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MPs demand resumption of National Assembly sessions

Panel says appointment in legal department should be changed

Aramco shares rocket on debut



RIYADH: Picture provided by Saudi Aramco shows the energy giant's President and CEO Amin Nasser (2nd left) ringing the bell during the official ceremony launching of Saudi Aramco's initial public offering (IPO) yesterday. — AFP

RIYADH: Saudi Aramco's shares soared on their debut on the domestic stock exchange yesterday, becoming the world's biggest listed company worth \$1.88 trillion after a record-breaking IPO. Aramco had priced the initial public offering at 32 riyals (\$8.53) per share, raising \$25.6 billion and eclipsing Alibaba's \$25 billion IPO of 2014 to become the world's largest.

Aramco shares rose 10 percent to 35.2 riyals just seconds after trading began on Riyadh's Tadawul exchange,

the maximum allowed on any trading day, further boosting the energy giant's valuation. "Today is a day of immense pride for Aramco," company chief executive Amin Nasser said at a glitzy launch ceremony. "Today we make history as Saudi Aramco marks the beginning of an important new chapter in our company's journey of prosperity," he added. The stock sale is the bedrock of de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's

Continued on Page 24

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Two lawmakers yesterday submitted a request to National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem urging him to resume the Assembly sessions which have been suspended since the resignation of the government about a month ago. MP Abdullah Al-Kandari said he submitted the request along with MP Bader Al-Mulla and demanded that the sessions be resumed on the basis of constitutional and legal procedures.

The two MPs said that the National Assembly should not be held responsible for the delay in the formation of the new Cabinet.

Based on parliamentary practice since democracy was introduced to the country in 1962, the presence of at least one Cabinet minister was considered a condition for holding National Assembly sessions. Such sessions could not be started without a government representation.

But some MPs and constitutional experts have challenged this practice as not in line with the constitution and demanded that Assembly sessions should be held even without a government representative. The government has refused to accept this argument. The government resigned on November 14 after infighting between ministers and follow-

ing allegations of corruption. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah declined an offer to form a new Cabinet saying he wanted to clear his name first from the allegations.

The Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah later appointed former Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah as the new premier. He has however said he will take his time to form the new Cabinet. MP Kandari said that a large number of issues are awaiting to be tackled by the National Assembly which should be holding daily sessions to deal with the issues.

Continued on Page 24

Water-scarce Gulf countries bank on desalination, at a cost

SUR: "We have water, and it's the most important thing in a house," says Abdullah Al-Harhi from the port city of Sur in Oman, a country that relies on desalination plants. But for Oman and the other Gulf countries dominated by vast and scorching deserts, obtaining fresh water from the sea comes at a high financial and environmental cost.

In Sur, south of the capital Muscat, water for residents and businesses comes from a large desalination plant that serves some 600,000 people. "Before, life was very difficult. We had wells, and water was delivered by trucks," the 58-year-old said. "Since the 1990s,

Continued on Page 24



AS SUR, Oman: A view of a desalination plant in the Omani port city of Sur, south of the capital Muscat. — AFP

6 die in hours-long NY-area shootout

JERSEY CITY: Six people including a police officer and two suspects were killed during an hours-long shootout across a New York suburb not far from the Statue of Liberty, local officials said. "Our officers were under fire for hours," Jersey City Police Chief Michael Kelly told reporters after the latest high-profile US shooting. In addition to the officer and the suspects, three civilians were killed in the incident that began around midday at a cemetery and ended in a store, Kelly said. Bomb squad officers were examining a stolen U-Haul vehicle "that may contain an incendiary device," he added.

No clear reason for the shooting has been given. Five of the dead were found inside a store, said Kelly. "We believe that two of them are bad guys," while the other three are civilians, he said, describing the crime scene as "very extensive, three locations at least." Two other officers were wounded, Kelly told reporters. "I

heard fighting outside, then 'Boom! Boom! Boom!'" the New York Daily News quoted a food store worker two blocks from the shooting as saying. "I saw people running outside - men, women, children in the street. These people were scared."

Kelly said the suspects' "movement was rapid and continuous for four hours" during the drama which saw the deployment of hundreds of police from New Jersey and New York, including tactical officers armed with rifles and wearing olive-green fatigues and helmets. NBC television reported that hundreds of rounds were fired. Media reports said the shooting began when an officer investigating a homicide approached the suspects in the cemetery.

Identified by media as Detective Joseph Seals, he was the first victim. Asked to confirm whether the officer was indeed probing a murder, Kelly said it is "being looked into." The suspects then took refuge in a grocery store where firing continued and the five bodies were later found. US residents have become accustomed to shootings - everywhere from churches to schools and cinemas - and firearms were linked to nearly 40,000 deaths of various kinds in 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. — AFP



NEW JERSEY: Police officers arrive at the scene of an active shooting in Jersey City. — AFP

Myanmar denies 'genocidal intent' in Rohingya case

THE HAGUE: Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday denied "genocidal intent" as she defended Myanmar's military operation against Rohingya Muslims in the UN's top court. Addressing judges in The Hague, Myanmar's civilian leader admitted that the army may have used "disproportionate force" but said that did not prove it was trying to wipe out the minority group.

The African state of The Gambia has taken Myanmar to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over a bloody 2017 military crackdown in which thousands of people were killed and around 740,000 Rohingya fled to neighboring Bangladesh. Once hailed internationally for her defiance of Myanmar's junta, Suu Kyi was this time on the side of the southeast Asian nation's military when she took the stand. "Regrettably The Gambia has placed before the court a misleading and incomplete picture of the situation in Rakhine state," Suu Kyi, wearing traditional Burmese dress and flowers in her hair, told the court.

Continued on Page 24

Climate activist named Time's 2019 Person of the Year

NEW YORK: Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who became the voice of conscience for a generation facing the climate change emergency, was named yesterday as Time magazine's 2019 Person of the Year. The 16-year-old first made headlines with her solo strike against global warming outside Sweden's parliament in August 2018.

"We can't just continue living as if there was no tomorrow, because there is a tomorrow. That is all we are saying," Thunberg told Time. The magazine interviewed Thunberg aboard the sailboat that took her from the United States to Europe after a hectic 11-week North American trip to several US cities and Canada. Thunberg has taken her disarmingly straightforward message - "listen to the scientists" - to global decision-makers, accusing them of inaction.

The Swedish activist was in Madrid as the award was announced, at a UN climate forum tasked with saving the world from runaway global warming. "The politics of climate action are as entrenched and complex as the phenomenon itself, and Thunberg has no magic solution," Time wrote in the interview. "But she has succeeded in creating a global attitudinal shift, transform-

ing millions of vague, middle-of-the-night anxieties into a worldwide movement calling for urgent change. "She has offered a moral clarion call to those who are willing to act, and hurled shame on those who are not."

'I want you to panic'

Within months of launching her lonely "School Strike for the Climate" protest outside the Swedish parliament Thunberg was spearheading global demonstrations by young people and demanding environmental action from world leaders. "I want you to panic," she told CEOs and world leaders at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland in January 2019.

"I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act." Her words spread like wildfire online. The daughter of an opera singer mother and an actor-turned-producer father born, Thunberg has faced severe criticism - the latest from Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who dismissed her as a "brat" - and been subjected to a swarm of online conspiracy theory.

Some mock her youth or try to discredit her because of her Asperger's syndrome, a diagnosis she has never hidden. Her diagnosis means that Thunberg "doesn't operate on the same emotional register as many of the people she meets," Time magazine wrote. "She dislikes crowds; ignores small talk; and speaks in direct, uncomplicated sentences. She cannot be flattered or distracted" - and according to the magazine, "these very qualities have helped make her a global sensation."

Thunberg says she is mystified by the hostility of some of the reaction to her. — AFP



Local

Kuwait Deputy FM restates respect for int'l human rights commitments

Badly organized immigration subjects people to abuse: Jarallah

Legalese

Startup Advice for Investments



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

I am extremely proud of all the entrepreneurs in the region that are making a difference with their technology startups, or 'tech startups'. You are making a difference by making our lives simpler with technology, and you have provided jobs for others and yourself. We are very proud of that community that you have created. Here are a few repeated questions that I receive from my tech startup clients.

Raising money

Question: What are my best options for raising money for a tech startup?

Fajer: There are many options for raising funds for small businesses. Here are a few of the popular ones, including the pros and cons for each:

- **Seed:** Just like a plant, it is the beginning of the life of the startup. This is usually provided by family and friends. Its advantage is that it is very easy to access, and can come from a very supportive environment. Its disadvantage is that it usually is not structured properly and legally. We are more likely to give a family member a large amount of our company without thinking through the valuation of the company.

- **Crowdfunding:** A product or a service is offered in return for money. Technically, you are selling a product or a service before you launch that product or service. Its advantage is that it can be a great marketing tool, while its disadvantage is that there is no legal structure for crowdfunding in Kuwait.

- **IPOs - Initial Public Offering:** You can offer shares of the company to the public.

Its advantage is that no one controls shareholder, and capital is raised quickly. Meanwhile, the disadvantage is that the legal structure in Kuwait for public shareholding companies is not efficient for small companies.

- **Angel Investment:** It is when a person or a small group of people invest with their own money in a startup. This usually happens at the early also. The advantage is that it can be a very supportive and mentoring relationship, while the disadvantage is that just like at seed level, they will ask for a large amount of shares.

- **Venture Capitalist Firms:** Those are professional investors that invest in startups. The advantage is that they add a lot of value to the company as they are usually reputable companies. On the other hand, the disadvantage is that the deal takes months to complete, and the VC firms may have many conditions in order to invest.

Approaching investors

Question: What should I keep in mind before approaching investors?

Fajer: There are a number of things to keep in mind before approaching investors, which include:

1. **Know your options:** Consider all the options mentioned above and understand that you can work with more than one, or be open to more than one option.

2. **Know what you will do with the money:** It is important for investors to know where the funds are going and how will the funds help the company expand.

3. **Know when to ask:** Something that you would need to consider is the timing. Timing is vital. Usually, investors want to provide funds in the first few years of a startup because the potential for growth is much larger than an already well-established company and therefore the returns are much larger.

4. **Have a solid legal structure:** Investors would not want to invest in companies unless they know what the structure of the company is and that includes all the shareholders, the type of shares they have and their rights.

5. **Register your intellectual property rights:** This is very important. Make sure you have trademarked your logo, and if you have an innovation then you have patented that innovation, copyright any designs, that you own all the websites you are using and so on. A mistake that startups do all the time is thinking that they need to copyright their source code; you do not need to do that. Do not give it to anyone and make sure no one has access to it.

6. **Know what the investor will be wanting:** Know how your investor is expecting their returns, this will help you negotiate.

7. **Prepare for Due Diligence:** Usually, investors will ask for Due Diligence. Due Diligence is an investigation where the investor digs really deep into the company to see if it is worth investing in; this will be from an accounting side and a legal side. Lawyers that are conducting due diligence will usually look for red flags such as any cases against the company, any debts or legal obligations on the company, any contracts signed that might put the company at risk in the future, etc.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@tl-legal.com.

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday reiterated his country's respect for international commitments to human rights. Addressing a seminar on contract workers' rights co-organized by the Foreign Ministry and the UN Mission in Kuwait, Jarallah said Kuwait would continue its efforts to ensure the ensuing rights of these commitments, chiefly guaranteeing dignity. In this regard, he pointed out the efforts exerted by Kuwait over the last years to create a congenial atmosphere for contract workers in Kuwait so that they could positively contribute to the development process in the country, citing relevant laws and decrees.

Jarallah emphasized that badly organized immigration could deepen splits and divisions in societies and subject people to exploitation and abuse. Therefore, he maintained, Kuwait participated in the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration organized by the UN in the Moroccan city of Marakech in December 2018, which produced the Global Compact for Migration. He added that all Kuwaiti labor laws are a normal outcome of growth and development in the country, spurring workers to seek job opportunities in this oil-rich country. As the labor law aimed at making a fair balance between the interests of employees and employers, a new law, Law 6/2010, was adopted, the Kuwaiti official remarked. This piece of legislation reflected Kuwait's respect for all international commitments in the fields of human rights and International Labor Organization (ILO) agreements, Jarallah said.

Furthermore, Kuwait has established several labor agencies with a view to promoting and safeguarding the rights of contract workers and to offering all necessary facilities to them, he boasted. Foreign laborers and their families, who are over three million in number, enjoy all rights enshrined in national laws and favorably contribute to all sectors in the country, Jarallah noted. In this regard,

NBK Capital hosts ACK students in collaboration with INJAZ

KUWAIT: NBK Capital hosted students from the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) in collaboration with the non-profit NGO, INJAZ (Kuwait). The aim of the visit is to educate students on 'Savings and Investments,' and prepare them for the financial and business working environment in the private sector.

During their visit to NBK Capital, the students were given a tour in the various departments of the firm, including Asset Management, Investment Banking and Brokerage, where they learned about the day-to-day work as a realistic model on how one of the largest companies of the investment sector in the region operates. The tour was followed by an educational session on "Savings and Investments" presented by NBK Capital's volunteers.

NBK Capital's CEO, Faisal Al-Hamad, stated: "NBK Capital's social initiatives focus on two main objectives, providing the opportunity for participating students to learn about the nature of work in the financial private sector and the importance it represents in developing the national economy, and the financial education of Kuwaiti youth on Savings and Investments." Hamad stressed on the importance of educating youth in savings, introducing them to the culture of investments, and teaching youth better financial planning through 'Savings and Investments' management.

NBK Capital is firmly committed to its social responsibility programs, which focus on educating Kuwaiti youth in order to achieve greater development and prosperity for Kuwait, always seeking to support and encourage initiatives that serve our society through education, to empower youth and guide them towards success.

VIVA receives AUM students

KUWAIT: VIVA, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and a subsidiary of STC Group, has extended a warm welcome to the students of the American University of the Middle East (AUM), who were given the opportunity to visit VIVA's Headquarters located in Olympia Tower to attend the induction session. The Human Resources team at VIVA received the AUM students and presented the history of the company since inception. They also explained different functions held within various departments, reflecting that cross functional activities and responsibilities.

On this occasion, Ahmad Hamad Al-Hammad, VIVA CHRO stated: "We are eager at VIVA to support the Education Sector and students from inside and outside of Kuwait, majoring in different fields, all in line with VIVA's CSR program. Because we believe that those students are the building blocks of the future of Kuwait, we have assigned professionals from our Human Resources team at VIVA to share their expertise and knowledge with AUM's students to help them better understand the industry and how to apply their skills in the real world to promote their readiness for future career positions." He added: "We invest in our employees to provide them with an environment that makes them reach their full potential and contribute to the success of VIVA and the Telecommunication Industry."



Ahmad Al-Hammad



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah speaks during a seminar on contract workers' rights co-organized by the Foreign Ministry and the UN Mission in Kuwait. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

he recalled to memory the UN General Assembly's decision adopted on September 4, 2000 designating December 18 as the International Migrants Day due to the increasing number of migrants worldwide.

The Kuwaiti deputy foreign minister cited Law 68/2015 regarding housekeepers as an example to follow owing to its multiple guarantees, mainly in relation to housekeepers and employers. The law included a center

for female laborers, aiming at providing them with help, legal protection and health services and free-of-charge meals, Jarallah pointed out. The center, which can accommodate 500 women workers, has gained the praise and appreciation of international governmental and non-governmental organizations and diplomatic missions in Kuwait, he said, adding that another center for male workers was in the offing. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A group photo of ACK students with NBK Capital employees.



ACK students during the educational session presented by NBK Capital's volunteers.



Local

Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, Prime Minister

Sheikh Sabah congratulates new GCC chief on post



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.— Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah expressed similar sentiments in separate cables.

Highnesses and Gulf Cooperation Council state leaders by being appointed Secretary-General," read the cable. The Kuwaiti citizen is a "source of pride for all," His Highness the Amir said, wishing Hajraf the best success in contributing to strengthen the bonds between the six member countries. Both His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah expressed similar sentiments in separate cables.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to the Governor General of New Zealand Patsy Reddy over victims of White Island volcano, which erupted Tuesday and caused many deaths and injuries. In his cable, His Highness the Amir offered his deepest sympathy to the victims' families and wished the wounded a speedy recovery, hoping officials in the friendly country will overcome the effects of this natural disaster. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent a cable of condolences to the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives Trevor Mallard.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to Czech President Milos Zeman to extend sincere condolences to victims of the deadly shooting at a hospital, in the northeast city of Ostrava, which left several casualties. In his cable, His Highness the Amir also wished quick recovery for injured people. He also voiced Kuwait's strong condemnation of the criminal act which targeted innocent people in contradiction to all religious and human values. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Czech president, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem sent two cables of condolences to President of the Czech Senate Jaroslav Kubera and Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Radek Vondracek.— KUNA

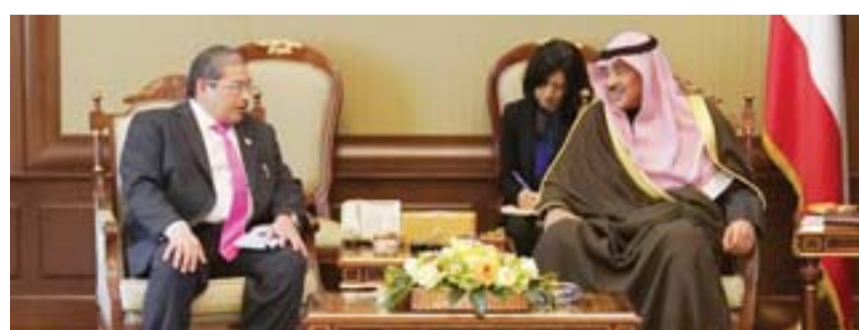


His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh.

Kuwait PM hosts Brunei Second Minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Brunei Darussalam's Second Minister of Foreign Affairs Erwan bin Pehin Yusof.— KUNA photo

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met Brunei Darussalam's visiting Second Minister of Foreign Affairs Erwan bin Pehin Yusof and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace yesterday. The encounter was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Ali Al-Said and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Brunei Salah Al-Mutairi.

Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah also met with the Brunei Darussalam's visiting Second Minister of Foreign, and the two tackled bilateral ties between both nations, and the latest developments in the regional and international arenas. Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Ali Al-Said, Assistant Foreign Minister for Deputy Foreign Minister Office Affairs Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, and Kuwait's Ambassador to Brunei Salah Mubarak Al-Mutairi attended the meeting.

In the meantime, Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem met Yusof and his accompanying delegation, and their meeting highlighted bilateral relations between the two countries, ways to bolster cooperation, and current developments in the Islamic world. The meeting was attended by MP Mubarak Al-Haris, Kuwait Ambassador to Brunei Salah Al-Mutairi, and Brunei Ambassador to Kuwait Haji Jumaa.— KUNA

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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunrise view at a beach in Fintas. — Photo by Mohammad Rasheed (KUNA)

Ambassador promotes Nepal tourism at diwaniya gathering

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A diwaniya gathering was hosted recently at Al-Baghli residence in Nuzha to promote tourism in Nepal. Durga Prasad Bhandari, Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, was invited at the diwaniya to update Kuwaitis on the tourism sector in Nepal. The ambassador gave a presentation about his country to attendees, and encouraged them to consider visiting Nepal in their future trips. Nepal's hospitality is worth experiencing, he said, adding that it is not enough to only hear good things about it from people who went there.

