IAW	158
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	UAE	877	Dubai	14:00	RBG	554
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	JZR	152	Mashhad	14:05	JZR	115
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	SAW	702
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	788	Bahrain	14:15	MSR	611
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	THY	767
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	UAE	872
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	QTR	1078	Doha	14:25	CLX	7912
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	364	Colombo	14:35	RBG	218
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:35	KNE	382
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45	GFA	222
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45	KAC	673
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	562	Amman	14:50	JZR	103
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC	618	Doha	14:50	FDB	060
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:50	UAE	878
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55	QTR	1079
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	118	Mashhad	14:55	SVA	501
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE	529	New York	15:00	JZR	125
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	412	Jeddah	15:05	KNE	530
NIA	1604	Luxor	03:10	ETD	303	Bangkok	15:10	KAC	105
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	645	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC	563
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	ABY	127	Muscat	15:20	JZR	405
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	UAE	857	Sharjah	15:35	KAC	743
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	546	Dubai	15:45	KAC	775
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	SVA	504	Cairo	15:50	ABY	128
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	FEQ	341	Madinah	16:00	ETD	304
RBG	1153	Asyut	04:10	JZR	732	Cairo	16:00	OMA	646
ETH	3424	Bahrain	04:15	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10	KAC	785
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10	KAC	619
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15	FEQ	242
JZR	1738	Cairo	04:45	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	MSR	576
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00	SVA	505
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	JZR	116	Doha	17:05	FDB	052
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	OMS	225	Doha	17:10	QTR	1073
IGO	1759	Delhi	05:10	SVA	510	Muscat	17:10	KAC	361
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	GFA	215	Riyadh	17:10	KAC	155
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	214	Bahrain	17:30	KAC	503
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	158	Jeddah	17:35	UAE	858
RBG	215	Sohag	05:35	JZR	104	Sharjah	17:50	KAC	283
UAE	873	Dubai	05:40	QTR	1080	Dammam	18:00	OMS	226
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	MSR	620	Bahrain	18:00	KAC	343
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	UAE	875	Doha	18:10	KAC	381
BAW	157	London	06:10	FDB	063	Cairo	18:30	SAW	706
KAC	708	Luxor	06:15	GFA	217	Dubai	18:35	SVA	511
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	RJA	640	Paris	18:35	KAC	615
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	JZR	306	Dubai	18:35	JZR	721
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	ABY	123	Frankfurt	18:35	GFA	216
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	KAC	744	Jeddah	18:40	JZR	127
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	674	Dubai	18:45	JZR	403
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	776	London	18:50	JZR	733
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	FDB	057	Muscat	19:00	JZR	2081
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	104	Doha	19:00	QTR	1053
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	KAC	166	Beirut	19:05	MSR	621
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KNE	381	Cairo	19:10	FDB	064
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	OMA	647	Dubai	19:15	GFA	218
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	NIA	1503	Sharm el-Sheikh	19:15	KAC	331
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	DLH	624	Beirut	19:20	ABY	124
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	MEA	402	Amman	19:20	RJA	641
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	126	Bahrain	19:25	FDB	058
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	620	Doha	19:30	KAC	351
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	QTR	1088	Doha	19:35	JZR	401
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:15	RBG	217	Asyut	19:35	UAE	876
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	172	Frankfurt	19:40	KNE	232
GOW	061	CNN	09:30	KLM	445	Amsterdam	19:40	KAC	353
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	19:45	OMA	648
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	UAE	859	Dubai	19:45	NIA	1406
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	ALK	229	Colombo	19:50	MEA	403
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	KAC	168	Paris	19:55	KAC	301
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	THY	764	Istanbul	20:00	RBG	214
GFA	213	Beirut	10:40	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:00	QTR	1089
MEA	404	Doha	10:55	GFA	219	Doha	20:05	DHX	171
QTR	1074	Mashhad	11:00	KAC	564	Doha	20:10	MSR	621
KIS	6032	Cairo	11:05	QTR	1082	Ahmedabad	20:15	FDB	064
JZR	1736	Doha	11:10	JAV	621	Dubai	20:20	GFA	218
IGO	1755	Sohag	11:30	KAC	786	Dammam	20:25	KAC	331
NIA	1405	Dubai	11:40	SVA	514	Riyadh	20:30	ABY	124
JZR	122	Mashhad	11:45	AIC	975	Mangalore	20:35	RJA	641
KIS	6032	Mashhad	11:55	JZR	128	Bahrain	20:40	FDB	058
TBZ	6605	Al Najaf	12:00	MSC	411	Dubai	20:45	KAC	351
IAW	157	Damascus	12:30	MSR	614	Cairo	20:50	KAC	551
SAW	701	Alexandria	12:30	FDB	071	Jeddah	21:00	JAV	622
RBG	553	Istanbul	12:30			Mashhad	21:05	QTR	1083
THY	766	Bahrain	12:30			Jeddah	21:10	SVA	515
KAC	614							SVA	503



## News

# World's youngest PM takes office in Finland

**HELSINKI:** Finland's Sanna Marin, 34, was officially appointed as the country's prime minister yesterday, becoming the world's youngest sitting head of government. The former transport minister takes the helm of a coalition of five parties that will all be led by women, once the prime minister takes over as head of her Social Democratic party next year. All but one of the female coalition leaders are aged under 35.

Marin became Finland's third female prime minister after her nomination was passed in parliament by 99 votes to 70 yesterday and President Sauli Niinisto officially appointed the new center-left cabinet. She succeeds Antti Rinne, who resigned last week after losing the trust of one of his coalition parties over his handling of a postal strike. Marin has made global headlines for becoming not only Finland's youngest ever leader, but also the world's youngest sitting head of government, ahead of Ukraine's Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk who is currently 35.

But yesterday, Marin deflected questions about the international attention she has received over becoming the world's youngest premier. "My own thoughts have been on practical things and this week, I haven't followed what the press have been writing very much either at home or abroad," she told reporters outside parliament. Earlier this week she said: "I have never thought about my age or gender, I think of the reasons I got into politics and those things for which we have won the trust of the electorate."

Marin grew up looked after by her mother and her mother's girlfriend, and said that her "rainbow family" showed her the importance of "equality, fairness and human rights". In a 2015 interview, Marin said she felt 'invisible' as a child, because she could not speak openly about her family setup. She has also said that her child-



**HELSINKI:** Ministers of the new Finnish government, led by Prime Minister Sanna Marin (center) pose for a family photo yesterday. — AFP

hood has strongly influenced her political priorities, which include protecting Finland's generous welfare system and low levels of inequality. "I come from a poor family and would not have been able to succeed and move forward were it not for the strong welfare state and the Finnish education system," she told Helsingin Sanomat.

The Social Democrats took office in June after defeating the far-right, anti-immigration Finns Party by the narrowest of margins in April's general election. The victory was seen by some commentators as a triumph for Finland's liberal, equal society over a party that ran on a ticket of cutting asylum levels almost to zero and

halting anti-climate change measures. Speaking after yesterday's parliamentary vote, Marin pledged to rebuild trust in her party. "We have promised the Finnish people change and now we must deliver on that promise. In June we agreed a government program together and I believe it is through actions that we will

## Democrats announce two impeachment charges against Trump

**WASHINGTON:** Democrats unveiled two articles of impeachment yesterday against US President Donald Trump after weeks of arguing there is overwhelming evidence that the US leader abused his office and deserves to be removed. If the charges - abuse of power and obstruction of Congress - are approved by the full House of Representatives in a vote expected next week, it would put Trump in the historic position of being the third US leader ever impeached and placed on trial in the Senate.

"Our president holds the ultimate public trust," said House Judiciary Committee Jerry Nadler. "When he betrays that trust and puts himself before country, he endangers the constitution, he endangers our democracy and he endangers our national security." Nadler, in a solemn and deeply serious moment for the nation, was joined by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in the US Capitol to lay out the charges facing Trump.