"I know that Kuwaitis are known travelers, and we want them to experience the hospitality we share to people around the world," he said, adding that political stability has helped the government shift focus on doing "aggressive campaigning" to attract more tourists to Nepal in 2020. "Now is the time to visit and invest in Nepal where everything is stable; from politics to business, we are always ready," he said, noting that Nepal has launched a well-funded tourism campaign to once again encourage foreigners to visit his country and check several business opportunities available there.

Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia located between India and the Tibet region. It is known for its temples and Himalayan mountains, which include Mt Everest. Kathmandu, the capital, has a mazelike old quarter filled with Hindu and Buddhist shrines. Around Kathmandu Valley are Swayambhunath, a Buddhist temple with resident monkeys; Boudhanath, a massive Buddhist stupa; Hindu temples and cremation grounds at Pashupatinath; and the medieval city of Bhaktapur. Nepal is a multiethnic country with Nepali as the official language.

Parts of northern Nepal were intertwined with the culture of Tibet. The centrally located Kathmandu Valley is



KUWAIT: Durga Prasad Bhandari, Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, speaks during a diwaniya gathering at Al-Baghli residence. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

intertwined with the culture of Indo-Aryans, and was the seat of the prosperous Newar confederacy known as Nepal Mandala.

"There are more to see in Nepal than Mt Everest," Ambassador Bhandari said. "Food is diverse; we serve halal food in all hotels and accommodations. Nepal is relatively close geographically to the Gulf; it is only a four-hour flight away. Contrary to popular belief, Nepal is not always cold; we have dry season and monsoon season too." As per the visa, while it is not free, Ambassador Bhandari explained that for Kuwaiti tourists, they can easily obtain their visa upon arrival if they choose to go to Nepal without filing for a visa at the embassy. "But you can also secure a visa in our embassy, and the visa will be issued within a day after you apply," he said.

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KUWAIT: Officials pose for a group photo during the Inauguration.

Dasman Diabetes Institute opens GeoHealth Lab

KUWAIT: Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, has inaugurated its GeoHealth Lab recently with the presence of Dr Qais Al-Duwairi, Director-General of the Institute, Jonathan Gilbert, Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait and many distinguished guests. During the inauguration, Dr Duwairi mentioned that "Dasman Diabetes

Institute is proud in driving a geohealth agenda to deal with diabetes in Kuwait and provide innovative solutions that focus on prevention and intervention."

Dasman's Geohealth Lab has built a comprehensive technical infrastructure that integrates health and administrative data with social, built and physical environmental data in support of spatial epidemiological research to understand and prevent Diabetes. This lab is the first focused Geohealth Research Hub in the region with capacity to apply spatial epidemiology and develop knowledge and understandings of the spatial drivers of diabetes in Kuwait. The lab is enabling the development of new methodologies to sustain effective public health and medical care interventions in Kuwait, which is part of our mission to serve the country and its population.

Local

Court rejects challenge to public eating in Ramadan ban

Bid to achieve gender equality in obtaining marriage loans denied

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The constitutional court yesterday rejected a contest filed by a citizen demanding considering as unconstitutional the penalty of drinking and eating in public during the holy month of Ramadan of a fine up to KD 100 and/or one month imprisonment. In its verdict, the court stressed the need to show respect for religious rituals and fasting people's feelings. The court also pointed out to the difference between not fasting, which is something between a worshipper and Allah Almighty, and eating or drinking in public.

In a different case, the court rejected a contest of the constitutionality of giving the financial investigations unit access to individuals' bank accounts and allowing the "violation of personal freedom" in money laundering and terrorism funding cases. In addition, the court also rejected a contest filed by a lawyer demanding equality between male and female citizens in obtaining marriage loans on grounds that husbands are the ones bearing financial burdens in a marriage.

New Cabinet

The new Cabinet is set to be announced next week, well-informed official governmental sources said, adding that His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah is about to finalize selecting his Cabinet members. The sources added that Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled is expected to present his final Cabinet formation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah by the middle or end of next week. "The parliament was notified that the new Cabinet formation will not exceed that of next week so that Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem can call for a session on Tuesday, December 24," the sources explained.

The sources said the new Cabinet members will be sworn in in the first parliamentary session after taking oath before HH the Amir. Moreover, the sources said Sheikh

Sabah Al-Khaled has made up his mind on "sovereign" portfolios by selecting Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah as defense minister, Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah as foreign minister and Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah as interior minister after excluding Sheikh Mohammed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah.

The sources added that MP Rakan Al-Nisf will be appointed commerce minister, Mohammad Al-Jabri will remain in the new Cabinet, Tareq Al-Merzam will be appointed minister of information, while an Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) member; probably Mohammed Al-Dalal, will join the Cabinet. "New names are nominated for the finance, public works and housing ministries," the sources said.

Parliament sessions

MP Abdullah Al-Kandari had said yesterday that along with MP Bader Al-Mulla, they urged the speaker to resume parliamentary sessions and not delay them any longer, because the government has failed so far to form the new Cabinet. "There are many unfinished issues that require holding daily meetings to resolve them. We also need to continue monitoring government performance to fight and prevent corruption," Kandari pointed out. MP Khalil Abul said: "The government that claims to fight corruption should not delay the legislative power's work." He added that delaying the Cabinet formation is not a good sign.

On this regard, parliamentary sources stressed such calls by MPs are unconstitutional because the constitution does not oblige a prime minister to form his Cabinet within a certain period if the parliament is still in office. "It only urges the premier to form the Cabinet within two weeks effective the day of his appointment after the election of a new parliament," the sources explained, noting that lawmakers can later call for accordingly amending the constitution to set a limited period.

Municipality fights unauthorized use of Jleeb open yards

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: In collaboration with Interior Ministry personnel, Kuwait Municipality's Farwaniya inspection teams recently launched a cleaning campaign in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh where the team used special installations to prevent using open yards as truck parking areas or garages for auto repair, changing oils and tires and dumping wastes.

In this regard, Farwaniya Municipality Manager Mohammad Sarkhouh said that

a plan had been set to clean various open yards and impound violating vehicles, adding that 11 vehicles and heavy machinery had been removed and 57 warning notices had been stuck on other trucks pending removal.

Sarkhouh added that 80 truckloads of waste and 30 truckloads of tires were removed from the yards, in addition to filing two citations for setting up unlicensed garages there. "Those yards are being currently cleaned," he underlined, pointing out that the cleaning process is

going on around the clock.

Meanwhile, Farwaniya Cleaning Manager Saad Al-Khorainej said that a yard opposite Block 10 in the area was subjected to cleaning over five days, during which abandoned vehicles and tires were removed and temporary fences were placed to prevent using the yard as a parking area. Khorainej added that 150 truckloads of waste and 50 truckloads of used tires were removed and sent to the used tires' dumpster in Salmi.

Customs confiscate 70 kg hashish in feed shipment

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle 70 kilograms of hashish found in an animal feed shipment that arrived from Iran yesterday. Doha Port customs officers confiscated the drugs and contacted concerned authorities for further legal action. Director General of Kuwait Customs Department Jamal Al-Jalawi said Kuwait customs work according to an integrated system, which has proven effective in foiling several drug smuggling attempts. "The customs staff are continually trained and sent on courses to get acquainted with the latest methods in drug smuggling," he said in a statement.

Rai fire

Kuwait Fire Service Directorate

(KFSD) officials were briefed on the fire that engulfed an electronics warehouse last week in Rai. Head of the Operations Center Lt Col Meshari Al-Faras explained the procedures taken in receiving the call and dispatching fire teams to the scene. He also gave an explanation on the risks that included the high level of heat generated by the fire, which caused the collapse of a building on the site. Acting Head of Capital Fire Station Col Fahad Al-Ajmi explained the method used to bring the fire under control and keep it from spreading further. Meanwhile, Investigations Supervisor Lt Col Sayyed Hassan Al-Mousawi spoke about the procedures taken by his team to determine the cause of fire. KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mikrad had given instructions to host the meeting.



KUWAIT: Drugs confiscated by customs officials at Doha Port yesterday.



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 0.445 0.275 Banana Chiquita per kg	 1.395 0.995 Strawberry 250 gm (USA) Packet	 0.495 0.285 Carrot (Australia) per kg
 4.590 3.490 Norwegian Whole Salmon /kg	 4.790 3.890 Shrimps Big (Kuwait) /kg	


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Partisan news outlets seeking to fill the void in US 'news deserts'

Hazardous Sydney smoke turns up heat in Australia's climate politics



WHAKATANE: The police boat Deodar III arrives into Whakatane after police were unable to get onto White Island to recover the bodies of those killed by volcanic eruption in Whakatane yesterday. — AFP

Tremors worsen on NZ volcano island

Risk too high for recovery of bodies

WHAKATANE: Increasing tremors on a volcanic island in New Zealand yesterday heightened the risk of another massive eruption, preventing the recovery of bodies two days after an eruption engulfed dozens of tourists in steam and hot ash. Six people were killed in Monday's explosion at White Island, which lies some 50 km off the mainland, with another nine officially listed as missing, and 30 injured.

Australian Gavin Dallow, 53, and his stepdaughter Zoe Hosking, 15, were the latest victims to be identified yesterday. "Our hearts break at the loss of Zoe at such a young age," the Dallow family said in an emailed statement. "We mourn the loss of Gavin and Zoe." And the death toll could rise with 29 people in intensive care in several hospitals around the country.

Twenty seven people have horrific burns to 30% or more of their body and 22 are also on airway support due to the severity of their burns, said medical authorities. "We anticipate we will require an additional 1.2 million square centimeters of skin for the ongoing needs of the patients," Counties Manukau Chief Medical Officer, Dr Peter Watson, said at Middlemore Hospital in Auckland.

"The nature of the burns suffered is complicated by the gases and chemicals in the eruption. This has necessitated more rapid treatment of these burns than is the

case for thermal-only burns," said Watson. Surgical teams were engaged in around-the-clock treatment. "This is just the start of a very long process that for some patients will last several months," he said. The Australian government said it expected to transfer up to 10 injured citizens from New Zealand starting in the next 24 hours, if medical staff approve them for travel.



Death toll 6, 9 still missing, 29 in intensive care

Too risky to recover bodies

Authorities monitoring the uninhabited island said conditions were worsening and there was now a 40-60% chance of a massive eruption similar to Monday in the next 24 hours. "In summary, yesterday there was a high risk of an eruption. Today there is an even higher risk of an eruption. And the parameters are worsening at the moment," Graham Leonard, a senior volcanologist at

GNS Science, told a news conference in Wellington.

A plume of smoke could still be seen coming from the island. "I've spoken to many of those involved in the operation and they are very, very eager to get back there, they want to bring people's loved ones home," New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in an interview with Reuters in Wellington. Aerial surveillance has detected no signs of life on the island, where at least one tour group was captured on automated webcams in the crater just a minute before the eruption.

Police said the safety of recovery teams was the priority and are awaiting advice from experts on when they could access the island. That has prompted some criticism authorities are being too cautious. "We cannot put other people in jeopardy to go out there until we're absolutely certain that the island is actually safe," Acting Assistant Commissioner Bruce Bird told a media conference in Whakatane, the town that is an access point for tourist trips to the island.

There were 47 people on White Island at the time of the eruption. Twenty-four of those were from Australia, nine from the United States, five from New Zealand, four from Germany, two each from China and Britain and one from Malaysia. A mother and daughter were the first Australians to



WHAKATANE: Steam rises from the White Island volcano in Whakatane after a volcanic eruption the day before. — AFP

be named as victims, media said yesterday. Brisbane woman Julie Richards, 47, and her daughter Jessica, 20, had been confirmed dead, family friend John Mickel told Sky News.

The death toll from Monday's eruption rose to six after one victim died in hospital on Tuesday. Daily tours bring more than

10,000 visitors to the privately owned island every year, marketed as "the world's most accessible active marine volcano". GeoNet raised the alert level for the volcano in November because of an increase in volcanic activity. The alert level was increased further after the eruption, and remains elevated. — Reuters

US Army to fund rare earths plant for arms

WASHINGTON: The US Army plans to fund construction of rare earths processing facilities, part of an urgent push by Washington to secure domestic supply of the minerals used to make military weapons and electronics, according to a government document seen by Reuters. The move would mark the first financial investment by the US military into commercial-scale rare earths production since World War Two's Manhattan Project built the first atomic bomb.

It comes after President Donald Trump earlier this year ordered the military to update its supply chain for the niche materials, warning that reliance on other nations for the strategic minerals could hamper US defenses. China, which refines most of the world's rare earths, has threatened to stop exporting the specialized minerals to the United States, using its monopoly as a cudgel in the ongoing trade spat between the world's two largest economies.

"The US rare earths industry needs big help to compete against the Chinese," said Jim McKenzie, chief executive officer of UCore Rare Metals Inc, which is developing a rare earths project in Alaska. "It's not just about the money, but also the optics of broad support from Washington." The Army division overseeing munitions last month asked miners

for proposals on the cost of a pilot plant to produce so-called heavy rare earths, a less-common type of the specialized minerals that are highly sought after for use in weaponry, according to the document.

Responses are due by Dec 16. UCore, Texas Mineral Resources Corp and a joint venture between Lynas Corp and privately-held Blue Line Corp are among the expected respondents, according to company officials and sources familiar with the matter. The Army said it will fund up to two-thirds of a refiner's cost and that it would fund at least one project and potentially more. Applicants must provide a detailed business plan and specify where they will source their ore, among other factors.

This latest move by the Army, a division of the Pentagon, comes after a military study earlier this year on the state of the US rare earths supply chain. The rare earths tension between the US and China goes back to at least 2010, when China limited exports to Japan after a diplomatic dispute, sending prices for the niche metals spiking and fueling concerns across the US military that China could do the same to the United States.

The US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center and the US Army headquarters did not respond to requests for comment. The request does not give a specific financial amount the Army could fund, though it is derived in part from the Defense Production Act (DPA), a 1950s-era US law that gives the Pentagon wide financial latitude to procure equipment necessary for the national defense.

A rare earth processing pilot plant could cost between \$5 million and \$20 million,

depending on location, size and other factors, with a full-scale plant potentially costing more than \$100 million to build, industry executives said. "It's great to see interest in financially supporting the industry from the Department of Defense," said Jon Blumenthal, CEO of Blue Line Corp, which earlier this year signed a memorandum of understanding to build a rare earth processing facility in Texas with Australia-based Lynas Corp. Blumenthal declined to comment when asked if Blue Line will respond to the Army's request. Lynas declined to comment.

It is not clear how the Army will rank the responses given that much of the rare earths industry expertise is now located in China, though the modern rare earths industry itself had its genesis in the United States decades ago. "Instead of providing funds for yet another study, this allocates money toward establishing a US-based rare earth supply chain," said Anthony Marchese, CEO of Texas Mineral Resources, which is developing the Round Top mine in Texas with USA Rare Earth.

After processing, however, rare earths need to be turned into rare earth magnets, found in precision-guided missiles, smart bombs and military jets and China controls the rare earths magnet industry, too. The Pentagon has not yet launched an effort to finance domestic magnet manufacturing. "Closing the magnet gap would do more to address the nation's defense needs, and as well the needs of electric vehicle makers and others," said Ryan Castilloux, managing director with Adamas Intelligence, a research firm that closely tracks the rare earths industry. — Reuters

Iran foils a 'very big' foreign cyber attack

DUBAI: Iran has foiled a major cyber attack on its infrastructure that was launched by a foreign government, the Iranian telecoms minister said yesterday, two months after reports of a US cyber operation against the country. US officials told Reuters in October that the United States had carried out a secret cyber strike on Iran after the Sept 14 attacks on Saudi oil facilities, which Washington and Riyadh blamed on Tehran. Iran denied involvement in the attacks, which were claimed by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi movement.

"We recently faced a highly organized and state-sponsored attack on our e-government infrastructure which was...repelled by the country's security shield," Mohammad Javad Azari-Jahromi, Iran's minister for communications and information technology, was quoted by the semi-official Mehr news agency as saying. "It was a very big attack," Azari-Jahromi said, adding that details would be revealed later. It was not clear whether Azari-Jahromi was referring to the US cyber attack, which US officials said took place in late September and tar-

geted Tehran's ability to spread "propaganda".

Asked about Reuters' October report of a cyber attack, Azari-Jahromi said then: "They must have dreamt it." In late September, Iran reviewed security measures at its key Gulf oil and gas facilities, including preparedness for cyber attacks, following media reports of Washington weighing possible cyber attacks on Tehran. The reported US cyber strike highlighted how President Donald Trump's administration has been trying to counter what it sees as Iranian aggression while avoiding an outright military conflict.

Iran has long been on alert over the threat of cyber attacks from abroad. The United States and Israel covertly sabotaged Iran's disputed nuclear program in 2009 and 2010 with the Stuxnet computer virus, which destroyed a number of Iranian centrifuges that were enriching uranium. Tensions in the Gulf have escalated sharply since Trump last year withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and reimposed trade and financial sanctions on Tehran. — Reuters

International

With Netanyahu's fate in question, Israel poised for another election

Efforts to form 'national unity' government deadlocked

JERUSALEM: Israel headed yesterday towards a third national election in less than a year with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu facing the fight of his life for political survival after a criminal indictment. After giving its preliminary approval, and barring last-minute progress in deadlocked efforts to form a new government, parliament was set to vote for its dissolution later in the day and approve a March 2 election date already agreed by the two major parties.

What had once seemed nearly impossible to many Israelis - a third visit to polling stations after inconclusive elections in April and September - carries a heavy economic price: it will be well into 2020 before a new budget is passed, which will mean months of cutbacks that will weigh on growth. Neither Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party nor the centrist Blue and White party led by his main rival, former military chief Benny Gantz, won enough seats in the Knesset (parliament) for a governing majority in the previous two contests.

Both men were delegated the task of forming a coalition, but failed. Each has blamed the other for the impasse, in which neither could agree on the terms for a "rotating" premiership. In the two previous national ballots, Netanyahu's opponents focused on the three corruption investigations against him that included allegations he dispensed favors to media barons in a push for more favorable media coverage.

But this time, Israel's longest-serving leader is running under the cloud of criminal indictment after charges of

bribery, breach of trust and fraud against him were announced last month. Denying any wrongdoing, Netanyahu, 70, has accused legal authorities of attempting a "coup" aimed at ousting a popular right-wing leader. Critics alleged that Netanyahu was trying to undermine the rule of law and set an election campaign theme portraying himself as the victim of "deep state" conspiracy.

As prime minister, Netanyahu is under no legal obligation to resign as a result of the indictment, and while in office he can ask the legislature to grant him immunity from prosecution. As caretaker premier, Netanyahu would remain in the post until a new government is formed - a process that could stretch months past a March ballot if what is likely to be tortuous coalition-building is taken into account. "The entire country is held hostage by the prime minister's legal battles," the left-wing Haaretz newspaper said in an editorial yesterday.

Netanyahu, vowing to "win big" at the polls, has described himself as best-placed to deal with Israel's many security threats. He has citing challenges posed by arch-enemy Iran as a main reason why Gantz should rally to his call for a unity government. An opinion poll on Israel's Channel 13 news on Tuesday forecast Blue and White would win 37 seats to Likud's 33 in the 120-member parliament, increasing the one-seat advantage it gained in the election in April. But it also indicated that both parties could still struggle to secure enough allies for a majority coalition. — Reuters



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (center) arrives at the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem. — AFP



Parliament set to vote on dissolution

Three soldiers, 14 attackers dead in Niger camp assault

NIAMEY: Three soldiers and 14 attackers died in an assault earlier this week on an army camp in western Niger near the border with Mali, the defense minister said. Heavily armed "terrorists" in a dozen 4x4 vehicles led the attack early Monday morning on the military post in the West African country's Tahoua region, he said.

"After two hours of intense fighting, the vigorous response of our defense and security forces enabled us to repel the attack and push back the assailants," the minister said Tuesday in a statement read on state TV. "A vehicle packed with explosives was seized" by the army along with weapons and ammunition, he said. Jihadist militants operate on Niger's northern borders with Mali and Libya, while its south-

eastern border with Nigeria is plagued by the Boko Haram group.

The statement added that the attackers had fled towards Mali after the battle at the Agando camp, which also left four soldiers and several attackers wounded. It came as armed men launched an attack Tuesday evening on another army post, also in Niger's west, according to a security source who could not give an immediate death toll. Tuesday's attack took place in the Inates area, the source said, adding that the situation was "under control" and reinforcements had been sent.

"The attackers came in their dozens, in small groups on motorcycles," and surrounded the camp, she said. In July, a faction of Boko Haram backed by the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for an attack on an army camp in Inates that killed 18 soldiers. Niger is part of a five-nation anti-jihadist task force known as the G5, set up in 2014 with Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Chad. Thousands of civilians and soldiers have died in violence across the vast region with porous borders, known as the Sahel, which began when armed Islamists revolted in northern Mali in 2012. — AFP



DAKORO: A family of Fulani herders pause during their transhumance in search for richer pastures while passing through Dakoro. Higher temperatures, shifting winds and moisture levels that alter rainfall patterns, sandstorms, torrential rain-all can change the quality or even the location of pasture on which migrating herders depend. — AFP

Five killed in jihadist attack on Somali hotel

MOGADISHU: Five people including three civilians were killed when jihadist militants stormed a hotel in Somalia's capital, police said yesterday, adding that all five attackers had also died after an hours-long siege. The attack on Tuesday evening, claimed by the Islamist group Al-Shabaab, took place at a hotel in Mogadishu popular with politicians, army officers and diplomats.

"Our brave security forces ended the terror attack on SYL hotel rescuing more than 80 people" including government officials and hotel guests, police said in a statement. "The number of the dead we have confirmed is five, among them two members of the security forces and three civilians. Nine other civilians and two soldiers were also wounded slightly". Several witnesses said that the assailants were dressed in police uniform, which allowed them to approach the hotel without arousing suspicion.

They then opened fire and threw grenades, triggering an armed response from security forces guarding checkpoints leading to the nearby presidential palace. After several hours of siege, police killed the two last attackers holed up inside the hotel, which has suffered three previous deadly attacks, all claimed by Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab posted a statement online saying it had carried out an operation "which happened as planned", but gave no further details. The police statement said the attack was carried out "by five people who have been sent by the terrorists to threaten the Somali public and all of them were killed".

Al-Shabaab - allied to Al-Qaeda - was forced out of the Somali capital in 2011 but still controls parts of the countryside and continues to launch attacks in Mogadishu. The group often strikes the most prominent hotels and restaurants, and has also staged attacks in neighboring Kenya. The SYL hotel is close to the main entrance of the Villa Somalia government complex, a high-security area that includes the presidential palace, the prime minister's office and ministry buildings. Unusually for an al-Shabaab attack, the jihadists did not use a car bomb to try and blast through the hotel's exterior wall, said police officer Suleyman Adan.

"It appears that the attackers have changed their tactics. It was easy for them to disguise themselves and enter the building," he added. Adan said that a large number of hotel guests had been quickly evacuated by police through the hotel's service doors and emergency exits. Witnesses described scenes of panic and confusion as the attack began. "I was close to the hotel when the gunfire broke out and we managed to turn our vehicle swiftly," said Abdulkadir Ahmed.

"The security forces around the palace checkpoints were firing heavy machine-guns but we don't exactly know who was fighting who." Another witness, Ali Moalim Nur, told AFP that one of his friends who escaped the hotel had suffered a fracture after jumping off a wall. In January 2015, five people were killed when a suicide car bomber rammed the gates of the same hotel on the eve of a visit by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

In February 2016, twin blasts set off close to the SYL hotel and the neighboring Peace Garden killed 14 people. Then in August of the same year, a suicide car bomb attack on the hotel killed 15 people. — AFP

Trafficking fuels jihadist groups in Sahel: Report

BAMAKO: Criminal activities such as arms and drug trafficking are crucial to the survival of jihadist groups in the Sahel, creating links with organized crime, a South African research centre said Tuesday. A study conducted by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) over two years in the Liptako-Gourma area, which covers the regions of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger that are currently fighting jihadist groups, found that illicit activities by extremist groups "finance their establishment and expansion".

The jihadists can generate the finances they need for their operations and provide

livelihoods allowing them to gain support from the locals, which has resulted in some of them joining the extremists. The study, which involved 800 people, some of whom were imprisoned members of armed groups, said the link between trafficking and jihadism is "generally indirect" as they do not own the trafficked products.

Rather the jihadist groups - as well as Malian armed groups - are paid for "the necessary protection" they provide to the traffickers' convoys of drugs. The ISS also said cattle theft is widespread in the Sahel region and that groups often steal cattle during attacks on villages and sell them to butchers or markets that are far away. "All armed groups in the area are involved in the removal of livestock, their survival depends on it," a former member of a jihadist group in Niger told the ISS. In some areas, extremist groups have imposed a levy called a "zakat", which farmers must pay in exchange for protection. — AFP



BERMO: Ardo Rouada Sabgari, a Wodaabe elder of the Sabgari Clan and the Chief of the Village of Bermo walks towards his camp. The Wodaabe People, a sub-group of the Fulani, are nomadic cattle herders and traders in the wider Sahel region. Their migrations stretch from southern Niger, through northern Nigeria, northeastern Cameroon, southwestern Chad, and the western region of the Central African Republic. — AFP

News in brief

Train kills 2 elephants

KOLKATA: Two elephants were hit and killed by a passenger train yesterday in eastern India, officials said, with the animals' bodies decorated with flowers before being cremated at the spot. In the past five years, at least 26 elephants have been killed and scores more injured by trains on this stretch of track near the Nepal border, according to wildlife officials. The animals - one of which was pregnant - were hit at 4:30 am while crossing the railway line, said North Frontier Railway spokesman Subhanan Chanda. "We think that the accident took place due to poor visibility in the area caused by the dense fog," Chanda added. Forestry workers and wildlife officials have repeatedly asked rail authorities to stop running trains at night because of such incidents. Dozens of locals gathered around the bodies of the elephants, with some offering prayers. Logs were piled up around the carcasses and set alight. — AFP

Delhi's air turns hazardous

NEW DELHI: Air quality in India's capital New Delhi plummeted to "severe" yesterday due to a drop in temperature and wind speed that trapped pollutants in the atmosphere, prompting health warnings from the government for the 12th time in two months. On Tuesday, the air quality index crossed 400, indicating a level of pollution that affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases, according to government guidance. The index measures small particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less in diameter (PM2.5) that can penetrate the lungs and enter the blood system. Chronic exposure to such particles contributes to the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as lung cancer, according to the World Health Organization. The Ministry of Health said those vulnerable to health risks should avoid outdoor physical activities when the air quality index is between poor to severe. — Reuters

US consul staffer in jail

ISTANBUL: A Turkish court rejected a request yesterday to release a US consular staffer jailed since 2017 on espionage charges as he told the judge no credible evidence had been submitted against him. The case of Metin Topuz, a Turkish citizen and liaison for the US Drug Enforcement Administration, has added to growing tensions between Ankara and Washington. Topuz has been in jail since his arrest in October 2017, accused of ties to US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara says ordered an attempted coup the year before. His next court appearance was set for March 10. "The charges are based on unrealistic allegations and contradictory testimonies of so-called witnesses," Topuz told the Istanbul court. "Not one single piece of evidence has been presented to the court that would convince a rational person that I tried to destroy the Turkish republic," he added, referring to claims made by the prosecution. — AFP

Bulgarian imam jailed

SOFIA: A Bulgarian imam was jailed for eight and a half years on Tuesday for spreading the ideas of the Islamic State group and propagating hatred and war on religious grounds. The regional court in the southern city of Pazardzhik also handed down lesser sentences to 13 followers of imam Ahmed Moussa Ahmed, who hails from Bulgaria's minority Roma group. He was found guilty of preaching the ideas of IS and for helping would-be jihadists passing through Bulgaria on their way to fight in Syria, the court said. In his preachings in the Pazardzhik mosque, Moussa had also incited hatred and urged his followers to wage war on religious grounds, it added. Thirteen of Moussa's followers - 12 men and one woman - were also found guilty of spreading hatred on religious grounds and propagating war. — AFP

International

Partisan news outlets seeking to fill the void in US 'news deserts'

Hundreds of websites launched by political organizations

WASHINGTON: Open the website of the Kalamazoo Times of Michigan and you will see a smattering of articles such as might be found on the sites of any number of news organizations. But a closer look reveals there are no ads or subscription offers, and many of the articles are weeks old or simply press releases for various organizations.

The site is nearly identical to more than a dozen others in Michigan such as the Lansing Sun, Battle Creek Times or Grand Rapids Reporter, all part of a group linked to conservative political activists. The Michigan websites are among hundreds launched by political organizations across the United States, in many cases mimicking the appearance of established news organizations without disclosing their ownership or funding.

These sites aim to fill the void in what has been described as "news deserts" created by the disappearance of local news outlets struggling to keep pace in the new digital landscape. Some 40 sites in Michigan are part of a network operated by the Metric Media Foundation, a group headed by conservative political consultant Bradley Cameron. The group, which did not respond to an AFP request for comment, said on its website it funds hundreds of local news sites using a "database of public information" and "free-lance reporters around the country who adhere to strict journalistic standards."

Although they don't circulate hoaxes or blatantly false conspiracy theories, the partisan bent may confuse readers. The proliferation of these sites creates "a tremendously difficult time for citizens to figure out what to believe," said Kathleen Culver, head of the University of Wisconsin's Center for Journalism Ethics. While there is nothing inherently wrong with politically driven news organizations, Culver said that "some of these efforts are trying to hide their partisanship by using the forms of journalism without the norms of journalism."

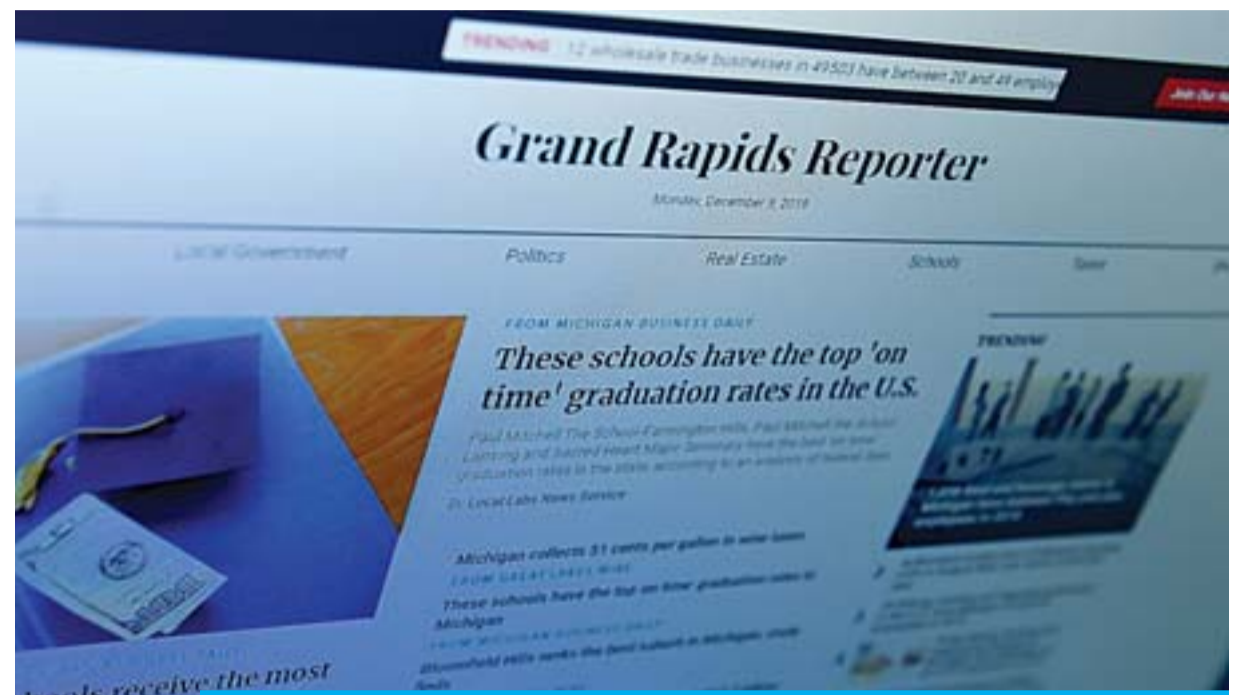
'Impostor sites'

Dartmouth University professor Brendan Nyhan says these "impostor sites" pretend to be news organizations without the varied and balanced coverage most people expect. "The prevalence of these impostors is likely to increase as the 2020 election approaches, threatening to mislead more voters and to promote greater skepticism toward all news media, including the local outlets that so many Americans rely on and trust," Nyhan said in a New York Times essay.

The surge in partisan news outlets comes with the legacy media in the throes of a horrific slump which has seen the loss of some 2,000 local newspapers and the loss of one-fourth of newsroom jobs over the past decade, according to various studies. The trend of politically driven news sites from both the left and right appears to be spreading. An investigation by the fact-checking group Snopes found the Tennessee Star and similar sites in Ohio, Michigan and Minnesota, had been created by "three Tea Party-connected conservative activists."

Operated by Star News Digital Media, the sites promise "a fact-based conservative perspective and feature stories that are of interest to residents of each state who voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election," according to its website. From the political left, a newly formed Courier Newsroom is in the process of launching sites in Virginia, Wisconsin, Arizona and Michigan, funded in part by the activist group Acronym, according to editor-in-chief Lindsay Schrupp. Schrupp, a former Vice Media writer and editor, said that unlike some other sites, "we are trying to be 100 percent transparent" while offering "a progressive lens on issues."

Courier is in the process of hiring journalists in the localities and pledged to offer "original reporting" on local issues without being afraid to take on Democrats as well as Republicans. "We are going to report on stories no matter where they go," she said. Courier aims to



WASHINGTON: The front page of the online news outlet, the Grand Rapids Reporter of Michigan, part of a group linked to conservative political activists is seen in an office in Washington, DC. Open the website of the Kalamazoo Times of Michigan and you will see smattering of articles such as you might find on the sites of any number of news organizations. —AFP

offer people "more facts and real info that is relevant to their lives" ahead of the 2020 elections and beyond, according to Schrupp. Still, readers are likely to be confused when faced with the array of "news sites" established by politicians, Russian internet trolls and others, often seeking to propagate via social media feeds.

"The reason these outlets are using these forms is that people still trust their local journalism organiza-

tions. That's what these groups are trying to play on," Culver said. Penelope Abernathy, a University of North Carolina professor and author of a study on "news deserts," said the flood of partisan news may not replace needed coverage of key local issues like education, public safety, the environment and health. "We need a well-rounded diet of news, not just politics," she said. "What we don't have right now is a deficit in political news." —AFP

Polar vortex, Midwest floods, California fires: US wild 2019 weather

CHICAGO: From a brutal polar vortex that froze much of the Midwest and East Coast in January to Hurricane Dorian that killed dozens in the Bahamas in September, Mother Nature dealt Americans a wild and deadly weather year in 2019. Weather events that made headlines this year included:

Polar vortex blamed for 21 deaths

The year got off to a roaring start with a polar vortex that paralyzed the US Midwest and the East Coast for several days at the end of January, putting tens of millions of Americans in a deep freeze. Arctic-like temperatures as low as minus 56 degrees F (-49 C) were blamed for at least 21 cold-related deaths, including nine in Chicago. The record-breaking cold snap shut schools and businesses, grounded hundreds of flights and filled emergency rooms with frostbite victims.

Historic flooding swamps US

A quick-melting snow from a March "bomb cyclone" storm left wide swaths of nine states flooded in the US Plains and Midwest. At least four deaths and hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses were blamed on the historic flooding. Some of the region's larger rivers filled to record high levels, causing levees to break. Several small towns and communities were cut off by the high waters while others were short of fresh drinking water. The flooding also destroyed billions of dollars of crops that were in storage and damaged roads and railways.

22 dead in July heat wave

At least 22 people died during a massive heat wave that baked the US Midwest, South and East Coast during the third week of July. Millions of residents in major US cities including Chicago and New York were urged to stay indoors as temperatures reached over 100 degrees F (37.8 C). To make matters worse, parts of Manhattan lost power, darkening Broadway theaters, halting subways and closing restaurants and shops in a blackout blamed on a faulty piece of equipment. In downtown Madison, Wisconsin, thousands of homes and businesses lost power after fires erupted at two substations near the state capitol during the hot weather.

Hurricane Dorian kills scores

At least 70 people lost their lives, with more than 250 still missing, when Hurricane Dorian, a Category 5 storm, slammed the Bahamas with 200-mile-per-hour winds during the first week of September. It was one of the strongest Caribbean hurricanes on record and stands as the worst disaster in the history of the archipelago nation of 400,000 people. The storm reduced thousands of homes and businesses to rubble and displaced tens of thousands of Bahamians before heading north and making landfall in the Carolinas as a Category 1 hurricane. Once in the United States, Dorian flooded coastal towns, whipped up tornadoes and cut power to hundreds of thousands of people.

3 dead in California wildfire

This year's wildfire season in California was relatively tame compared to the epic spate of conflagrations in 2017 and 2018 that ranks as the deadliest and most destructive in state history. California, however, was not completely spared. The state's biggest fire in 2019 was the Kincaid fire, a wind-driven blaze that scorched 120 square miles of Sonoma County wine country, where it damaged or destroyed hundreds of structures and forced thousands to evacuate. In all, just three fatalities were recorded in 2019, compared to nearly 150 lives lost during the previous two years. —Reuters

What's at stake for Britain's economy in election?

LONDON: The two main parties in Britain's election today offer contrasting plans on spending, tax, the role of the state, trade unions and Brexit. Below is a summary of the main economic policies of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party.

Spending

Johnson is already loosening the purse strings after nearly 10 years of cuts for many public services. He approved the biggest rise in day-to-day spending in 15 years in September. But proposals in the Conservatives' election manifesto for further funding increases are modest and would mean continued austerity for many services outside the health system, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) think-tank.