The president is alleged to have wielded the power of the presidency for personal and political gain by

pressuring Ukraine to interfere in the 2020 US election. His accusers say he conditioned vital military aid and a much-sought White House meeting on Kiev announcing it would investigate Democratic former vice president Joe Biden, who is the frontrunner to challenge Trump in the 2020 election. He also pressed his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky to probe a debunked Kremlin conspiracy theory that it was Kiev, and not Moscow, that interfered in the 2016 US election.

The charges also focus on Trump's efforts to block Congress from fully investigating his actions - which Democrats see as a violation of its constitutional right to conduct oversight of the executive branch. "The evidence of the president's misconduct is overwhelming and uncontested," said House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff, who oversaw weeks of public hearings in which witnesses including Trump administration officials and US diplomats testified about the pressure on Ukraine.

"To do nothing would make ourselves complicit in the president's abuse of his high office," Schiff said, adding that Trump's "misconduct goes to the heart of whether we can conduct a free and fair election in 2020." Trump, who has long assailed the Democrats for pursuing impeachment, maintained his fighting posture early yesterday, tweeting that the effort to oust him as "sheer Political Madness!" — AFP

Prize, will spur the parties to further implementation of the peace treaties," she added.

Abiy has vowed to hold the first "free, fair and democratic" elections since 2005 in May, and experts fear the Ethiopian leader may have to shift his attention away from the peace process to focus on the vote. In stark contrast to his authoritarian predecessors, Abiy has lifted the state of emergency, released dissidents from jail, apologized for state brutality and welcomed home exiled armed groups. He also established a national reconciliation committee and lifted a ban on some political parties.

But less than two weeks after the Nobel announcement in October, anti-Abiy protests left 86 people dead. In his Nobel speech, he denounced the "evangelists of hate and division" who are "wreaking havoc in our society using social media". Meanwhile, the Nobel festivities have been tainted by Abiy's refusal to field questions from the media, as the ex-intelligence chief has considerably shortened the traditional Nobel program and cut out all news conferences.

The head of the Nobel Institute, Olav Njolsstad, called the decision "highly problematic", noting that a "free press and freedom of expression are essential conditions for a lasting peace in a democracy". Abiy's entourage responded that it was "quite challenging" for a sitting leader to spend several days at such an event, especially when "domestic issues are pressing and warrant attention". They also said Abiy's "humble disposition" contrasted with "the very public nature of the Nobel award".

The Nobel Peace Prize consists of a diploma, a gold medal and a cheque for nine million Swedish kronor (\$945,000). The other Nobel prizes for literature, physics, chemistry, medicine and economics were also handed over yesterday, but in Stockholm. — Agencies

tions of a detente between Qatar and its former allies, despite Doha's refusal to meet 13 key demands made by the Riyadh-led bloc, including shutting down Al Jazeera, downgrading ties with Iran and closing a Turkish military base on its territory. Yet, beyond the bonhomie in Riyadh, the event "falls short of achieving the intended reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Qatar", said Gulf analyst Ali Baker. "My understanding is that unless the blockade on Qatar is removed it will be hard to expect a serious breakthrough," he told AFP.

However, negotiations to end the impasse are expected to continue, analysts say. "Ending the Gulf rift is an incremental process of engagement and dialogue rather than something resolvable at a single summit meeting alone," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute in the United States. For Samuel Ramani, a doctoral researcher at Oxford University, "Saudi Arabia's normalization with Qatar is likely to occur without major concessions from Doha."

"It is possible that Qatar could scale back its links with the Muslim Brotherhood, but it is certainly not planning on reducing its diplomatic ties with Turkey and Iran as trust between Doha and other GCC countries has been severely damaged." Analysts say the spat has hurt the blockading countries more than Qatar. Saudi Arabia now appears to be taking a more conciliatory approach after adopting a combative foreign policy that has spooked investors. But some of the other blockading countries are not as eager to step back. Two sources familiar with the negotiations, including an Arab diplomat, told AFP that hardliners in Abu Dhabi - Riyadh's principal ally - are opposed to a restoration of ties.

## Protests rage in India over...

Continued from Page 1

and Pakistan to become Indians. Modi's government says Muslims from these three countries are excluded because they can choose to go to other Muslim countries.

Also excluded are other minorities fleeing political or religious persecution elsewhere, such as Tamils from Sri Lanka, Rohingya from Myanmar and Tibetans from China. "This bill is in line with India's centuries old ethos of assimilation and belief in humanitarian values," Modi tweeted. "I say this again and again that this bill has nothing to do with the Muslims in this country," Home Minister Amit Shah told parliament. Shah has stoked further fears among India's Muslims with his aim to conduct a nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) that he says will see all "infiltrators" identified and "expelled" by 2024.

On Monday, almost 1,200 scientists and scholars at

## Suu Kyi told to 'stop...

Continued from Page 1

Her decision to personally lead the southeast Asian nation's case at the court has proved popular at home, where the Rohingya are widely regarded as illegal immigrants despite having lived in Myanmar for decades.

In Myanmar, flag-waving supporters joined rallies in support of Suu Kyi in several cities across the country yesterday, with some 2,000 people marching through Yangon and tens of thousands more in Mandalay. Popular reggae singer Saw Phoe Khwa was among the celebrities who took to the stage in Yangon, imploring everyone to love each other before breaking into song. "We have to stand behind her as she travels to defend our country's dignity," said 57-year-old Yangon resident Thant Zin, sporting Suu Kyi stickers on both cheeks.

The Gambia's lawyers however said the appearance of huge billboards across Myanmar in recent weeks featuring pictures of Suu Kyi with three smiling generals showed she was "in it together" with the army that once held her captive. "It can only be have been intended to show that they are all in it together and that Myanmar has absolutely no intention of holding its emboldened military leadership accountable," lawyer Paul Reichler told the court.

A group of some 50 pro-Rohingya protesters gath-

institutions in India and abroad published a joint letter expressing their "dismay" at the legislation, saying the constitution called for members of all faiths to be treated equally. The move also evoked sharp reactions from international groups, with an influential US body calling for sanctions on Shah and other key players of the proposed law.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom in a statement Monday termed the bill as a "dangerous turn in the wrong direction", that together with the proposed National Register of Citizens, aims to create a religious test for Indian citizenship that would strip citizenship from millions of Muslims. India's foreign ministry yesterday retorted saying the US group's remarks were "neither accurate nor warranted" and "guided by their prejudices and biases".

The European Union's ambassador to India Ugo Astuto also expressed the bloc's concerns, saying he hoped "the principle of equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution will be upheld". Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted that the legislation by India's "fascist" government "violates" all norms of international human rights law and bilateral agreements. — AFP

ered outside the gates of the ICJ for the hearing, carrying banners saying: 'Say yes to Rohingya, justice delayed is justice denied' and "Stop Burma military attack Rohingya." "Today is the start for our right to justice," said Mohammed Harun, 49, who travelled from London for the hearings. "It's international justice day for Rohingya," he told AFP. A small group of Suu Kyi supporters also unfurled a banner outside the court with the Myanmar leader's face on it saying: "We love you, we stand with you!" "Suu Kyi is the only person who can solve this problem," supporter Swe Swe Aye, 47, told AFP.

The 74-year-old Suu Kyi was once mentioned in the same breath as Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi, having won the Nobel in 1991 for her resistance to Myanmar's brutal junta. After 15 years under house arrest she was freed in 2010 and led her party to victory in elections in 2015, but her defence of the same generals who once kept her locked up has since caused international condemnation.