Labour's spending plans dwarf Johnson's. Corbyn wants to reverse cuts to services such as the police and give public workers a 5% pay rise, which would push day-to-day spending up by 82.9 billion pounds (\$106 billion) a year by 2024. The equivalent increase in the Conservatives' spending plans is 2.9 billion pounds. On investment, the differ-

ence is smaller but still stark. Under the Conservatives, it would rise by about 20 billion pounds a year, or a third of Labour's planned increase. The IFS has said Labour's plans are too big to implement, at least in the short term.

Tax

Johnson would gradually increase the threshold at which workers pay social security contributions. He has also ruled out increasing income tax and Value-Added Tax. Corbyn has said Labour's spending increases will be funded largely by higher taxes for companies and people in the top income bracket. The IFS has said both parties would probably have to raise taxes further, or borrow more, if they stick to their plans.

Role of the state

Labour's left-wing leadership wants to put the state back at the centre of Britain's economy. Plans to nationalize power networks, water, rail and postal companies expanded last month to include the fixed-line network of telecoms group BT to give free broadband to everyone.

Labour says workers in large companies will get a 10% stake via Inclusive Ownership Funds which would share profits with staff and pump money into government apprentice schemes. Johnson favors free market policies but he has proposed new state aid rules, changing state purchasing policies and reforming farming so public bodies buy more British goods. Labour has promised a "huge roll-out of individual

FBI lawyer mocked by Trump sues over leaked texts

WASHINGTON: A former FBI lawyer, who was mocked by President Donald Trump over private texts with her FBI lover concerning politics and the Russia investigation, sued the Justice Department and FBI for privacy violations Tuesday. Lisa Page, whose relationship with FBI counterintelligence official Peter Strzok became a lurid sideshow of the Russian collusion investigation of Trump, accused the two agencies of unlawfully disclosing 375 text messages between her and Strzok during the 2016 election.

At the time Strzok was deeply involved and Page more peripherally involved in the overlapping investigations of Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton's misuse of a personal computer server, and of Russian election interference designed to support Republican Trump. When they were released, the text messages - a mix of pillow talk, office politics and comments on the candidates - were cited by Trump as evidence that the Russian collusion investigation focused was politically motivated.

The Justice Department inspector general found no political bias in two separate investigations reviewing the FBI and the 2016 election. "I sued the Department of Justice and FBI today. I take little joy in having done so. But what they did in leaking my messages to the press was not only wrong, it was illegal," Page said in a tweeted statement. She said the texts were in the possession of the inspector general when they were leaked to the media in December 2017.

The leakers sought "to promote the false narrative that



PENNSYLVANIA: US President Donald Trump speaks during a Keep America Great rally at the Giant Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania. —AFP

plaintiff (Page) and others at the FBI were biased against President Trump, had conspired to undermine him, and otherwise had engaged in allegedly criminal acts, including treason," the lawsuit said. The leak turned Page "into a subject of frequent attacks by the president of the United States, as well as his allies and supporters," it said. Page noted that Trump has tweeted about her over 40 times and mentioned her publicly dozens of times, branding her and Strzok "the FBI lovers."

In an October political rally in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Trump recounted the texts in a mocking erotic tone, making fun of Page. In an interview with The Daily Beast on December 5, she said that speech deeply angered her. "Honestly, his demeaning fake orgasm was really the straw that broke the camel's back," she said. "It had been so hard not to defend myself, to let people who hate me control the narrative. I decided to take my power back." —AFP



MIDDLESBROUGH: Britain's Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn poses for selfie photographs as he greets supporters during a general election campaign event in Stainton Village, near Middlesbrough, north east England yesterday. —AFP

and collective rights" to give more power to unions.

Brexit

Britain's relationship with the European Union will have a major bearing on the economy. Johnson wants to leave by Jan. 31 and secure a trade deal with the bloc by the end of 2020 when a transition period ends, meaning tariffs and other barriers to trade could come into force for British goods and services. Johnson says ending the Brexit uncertainty would "unleash a great tide of investment" and boost the economy. However, getting a new deal done

before the end of next year is seen as tough given the complexities of trade negotiations.

Corbyn says he will negotiate a new exit deal and put it to a referendum, raising the prospect of Britain reversing its Brexit decision altogether. The finance ministry estimated in 2018 that striking a free trade deal with the EU would reduce the size of the economy by about 5% by the mid-2030s compared with staying in the EU. Labour's proposal of remaining in an EU customs union with close alignment to its single market is widely seen as being less damaging to the economy. —Reuters

Final push in UK Brexit election

LONDON: Britain's political leaders were to criss-cross the country yesterday's final day of general election campaigning as a key poll showed the outcome could be hanging in the balance. Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Labour main opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn were set for whistlestop tours of key battleground seats in a frantic last push for votes.

Today's snap general election was called in a bid to break the Brexit deadlock that has gripped Britain ever since the seismic 2016 referendum vote to leave the EU. After struggling to lead a minority administration, Johnson is hoping to secure a majority government that will enable him to take Britain out of the European Union on January 31. His centre-right Conservatives have been consistently ahead in the opinion polls but YouGov's final survey of the campaign predicted they were set only for a narrow majority — with the race tightening.

The pollsters' seat projection put the Conservatives on course for a relatively slender 28-seat majority in parliament's 650-member lower House of Commons - down from a comfortable 68 forecast by YouGov on November 27.

The new poll forecast that the Conservatives would take 339 seats (up 22 on the last general election in 2017), with the left-wing Labour main opposition on 231 (down 31). The Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) was on course for 41 seats, up six, while the Liberal Democrats are set for 15 seats, up three.

YouGov warned that the final number of Conservative seats could be between 311 - hung parliament territory - and 367. "The margins are extremely tight and small swings in a small number of seats, perhaps from tactical voting and a continuation of Labour's recent upward trend, means we can't currently rule out a hung parliament," said Chris Curtis, YouGov's political research manager. The pollsters interviewed approximately 100,000 panelists over the past seven days. —AFP

International

Hazardous Sydney smoke turns up heat in Australia's climate politics

Devastating bushfires heighten public anger

SYDNEY: Devastating bushfires that blanketed Australia's largest city with hazardous smoke this week have heightened public anger and raised political pressure on the government to do more to battle climate change. While cooler weather eased fires and haze around Sydney on yesterday, the previous day's thick shroud of smoke triggered protests and prompted one conservative lawmaker to break with his party by directly tying recent weather to carbon emissions.

"We are in the middle of the worst drought in living memory, this is the second hottest year on record," New South Wales Environment Minister Matt Kean, from the centre-right Liberal-National coalition, told the Australian Broadcasting Corp Radio. "Yesterday smoke was causing some of the worst air pollution in Sydney that we've ever seen - this is climate change."

People had choked in Sydney on Tuesday as more than 100 fires raged across the east coast, turning the daytime sky orange, obscuring visibility and disrupting public transport services as air quality plunged. Yesterday, temperatures dropped by more than 10 degrees Celsius, and winds eased, improving the air quality, although it still held at levels considered hazardous. Amid mounting public anger, Australia's Liberal-National government defended its policies in tackling climate change and downplayed its links to the unprecedented early arrival and severity of the fires.

"Certainly, climate change is a factor, there is no question, but also it is important to note that most of these fires have been caused by 'Little Lucifers',"

Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack told ABC, referring to arsonists. Australia's fires have killed at least four people since November, burnt about 2.5 million acres of farmland and bush and destroyed more than 400 homes. While police are investigating what triggered some fires, firefighters and scientists have said the bulk of the blazes have been caused by soaring temperatures and three years of drought that left bushland tinder-box dry.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has said his government is committed to fighting climate change, insisting that Australia will meet a pledge to cut emissions from 26% to 28% by 2030, versus 2005 levels. But critics accuse the government of merely paying lip service to climate concerns. As many Sydneysiders finished work, several thousand protesters, many wearing masks, marched through the main business district to demand stronger action. Many carried signs, with a group of four pregnant women holding up a banner that read, "Stop burning our babies' future."

"They (the government) are to blame for our largest city being poisoned and rather than taking meaningful action, they are fast tracking new coal mines," said Chloe Rafferty, an organizer for the Uni Students for Climate Change group holding the march. Australia is one of the world's largest carbon emitters per capita because of its reliance on coal-fired power plants. In June, it approved a new coal mine in Queensland state by India's Adani Enterprises that is expected to produce 8 million to 10 million tons of thermal coal a year. —Reuters



SYDNEY: A demonstrator with a mask attends a climate protest rally in Sydney yesterday. Up to 20,000 protesters rallied in Sydney yesterday demanding urgent climate action from Australia's government, as bushfire smoke choking the city caused health problems to spike. —AFP

Japan funeral for 'hero' doctor slain in Afghanistan

TOKYO: Relatives and well-wishers paid tribute yesterday to veteran doctor Tetsu Nakamura at his funeral in southern Japan, a week after he was killed in an ambush in Afghanistan. The 73-year-

old physician's son recalled him as a man of action, with a deep respect for the natural world. "My father was a man who loved mountains, rivers, plants, insects and animals," his eldest son Ken, 36, said in an address, the local Nishinippon Shimbun reported.

"Before I turned 20, he used to constantly scold me. He would say 'Don't just talk. Show your actions,'" he added in the remarks. Nakamura, a towering figure in Afghanistan where he spent decades of his career, was killed last week in Jalalabad, the main city in the eastern province of Nangarhar where he had worked since the 1980s. He was

killed along with five Afghan guards and colleagues in an attack no one has yet claimed, and which the Taliban condemned.

Steady streams of visitors paid their respects at the ceremony yesterday in Fukuoka city in southwestern Japan. The service was held jointly by his family and an aid NGO that Nakamura operated. His white coffin was surrounded by white flowers, with a photo of the doctor placed on top, and an Afghan flag underneath. "What I learned from my father, I will demonstrate with my actions," Nakamura's son said, offering condolences to others killed in the attack.

The slain doctor had devoted 35 years of his life to healing Afghans and Pakistanis and eventually became an honorary citizen of his adopted country. He also issued stark warnings of the dangers of desertification in Afghanistan, and his organization built wells and irrigation canals that changed dusty expanses of Nangarhar into green, tree-lined fields. In Afghanistan, a country no stranger to violent deaths, his murder nonetheless came as a shock, with Afghan mourners demanding justice. "Dr Nakamura was an icon of humanity," one mourner told AFP at a vigil held in Kabul after his killing. —AFP

India PM cleared of complicity in deadly communal riots

AHMEDABAD: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not complicit in deadly religious riots that broke out in 2002 in one of the bloodiest episodes in independent India, according to a judge-led commission report released yesterday. Modi was the chief minister of the western state of Gujarat when nearly 1,000 people—the majority of them Muslims—were killed in riots triggered by a fire on a train which killed 59 Hindu activists.

The riots have long dogged Modi, who was accused by human rights groups of turning a blind eye to the violence. The Nanavati Commission found that the riots were spontaneous, sparked by the train burning deaths, rather than pre-planned attacks. "There is no evidence to show that these attacks were either inspired or instigated or abated by any minister of the state," the Nanavati Commission said in its nine-volume report of more than 2,500 pages.

The release of the report came amid protests in northeastern India over a citizenship bill that proposes

excluding Muslim refugees from neighboring Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), re-elected in a landslide in May after coming to power in 2014, has long been accused of following a "Hindutva" agenda favoring officially secular India's majority Hindus. In August Modi's administration rescinded the partial autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, in what his government said was aimed at boosting the local economy and rooting out corruption.

The report—which included 44,445 affidavits from witnesses and 488 government officials—was tabled in the Gujarat state assembly yesterday, five years after it was submitted to the government following a 12-year probe. While the commission's terms of reference did not require the government to make the findings public, it said in September the report would be released after a petition for its publication was filed in the High Court.

The commission also cleared the police force of negligence, finding that police were unable to control mobs as they had inadequate numbers or were not properly armed. In 2008, it had concluded that the train incident was a pre-planned conspiracy, with 31 people later convicted of criminal conspiracy and murder by a special court. More than 100 people have already been convicted over the riots. Modi—who set up the inquiry in 2002—was cleared in 2012 by a Supreme Court-ordered investigation. —AFP



NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives to a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) parliamentary committee meeting at the Parliament House in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP

Facebook firm on message encryption despite the pressure

WASHINGTON: Facebook said it plans to move ahead with strong encryption for all its messaging applications, claiming that allowing law enforcement special access would end up being "a gift to criminals, hackers and repressive regimes." The comments from the leading social network come weeks after officials from the US, Britain and Australia called on Facebook to allow authorities to circumvent encryption to better fight extremism, child pornography and other crimes.

"The 'backdoor' access you are demanding for law enforcement would be a gift to criminals, hackers and repressive regimes, creating a way for them to enter our systems and leaving every person on our platforms more vulnerable to real-life harm," the heads of Facebook's WhatsApp and Messenger, Will Cathcart and Stan Chudnovsky, said in a letter to officials from the three countries.

Critics have argued that new forms of encryption - which can make it impossible for anyone except the sender and recipient to see the contents of a message - are locking out law enforcement. Facebook, which already uses "end-to-end" encryption on WhatsApp, said in the letter it

intends to do the same across all its messaging services. Jay Sullivan, the privacy product chief for Messenger, told a congressional hearing Tuesday Facebook was aware of its duty to work with law enforcement, pointing to the tech giant's assistance in terrorism and child abuse cases.

Rights activists back Facebook

Earlier Tuesday, more than 100 activist organizations, security experts and industry groups warned against efforts to force tech companies to weaken encryption. "These exceptional access mechanisms for law enforcement agencies would be the same 'back doors' that provide an opportunity for terrorists, criminals, and other parties to gain unauthorized access," said the letter endorsed by groups including the American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

"Technologists cannot build systems that are inherently able to tell when 'bad' people use them, just as engineers cannot design sidewalks and highways to crumble underneath the feet of certain people." It said special access demands would "embolden repressive and authoritarian regimes in their attempts to pressure messaging apps and device manufacturers to build surveillance capabilities into their products and services."

Law enforcement hamstrung?

A joint letter in October signed by US Attorney General William Barr, British Home Secretary Priti Patel and Australian Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton urged Facebook to give authori-



The logo of US online social media and social networking service Facebook is displayed on a tablet in Lille. —AFP

ties the ability to circumvent encryption used in its messaging services. The officials said strong encryption made it more difficult for law enforcement to detect terrorism and child pornography, and that a move to implement "end-to-end" encryption on its Messenger platform could make matters worse. "Facebook has not committed to address our serious concerns about the impact its proposals could have on protecting our most vulnerable citizens," said the October letter.

At a Senate Judiciary Committee

hearing Tuesday, New York District Attorney Cyrus Vance echoed those concerns, and argued that investigations were being crippled by the failure to get access to encrypted messages and smartphones, which cannot be accessed even with a warrant. "Unintended or not, the reality remains that these tech titans are doing tremendous damage to our justice system, particularly justice at the local and state levels, by choosing to render themselves incapable of complying with a judge's signed order," Vance said. —AFP

Climate concerns put Austria glacier project on thin ice

SANKT LEONHARD IM PITZTAL: In his office nestled in Austria's snow-capped Pitztal valley, Eberhard Schultes is among those pushing to expand the region's skiing sector - but environmentalists alarmed about the region's vanishing glaciers are pushing back. Schultes is the managing director of the Pitztaler Gletscherbahnen mountain lift company, which is trying to win approval for a new ski area to connect the Pitztaler glacier to the neighboring Oetzal formation. Even though the last winter season saw Austria break records for accommodation booked, visitor numbers have stagnated in Schultes' native valley. He is banking on the scheme to bring them back.

But the project has drawn the ire of environmentalists and the Greens, at a time when the party is negotiating to be in government - and amid growing concerns about the sustainability of winter sports. "The Pitztal glacier has hardly changed for the past 30 years in terms of offer - the amount of slopes and facilities - and given that this is winter guests' number one criteria, it is absolutely necessary to carry out this merger," Schultes says. In Tyrol state, where the 3,440-metre-high Pitztal glacier is located, every fourth job and every third euro (\$1.10) earned come from tourism and leisure.

Spectacular, Bond-like scenery

The project was first floated five years ago and has been gradually winding its way through the approvals process, with an environmental impact hearing due in January. If it does get the go-ahead, the project - estimated to cost more than 130 million euros (\$140 million) and take six years to build - will add more than 64 hectares of slopes to the current 120 hectares. In addition it will link up to the Oetzal glacier area, which encompasses the popular Soelden resort. Its spectacular scenery may be familiar to anyone who watched the snow-chase sequence in the last James Bond film, 'Spectre'.

The project envisages a summit station with restaurant, two new cable cars, a ski tunnel, artificial snow generators and, most importantly for the Pitztal, a new gondola - a cable lift to bring guests up from the valley into the new ski area. Schultes says the current mountain railway built in 1983 is outdated, as it can only carry a maximum of 1,100 people per hour. With the new gondola, that capacity would triple. But the project in the area, which already boasts Austria's highest mountain gondola, has drawn criticism from those questioning the sustainability of such plans.

'Massive destruction'

A team of researchers in Switzerland warned earlier this year that unchecked greenhouse gas emissions could see more than 90-percent of glaciers in the Alps disappear by the end of the century. They say that because of historic emissions and current CO2 levels, the Alps will lose half of their glaciers no matter what is done about emissions. Environmentalist groups have formed an alliance to lobby against the Pitztal project's "massive destruction... of an untouched landscape". An online petition against the plans has racked up more than 150,000 signatures within two months. And the Greens, who have governed Tyrol in coalition with the conservative People's Party (OeVP) since 2013, have also come out against the project. "The massive encroachment into nature is irreversible," Georg Kaltschmid, a Green Tyrol parliamentarian said.

Political tensions

Tyrol is one of two states governed by an OeVP-Green coalition, and the two parties are currently negotiating to enter government together on a national level. If that did happen, it would be the first time the Greens entered government at national level. OeVP leader Sebastian Kurz is hoping to return as chancellor after his previous coalition with the far-right fell apart earlier this year. Kaltschmid insists the two parties "work very well together" despite their differences over the glacier plans. —AFP

Analysis

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Trump on impeachment brink, but far from falling

For a man on the brink of becoming only the third US president to be impeached, Donald Trump sure sounds confident. "You're so lucky I became your president," he boomed to cheering supporters late Tuesday in Hershey, Pennsylvania. "A regular president would have been under the table, thumb in mouth, saying 'take me home, Mommy, this is too tough for me.'"

Hours earlier in Washington, Democratic leaders unveiled two impeachment charges against Trump that the full House of Representatives, dominated by Democrats, will likely confirm in the near future. The Republican businessman is now so entangled in controversy that it takes a hardened Washington politics junkie merely to unravel the strands.

Russia collusion, Ukraine quid pro quo, foreign emoluments clause, deep state coup—the terminology alone illustrates the increasingly exotic political mess engulfing Trump. And less than a year from the 2020 presidential election, he's also struggling in the polls. But Trump is protected by two things. The first is that he presides over a booming economy, historically a surefire way to re-election. The second is more personal: Trump loves to brawl, and with impeachment he has found a brawl that matches his formidable energy.

Fight every step

President Richard Nixon resigned in 1974 before Congress could even take its impeachment vote over the Watergate affair. Trump, by contrast, is fighting back at every step. Almost daily he brands impeachment a "hoax," or as he said in Pennsylvania—with a typical flourish of vivid, often violent language—a "big, fat, disgusting fraud." He has flat-out refused to allow government employees to testify in his case or to release documents to investigators. That strategy led to one of the two impeachment charges being levied against him: obstruction of Congress. The other charge is for allegedly trying to force Ukraine to open a corruption probe aimed solely at embarrassing one of his main Democratic rivals Joe Biden.

Even if the Democrats do vote for impeachment as expected, the case will then go to the Republican-controlled Senate, where Trump sees a chance for revenge. According to CNN, Trump is pushing reluctant Republican leaders in the Senate to make the trial a media extravaganza, giving his take on the Ukraine affair—including a series of unproven conspiracy theories—a dramatic hearing. "If you are going to impeach me, do it now, fast, so we can have a fair trial in the Senate," he dared the Democrats in one of his torrents of tweets on the crisis.

Bad polls, good economy

The latest national numbers on polling analysis website FiveThirtyEight look bad for Trump. The billionaire real estate dealer is shown losing to nearly every one of the multitude of Democrats scrambling to take him on. Even Pete Buttigieg, an Indiana small city mayor whose name most Americans couldn't pronounce a couple of months ago, is shown beating Trump if the elections were held today. But those polls are taken on a nationwide basis, while US presidential elections are won state by state.

Just as in 2016, the 2020 election is expected to go down to the wire in handful of swing states as Trump and his eventual challenger try to claw their way to the magic number of 270 electoral college votes. So Trump is happy with a new survey from Republican pollster Firehouse that shows him ahead against all comers in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. "As the impeachment process heats up in Washington, Donald Trump is seeing a boost in support in crucial swing states," the firm said.

It is true that Trump suffered the embarrassing defeats of Republicans he campaigned for in recent state elections in Kentucky and Louisiana. His party also took a tough hit in the 2018 congressional midterm elections and Democrats appear to be highly energized for 2020. But the famous maxim from former president Bill Clinton's victorious 1992 campaign—"it's the economy, stupid"—could yet help Trump win the job.

The latest jobs report puts unemployment at 3.5 percent, its lowest since NASA landed a man on the Moon 50 years ago. A Quinnipiac poll on Tuesday found that 57 percent of voters say that they are better off financially today than they were in 2016, while just 22 percent say they are worse off. "We are finally rebuilding our nation," Trump said in yet another applause line during the Pennsylvania speech. Americans will hear that phrase many more times in the months to come. — AFP

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



Myanmar's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi (center) stands before the UN's International Court of Justice yesterday next to Abubarr Tambadou (3rd left), minister of Justice of the Gambia, in the Peace Palace of The Hague, on the second day of her hearing on the Rohingya genocide case. — AFP

Murder, witch-hunting claims as Gambia hearings hit 1-year mark

Gambians have closely watched as scores of witnesses have accused ex-president Yahya Jammeh of atrocities, in hearings that have done little to deter his diehard supporters. The former autocrat ruled the tiny West African state for 22 years before he fled in January 2017 after losing a presidential election to Adama Barrow, a relative unknown.

Some 190 witnesses have appeared before the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) set up to investigate abuses, in a process which began in January. The first year of hearings ended last week, capping months of testimony about torture, murder, rape and witch hunts under Jammeh. "We had blind loyalty for Yahya Jammeh," Amadou Badjie said at hearings last summer, describing how he had murdered two US-Gambian businessmen suspected of planning a coup.

Known as the "Junglers", former members of the ex-president's personal death squad have accused Jammeh of ordering a string of other murders. The ultra-loyal paramilitary unit executed some 50 African migrants - who they mistook for rebels - rounding them up on a beach as they were trying to make their way to Europe. The TRRC hearings are due to last two years in total, but it is still unclear whether they will lead to prosecutions.

"They're really building a case against Yahya Jammeh," said Reed Brody, a lawyer for Human Rights Watch. He added that the TRRC will write a report after the proceedings end next year, when it is assumed it will request Jammeh's extradition from his refuge of Equatorial Guinea.

There is no lack of harrowing testimony. In October, a former Gambian beauty queen said Jammeh raped her after she refused to marry him. And from mid-November until today, the hearings heard evidence about a mass witch hunt in 2009.

Forty-four witnesses, according to an AFP journalist, testified to kidnappings by witch hunters hired by Jammeh. The victims were forced to drink strange concoctions. "I told my captors that I will not drink the concoction, but they threatened to kill me if I refused," Adama Gassama said last week. She said her husband was beaten mercilessly until he drank the liquid, and died a year after being released. Many witnesses said they developed severe health problems after drinking the brew.

AFP was unable to independently verify the claims. Amnesty International said that as many as 1,000 people were snatched from their villages by the witch hunters in 2009. The motivation behind the episode is unclear. However, Jammeh is allegedly highly superstitious, and believed that witches killed his aunt. TRRC hearings next year are still to examine some of the most notorious aspects of Jammeh's regime, such as allegedly forcing AIDS patients to undergo a herbal treatment invented by the president.

Jammeh's support

The former president retains support in the country of around two million people despite the grisly testimony, however. "The TRRC is a witch hunt," said Yankuba Colley,

a member of the former ruling party. "This will not bring healing and reconciliation in the country." "The lead counsel... does not want witnesses to say anything apart from Jammeh is responsible for the crimes," he said.

There have been numerous calls for Jammeh to be returned to The Gambia for prosecution, while others are seeking his active return to politics. Thousands of supporters of Jammeh's Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) party thronged the capital Banjul last month demanding his return from exile. "He is the only president who can develop the country," said Emille, who attended the rally.

APRC activist Yankuba Kujabi said the size of the crowd at the rally "should show them that still now people love the former president". The calls come at a delicate time for current President Barrow, who is suffering political backlash for his decision to serve a five-year term after initially promising to leave after three years. Jammeh has hardly been heard from since fleeing to Equatorial Guinea in 2017. A recording between him and APRC members, which leaked last year, suggests he is still in touch with his party. Barrow's cabinet told AFP that Jammeh cannot run for president. "The least that could happen is to return as a private citizen but not as president," an official said. Current APRC leader Fabakary Tombong Jatta holds regular meetings at his home, where Jammeh's possible return is on everyone's lips. "He has the right to come back and he will come back, inshallah (God willing)," Jatta said. "It's just a matter of time." — AFP

Algeria presidential vote faces brick wall of Berber opposition

In Algeria's disaffected Kabylie region, the brick has become the symbol of the anti-vote campaign ahead of unpopular presidential elections set for today. Protesters have even bricked up the entrances to local government offices to prevent the distribution of election material in Tizi-Ouzou, a key city in the region home to much of the North African country's Berber minority. Walls where election posters would ordinarily appear are instead daubed with calls for a general strike. "The strike is a show of force against the election - we want zero voting here," said Amar Benchikoune, 38, outside his shuttered store. Since Sunday, pharmacies are the only shops to open in the city.

Ethnic Berbers, who mostly live in the mountainous Kabylie region, make up 10 million of Algeria's 42 million population but have long been marginalized by a state

founded on Arab nationalism. Online, people determined to thwart the vote have changed their profile pictures to a brick with the inscription "ballot". "It's our way of showing our total rejection of the vote," said Ouerdia, a 55-year-old retiree. For Mokrane, 29, "they want to organize the vote on the sly but we won't let them do it."

Bricks and thwarters

On Sunday, protesters marched on the district administrative office carrying bricks and bags of cement. Anti-riot police held them off for three hours before withdrawing in the face of the jubilant crowd. "A free and democratic Algeria," protesters chanted as they walked off the entrance, which they painted with "No vote".

"There is no chance of even a sole voter placing a ballot here," said Boudjemaa Lakhdari, a 36-year-old vendor speaking amid the thronging protesters. While Kabylie has historically had low election turnout amid widespread opposition to the central government, today's presidential vote is unpopular across the country too. Mass protests, which forced ageing president Abdelaziz Bouteflika to resign his two-decade tenure in April, have taken place weekly across Algeria to demand sweeping reforms ahead of any vote.

The five approved candidates all either supported

Iraq families fear the worst after protesters abducted

"Last seen: Friday, 9:18pm." About an hour after gunmen began attacking a protest encampment in Iraq's capital at the weekend, Mustafa - who had slept there for weeks - went offline. In the days since, the 20-year-old demonstrator has not reappeared on messaging application WhatsApp, or in real life.

Late Friday, unidentified gunmen stormed and torched the multi-storey building known as al-Sinek Garage, where anti-government protesters had camped out for weeks. At least 20 protesters and four police officers were killed in the melee, medical sources told AFP, while about 80 demonstrators were abducted. "They filled up two charter buses with people from Al-Sinek," said Yousef Al-Harbi, an activist who was in the building when it was attacked.

Amer, a 26-year-old demonstrator, said he was nearby when gunshots began echoing from the building, so he called friends he knew were inside. "Mustafa picked up and said, 'things are really bad, they're shooting at us.' He hung up and his phone turned off," said Amer, using a pseudonym as he has faced threats. "We've called everyone - from the government to the militias", Amer said. Security forces say none of the demonstrators were taken into custody, while pro-Iran armed groups blamed by protesters for Friday's killings swore they had no role in the violence.

Masked men

Nineteen-year-old Sajad was among those abducted

by bus on Friday night. His family heard nothing from him until he reappeared outside his home on Tuesday morning, after being held by masked men for three days. "They drove for about three quarters of an hour and then their captors handed them over to another group," his father Rahim said. "They were asked for their names, their parents' names and their addresses," Rahim said, declining to use his full name for fear of reprisals. The description of where they were held — on a tributary of the Tigris in Baghdad's northeast outskirts - corresponds to where other Iraqis say they were detained.

"It's a place overlooking the Diyala" tributary, Iraqi blogger Chojaa Al-Khafaji said after he was taken to the same place on the back of being abducted from his home in October. There masked men in black uniforms took his phones after a brief interrogation. After 24 hours, they left Khafaji in a poor district of Baghdad with \$20 to return home by taxi. Sajad had to wait 72 hours until he was released with about 30 other protesters in the middle of the night on a road outside Baghdad. Sajad was not beaten, his father said. But others abducted from the protest encampment were less fortunate. According to security sources, at least 35 young men taken from Al-Sinek were later found by Iraqi security forces along the bank of the Tigris, blindfolded and with their hands tied. Footage confirmed as authentic by security forces shows about two dozen young men, many of them wrapped in bloody bandages after being taken into government custody. "They beat us so much," one could be heard crying.

'Everyone is too afraid'

Since October 1, demonstrators in Baghdad and southern cities have disappeared almost daily. In most cases, they are taken from near their homes as they return from protests. Their relatives fear the worst. Last week, the bruised body of a 19-year-old protester was dumped out-

side her home in Baghdad, while on Sunday a prominent Karbala activist was shot dead by a gunman riding on the back of a motorbike. Abductions have continued and at dawn on Saturday, more protesters were taken from the Tigris riverfront as they drove home from Tahrir.

In view of nearby policemen, two pick-ups carrying masked men shot in the air and chased down the six protesters as they tried to flee their vehicle, a witness said. In Iraq, where militias and sectarian violence killed tens of thousands in the 2000s, kidnappings have long been common. But "you used to be able to find out who took them," and for a ransom obtain their release, said Haydar, whose 23-year-old cousin was recently kidnapped for several days in Baghdad. "Now you don't know at all. Everyone is too afraid." — AFP

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The five approved candidates all either supported



Iraqi students take part in an anti-government demonstration in the central city of Najaf yesterday. Since October 1, Iraq's capital and its Shiite-majority south have been gripped by rallies against corruption, poor public services, a lack of jobs and Iran's perceived political interference. — AFP

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Regulation & supervision: From old fault lines to emerging concerns

Keynote speech delivered by Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel

ABU DHABI: Following is a keynote speech delivered by Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel, Governor, Central Bank of Kuwait at the 14th High Level Meeting for the Middle East & North Africa Region, jointly organized by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, the Financial Stability Institute and the Arab Monetary Fund yesterday in Abu Dhabi.

I am delighted to return to this forum for the third time in a row, and I am grateful to HE Dr Abdulrahman A Al-Hamidi for inviting me to speak before this august gathering. Taking this opportunity today, I would like to touch upon two areas. First, where the years of regulatory reforms have left us in terms of addressing the fault lines that global financial crisis (GFC) laid bare, and second, what are the emerging regulatory & supervisory concerns going forward.

Fixing the old fault lines

Let me start with the first question: where the years of regulatory reforms have left us? It is well over a decade since the GFC took the financial world by storm. Around ten years back, in 2009, the world was reeling from a financial crisis that was unique in both its origin and scale. Epicenter of the crisis was advanced countries and the US in particular. And in terms of scale, as research by BIS has highlighted, cumulative output loss since the GFC has been a hefty 25% of the world's GDP, excluding the enormous social costs associated with high unemployment and lost output.

Rising to the occasion, global leaders moved quickly to address the threats to global financial system - a feat that appears particularly impressive in current times of trade spats and growing nationalism. GFC also led to a fundamental shift in our approach to banking regulation and supervision, essentially by exposing the fault lines in the inadequacy of earlier regulatory architecture.

By now, those fault lines are well-understood. Banks held too little capital and of poor quality. Inadequacy of capital was further weakened by the absence of a backstop measure to contain excessive leverage. Banks that were too big to fail enjoyed the market power but were not required to internalize the cost of risks they brought to the overall system. Suitable measures of liquidity, in both funding and market sense, were lacking. And the efforts to contain systemic risk, both in its time and structural dimension, were hardly in sight. In a nutshell, the rule book was evidently deficient.

And if that was not enough, banking supervision was micro prudential in nature. Supervisors believed that ensuring stability of individual institutions would make the system as a whole stable, thus largely ignoring the buildup of systemic risk.

The GFC brought into sharp focus the gaps in our regulatory regime. As Paul Romer, a Stanford Economist, once said, 'A crisis is a terrible thing to waste'. Thankfully, lessons from the GFC were not wasted. Central banks and financial regulators made great strides in building a more stable and resilient financial system. The regulatory reforms by the BCBS under Basel III regime not only refined the existing rules but also introduced wide-ranging measures which were earlier missing or inadequate.

Thanks to these efforts, the old fault lines have been largely fixed. Capital adequacy regime has been enhanced, with higher and better quality capital. Additional capital conservation buffer and countercyclical capital buffer requirements have also been put in place to help banks maintain additional cushion and limit

the buildup of systemic risk. Likewise, leverage ratio has been phased in as a backstop to CAR.

On the liquidity front, Liquidity Coverage Ratio and Net Stable Funding Ratio have further strengthened banks' capacity to withstand liquidity stress and to make their funding structure more stable. To address structural dimension of systemic risk, capital charge for SIFIs has been added, recovery and resolution regimes have been strengthened and safety nets have been improved. Of course, this list is not exhaustive.

While the world has not seen a crisis similar to GFC to determine if these reforms have made the financial system resilient enough, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that our banks are considerably more stable than a decade ago. Even the impact of oil price shock of 2014 on GCC banks have been muted at most, though degree of resilience certainly varies from one country to another. Still, there is broader agreement that our banks entered the low oil price environment from a position of strength which was built through prudent regulatory reforms.

Now, as the rule book is mostly in place, it is time for supervision to step up. After all, regulation can only go that far: without effective supervision, it is hard to ensure timely and consistent implementation and achieve financial stability at large.

The role of effective supervision is also critical because not every risk can be pre-defined in a rule-book. While overseeing the dynamic world of finance, supervisors must be agile enough to suitably correct course in line with the constantly changing nature of the banking industry or the emergence of new risks. In the second part of my speech, I would like to touch upon two such emerging concerns: cyber threats and climate change.

Addressing Emerging Concerns Ensuring resilience against cyber threats

First, consider the issue of cyber threats. Growing footprint of technology is influencing every facet of the banking business, transforming banks' internal processes as well as their engagements with customers. As the role of technology deepens from a mere support function to a platform central to everything that banks do, the likelihood of new risks emanating from ubiquitous and connected technologies loom large. Materialization of such risks will not only disrupt vital financial services but will also undermine the security and confidence in the financial system.

In fact, the scale and sophistication of cyber-attacks is already on the rise. Examples include data breach at Target of 70 million credit card users, a cyber-attack on Equifax compromising data of 143 million customers, and the hacking of over 100 million customers' data at Capital One Bank. No wonder, cyber risk features as a key concern in different industry surveys. For instance, respondents to the Bank of England's Systemic Risk Survey of 2H-2018 quoted the risk of a 'cyber attack' as the second major threat to the system, only behind the Brexit induced political risk.

The growing threats of cyber risk need to be reflected in banks' operational risk capital charge. Incidentally, the Basel Committee has revised its operational risk methodology by replacing the existing three techniques with a simplified Standardized Measurement Approach and expects that its implantation, due by January 2022, will increase capital risk charge for operational risk by 18

percent for a group of banks currently using Standardized Approach of the old regime. While it is not clear how much of the increase in operational risk charge is driven by the recognition of growing cyber threats, greater capital allocation for operation risk is a step in the right direction, given the increasing significance of such low probability but high impact risks.

However, reliance on capital alone will not suffice. Supervisors must ensure that banks improve their operational resilience by strengthening their ability to respond to and recover from cyber-attacks. At a minimum, mitigating cyber threats would require effective collaboration between regulators and the industry, adequate contingency and recovery plans by banks and sound security practices by all participants of financial market infrastructure. In Kuwait, we are in the process of putting in place an advanced platform for effective information sharing about cyber threats that can later be used at the regional level.

Supervisors in this regard can leverage CPMI-IOSCO guidance that calls for 'resilience by design', encouraging to incorporate sound security features in the system right from its earliest stage of conceptualization. This approach will help address the potential cyber compromises that could stem from banks' dependence on legacy technologies.

To help strengthen cyber resilience of financial institutions, Financial Stability Board (FSB) is currently working on 'identifying practices to help financial institutions recover from and respond to cyber incidents'. Next year, they are planning to release a toolkit of effective practices that banking industry can use in improving operational resilience against cyber threats.

Coping with climate change

The second emerging issue warranting our close attention is climate change. According to UN estimates, around 60 million people were affected by extreme weather events in 2018 alone. And within this year, we have witnessed the damaging impact of wildfire in California, hurricane in Bahamas, cyclone in Bangladesh and typhoon in Japan.

Thankfully, the issue of climate change, after languishing on margins for years, has finally caught policy makers' attention. As Victor Hugo once said, 'nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come'. It seems that time has finally come for the climate change to receive the attention it deserves.

Climate risks stem both from climate shocks like floods, hurricanes and other severe weather events as well as from trends such as warming temperatures, melting glaciers and rising sea levels. Broadly speaking, these weather developments pose two types of risks to the financial sector: physical and transition. Increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather events could pose serious physical risks by damaging the assets that constitute banks' exposures. Additionally, natural disasters can damage public infrastructure and destroy livelihood, hurting economic activity in general.