The case is also being watched in Bangladesh where the Rohingya remain in sprawling camps. "I demand justice from the world," said Nur Karima, a Rohingya refugee whose brothers and grandparents were killed in a massacre in the village of Tula Toli in Aug 2017. ICJ judges have only once before ruled that genocide was committed, in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia. Myanmar, however, faces a number of legal challenges over the fate of the Rohingya, including a probe by the International Criminal Court - a separate war crimes tribunal in The Hague - and a lawsuit in Argentina. — AFP

changes in three areas: Contract enforcement, government procurement, and bankruptcy and insolvency," Tejtel said.

According to Tejtel, investors would like to know that a contract will be enforced, and if there is a dispute, they can go to the arbitration court for mediation and to resolve their cases. They need modern and transparent government procurements where all small and large companies follow the laws. "On bankruptcy and insolvency, they need loans that do not penalize companies - on contrary, they should give second chances to companies that fail," he added.

Faris Al-Obaid, Advisor to the Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, said the New Kuwait 2035 vision is an all-encompassing one aiming to transform Kuwait into an innovation-based sustainable international actor of the 21st century. "If we are to thrive and prosper, we must transform the way we think about policy and implement a forward-thinking agenda that will help us achieve this goal. We cannot as a government rely on the public sector alone. A main tenet of New Kuwait 2035 is the growing of partnerships between the government and private sector, in addition to empowering the private sector to take a lead role in Kuwait's development. This partnership is also a window to the world - a successful nation is a cosmopolitan one," he added.

The New Kuwait 2019 Summit aims to provide Kuwait with a global platform and window to the world to attract insightful debate and information around the seven pillars identified by the Kuwait national development plan - Kuwait's global position, infrastructure, human capital, public administration, healthcare, economy and living environment.

## Abiy collects Peace Nobel...

Continued from Page 1

and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki formally ended a 20-year-old stalemate between their countries in the wake of the 1998-2000 border conflict. That was just three months after Abiy took office.

Yesterday, Abiy was quick to praise the role of his Eritrean "partner and comrade-in-peace" - the only leader Eritrea has known since it gained independence in 1993 - in his Nobel Prize. "We understood our nations are not enemies. Instead, we were victims of the common enemy called poverty," he said. A former soldier himself, Abiy also testified to the ravages of war, recalling how his entire unit had been wiped out in an Eritrean artillery attack but he had survived after briefly leaving a foxhole to get better antenna reception. "War is the epitome of hell for all involved," he said.

During the lightning-fast rapprochement that followed the peace deal with Asmara, embassies reopened, flights resumed and meetings were held across the region. But the "Abiymania" hype has faded and he is now facing major challenges. The land border between the two nations is once again closed, and the question of border demarcations remains unresolved. "At present, this work seems to be at a standstill," said the head of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Berit Reiss-Andersen. "It is the hope of the Norwegian Nobel Committee that your previous achievements, coupled with added encouragement of the Peace

## Amir hails positive steps to forget the...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Saudi King Salman congratulated Kuwait's Nayef Al-Hajraf on being appointed as the next GCC secretary general. Hajraf's candidacy was unanimously approved at ministerial talks ahead of the leaders' summit in Riyadh.

Qatar's Amir yesterday skipped the Gulf summit billed as a potential "reconciliation conference", but leaders' calls for integration provided more signs of a thaw between Doha and regional power Saudi Arabia. In a sign of the changing mood, the Doha delegation received a warm welcome in Riyadh, with Saudi Arabia's King Salman and the Qatari prime minister exchanging smiles and pleasantries. "The people of Qatar, welcome, to your second country," said the commentator on Saudi state television, in a friendly greeting.

Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani sent Prime Minister Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani in his place to the annual summit of the GCC. In his speech, King Salman did not address the Qatar dispute directly but called for Gulf unity in the face of threats including "aggressive acts" by Iran. GCC secretary-general Abdullah Al-Zayani also called on Gulf nations to remain "integrated and intertwined", stressing the need for "cohesion".

Hopes for reconciliation have been raised by indica-



Sports

# Tiger Woods defends ‘great kid’ Reed after rule-breaking row

## No sympathy for anyone that cheats: Cameron Smith

**MELBOURNE:** US captain Tiger Woods defended Presidents Cup teammate Patrick Reed as “a great kid” yesterday after he was penalised for breaking the rules in the Bahamas, while attempting to draw a line under the controversy.

Former US Masters champion Reed was given a two-shot penalty for improving his lie in a waste bunker during the third round of the Hero World Challenge on Friday. His actions were blasted by two of the International side preparing to face the Woods-led United States in the team matchplay showdown at Royal Melbourne this week, potentially opening the door for some barracking by Australian fans.

Cameron Smith told reporters at the weekend he had “no sympathy for anyone that cheats” while Marc Leishman called his behaviour “pretty ordinary”. Woods was keen to move on from the row when pressed in Melbourne, admitting the two discussed the matter on the long plane trip to Australia from the Bahamas but it was now over.

“It was not a lengthy conversation. Pat and I are very good friends. We kept it short and brief, to the point,” said Woods, who is the first playing captain at the Presidents Cup since American Hale Irwin in 1994.

“The rules official gave him two shots. He finished at 16-under, two back of Henrik (Stenson), and now we’re on to this week.” Reed acknowledged that he moved sand with both practice swings and therefore violated the rules, but denied yesterday he was a cheat.

“It’s not the right word to use,” he said. “At the end

of the day, if you do something unintentionally that breaks the rules, it’s not considered cheating and at the end of the day that’s what it is.” Despite the prospect of a volatile reception in Melbourne, Woods insisted Reed would be “fine” when the tournament begins tomorrow.

“Pat is a great kid. He’s handled a tough upbringing well, and I just think that he’s one of our best team players and is one of the reasons why all of the guys wanted him on the team,” he said.

International team captain Ernie Els said he had no problem with Smith and Leishman being outspoken on Reed, keen to take any edge they can into the tournament. “Well, I think it’s only natural. These guys are competitors. Obviously they didn’t like what they saw,” he said. But Els added: “Like Tiger, we’re moving on; we’ve got a Cup to play for. It’s got nothing to do with us. It’s basically what’s happened, and I think Tiger’s dealing with it and Patrick’s dealing with that.

“We’re getting ready to play the Presidents Cup. There’s nothing more to be said.” The International team will need to use everything in their arsenal to unsettle Woods’ star-studded team, who are the heavy favourites to win.

They have clinched all but one edition of the Presidents Cup in its 25-year history. The exception was at Royal Melbourne in 1998, where a young Woods played. He admitted the team then was not properly prepared, in contrast to now. “I think our strength is that we are a very deep team. The guys have played well this entire year, and you know, we had 11 out of 12



**MELBOURNE:** US player Patrick Reed tees off during a practice round ahead of the Presidents Cup golf tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

guys play last week,” said Woods. “So it was nice for them to shake off some rust. Get a feel for things. “Today is an important day for us to just walk and to

stretch our legs a bit,” he added. “Getting in yesterday after a 26-hour ride in a luxurious tin can, it’s nice to actually get out there and feel some fresh air.” — AFP

## Kuwait ready for 20th Junior Water Polo Championship



By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait’s Junior Water Polo team continues its training for the 20th FINA World Men’s Junior Water Polo Championship, hosted by Kuwait starting tomorrow and will continue until Dec 20 at Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Olympic swimming pools complex under the patronage of National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

Assistant coach Khalid Al-Shawaf said players began their training early due to the strong teams participating. He said the national team held a training camp in Hungary, for a month, then continued its training here in Kuwait.

Al-Shawaf said the championship represents an opportunity for the current players to gain experience through competing with distinguished players of high standards.



Team captain Abdallah Murad said players are together since May, and are enthusiastic towards showing an outstanding performance during the championship.

Meanwhile, player Abdallah Al-Hammad said all players exerted their utmost during the preparation period under the watchful eye of their Greek coach Marcos and his assistance Al-Shawaf.