On the other hand, transition risk stems from the economic impact of a shift to a low-carbon economy. Factors like development of environment-friendly technologies, changing public sentiments, and new laws to govern carbon emission can cause a shift in economic activity towards greener projects. As a result, the value of carbon-intensive assets might drop as investors' risk perception and preferences change. Sectors like oil, gas,

coal and utilities are particularly vulnerable in the long run as transition risk might devalue their assets and displace their workforce.

International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that achieving Paris Agreement target on climate change would require, by 2050, about 80 percent decrease in the CO2 intensity of the building sector, 95 percent of world energy supply to be of low carbon and 70 percent of new cars to be electric. This will cause significant, even if slower, shift in the structure of our economies with strong bearing on the financial sector.

That is why the NGFS, the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System, has argued that 'climate related risks are a source of financial risk and therefore fall squarely within the mandate of central banks and supervisors to ensure that financial system is resilient to these risks'.

Regulators need to determine how best to incorporate and operationalize climate related risks in their prudential policy settings. It would require expanding the risk matrix to formally include climate related risks and enhancing the analytical tools to assess financial sector exposures to extreme weather events. Bank of England has announced that in 2021, it will start stress-testing banks on different climate pathways. Ultimately, the key is to retool the regulatory regime to factor in risks to climate change in a holistic fashion, instead of adding on an additional item in the risk matrix.

Conclusion

Let me conclude. While we have managed to fix the fault lines exposed by the GFC, our understanding and ability to respond to some of the emerging risks remains limited. This is true for both cyber threats and climate change. A feature common to these risks is their wider impact through multiple entry points. Hence, the key to address both lies in sharing information and strengthening cooperation. If we are grappling with risks that transcend sectoral and national boundaries, so should our response.

Active action. "A strength of AI is its ability to identify correlations in vast data sets. Such correlations can be helpful in systemic risk monitoring, it's clear that a solid majority of market participants ... soon will be using AI in the securities trading process."

The Bank of England, meanwhile, has also given a cautious analysis. "In the financial services industry, the application of machine learning methods has the potential to improve outcomes for both businesses and consumers," it said in a separate report. "At the same time, existing risks may be amplified if governance and controls do not keep pace with technological developments." Vasant Dhar, professor of information systems at New York University Stern School of Business, added, however, that AI trade would always be safer than purely human-led decisions. Dhar added that any AI system has a human safeguard as a fallback option. But he cautioned that humans would not necessarily recognize a system failure or make the right call. "Consider the fact that humans can make bad decisions as well. You can't assume that the human in the loop will make the right decision," Dhar said. —AFP

Financial markets embrace brave new world of AI

LONDON: Artificial Intelligence has spread rapidly across markets in recent years as traders constantly strive to gain the upper hand, while regulators have given a guarded welcome to the cutting-edge technology. High-frequency trading propelled by algorithms has reigned over the past decade, as banks and funds take advantage of small price fluctuations on many markets to carry out thousands of deals in a fraction of a second.

Complex mathematical equations have long been used to conduct certain operations - for example, selling or buying a security if it breaches a certain level. Yet algorithms have come under fierce criticism over "flash crashes", such as a dizzying slump in the British

What's On

Lulu strengthens presence in Kuwait; Opens 10th Hypermarket



In a bid to further strengthen its presence in the State of Kuwait, retail major Lulu Group has opened yet another hypermarket in the country. The latest hypermarket which is also 10th in Kuwait was inaugurated by Abdul Kareem Taqi Abdul Kareem, General Manager of Public Authority for Industries, Kuwait in the presence of the ambassadors of the United Arab Emirates, India, Nepal, Malaysia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines and South Africa and a large number of diplomats in addition to many prominent Kuwaiti figures at Al Hashan Commercial Complex in Fahaheel.

The new hypermarket, which is one of the largest hypermarkets in the country is also 184th of the group globally. The 150,000 square feet three level hypermarket was designed according to the best design concepts serving a large number of residents in Fahaheel and its surrounding areas. The focus has been on providing shoppers with a convenient and comfortable shopping experience.

The interiors, well-planned retail floor layout, ample aisle space, extensively laid out counters and liberal parking space contribute to a relaxed world class shopping experience.

Commenting on the opening of the new hypermarket, Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu Group said, "it has been our policy to bring unique shopping experience closer to the residents rather than making them drive long distance. With the opening of this new market, the citizens and residents staying here will have huge options of quality products at attractive and competitive prices". We also believe that this new shopping center will further strengthen our presence and help us to give more value to our shoppers in Kuwait, added Yusuff Ali.

Yusuff Ali further said that Lulu has always been committed to support and promote Kuwait agricultural sector. As part of this initiative, dedicated sections for locally grown

vegetables and fruits especially organic have been arranged. Due to our efforts, we are seeing good growth and popularity of locally grown agricultural produce among the largest sections of the population".

Lulu has been on an aggressive expansion drive with more than 20 new hypermarkets and malls slated to open within the next two years in different GCC countries, Egypt and Far East. The new branch offers a wide range of departments that meet the needs of all shoppers including fresh foods, fruits, vegetables, groceries, and hygiene products as well as electronics, fashion, appliances, home appliances, and mobile phones.

Also present were Saifee Rupwala, CEO, Ashraf Ali MA, Executive Director, Mohamed Haris, Lulu Kuwait Director and other senior officials. A large number of people from different walks of life were also present on the occasion.



Ooredoo Kuwait celebrates Qatar National Day with Embassy of Qatar



Ooredoo Kuwait, the first to launch innovated digital services in Kuwait participated in the Qatar National Day Celebration that was held on Monday December 9 at the Four Seasons Hotel, in which thousands of people attended to congratulate the Qatari people on this special day. The reception was held by the Qatari Embassy with the attendance of his Excellency the Ambassador of the State of Qatar Bandar Bin Hamad AlAttiyah and his retinue.

The reception was attended by Ooredoo Kuwait's top management, where they all congratulated His Excellency the Ambassador of Qatar on this special day, and also con-

gratulated the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani.

Ooredoo's AlNukhba booth was present in AlRaya Ballroom during the celebration to welcome the guests and present them with the latest VIP offers, which further demonstrates the company's commitment to enriching our customers' experience and offering them a VIP experience tailored to what they desire, driven by the company's values of which is aligned with our core values of caring, connecting and challenging. Ooredoo aspires to offer customers through the AlNukhba Program a VIP experience tailored to customers that are looking for quality

services that match their lifestyle.

It is worth mentioning that all AlNukhba clients get Nojoom rewards worth up to KD 500, which can be redeemed from Ooredoo's selection of exclusive partners who offer the best in class services in a variety of industries, ranging from retail to hospitality and travel. The company is continuously working on enriching its portfolio of partners to ensure delivering customers with an unrivalled experience. In addition to the unrivalled services, AlNukhba customers can enjoy the exclusive VIP treatment in Ooredoo's AlNukhba lounge in the fifth floor of Ooredoo's Head Office in Kuwait City.

ACK hosts First Aid Day event

As a part of its continued commitment to corporate social responsibility, the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) hosted a First Aid Day in order to raise awareness regarding important safety issues and to promote the importance of acquiring first aid skills. Among the attendees was Jonathan Gilbert, Australian Ambassador to Kuwait.

The First Aid Day is the seventh in a series of Health and Safety related events that have been held by ACK since 2016 as a part of its commitment towards the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices and habits for students, staff and the Kuwaiti community in general.

The event focused on important aspects of first aid knowledge and application. First aid is an important tool in quickly responding to accidents to ensure that injuries can be efficiently and promptly dealt with before a trained medical professional arrives to administer

more specialized treatment.

Knowledge of first aid can have a significant impact if an accident happens in the workplace, home or in a public space, as being unprepared to respond in an emergency can potentially worsen the situation.

In order to introduce attendees to basic principles of first aid, members of the Kuwait Medical Emergency Services and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society were available to give introductory training to adults and children about basic first aid techniques and procedures that can be performed with limited equipment and is typically carried out until professional medical assistance arrives.

Besides the safety awareness elements, the event included stage shows, talent competitions and various booths and activities for children and adults that were organized by ACK's School of Business students. ACK chose to organize it through the School of Business in order to give practical experience to business students in events management.

The proceeds from the event ticket sales were donated to the Cancer Aware Nation (CAN). The total amount reached 1,400 KD, which was the highest amount collected so far during the series of Health and Safety events.



Jumeirah Group appoints Muneera Al Taher as Emiratisation director

Jumeirah Group is pleased to announce the appointment of Muneera Al Taher as Director of Emiratisation - Talent Acquisition and Development, with a focus on driving local talent recruitment and development across the group.

Under the umbrella of the UAE leaders' vision to empower Emiratis across the semi-government and private sector, Al Taher will pioneer a new agenda that focuses on attracting top talent, introducing new development programmes and supporting growth of Emirati employees in Jumeirah Group. Her appointment forms part of increased efforts by the company to grow and develop its local workforce and support the nation's Emiratisation vision leading up to Expo 2020 and beyond.

Al Taher recently started in her new role after two years as Director of Human Resources at the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel,

where she was focused on overseeing the performance culture and team development. She has also been instrumental in her role as the Emiratisation and Learning and Development Manager in a corporate capacity from 2013, which saw her take charge of national programs aimed at attracting and developing local talent.

Ellen Dubois du Bellay, Chief Human Resources Officer at Jumeirah Group said: "From our privileged position as the darling brand of Dubai we want to ensure that local talent is an integral part of our workforce, harnessing their deep understanding of the market and culture to grow and differentiate Jumeirah both in the UAE and globally. As such, we aim to grow the Emirati presence within our workplace, and we are confident that Muneera will drive this strategy forward across the business.

At Jumeirah Creekside, she worked hard

to establish UAE national focused programmes and this experience combined with her extensive knowledge of the Jumeirah business, will allow her to achieve great success within her new role."

Al Taher possesses a strong foundation of knowledge from her extensive experience in the field of Human Resources, exposing her to various elements of the trade, from management and skill development to evaluation of performance. To cement this further, she received recognition from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, augmenting her industry prowess and allowing her to play a vital role in strategy creation regarding hiring, training and development functions throughout her career.



Muneera Al Taher

QMO honors Fatima Al-Azmi



President of Qatar Media Organization (QMO), Sheikh Hamad Bin Thamer Al Thani and QMO's CEO, Sheikh Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al Thani honoring Fatima Al-Azmi at the Bloggers Forum.

Health & Science

Germany on alert as swine fever nears border

BERLIN: Sniffer dogs, drones and electrified fences: Germany is deploying a full array of defenses to stop boars from bringing swine fever into the country and avert a disaster for its thriving pork industry. "The question is no longer if swine fever will come to Germany but when," Torsten Reinwald, a spokesman for Germany's hunting federation, told AFP.

The virus is not harmful to human health but can cause deadly bleeding in domestic pigs and boars. The only way of getting rid of it is through mass culling at farms — a nightmare for German farmers. Half of Germany's pork production of five million tons a year goes to foreign markets, making it Europe's biggest exporter of the meat.

It is feared that even a single case could wreak havoc. "The probability that countries like China impose a total import ban is very high," said Sarah Dhem, a representative of Germany's meat products association. Dhem gave the example of a total Chinese import ban following a few outbreaks in Belgium last year. Losses could run into billions of euros and the European market would be flooded with cut-price pork. Farmers first began to worry when swine fever was identified at a pig farm in western Poland in November.

Drone patrols

But it was the discovery of a boar with the fever near the town of Nowogrod Bobrzański — just 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the German border — that really raised the alarm. As a result, German regions are pulling out all the stops. In Saarland, near the French border, packs of sniffer dogs are being sent out to find dead boars so as to quickly remove any potential carriers of the virus. In Saxony, which neighbors Poland, vets and emergency workers are holding drills in case of an outbreak and using drones and infrared cameras to find sick boars.

Further north, in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, 50 kilometers of electrified fence to stop boars along



GRIMMA: In this file photo taken on December 3, 2019, workers of the veterinary department dispose of a dead boar at a 'carcass collection point' (Kadaver Sammelpunkt) during an animal disease's drill aimed at preparing Saxony's officials to a possible outbreak of the African swine fever, in Grimma, eastern Germany. — AFP



Picture taken on December 3, 2019 shows a person holding a postcard informing about measures against the spread of swine fever during an animal epidemic training in Grimma, eastern Germany.

the border with Poland are being prepared. But, fearing that a spread to Germany may be inevitable, Denmark is already putting up a fence along its own 70-kilometre border.

There have been several recent outbreaks of African swine fever in Central and Eastern Europe since 2014, which have devastated the local pig farming industries. "Since it first appeared in Europe in 1957, the virus has almost always been brought into other countries through airports and ports. It has been exterminated everywhere except Sardinia" in Italy,

said Sandra Blome, a swine fever expert at the Friedrich-Loeffler Institute.

Sick boar risk

The irony is that Germany so far has profited from the ravages of swine fever at farms in China, where more than a million pigs have had to be culled. That pushed up the price of pork imports, which are expected to more than double in volume in 2019.

Until now, the possibility of humans spreading the virus inadvertently — for example through discarded

pork product sandwiches — was thought the most likely. Even though it has no effect on humans, the virus can survive for months in smoked goods such as hams. At train stations and in parks and forests up and down the country, posters from Germany's agriculture ministry urge people not leave any food behind. Reinwald also pointed out that the virus can survive for up to three months in mud carried in tire threads. But the attention now is firmly on roaming boars. "The possibility of an infection from sick boars crossing the border is very high, higher now than the risk from humans," Blome said. — AFP

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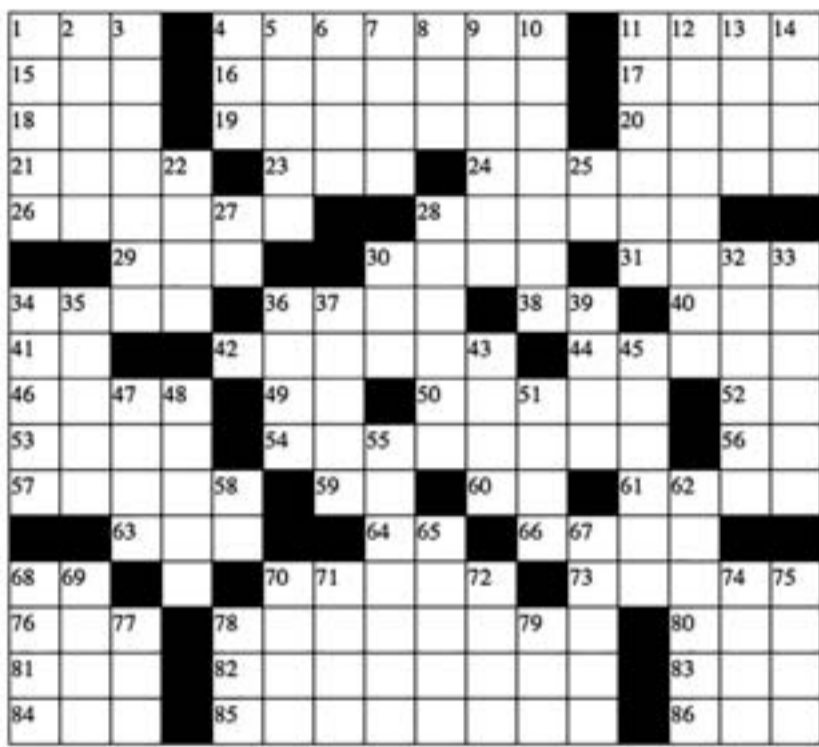
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2383



ACROSS

1. A small drink of liquor.
4. Scandinavian liquor usually flavored with caraway seeds.
11. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
15. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
16. A genus of Anitidae.
17. Avatar of Vishnu.
18. (British) Your grandmother.
19. Excessive desire to eat.
20. Sweet pulpy tropical fruit with thick rind and shiny black seeds.
21. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
23. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
24. A city and port in northern Jutland.
26. A member of a Caddo people formerly living in north central Texas.
29. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
31. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
34. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
38. Being ten more than one hundred forty.
40. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
41. A midwestern state in north central United States in the Great Lakes region.
42. A member of the Siouan people formerly inhabiting the Black Hills of western South Dakota.
44. Enthusiastic approval.
46. Long and thin and often limp.
49. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
50. Moth having nonfunctional mouthparts as adults.
52. An uproarious party.
53. To run away.
54. A milkshake with egg in it.
56. The square of a body of any size of type.
57. Jordan's port.
59. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
60. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
61. A flat device with narrow pointed teeth on one edge.
63. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
64. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
66. A member of an extinct North American Indian people who lived in the Pit river valley in northern California.
68. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
73. A low triangular area where a river divides before entering a larger body of water.
76. The airforce of Great Britain.
80. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
82. Characterizing the family Hominidae, which includes Homo sapiens sapiens as well as extinct species of manlike creatures.
83. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
84. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
85. A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living between Lake Chaplain and the Saint Lawrence River.

86. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.

DOWN

1. Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
2. A native or inhabitant of Iran.
3. Fudge made with brown sugar and butter and milk and nuts.
4. (informal) Of the highest quality.
5. A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.
6. A small bottle that contains a drug (especially a sealed sterile container for injection by needle).
7. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
8. Being one more than six.
9. Constituting the undiminished entirety.
10. A language spoken by a Malaysian people on Formosa.
11. A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
12. Of or relating to or based on the manor.
13. (Roman mythology) God of love.
14. A special way of doing something.
22. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
25. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
27. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
28. Imperial moths.
30. A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
32. An ornamental jeweled headdress signifying sovereignty.
33. Place in a grave or tomb.
35. A soft whitish calcite.
36. A cruel wicked and inhuman person.
37. The beach at a seaside resort.
39. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
43. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
45. A hospital where foundlings (infant children of unknown parents) are taken in and cared for.
47. A less than average tide occurring at the first and third quarters of the moon.
48. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
51. A city in northwest Indiana on Lake Michigan.
55. Soviet cosmonaut who in 1961 was the first person to travel in space (1934-1968).
58. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
62. Rig used in drilling for oil or gas.
65. An occurrence of thorough mixing.
67. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
69. A small cake leavened with yeast.
70. Originally a stronghold captured by David (the 2nd king of the Israelites).
71. Fabric dyed with splotches of green and brown and black and tan.
72. English essayist (1775-1834).
74. A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
75. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
77. An interest followed with exaggerated zeal.
78. A branch of the Tai languages.
79. The act of slowing down or falling behind.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

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



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

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



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes them do the things they do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

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



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a day you will crave all eyes to be on you. You crave attention. From the way you dress, to the way you carry yourself, the center of attention is what you can expect to be. All eyes are on you. You will shine today. It seems as if everything conspires to bring out your more unique and unusual qualities. It may seem as if things work in your favor today. Solutions to old problems will come easy. This is a great day to spend some time working on a new invention.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

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



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The sky is the limit for you today. You are optimistic and can accomplish anything you set your mind to. You have faith and are willing to take chances on an emotional level that may bring great reward and happiness your way. You may be deep within your feelings and have a desire to experience something new. An emotional wanderlust, if you will, is the desire of your heart. Today you are all about you. Your wants, needs, and desires, take over and all you can do is pursue what your heart wants. This is a very productive day for you physically and emotionally. You will find peace and happiness in accomplishing the goals you have set for yourself today, Libra. Reach for the stars! You may just be the one that can touch them.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes them do the things they do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Stress plays a bigger role in your life than usual. Under pressure is not the best position to be in to make decisions. When tensions are high like you may experience today, it is best to but off any decisions for later. Hit the road, take a drive, or just do what it takes to add a bit of relaxation into your world. You may find someone turning to you for advice or as a shoulder to cry on. Pouring your time into helping someone may seem to relieve your stress and minimize your own problems. Helping others could be the best way to help yourself.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

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



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You tend to bore easily. This is a time where you crave something different, something out of the ordinary. The only way to bring about change in your world is for you, yourself to make changes. Think outside of the box. Dare to dream the impossible. Reach for the stars. One day you just may be one. You crave excitement and something that will set your soul on fire. Trying new things and surrounding yourself with new friends may be in order. Let no one set limits on your life. You are in control and you have the power to acquire everything your heart desires.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You're into the organic diet and toxic free lifestyle; this is reflected in the contents of your garden and kitchen. You're focused like a laser on reaching certain financial goals and anything that threatens this rattles you; take a deep breath and conquer! You're in a position to caretaker someone who's unable to take care of themselves in some way; you happily attend to this. You go the extra mile to help someone at work and this opens your eyes to the plight of someone else. A melancholy energy could infuse your environment; realizing that we live on a sometimes harsh planet is a downer until you take a look at the wonderful life you lead.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Restaurant

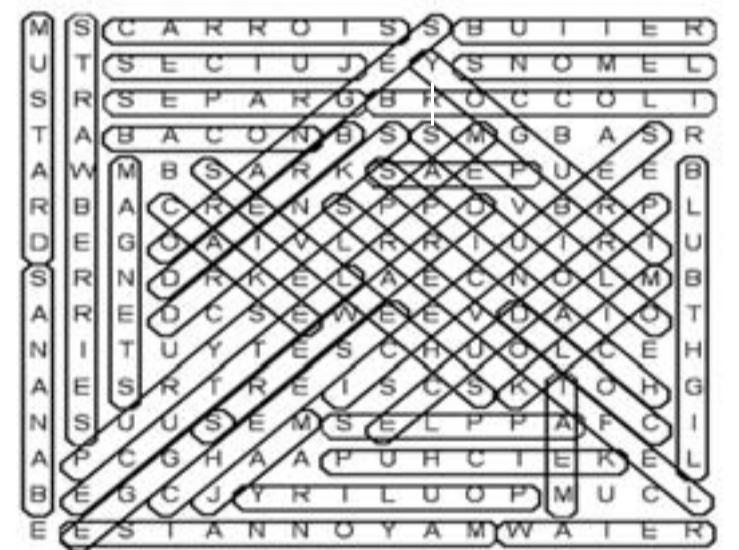
Find and circle all of the Restaurant words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word.

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------|------------|
| APERITIF | CUPS | MANAGER | SPOON |
| APPETIZER | CUSTOMER | MEAL | TABLECLOTH |
| BILL | DESSERT | MENU | TABLES |
| BUSBOY | DISHWASHERS | NAPKINS | TEA |
| CASHIER | DRINKS | ORDER | TIP |
| CHAIRS | ENTREE | PLATES | WAITER |
| CHEF | FORK | SALAD | WAITRESS |
| COFFEE | GLASSES | SAUCERS | WATER |
| COOKS | KNIFE | SERVERS | WINE |

Yesterday's Solution

Refrigerator



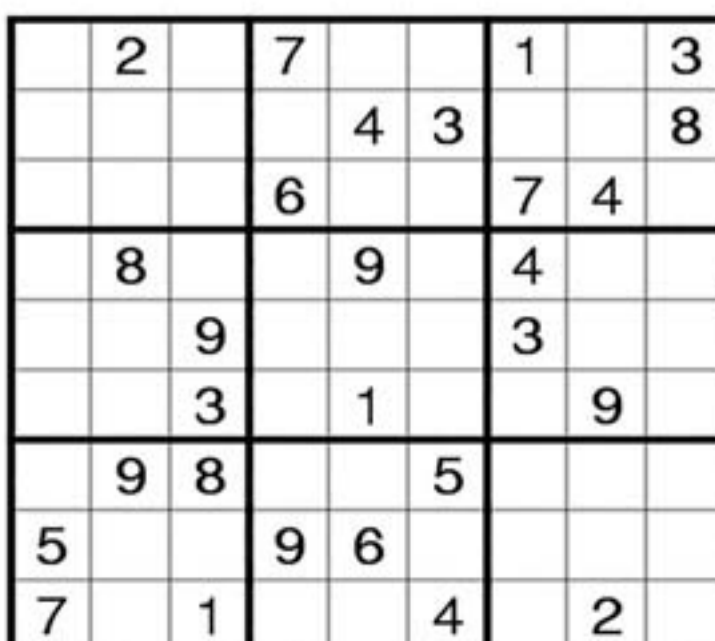
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|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| APPLES | DRAWERS | LETTUCE | ORANGES |
| BACON | DRINKS | LIGHTBULB | PEAS |
| BANANAS | EGGS | MAGNETS | POULTRY |
| BREAD | GRAPES | MAPLE SYRUP | PRODUCE |
| BROCCOLI | ICE CUBES | MAYONNAISE | SHELFS |
| BUTTER | JAM | MEAT | SPINACH |
| CAKE | JUICES | MILK | STRAWBERRIES |
| CARROTS | KEITCHUP | MUSTARD | WATER |
| CHEESE | LEFTOVERS | OLIVES | YOGURT |
| COLD | LEMONS | | |

The hidden message is: BARBECUE SAUCE

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2019



A magpie is pictured sitting on the branches of a tree at sunrise in Gaiberg near Heidelberg in southwestern Germany, on a cold day yesterday. — AFP

Sudan's first female football stars push for women's rights

Within months of Sudan's first women's football league kicking off, the championship's emerging stars are being hailed as icons for equal rights in a country transitioning to civilian rule. Orjuan Essam, 19, and Rayan Rajab, 22, of Khartoum-based Tahadi women's club, have scored several goals already in a tournament that would have seemed unlikely when autocrat Omar Al-Bashir was in power. "I was thrilled to see that authoritarian rule was finally turning into civilian and that women's rights could now be achieved," said Essam, her long hair flowing freely as she trained at a stadium in the capital.

Sudan was once a football pioneer, joining FIFA in 1948 and co-founding the Confederation of African Football with Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa at a meeting in Khartoum in 1957. But women's football faced an uphill battle after the country adopted Islamic sharia law in 1983, six years before then-brigadier Bashir seized power in an Islamist-backed coup. Bashir's 30 years of ironfisted rule ended in April after he was ousted by the army in a palace coup following months of protests, triggering hopes that more liberal, pro-women policies would emerge.

Women were at the forefront of anti-Bashir protests, expressing anger against centuries of patriarchal traditions and laws

that severely restricted their role in Sudanese society. Sudan is now ruled by a joint civilian-military sovereign council, which has been tasked with overseeing the transition to civilian rule as demanded by protesters.

League pushes women's rights

Last month the new authorities scrapped a decades-old public order law, which primarily targeted women for "immoral acts". During the rule of Bashir, thousands of women were flogged or fined under the law. Today, the launch of women's club football is seen as a much-needed boost for women's rights in Sudan. Essam, who plays left midfielder for Tahadi, said the world would now know that Sudanese women are not just "meant for raising children and doing household chores". "Women's rights are much more than that," she said.

Rajab, wearing a track suit at the practice session, said the tournament was the best thing to have happened to Sudan, showcasing the country's talented female footballers. "We badly needed it," said Rajab, whose aim is to score in every match. "Hopefully, I will become a professional player overseas and return to the Sudanese team, if they choose me to represent Sudan in the next World Cup," Rajab said.



Sudanese football player Orjuan Essam (center), 19, takes part in a training session.

For Essam, who reads the Holy Quran every morning and wants to become a dentist, football remains a hobby. Since the championship began on Sept 30, both players have won praise for their positive team spirit, with Sudanese newspapers splashing their photographs on the sports pages. "I play as a striker... Orjuan is a left midfielder. We coordinate and make passes to each other," Rajab said. Their coach Ahmed Al-Fakki said the two always have a countermove to any plays their opponents make on the field. "Their goals speak for them, they were very beautiful goals," Fakki said, as Rajab dribbled the ball behind him.

Family support

Essam and Rajab say they owe their new-found glory to understanding parents. Essam said her father, a football enthusiast himself, is her biggest supporter and personal coach, often correcting her mistakes during training. "Women are now competing with men at all levels, they are even taking ministerial positions," said her father, Essam Al-Sayed, who is a banker.

Rajab took a liking to football at a young age, mostly playing with her brother. "My parents had no objection, they kept telling me to push on with sports," she said. With the success of the league and the attention the two girls have brought to the championship - which has 21 clubs participating - organizers now want to tap more talent. "We have convinced the ministry of education to open schools for training girls in football, and we have contacted FIFA to help bring football to young children," said Fakki, who is also involved in organizing the league.

Essam and Rajab, however, remain special to him. "Orjuan and Rayan are capable of becoming professional footballers," he said. "I tell them to show the world that Sudan has talent and it is only professional players who can help develop the sport." — AFP



Sudanese women football players take part in a training session at a stadium in the Sudanese capital Khartoum on Nov 20, 2019. — AFP photos



Difaain players pose for a group shot ahead of the Sudanese Women Football League match between Tahadi and Difaain in Khartoum on Sept 30, 2019.



Tahadi players listen to their coach's instructions.

Two new looks for the legendary diver

OMEGA's Seamaster Diver 300M collection continues to evolve with the introduction of two stunning new models.

Blue Ceramic and Sedna Gold

This 42 mm watch, crafted from 18K Sedna gold, includes a polished blue ceramic bezel with OMEGA Ceragold diving scale. Beautifully integrated with the case is a blue rubber strap with a buckle in 18K Sedna gold. Once again OMEGA has used polished blue ceramic [ZrO₂] for the dial, which features laser-engraved waves and a date window at 6 o'clock. The skeleton hands and raised indexes are 18K Sedna(tm) gold and filled with white Super-LumiNova.



White Ceramic and stainless steel

Amongst the many choices of Seamaster Diver 300M, customers can now choose this model with a new white ceramic [ZrO₂] dial, which works perfectly with the surrounding black bezel and stainless steel case. Adding extra depth to the dial are blackened hands and indexes, and the famous Seamaster name highlighted in red. The polished-brushed bracelet, seamlessly integrated with the 42 mm case, includes OMEGA's patented extendable foldover rack-and-pusher, as well as a diver extension.



Master Chronometer Certified

As with all timepieces in this collection, a Master Chronometer movement, officially certified by the Swiss Federal Institute of Metrology (METAS), provides the power - and is visible behind the sapphire crystal on the caseback. Driving the gold version is the OMEGA Co-Axial Master Chronometer Calibre 8801, with a special luxury finish in 18K Sedna gold. Behind the white dial is the OMEGA Co-Axial Master Chronometer Calibre 8800.

Shared qualities

The striking additions, in new colors and materials, retain the collection's iconic features, such as the famous waved dial and helium escape valve.

Lifestyle | Gossip

Robbie Williams

thinks his daughter
Teddy is destined
for a career in music



The 'Angels' hitmaker has heaped praise on his seven-year-old girl - whom he has with wife Ayda Field - and he claimed even at such a young age she's already a much better singer than he is. Speaking to the Daily Star newspaper's Wired column, he said: "I'm not the most talented singer in my family, my daughter is more talented than me. Teddy is a fantastic singer, really." Already she's got a musical ear and it's incredible." Robbie - who also has daughter Coco, 15 months, and son Charlie, five, with Ayda - also revealed his plans for the festive season, as he teased a solution to an early Christmas wakeup call. He added: "What I might do is not tell them it's Christmas, so then they don't go up too early... as they're not excited and then I'll go: 'Surprise, Santa has been.' "Meanwhile, daughter Teddy actually makes an appearance on the track 'Home' - which appears on Robbie's new album 'The Christmas Present' - although he will be holding onto the song earnings until she's old enough to manage her own money. The 'Let Me Entertain You' star recently said: "No, not yet. I'll be keeping them." Asked if she will get a mention in the credits, he replied: "I don't know, it's not a duet, it's only a very small bit."

The 45-year-old singer shared how he just heard Teddy singing in their home studio one day and was blown away by her voice. On how the feature came about, he said: "Teddy is on a track called 'Home'." "I have a studio in my house and the kids wander down." This particular time she was singing and I said, 'You sound great, baby - do you think you can remember these words?'. She knocked it out of the park." 'Friends' creator David Crane admits Phoebe Buffay could have ended up with David the Science Guy. The sitcom boss - who co-created the show with Marta Kauffman - has admitted Lisa Kudrow's character could easily have found love with Hank Azaria's alter ego when he returned from a research trip in Minsk, although she chose to stay with Mike (Paul Rudd). Speaking to Radio Times magazine, Crane said: "There was definitely a possibility of [Phoebe ending up with David], I mean, we didn't definitively know [who she'd end up with]." I mean, both Paul and Hank are fantastic, and fantastic with her. We sort of went back and forth. "I don't even remember all the pieces that led to where we landed, but yeah, it could have gone the other way. Phoebe would have been great with either one." However, Crane admitted there was never any chance of

Phoebe becoming an item with Matt LeBlanc's character Joey Tribbiani, despite the pair kissing a few times on the show. He revealed the team thought having the duo end up together would have felt "too tidy" with couples Ross Geller and Rachel Green - played by David Schwimmer and Jennifer Aniston - and Monica Geller (Courteney Cox) and Chandler Bing (Matthew Perry) ending up together. He explained: "It all would have been too tidy and too complete... When your goal is to keep the six characters in stories together, it would be really easy to go down that road but I think we all felt it would be a mistake." Despite repeated calls from fans of the sitcom - which originally aired between 1994 and 2004 - Crane and Kauffman have been adamant they won't revive the comedy. The latter said earlier this year: "We will not be doing a reunion show, we will not be doing a reboot. The show was about that time in life when friends are your family." And Crane added: "We did the show we wanted to do. We got it right, and we put a bow on it."

Kendall Jenner says Rob Kardashian is the best parent out of her famous siblings

The 24-year-old model is the only one without children, and she was asked to either rank them all - including Kylie Jenner, Kourtney, Khloe and Kim - or have to drink old Egg Nog as part of a game of 'Spill Your Guts'. Facing off with 'Late Late Show' guest host Harry Styles, she said: "I feel like I can answer it. I mean, I'll start by saying they actually are all amazing, they really are. They are, I swear. But I'd say Rob is number one - he's so good to his daughter. I mean, that's so hard, they're all amazing. Then it would be Khloe, Kim, Kylie, Kourtney." Rob has three-year-old daughter Dream with his ex-fiancee Blac Chyna. And although Kendall was forthcoming with that question, she decided to drink a salmon smoothie rather than name the most unlikely supermodel, although she admitted

she did have an answer in mind. In retaliation, Harry was asked to rank the solo careers of his One Direction bandmates - Niall Horan, Liam Payne, Louis Tomlinson and Zayn - from best to worst. However, the 25-year-old singer - who also refused to say which songs he has written about Kendall - didn't even wait for the question to be finished before he ate scorpion and brought the game to an end. Meanwhile, Kendall has previously opened up about the idea of starting a family, and she admitted she wants to "wait" a bit longer to have children of her own. She said: "It's obviously a bit weird that your little sister [Kylie Jenner] is having a baby before you. I didn't expect it to happen like this." But it's beautiful... I am ready to wait. I want to have kids, but at, like, 28 or 29."



Kevin Hart says he's 'forever a work in progress' after a rollercoaster year



The 'Jumanji: The Next Level' actor was honored at a special hand and footprint ceremony at the iconic TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood on Tuesday and he has reflected on a difficult year - which saw him sustain three fractures in his spine when a car he was travelling in veered off the highway and ended up in a gully about 10 feet off the road - as he opened up after the ceremony on social media. Sharing a series of snaps on Instagram, he wrote: "Words can't explain my emotion right now... 2019 has been a hell of a year for me. I appreciate the Ups & the downs... to be honest I appreciate the downs so f***ing much because they help build character. My appreciation for life is the highest that it's ever been... I am forever a work in progress... I'm always looking for ways to improve or better myself... the best way to receive anything is to be willing to listen & accept or learn... I am all of the above. (sic)" The 40-year-old star also thanked Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, Karen Gillan and Will Ferrell - who were all in attendance at the ceremony - and revealed he is grateful for so many people. He added: "I am also thankful... I'm thankful for my family/friends/CoWorkers/Fans... Without you guys none of this would be possible. Thank you all so much. Mom I hope I am making you proud... Dad I love you... 40 G's you're the best big brother on the planet... Niko you're my everything... Kids I do it all for you... PCB you are my ride or dies... God you are my EVERYTHING!!!! (sic)" Meanwhile, Dwayne has heaped praise on his friend after he received the recognition this week. He said: "I'm so happy and so proud of him. I have the privilege of speaking on his behalf tomorrow and I can't wait. I did have the honour of having it done and, not to mess with him, but I know how cool it is and I'm so happy that he's experiencing it. This is a great Christmas. It's a great holiday ... I'm so happy to celebrate my guy."



Kelly Ripa has had plastic surgery on her earlobes

The 'Live with Kelly and Ryan' star revealed she's gone under the knife to fix her lobes after "hanging gauges" caused some damage meaning a surgeon had to "sew it together". In a new 'Fashion Finder' video on her show's Instagram page, the 49-year-old daytime host explained: "I had gauges, like hanging gauges. See these holes up here." These were my earlobes that tore all the way through. So I had to go to a plastic surgeon... There's a piece of my earlobe that's not there because he had to sew it together." Kelly revealed her love of hanging earrings led to both earlobes tearing right through, although one had a

much better recovery than the other. Pointing to her left ear, she said: "This one really recovered very nicely. This one is perfect... [The other one] was just way worse. The damage was worse." The television personality previously opened up about the embarrassing moment she answered a FaceTime call to close friend Andy Cohen whilst she was naked, without realizing he was out shopping. Kelly was in the buff in the changing rooms of her gym, unaware that Andy was out searching for a shirt as a gift for her son and called because he wanted her opinion.