Meanwhile, FINA bureau will hold a meeting today at Crowne Plaza hotel, on the sidelines of the 20th FINA World Men’s Junior Water Polo Championship, which will start tomorrow at Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Olympic swimming pools complex of Al-Nasr sports club.

This meeting proceeds a meeting of FINA board, and it will make recommendations and proposals for the 25 member board, which has the authority to make

official decisions.

Among the important items on the agenda is to make a new plan to develop water games and swimming, also to prepare a schedule for the upcoming championships, that in addition to having standards for the game during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and approve those who qualify.

The bureau is made of nine members including FINA president Dr Julio C Maglione from Uruguay, first Vice-president Husain Al-Musalla from Kuwait, second Vice-president Sam Ramsamy, Vice-president Paolo Barelli from Italy, Vice-president Matthew Dun from Australia, Vice-president Date Neuburger, Pipat Paniangvait, Treasurer from Thailand, member Tamas Gyarfazs from Hungary and Executive Director Cornel Marculescu from Switzerland.

## Renault Al Babtain awards winners of 25th Annual NBK Walkathon event

**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Co., the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait recently awarded Victoriano G. R. Moraldi and Lulu Alfarsi with a Renault Duster and Renault Megane RS respectively upon their participation at the annual NBK walkathon.

The annual event which took place on 7th December 2019 on Gulf Road, falls in line with Renault’s CSR mission to promote the increased benefits of fitness while inspiring positive community engagement. The two lucky winners who had completed the NBK Walkathon this year, held under the theme titled “One Step Can Change Your Life”,

were granted the chance to enter a draw and win the popular models.

“Keeping in line with organization’s brand signature motto ‘Passion for Life’, an embodiment of the unique Renault spirit, Renault Al Babtain will remain a keen supporter of maintaining a wholesome lifestyle. We are proud to be part of a national movement that reflects our values and willpower to succeed. As a homegrown automotive brand, we will continue to play a vital role in inspiring more people to adopt healthier habits through strategic collaborations with likeminded entities in Kuwait,” said Laurent Pernet, General Manager Automotive at Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain during the event.

Demonstrating the values by which the group lives by – passion, integrity and commitment, the participants were rewarded by Laurent Pernet, who recognized the winners for their perseverance. The 11KM walk from Green Island on the Gulf Road to the Shuwaikh Beach Park witnessed the participation of many people from different age groups.

The winners were delighted to receive the ‘best in class’ models – the unstoppable SUV Renault Duster, and the Renault Megane, every sports driving enthusiasts favorite vehicle.



## McIlroy turns down spot in Saudi tourney

**LOS ANGELES:** Rory McIlroy confirmed Monday he had turned down the chance to play in next month’s European Tour event in Saudi Arabia despite reportedly being offered a multi-million-dollar appearance fee.

McIlroy told the Golf Channel in an interview he had no interest in playing the Saudi International tournament in late January. “It’s just not something that would excite me,” the Northern Irishman said, echoing comments from Tiger Woods who last week confirmed he had also rejected an approach to play in the event.

The tournament has attracted a slew of talent including world number one Brooks Koepka, former US Open champion Dustin Johnson and Phil Mickelson. Golfers participating in the inaugural event last year faced criticism, with the tournament taking place just months after the killing of US-based Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018.

Mickelson was criticised last week after announcing his decision to play in the tournament. “You’re better than taking the money grab from a corrupt regime,” wrote one commenter on Twitter. “Come on, Phil.”

McIlroy, who was reportedly offered \$2.5 million to play in the tournament, hinted in his Golf Channel interview that “morality” had influenced his decision. “100%, there’s a morality to it as well,” McIlroy said.

“You could say that about so many countries, not just Saudi Arabia, but a lot of countries that we play in that there’s a reason not to go, but for me, I just don’t want to go.” — AFP

## Heartbreak, then joy for Presidents Cup rookie An

**MELBOURNE:** It has been a roller-coaster ride for An Byeong-hun, and the Presidents Cup hasn’t even started. The South Korean received a heart-breaking call from International team skipper Ernie Els in November to tell him he had missed the cut as a captain’s pick.

Then Australian Jason Day was forced out by a back injury and the phone rang again. “I got a phone call twice, unfortunately and fortunately,” said An yesterday as he prepared to make his Presidents Cup debut at Royal Melbourne against the Tiger Woods-led Americans.

“First one was saying I’m not in. It was a tough call. Obviously I was disappointed. “I never thought I would get a second call, and last week, they said — ‘well, you can tell me to get lost but we need you on the team’.

“I was like, I’ll go down and play. I’m here and I’m looking forward to my first Presidents Cup.” A former US Amateur Championship winner, An earned his spot on the team following three top-10s in his last six PGA Tour starts.

He is one of seven rookies in the 12-man team — the youngest ever assembled by the Internationals with an average age of just under 29. He is confident that fellow debutants Li Haotong, CT Pan, Abraham Ancer, Cameron Smith, Joaquin Niemann and compatriot Im Sung-jae will rise to the occasion.

“I was very surprised, I’m like the seventh-oldest guy on the team,” said the 28-year-old. “Ernie has been great. The team, I think everyone has their own partners. We know who we’re playing with. We were all excited, so we’re very looking forward to Thursday, Friday, going into the weekend, so we’ll see.”

Mexico’s Ancer is also making his bow at the team matchplay showdown, having qualified automatically. He is equally excited and buzzing from the team atmosphere in camp. “I think everybody is really excited. I’ve been talking to a lot of friends. Some of them made the trip. Saw a couple of Mexican flags out there on the golf course, which is awesome,” he said after a practice round yesterday.

“And everybody’s excited. Obviously, I want to perform really, really well for my country. But not only for that, the family, but also my teammates and then my captain.” But he also admitted to nerves ahead of such a big event.

“It’s going to be a lot of people, a lot of expectation, obviously. And just the nerves of playing in your first Presidents Cup, I think is normal and I want that,” he said. “I want to feel the nerves. I want to see how I do under the gun. And I think it’s going to be a great week.” — AFP



Sports

# Flames stretch winning streak to five, end Avalanche' at six

## Blue Jackets stun Capitals, stop losing skid

DENVER: Sean Monahan scored in overtime and the Calgary Flames overcame blowing a two-goal lead in the third period to defeat the Colorado Avalanche 5-4 in Denver on Monday night. Andrew Mangiapane and Michael Frolik had goals in the first 1:39 of the third period to give the Flames a 4-2 lead. But Nathan MacKinnon and Joonas Donskoi each scored in the third to even the game and ultimately send it to overtime. Matthew Tkachuk had a goal and an assist, Derek Ryan also scored and David Rittich stopped 28 shots for the Flames, who have won five straight under interim head coach Geoff Ward. Mark Giordano, Elias Lindholm and Dillon Dube had two assists each for Calgary. MacKinnon and Donskoi each added an assist, as well, and Valeri Nichushkin and Ryan Graves also scored for Colorado, which had won six in a row. Pavel Francouz had 28 saves.

### BLUE JACKETS 5, CAPITALS 2

Cam Atkinson scored two goals, one early and one late, as visiting Columbus defeated Washington to snap a four-game losing streak. The Capitals' six-game winning streak ended, too. Atkinson scored the game's first goal, 3:27 into the first period, and added another one into an empty net with 1:48 to play to give the Blue Jackets some insurance. Columbus goalie Joonas Korpisalo wound up with 37 saves as the Capitals turned up the heat in the final two periods. Ryan Murray, Riley Nash and Oliver Bjorkstrand also scored for Columbus. Alex Ovechkin had a goal and

an assist for Washington, as did Nicklas Backstrom in his return after missing eight games due to an upper-body injury.

### ISLANDERS 5, LIGHTNING 1

Brock Nelson scored twice in New York's three-goal third period to carry the Islanders past host Tampa Bay. Ross Johnston and Josh Bailey scored goals less than two minutes apart in the second period, and Anders Lee added a late power-play marker as the Islanders won for the fourth time in six games. New York stymied all three power plays by Tampa Bay, which came into the game leading the NHL with 36.5-percent efficiency with the man advantage on home ice. The Lightning are 2-4-1 in their last seven.

### SENATORS 5, BRUINS 2

Anthony Duclair scored two goals and added an assist as Ottawa defeated visiting Boston. Chris Tierney added a goal and two assists, Artem Anisimov and Jean-Gabriel Pageau also scored, and Vladislav Namestnikov had two assists for the Senators, who won for just the second time in their past eight games. Anders Nilsson made 38 saves. Patrice Bergeron, making his return after missing the previous seven games with a lower-body injury, and Jake DeBrusk scored for the Atlantic Division-leading Bruins, who failed to win for the third straight game (0-2-1). Brad Marchand and David Pastrnak each had two assists, and Tuukka Rask stopped 23 of 26 shots. — Reuters



DENVER: Mark Barberio #44 of the Colorado Avalanche advances the puck against the Calgary Flames in the third period at the Pepsi Center in Denver, Colorado. — AFP

## Kuwait cycling team returns home with medals



KUWAIT: Kuwait Cycling National Team returned home with one gold, two silver and four bronze medals after participating in the Arab Championship that was held in Alexandria, Egypt.

## Pakistan, S Lanka set for historic Test

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's captain Azhar Ali thanked Sri Lanka yesterday for returning to Pakistan for the first Test tour there in a decade, after a fatal militant attack on their team in 2009 drove international cricket away.

"It's a historic occasion and all the players are excited to be part of this," Azhar, who has played 75 Tests — but, until now, none at home — said at a press conference in Rawalpindi with his counterpart, Dimuth Karunaratne. "We thank the Sri Lankan team for coming here. The last Test was also against them so their visit will send a strong message to the world that we need to support each other," he said.

Eight people were killed and several players and officials were wounded when militants opened fire on the Sri Lankan team bus travelling to a Test in Lahore in 2009.

The attack plunged Pakistan into sporting isolation during its years-long battle with militancy, with all "home" venues played in the United Arab Emirates. But with security dramatically improving in recent years international cricket began creeping back starting in



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's cricketers take part in a practice session at the Pindi Cricket Stadium ahead of the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Rawalpindi yesterday. —AFP

2015, albeit only for limited overs. Sri Lanka will play two Tests under heavy security, one in Rawalpindi and the second in Karachi, ending a decade-long absence for cricket's five-day format. They will be the first home Tests for all 16 players in the Pakistan squad.

"Cricket is the biggest thing and if the youngsters can't see matches here then it's a big loss for our cricket and budding players," Azhar said. "I am sure our grounds will host more matches in the years to come."

Karunaratne — who refused to tour Pakistan for a limited over series in September-October this year — shared his rival's sentiments. "I am really excited.. The players are excited to be part of this historic occasion," he said. Sri Lanka are on the up in Test cricket after becoming the first Asian team to win a series in South Africa earlier this year. They then drew a Test series 1-1 against New Zealand at home in August, their first fixture in the World Test championship. — AFP

## Russian high-jump star Lasitskene slams officials

MOSCOW: One of Russia's top athletes, three-time world champion high jumper Mariya Lasitskene, yesterday called sports officials to account after her country was banned for four years from international competition.

In her open letter published by Championat.com sports website, Lasitskene, a longtime critic of Russian sports officials, demanded to know who has been punished over the country's doping scandal and the fact that she cannot compete under the Russian flag.

Lasitskene missed the 2016 Rio Olympics because of the doping crisis and had threatened to leave Russia so as not to miss the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

"The Russian flag was taken from me at the end of 2015," the 26-year-old

wrote, calling herself "an athlete who has a lot of questions". "Have we done an internal investigation? Who was punished?" Lasitskene said.

"Why is our athletics still using banned substances, and coaches of athletes caught doping are still working while officials in charge are falsifying official documents?"

The World Anti-Doping Agency on Monday banned Russia for four years from major global sporting events including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar over manipulated doping data, prompting an angry response from President Vladimir Putin.

Many Russian officials have blamed "anti-Russian hysteria" for the ban. Lasitskene, who hails from the Russian Caucasus and won gold at the 2015, 2017 and the 2019 World Championships, has previously called on the head of Russia's Athletics Federation to resign. She has also complained that it was psychologically hard to compete as a neutral.

Some of her supporters have suggested on Instagram that she quit Russia and take up a different citizenship, but Lasitskene on Monday said she did not plan to obtain a new passport. —AFP

## McLaren ready to battle Ineos for yellow jersey

LONDON: Chequered flags have always been the driving force for McLaren but the iconic British motorsport brand will be focussing its considerable power on chasing yellow jerseys next year too.

"As a brand we don't pick fights very often but when we do we pick them with the intention to win," John Allert, McLaren's Chief Marketing Officer, said at the glitzy launch of the Bahrain-McLaren UCI WorldTour team on Monday.

It was a bold statement but with McLaren's vast technological resources, Middle Eastern backing and a formidable-looking roster for 2020, the team looks well-equipped to shake up the peloton. Team principal Rod Ellingworth, formerly with British Cycling and Team Sky, says Bahrain-McLaren has been formed to win Grand Tour titles and pre-

dicts they can take on his dominant former outfit now known as Team Ineos.

"I was walking around here and thinking bloody hell, this is pretty special," Ellingworth, who will now be a rival of his former Team Sky boss Dave Brailsford, said at McLaren's vast Technology Centre, which will be the team's performance HQ.

"I think from the outset we are capable of taking on Ineos. The ambition is to become a Grand Tour winning team. The yellow jersey of the Tour is an iconic jersey and we want to bring it home to McLaren and to Bahrain."

The futuristic McLaren production centre is a history lesson in motor racing heritage, from the classic F1 machines driven to world titles by the likes of Ayrton Senna and Lewis Hamilton to the hundreds of trophies lining the walls of the walkways.

But McLaren is no stranger to cycling, having collaborated with US bike builder Specialized. They also worked on the track bike Britain's team used to sweep golds at London 2012. The team will continue, for now, to use Merida bikes of which the frame colour and rider kit reflect the original McLaren race car colour (papaya orange) introduced by founder Bruce McLaren. — Reuters

## Paralympics boss urges clarity for Tokyo after Russia doping ban

TOKYO: The head of the International Paralympic Committee yesterday called for clear guidance over the participation of Russian athletes at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, adding that it was "disgusting" that authorities had allegedly tampered with doping samples.

In an interview with AFP, Andrew Parsons said he

expected Russia to appeal Monday's decision by the World Anti-Doping Agency to ban the country for four years from major global sports events after accusing the Russians of falsifying data from a testing laboratory.

Under the sanctions, Russian sportsmen and women will still be allowed to compete at the Olympics and Paralympics, but only as neutrals and only if they can demonstrate that they were not part of what WADA believes was a state-sponsored system of doping.

"At the end of the day, the decision will be a CAS (Court of Arbitration for Sport) decision and we will then need to react but it will be four months prior to the Games, so we will need to react quickly," said Parsons.

"It will depend a lot on the decision. What we want is for the decision to be clear in the sense that there will be a clear path... on what will be the participation of Russian athletes — if any?"

The IPC banned the Russian Paralympic Committee in the run-up to the Rio Games, only reinstating them this February and setting down clear criteria for their participation.

Last time, it was up to the IPC to decide on a ban but the guidelines have changed, meaning the IPC will now follow whatever recommendations WADA lays down after a potential Russian appeal. "Of course, to know that authorities have tampered with data is disgusting and they are letting their athletes down," Parsons said.

Documents released Monday show WADA believes "deletions and alterations" to Russia's doping data "materially prejudiced the ability to pursue cases against 145 of the 298 athletes" with suspicious doping controls between 2011 and 2015.

The toughest sanctions imposed on Russian state authorities will also see government officials barred

from attending any major events, while the country will lose the right to host, or even bid, for tournaments.

Parsons also said Paralympic athletes were keener than ever to stage their marathon in Tokyo after concerns over the summer heat forced the Olympic showcase event to be moved 800 kilometres (500 miles) north to Sapporo.

The IPC boss said it was "very unlikely" the Paralympics would follow suit and shift the marathon venue. After analysing historical data — including for the unusually hot summer of 2019 — the IPC medical committee had concluded it would be safe for Paralympic athletes to compete, he told AFP.

The Paralympic Games begin on August 25, with the marathon scheduled for September 6, the final day of competition, and officials are hopeful the worst of the Tokyo heat will be over by then. — AFP



## Sports

# Arsenal relieved as worst winless run since 1977 ends at West Ham

## First win in 10 games lifts Arsenal up to ninth

**LONDON:** Arsenal caretaker manager Freddie Ljungberg believes a weight has been lifted off his players' shoulders after a three-goal blitz in nine second-half minutes beat West Ham 3-1 on Monday to end the Gunners' worst winless run in 42 years.

Another miserable night for the Swede seemed in store when the visitors trailed at half-time to Angelo Ogbonna's deflected header. However, Arsenal suddenly sparked into life after Gabriel Martinelli scored his first Premier League goal as Nicolas Pepe finally started to deliver on his club record £72 million fee by curling home a brilliant second, before crossing for Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to secure all three points.

"It means so much for the players. They have been living under enormous pressure and you see it in their performances," said Ljungberg. "You can see the players have been a bit low and you see in the dressing room the relief and how happy they are."

A first win in 10 games in all competitions lifts Arsenal up to ninth and cuts the gap on fourth-placed Chelsea to seven points in the battle for Champions League qualification next season. Ljungberg reacted to taking just one point from his opening two games in temporary charge against lowly Norwich and Brighton by making five changes with Martinelli and Pepe among those coming into the side.

Pepe's inability to make an impact has been one of the major reasons for Arsenal's struggles, but the Ivorian looked a new player after curling home his first Premier League goal from open play 24 minutes from time. "Nicolas is an amazing football player, but it is not easy to come from the French league into the Premier League and adjust straight away," added Ljungberg. "It

was an amazing goal and he'll get better and better."

Not much had improved in Ljungberg's first two games since replacing the sacked Unai Emery and it was the same tame and lifeless Arsenal for the first hour against a West Ham side that have won just once in their last 11 games.

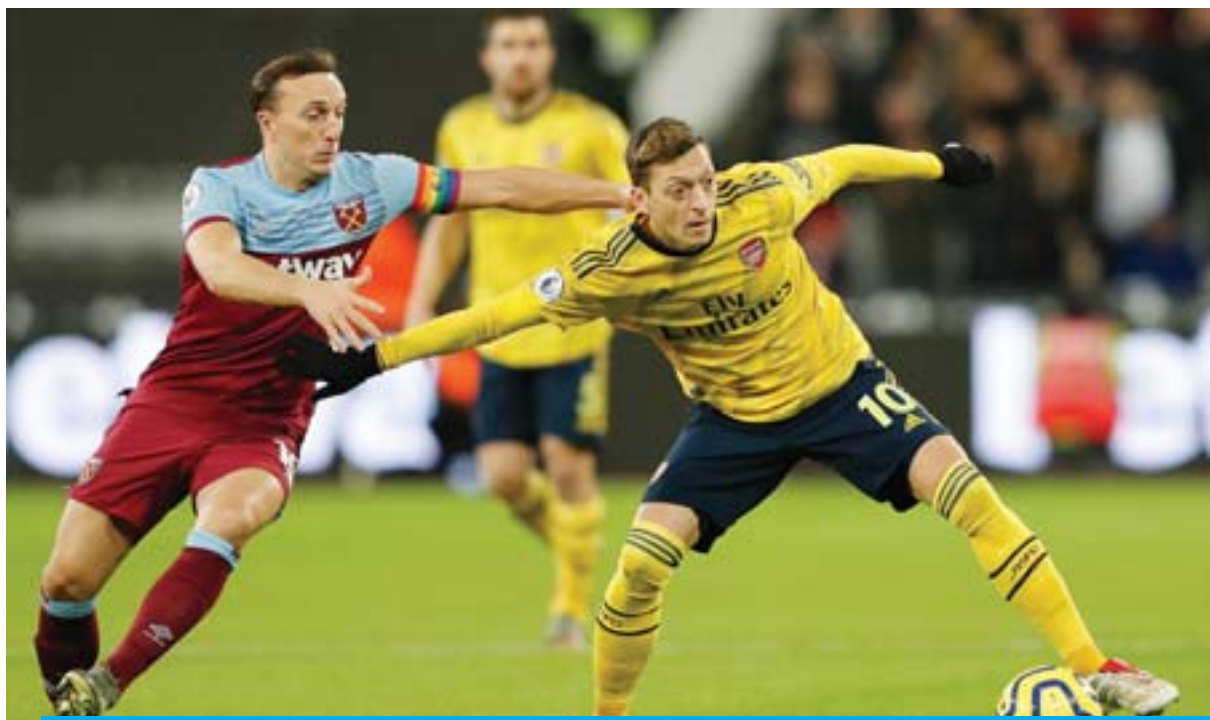
"I think we dominated the game for 60 minutes and after that in 10 minutes we lose the game," said West Ham manager Manuel Pellegrini, who is under increasing pressure as his side sit just one point above the relegation zone.

Another home defeat means the Hammers have taken just one point from their last five games at the London Stadium and the home side were booed off at full-time. "You understand the boos because the last five games we played here we didn't win," added Pellegrini. "You cannot concede three goals in every game." In a first half of precious little good football it was fitting the opener arrived in scrappy fashion as Ogbonna's attempted header came off his shoulder and deflected off Martinelli to wrong-foot Bernd Leno in the Arsenal goal.

But one moment changed the course of the game when Sead Kolasinac burst down the left and crossed low for Martinelli to slot home his eighth goal of the season after impressing in the League Cup and Europa League.

Suddenly the confidence which Emery and Ljungberg bemoaned had drained away from their players in recent times was restored, none more so than in Pepe, who cut inside onto his favoured left foot and curled into the top corner.

Pepe then turned provider for Aubameyang to slide



**LONDON:** West Ham United's English midfielder Mark Noble (L) vies with Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Arsenal at The London Stadium, in east London. — AFP

in for his 13th goal of the campaign. "At half-time, Freddie told us to play with a higher tempo," said Aubameyang. "We have the quality in the squad, and if

we believe in ourselves, we can go forward and win games. We will take this second half as an example for the rest of the season." — AFP



## New season for baseball begins

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Baseball team celebrated the start of the new season 2019-2020. The celebration was attended by Public Authority for Sport Deputy Director General for Competitive Sport Dr Saqr Al-Ghanim, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Head of Kuwait Hunting and Equestrian Club Sheikh Dhari Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in addition to ambassadors from Canada, France, China, South Korea, India, Malta, Cuba.

The celebration included a brief about the game of baseball, then the teams presented themselves.

Chairman of the Board of Baseball Club Saud Abdelaziz Al-Ayoub thanked HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Amiri Diwan for their continued support to Kuwait sport and athletes, in general and the baseball

and softball games in particular.

He said he is pleased with the way the celebration came out and impressed those present.

He also thanked Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser and PAS, who ensure the continuation of this sport and enhance it in Kuwait, and his role in having the club be the first in the GCC countries.

He gave special thanks to Sheikh Dhari Al-Fahad for his support of the game without which the game would have vanished from Kuwait and have a recognized club.

He said athletes went through several sports experience locally, regionally and internationally and now we get into a new challenge which is baseball and softball, which practiced by all of both genders, adding that the number of those who are practicing it reached 420 of both genders and they are from 26 countries of various age groups, adding



that he is proud of the two teams of the disabled.

He said the league season started in

November and continues until March 2020 and matches are played on Thursdays and Fridays each week.

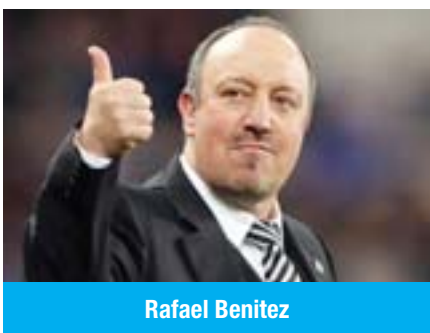
## Benitez rules himself out of Arsenal and Everton jobs

**LONDON:** Rafael Benitez insisted on Monday there is "no chance" he will fill the managerial vacancies at either Arsenal or Everton, but he refused to completely rule out a return to the Premier League.

Former Liverpool and Real Madrid boss Benitez is currently in charge of Chinese side Dalian Yifang after leaving Newcastle United after the end of last season. Arsenal are still looking for a permanent successor to Unai Emery while Everton, Liverpool's local rivals, sacked Marco Silva last week, and former Champions League winner Benitez said he was happy in the Chinese Super League despite finishing a lowly ninth this season.

"I can be very clear — there is no chance I will come back now because I'm really happy," he said on Sky Sports. "I'm really pleased (Dalian Yifang) trust me. We have a lot of staff working on a big, big project. We want to leave a legacy and it's a challenge for me. I'm quite happy at the moment."

"In the future I would like to come back to the Premier League because I like the league." Benitez has also seen his name linked with West Ham should



Rafael Benitez

Manuel Pellegrini leave the London club. But although he was linked with a move to the Hammers four years ago before joining Real Madrid, Benitez said there was no chance of them tempting him away from China.

"It was in the past, it's true that I was nearly there (at West Ham)," he said. "Then Real Madrid came, and I needed a couple of days to know exactly what was going on. 'Obviously I couldn't say no to Real Madrid, but it was a good time and it's a massive club."

"Everybody can see both teams (West Ham and Arsenal) have problems, but both are massive clubs and they will do well at the end." —AFP

## Eagles stay alive as Giants downed in overtime

**LOS ANGELES:** The Philadelphia Eagles kept their playoff hopes alive with an overtime victory against the New York Giants to deny Eli Manning a fairytale return on Monday. A Zach Ertz touchdown on the opening drive of overtime sealed a 23-17 win for the Eagles, who overturned a 17-3 half-time deficit to stay on target for a place in the postseason.

It was a disappointing night for Giants quarterback Manning, the veteran two-time Super Bowl champion recalled in place of rookie Daniel Jones, who had started the previous 10 games.

Manning had looked to be rolling back the years during a vintage first half display, throwing for two touchdowns and 179 yards at the break. Manning picked out Darius Slayton for the opening score in the first quarter, the rookie receiver spinning away from his tackler for a 35-yard touchdown to make it 7-0.

After the two teams traded field goals, Manning then hit Slayton again with a 55-yard completion for a

touchdown which left the Giants 17-3 ahead. But the Eagles, who left the field to loud boos from their fans at Lincoln Financial Field, rallied strongly after the interval.

With quarterback Carson Wentz gradually finding his rhythm, the Eagles offense started making inroads into the Giants defense. Running back Boston Scott went over from two yards for the first Eagles touchdown, and then Wentz led a 14-play 80-yard drive that ended with the quarterback picking out Ertz in the endzone from two yards for a game-tying score.

The Eagles' winning score was almost a carbon copy of their fourth quarter touchdown, Wentz advancing the team down the field before connecting with Ertz once again from close range. The victory leaves the Eagles at 6-7 in the NFC East. If the Eagles win their remaining three games — against the Dallas Cowboys (6-7), the Washington Redskins (3-10) and the Giants (2-11) — they will clinch the division and advance to the playoffs. — AFP

## Quick turnaround for new Asian champions Al Hilal

**HONG KONG:** Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal did not have long to savour their Asian Champions League triumph before discovering they will face 2015 finalists Shabab Al Ahli Dubai and Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in next year's competition after the group stage draw on Monday.

The club from Riyadh defeated Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds to win the trophy last month for the first time since the competition started in 2002.

Yokohama F Marinos' coach Ange Postecoglou will take the J-League champions to his native Australia after being drawn to face Sydney FC in Group H, which also features two-time champions Jeonbuk Motors from South Korea and a playoff winner.

Chinese Super League champions Guangzhou Evergrande will challenge for a third title in Group F, where they were drawn to play Suwon Bluewings from South Korea and Johor Darul Ta'zim from Malaysia as well as the as-yet undetermined winner of Japan's Emperor's Cup.

Chiangrai United from Thailand will make their debut in the competition in Group E against China's Beijing Guoan and a pair of playoff winners. Group F features Chinese FA Cup winners Shanghai Shenhua, Ulsan Hyundai from South Korea, Australia's Perth Glory and another team from the playoffs.

Perspolis from Iran, who were runners-up in 2018, will take on Qatar's Al Duhail, Al Taawoun from Saudi Arabia and Sharjah from the UAE in Group C. Fellow Iranians Sepahan meet 2019 semi-finalists Al Sadd from Qatar and Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr as well as a team from the playoffs in Group D.

Group A will also feature two teams from the playoff rounds as well as Al Wahda from the UAE and Iraq's Al Shorta.

The group phase kicks off on Feb. 10 with the two top teams in each group advancing to the last 16, with the final due to be played over two legs on Nov. 22 and 28.

### 2020 Asian Champions League Draw:

**Group A:** Al Wahda (UAE), Al Shorta (IRQ), Playoff winner, Playoff winner

**Group B:** Al Hilal (KSA), Shabab Al Ahli Dubai (UAE), Pakhtakor (UZB), Playoff winner

**Group C:** Al Duhail (QAT), Al Taawoun FC (KSA), Sharjah FC (UAE), Perspolis FC (IRN)

**Group D:** Sepahan (IRN), Al Sadd (QAT), Al Nassr (KSA), Playoff winner

**Group E:** Beijing Guoan (CHN), Chiangrai United FC (THA), Playoff winner, Playoff winner

**Group F:** Ulsan Hyundai (KOR), Shanghai Shenhua (CHN), Perth Glory (AUS), Playoff winner

**Group G:** Emperor's Cup Winner (JPN), Suwon Bluewings (KOR), Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN), Johor Darul Ta'zim (MAS)

**Group H:** Sydney FC (AUS), Yokohama F Marinos (JPN), Jeonbuk Motors (KOR), Playoff winner. — Reuters



**25** Tiger Woods defends 'great kid' Reed after rule-breaking row



**26** Pakistan, S Lanka set for historic Test



**27** Benitez rules himself out of Arsenal and Everton jobs



## Bjelica beats buzzer to stun Rockets

Booker nets 26 as Suns dump slumping Wolves



HOUSTON: Russell Westbrook #0 of the Houston Rockets shoots the ball against the Sacramento Kings at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas. — AFP

**HOUSTON:** Nemanja Bjelica drilled a 3-pointer at the buzzer, and the Sacramento Kings claimed a 119-118 victory over the host Houston Rockets on Monday. Bjelica drilled a 33-footer off an inbound pass from Cory Joseph to answer a driving layup from Rockets guard Russell Westbrook on the preceding possession. Bjelica scored over PJ Tucker to cap his 17-point performance as the Kings finished 20 of 45 from behind the arc. Westbrook scored a season-high 34 points, primarily on driving layups as the Kings offered scant rim protection. His basket countered a game-tying 3-pointer from Kings guard Buddy Hield (team-high 26 points), whose trey matched a 3-pointer from Ben McLemore with 22.7 seconds left. The Rockets had won 18 of 20 meetings against the Kings, who received 19 points and eight rebounds from Harrison Barnes. James Harden paired 27 points with 10 assists for the Rockets while Tucker grabbed a career-high 19 rebounds

### Detroit Pistons 105 - New Orleans Pelicans 103

Derrick Rose scored a team-high 21 points, capped by a last-second, game-winning jumper as Detroit won at New Orleans. The Pistons inbounded the ball with 14.7 seconds left and cleared out for Rose, who dribbled down the clock, penetrated and hit a jumper from just inside the foul line. The Pelicans called timeout with 0.3 seconds left, but their subsequent pass was deflected, and they lost their ninth straight game. Langston Galloway added 16 points, Luke Kennard scored 14 and Andre Drummond had 13 points and 10 rebounds for

Detroit. Brandon Ingram scored 31 and Jrue Holiday scored 20 to lead New Orleans.

### Milwaukee Bucks 110 - Orlando Magic 101

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 32 points and grabbed 15 rebounds as Milwaukee extended its NBA-best winning streak to 15 games with a victory over visiting Orlando. Khris Middleton scored 20 points and Donte DiVincenzo added 12 as the Bucks improved to 11-1 at home and matched the Los Angeles Lakers for best record in the NBA at 21-3. Evan Fournier scored 26 points and Terrence Ross added 23 as the Magic saw their season-best four-game winning streak come to an end, but not before putting together a late run.

### Toronto Raptors 93 - Chicago Bulls 92

Pascal Siakam scored 22 points, and visiting Toronto overcame an eight-point fourth-quarter deficit to defeat Chicago and end a three-game losing streak. Kyle Lowry added 11 points and made the go-ahead layup with 50.9 seconds remaining for the Raptors, who have won 11 in a row against the Bulls. Norman Powell had 17 points, Serge Ibaka had 11 points and 14 rebounds, and OG Anunoby scored 10 for Toronto. Zach Lavine scored 20 points — all in the first half — and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Bulls, who have lost three straight.

### Boston Celtics 110 - Cleveland Cavaliers 88

Kemba Walker scored 22 points, Gordon Hayward had 14 in his return from a hand injury, and Boston beat visit-

ing Cleveland. Jaylen Brown added 20 points, Jayson Tatum 19 and Daniel Theis 10 as all five Celtics starters scored in double figures. Boston improved to 10-0 at home and won for the sixth time in its past seven games. Jordan Clarkson had 19 points and Tristan Thompson 17 for the Cavaliers, who lost their seventh straight and fell for the 13th time in their past 14 games.

### Los Angeles Clippers 110 - Indiana Pacers 99

Paul George made seven 3-pointers to highlight a 36-point performance against his former team as Los Angeles held on to beat Indiana in Indianapolis. George was booed by the crowd in his third game back at Bankers Life Fieldhouse after requesting a trade from Indiana, with which he spent his first seven NBA seasons. George was sent to Oklahoma City in exchange for Victor Oladipo and Domantas Sabonis in July 2017 before the Thunder traded him to the Clippers in the latest offseason. Montrezl Harrell had 26 points and eight rebounds for the Clippers, who played without Kawhi Leonard (left knee soreness). Leonard sat out the latter half of a back-to-back set with a Wednesday showdown looming against his former team in Toronto, marking his first return to the city since he led the Raptors to the NBA title in June.

### Oklahoma City Thunder 104 - Utah Jazz 90

Dennis Schroder scored 27 off the bench to lead Oklahoma City to a win over Utah in Salt Lake City. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 20 points and Chris Paul had 16 points and seven assists for the Thunder, who over-

came 26 points from Utah's Donovan Mitchell. The Thunder played without a pair of starters. Terrance Ferguson missed his third straight game due to right hip soreness while Danilo Gallinari missed a game for the first time this season after sustaining a left ankle sprain.

### Phoenix Suns 125 - Minnesota Timberwolves 109

Devin Booker had 26 points and three 3-pointers, and Kelly Oubre Jr. scored 24 points on his 24th birthday as host Phoenix pulled away from Minnesota. Dario Saric had 20 points and was a rebound short of his fifth double-double in the last eight games, and Ricky Rubio added 16 points and 14 assists for the Suns, who beat Timberwolves for the second time in 17 days to get within one game of .500. Karl-Anthony Towns had 33 points and 15 rebounds, Andrew Wiggins put up 23 points, and Jeff Teague had 16 points and four assists off the bench for the Timberwolves, whose season-high losing streak reached five games.

### Memphis Grizzlies 110 - Golden State Warriors 102

Memphis used six 3-pointers to bolt to a 24-11 lead in the first 7:19 of the game, then never trailed thereafter in a victory over Golden State in San Francisco. Rookie star Ja Morant returned from a four-game layoff caused by back spasms to lead the way with a game-high 26 points and seven assists. He helped the Grizzlies win for just the second time in their last 10 games. D'Angelo Russell and Alec Burks shared team-high scoring honors for the Warriors with 18 points. — Reuters

## Australia backs Russia ban, athletes group unimpressed

**SYDNEY:** The Australian Olympic Committee have welcomed the decision by the World Anti-Doping Agency to ban Russia from major sporting events, including next year's Tokyo Games, for four years as the sports world began to digest the suspension yesterday.

WADA's executive committee acted on Monday after concluding that Moscow had planted fake evidence and deleted files linked to positive doping tests in laboratory data that could have helped identify drug

cheats. Ian Chesterman, the AOC vice-president who will lead the Australian team at the Tokyo Olympics next year, said that WADA had sent a "powerful message" with the unprecedented ban. "This was a shocking betrayal of fair sport and there are severe consequences for that," he said.

"Every athlete deserves to compete with the confidence they are competing in a clean and fair environment. The fact that this was a systematic attempt to undermine fair sport makes it all the more galling and all the more offensive."

The ban comes as a huge blow to Russian pride and President Vladimir Putin said on Monday that Moscow might appeal the decision, as is their right within 21 days. WADA's decision does leave the door open for "clean" Russian athletes to compete as individuals in Tokyo without their flag or anthem, as was the case when Russia was banned from the 2018 Pyeongchang

Winter Games.

The decision not to impose a blanket ban was not uniformly welcomed with Travis Tygart, head of the United States Anti-Doping Agency, describing it as "yet another devastating blow to clean athletes."

His view was echoed by Global Athlete, an advocacy group set up by athletes, who said WADA had been "played for fools" by the Russians and was "not fit for purpose". "Today WADA has robbed athletes worldwide of their right to clean sport due to their inability to enforce the strongest possible sanctions on Russia," it said in a statement.

"Strong sanctions which would include a complete ban of Russia and Russian athletes at all international competitions including the Olympic and Paralympic Games," Chesterman, however, said that Russian athletes who could prove they were not part of the tainted system must be able to compete.

"While the guilty must be punished, it's only fair that clean athletes from Russia are given the opportunity to compete if they can demonstrate that they were not implicated in any way," he added.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC), whose 2020 Tokyo Games will also be impacted by the decision, said they would respect WADA's sanction after the appeal is exhausted. "The IPC would like to thank WADA for the work they have done in exposing this attempt to cheat the system," the IPC said in a statement

"Once a final decision has been taken, it will be legally binding across all sports and bodies that are signatories of the World Anti-Doping Code, and must be recognised and enforced by all signatories. This includes the IPC." The Japanese Olympic Committee said they would not be commenting on the ban. — Reuters