Ryan Reynolds says Hugh Jackman is a 'fraud'

The 'Deadpool' actor has reignited his tongue-in-cheek fake feud with the 'Logan' actor - who was born in Sydney - and joked his friend is actually a fellow Canadian. Speaking to Australian's 'Today' show, he teased: "He's just an evil person. You guys have all been duped... You think he is this benevolent ambassador from your country, people don't realize he is from Winnipeg, Canada... The Truth makes your eyes water. Hugh Jackman is a fraud." The two pals frequently take playful digs at each other in interviews and on social media, and Ryan's latest comments come after the 'Greatest Showman' star mocked him while congratulating John Legend on being named People's Sexist Man Alive. Hugh - who won the accolade in 2008, two years before the 'Deadpool' star -

warned the 40-year-old singer he needed to "fall in with the right crowd" now he has joined the "very, very prestigious" group to have been given the title and couldn't resist taking a swipe at his friend as he did so. Hugh shared a video on Instagram of himself and Ryan looking at the 2008 Sexiest Man Alive cover and captioned the clip: "Dear John. Massive congrats on joining this very very prestigious group. 99% of the time, People Magazine gets it right. Such as Blake, DJ, etc ... But a word of caution. There is the 1%. Exhibit A. It's important that you fall in with the right crowd. Enjoy your reign. Love Hugh. (sic)" But the 'All of Me' hitmaker claimed he was left confused by the advice. He commented: "Wait so you're the 99 and Reynolds is the 1? Or vice versa? (sic)"



Jennifer Lopez wants her daughter to know she doesn't need a man

The 'Hustlers' actress - who has 11-year-old twins Emme and Max with her ex-husband Marc Anthony - has opened up about what she learned from her stripper and entrepreneur character Romana in the big screen drama, and how she will pass those lessons on. She told the New York Times: "I love that you never see Ramona with a man. Except when she's in the club or working. When you do certain roles, you realise something about yourself. "I've always been so much a romantic, so much about having a relationship, and this woman is the total opposite. And to play that, to live in those shoes, to walk in those very high heels, in that skin, made me realise I'm out here on my own. That's what I need to teach my daughter, that aspect of it, that you can do it on your own. Women are not taught that all the time." Meanwhile, the 50-year-old superstar recently revealed she is fully behind her daughter's dream to become a singer. J-

Lo - who was joined on stage by her daughter for a duet of 'Limitless' when she brought her 'It's My Party' tour to Los Angeles in June - said Emme "can accomplish anything". She previously said: "I want her to know she's limitless. Performing a duet with her on tour this summer was such a proud moment for me and I know she can accomplish anything if there's a passion behind it." Emme's dad Marc has also publicly stated he is completely behind her singing ambitions as long as she wants to launch a music career "because she likes it" and not because she wants to be famous. The 'You Sang To Me' hitmaker said: "Music was a big part of my life growing up and I hope it does the same for [Emme] as it has done for me. And if that is what she wants to do ... well, she should do it because she likes it, not because she has to. Not for fame, or popularity, or for likes."



Nicole Scherzinger

fears for children growing up in modern society

The Pussycat Dolls star - who has opened up about battling bulimia earlier in her pop star career - lacked confidence as a youngster, and she admitted it can be difficult for kids to deal with these issues. She's quoted by the Daily Mirror newspaper as saying: "I think it can be hard for young kids. I know I had a hard time feeling I fitted into my own skin. I was just hard on myself. I had a lot of struggles with self esteem and a lot of insecurities." The 41-year-old star is currently a judge on 'The X Factor: The Band', and she has urged people entering the music industry to believe in themselves and try to see past any struggles. She added: "I would say, 'You are perfect just the way you are. God made you and you are precious. You have purpose and you are going to go through a lot of pain and struggles in life but there is purpose in that pain and there is a bigger plan'. That's the same advice I'd give anyone. When you go through struggles and challenges it's going to prepare you. Even though you're feeling you're not fitting in, it's because you're not meant to fit in, you're meant to stand out." Nicole has previously revealed she didn't realize she needed to face up to her illness until she lost her voice and "passed out" backstage. Now, she wants to use the "platform" she has to make a difference, even if that simply means giving people an escape through "light entertainment". She added: "I feel like to think I've been given a platform and a voice to impact positive change in this pretty messed-up world, just as much as providing light entertainment."

Megan Fox sends her children to a vegan school

The 33-year-old actress is determined to let her children - Noah, seven, Bodhi, five, and Journey, three - be who they want to be, but she does want to teach them to be kind to animals and not to "rip flowers out of the ground" because she's convinced they have "feelings, thoughts and emotions." Speaking to PEOPLE.com, the 'Jennifer's Body' star said: "We send them to an organic, sustainable, vegan school where they're seed-to-table, they plant their own food. They grow it, they harvest it and they take it to local restaurants to sell it, so they understand how all of that works. "I'm very specific about never harming animals. We don't step on ants; we don't do things like that. We don't rip flowers out of the ground, because we think they're beautiful. I teach them that plants are sentient beings - they have feelings, thoughts and emotions - so that's what we're doing. My son accidentally stepped on a roly-poly once and he was devastated, and we had a full funeral for it. We did a ceremony, we buried it, we lit sage, we released him back. So they're very involved." However, Megan and her husband Brian Austin Green think it's very important that they allow their kids to be free-spirited and make their own decisions in life. The brunette beauty explained: "It's about releasing control, right? That's all it is. It's [about] allowing them to be who they are and relinquishing control, because they were born to be who they are, and it's my job to support that process, not to get involved and micromanage and mould them into what I think they should be. It's [about] being of that mindset of realizing that they come as the teachers to u. We're here to keep them alive, but we're learning all the lessons from them."



Kris Jenner is giving her friends and family Botox for Christmas

The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star - who has been relying on the cosmetic procedure for a long time to banish the lines on her face - will be dishing out gift cards for Botox Cosmetic to her loved ones this festive season. Speaking to PEOPLE.com, she said of the gift idea: "It's a one stop shop for me. And who doesn't love Botox? For me it's been really great. If you're responsible, and you talk to your doctor, I think it works. It's something that I've been using for a long time. My routine is pretty simple, but it always has been my entire life. A massage, a great facial, a manicure and a little Botox and I'm good to go. I'm pretty traditional. As long as I'm clean and scrubbed up, I'm a happy camper." And, although she's got a busy

schedule, the 64-year-old matriarch - who has six children: Kourtney, 40, Kim, 39, Khloe, 35, Rob, 32, Kendall, 24, and Kylie, 22 - still tries to make time for "personal care" because it's "really important." She added: "I taught my kids that when they were really young. And then they remind me of the horror stories of getting their first bikini waxes! We love great beauty experiences and learning about new things and new products." I also feel really blessed to have my mom still here feeling okay, and she's 85 years old. I hope I have that adventurous spirit when I'm her age. She's a joy. I'm going to give her a Botox gift card for sure."



Nicole Kidman says her second Golden Globes nomination for 'Big Little Lies' is 'so important'

The 52-year-old actress won the Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series or a Motion Picture Made for Television for her role as Celeste Wright in the HBO hit at the ceremony this year, and she's been nominated alongside her co-star Reese Witherspoon (Madeline Mackenzie) for Best Actress in a Leading Role next year, whilst the show itself is up for Best Television Series - Drama. Nicole - who is also an executive producer on the show along with Reese and author Liane Moriarty, whose novel the show is based on - says the accolades mean everything to the cast and team behind the two seasons because it's "such a passion" for them all. The 'Bombshell' actress told 'Entertainment Tonight': "We were just so, so happy and thrilled because 'Big Little Lies' is such a passion for all of us. "And to have it acknowledged in this way by the Hollywood Foreign Press was just, it was so important. And also the Critics Choice, and all of those acknowledgements, just because the subject matter in this is still - yes, there's all of the sort of the hoopla around it - but if you take all that, strip all that away, and hopefully get to what the show is actually about, that's still there in such a different way this season." Meanwhile, the 'Paddington' star also spoke about how much fun she had working with fellow Australian actress Margot Robbie and Charlize Theron, who they made an "honorary Aussie", on their upcoming movie 'Bombshell'. Nicole - who plays Gretchen Carlson - said: "We have fun, we have loads of fun." They both have amazing senses of humour and they're just up for anything. And obviously Margot's an Aussie, so we immediately have incredible, sort of, history together, because of that we just have a second language. And Charlize, we've made an honorary Aussie."

Chrissy Teigen's assistant does most of her Christmas shopping for her

The 34-year-old Sports Illustrated model has admitted she rarely has to conjure up any gift ideas around the festive season - even for her children Luna, three, and Miles, 18 months - because her "house manager" does most of the thinking for her. Asked if her assistant lives with her, Chrissy said in a Twitter Q&A: "We have a house manager who works at the house all day to handle our lives and day to day business, packages, scheduling for household staff etc." Pressed on whether she does her own Christmas shopping, the brunette beauty added: "Assistant does a lot." But it's funny when it's the assistant's bday and you gotta go yourself. (sic) Chrissy and her husband John Legend even have a business accountant who deals with all of their utility bills and keeps an eye on their spending. She explained: "I have a business accountant who handles everything and sends me summaries of my spending/income. I don't get mail." And, although they have staff in and out of their house regularly, the couple - who got married in 2013 - don't try to hide their arguments from them. She said: "I don't hide anything. I fight in cars, I fight at home, I fight at the airport. I don't care. John just won't fight back." Meanwhile, Chrissy recently said she doesn't know if fame has changed her for the better or the worse because she's a "highly anxious" person. She said "Very good question. I don't know, honestly. I still see things from every perspective. But I'm also highly anxious and perceptive so it's kind of hell for my own mind. But also good? I like that I can help people but my own self is kind of... stuck?"



A\$AP Rocky back in Sweden



New York rapper A\$AP Rocky was back in Sweden yesterday for a concert, four months after receiving a suspended sentence over a Stockholm street fight. The gig alongside Swedish rap artists Jireel, Z.E and Dree Low is set for Stockholm's Ericsson Globe, a golf ball-shaped arena that is the world's largest spherical building. A\$AP Rocky's booking agency Live Nation said part of the concert's proceeds would go to charity. The 31-year-old rapper will have to be on good behavior during his stay in Sweden to avoid seeing his suspended sentence change to a spell behind bars. A\$AP Rocky, whose real name is Rakim Mayers, was arrested on July 3 a few days after a brawl in Stockholm in which he and his entourage were embroiled with a 19-year-old plaintiff. Considered a flight risk, he was held in custody for a month while the case was investigated and throughout his trial. Prosecutors had called for a six-month prison sentence, but the court said the actions of Mayers and two members of his entourage were not severe enough to warrant more time in prison. The court did not specify the length of the suspended sentence. Assault carries a maximum penalty of two years in prison in Sweden. Mayers' imprisonment outraged fans, who started an online petition, #JusticeForRocky, which garnered more than 640,000 signatures. Supporters were urged to boycott Swedish brands. The case also led to diplomatic tensions after US President Donald Trump himself called for Mayers to be released.



Demonstrators use makeshift shields during a protest against the government in Santiago on Nov 14, 2019. — AFP photos



A demonstrator with his face painted holds a makeshift shield depicting a painted face of the Joker.

CHILE'S PROTEST 'FRONTLINE' — HEROES OR VANDALS?

Armed with clubs and shields, the "frontline" youth of Chile's two-month-long protest movement are seen as heroes by some - and vandals by others. Since the civil unrest broke out on October 18, Chile has become increasingly polarized in its view of those leading the demonstrations against President Sebastian Pinera's government. For some, the protest movement has been the downfall of a country that was often described as a regional bastion of stability and prosperity but is now suffering from chaos inflicted by hooded anarchists and looters.

middle-class university student contingent - united by the same frustrations and resentment as their more violent peers.

"The fact that we're on the frontline allows for peaceful demonstrations because otherwise (the police) would be there" using tear gas to disperse protesters, said Matias, who is saddled with debt after quitting veterinary studies in his fourth year. He mixes baking soda in a bottle of water to wash his eyes against the effects of tear gas. After nearly two months of civil unrest and clashes, 95 percent of people in the country reject the theft and looting, according to poll-

where a million people from all walks of life stood together to demand an end to social and economic inequality on Oct 25. Youths broke off pieces of sidewalks, smashed bus shelters for metal and carried glass bottles, all to be used as projectiles to throw at security forces.

Some saw their defiance as courageous, while others thought it cowardly. "This situation has left all us Chileans perplexed," Matias Fernandez, a sociologist and academic at Santiago's Catholic University told AFP. Attacks by masked protesters on police have a particular resonance in Chile, where leftist groups clashed with military dictator Augusto Pinochet's security forces from 1973 to 1990, a period that has helped "romanticize" violent resistance of tyranny in the country. "However, the violence the country has seen since October 18 is unprecedented in democracy," said Fernandez.

Taken for granted

At the start of the protests, rioters used broken road signs, doors and pieces of chairs looted from restaurants as weapons, but the "front line" has since improved on the equipment its members use. In particular, they now wear goggles to protect against the rubber pellets fired by police, which have caused 350 serious eye injuries. Andres Ramirez, a 52-year-old Uber driver, told AFP "there are people taking advantage of the hoodies to commit their misdemeanors". Yet he still supports the street movement and blames "criminals" for theft and destruction. "They're not the citizens who want the country to change for the better," he said.

The violence is incomprehensible to many, particularly since it was sparked by a modest hike in metro fares in a democracy often lauded as the richest in South America. According to Fernandez, this is "a generation of youngsters who didn't grow up under the dictatorship" and democracy is something they take for granted. These "children of democracy don't feel that this system full of flaws and injustice that they live in is something they should give thanks for". "For youngsters, having regular elections is an unquestionable fact, like having air to breathe." — AFP



A demonstrator holds a makeshift shield depicting an eye - referring to the many cases of demonstrators hit in the eyes by police pellets - and reading "Pinera out".



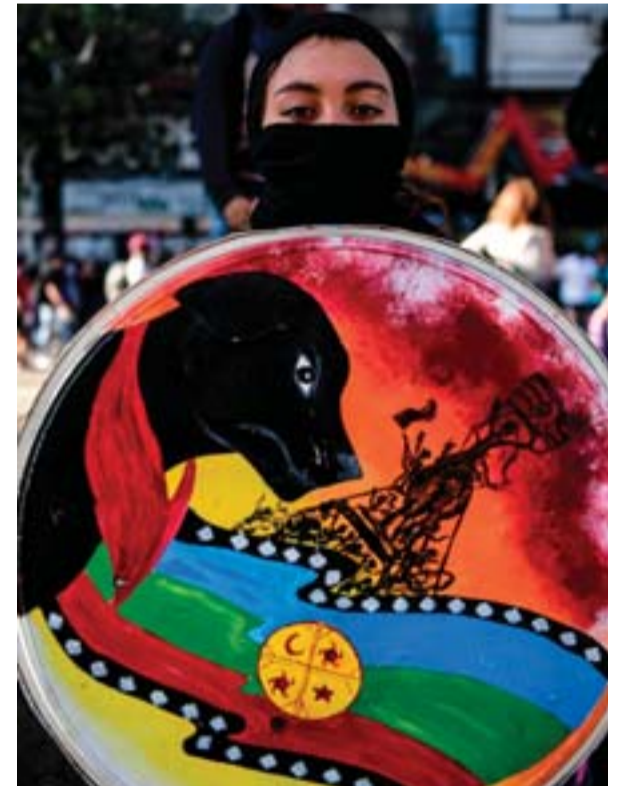
A demonstrator holds a makeshift shield depicting a dog and reading "Black Saint Killer, Patron Saint of Demonstrations".

For others, the mass demonstrations are a festival of rebirth. "We're going to stay here until there are real solutions to the issues that have been raised since the beginning and which have made the government go crazy," Matias, a masked 27-year-old, told AFP from behind a metal shield. He said he was neither an anarchist nor a thief, and not reckless or poor. Rather, he represents the protests' mid-

ster Cadem. But surveys show that 70 to 85 percent of people support the movement.

'Perplexed'

The youthful protest "frontline" has situated itself two blocks from Plaza Italia, the historical epicenter of Chilean demonstrations, which is also the demographic border between the wealthy uptown and poor downtown. It was



A demonstrator holds a makeshift shield depicting a dog and the Mapuche indigenous flag.



A demonstrator disguised as Mexican character Red Grasshopper holds a shield.



A demonstrator uses a street sign as shield.



A demonstrator holds a makeshift shield referring to the Bible.



A demonstrator wearing a helmet uses a makeshift shield.

Classifieds

Thursday, December 12, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Rather cold with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 11/12/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	15 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	13 °C			
ABDALY	20 °C	09 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	20 °C	12 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	20 °C	16 °C			
AHMADI	20 °C	16 °C			
NUWASIB	20 °C	14 °C			
WAFRA	21 °C	12 °C			
SALMY	19 °C	10 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	12/12	Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	21 °C	10 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 40 km/h
Friday	12/13	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	23 °C	15 °C	SE-NW	20 - 50 km/h
Saturday	12/14	Partly cloudy	21 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Sunday	12/15	Partly cloudy	22 °C	13 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:07
Sunrise	06:32
Zuhr	11:41
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:50
Isha	18:13

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	20 °C
MIN. Temp.	14 °C
MAX. RH	75 %
MIN. RH	36 %
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
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

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 Dornic 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, Udipi. 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. S2395655

EMERGENCY 112



Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

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

Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 12/12/2019				Departure Flights on Thursday 12/12/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	KAC	781	Jeddah	13:30
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	KAC	541	Cairo	13:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
KAC	102	London	00:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KAC	504	Beirut	01:05	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
RJA	642	Amman	01:40	FDB	8066	Dubai	15:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:45
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:50
KAC	5624	Doha	02:05	SVA	501	Jeddah	16:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	125	Dubai	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	16:35
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	UAE	854	Dubai	16:45
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KLM	446	Amsterdam	16:50
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	QTR	1087	Doha	16:50
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	OMA	644	Muscat	16:52
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	17:00
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	KAC	621	Doha	17:05
KAC	796	Madinah	04:40	MSR	613	Cairo	17:25
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	JZR	713	Sohag	17:35
JZR	406	Kochi	04:45	LMU	511	Cairo	17:35
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50	IGO	1752	Chennai	17:40
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	QTR	1077	Doha	17:40
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	OHY	351	Istanbul	17:45
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	101	Bahrain	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	121	Dubai	17:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	RJA	643	Amman	17:55
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	FDB	070	Dubai	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	GFA	212	Bahrain	18:00
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	KAC	413	Bangkok	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55	KAC	167	Paris	18:10
KAC	106	London	06:00	IGO	1767	Mumbai	18:10
KAC	332	Trivandrum	06:05	KAC	173	Munich	18:20
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	FDB	054	Dubai	18:20
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	JZR	001	LGW	18:20
KAC	362	Colombo	06:30	KAC	163	MXP	18:20
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	KAC	787	Jeddah	18:35
BAW	157	London	07:05	KAC	501	Beirut	18:40
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	BAW	156	London	18:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:10	JZR	731	Cairo	18:55
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	QTR	1085	Doha	19:20
JZR	120	Dubai	07:35	KAC	545	Cairo	19:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	157	Istanbul	19:30
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	JZR	601	Baku	19:30
KAC	8511	Doha	08:00	KAC	671	Dubai	19:30
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:10	KAC	561	Amman	19:35
KAC	622	Doha	08:30	QTR	1081	Muscat	19:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
ETD	301	Bahrain	08:55	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	RUA	641	Amman	20:10
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMS	266	Muscat	20:45
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	KAC	333	Trivandrum	20:50
NIA	361	Alexandria	09:50	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	410	Delhi	10:00	QTR	1091	Doha	21:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	DLH	624	Dammam	21:45
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	714	Sohag	10:50	QTR	1089	Doha	21:55
QTR	1074	Dubai	11:15	JZR	507	KHI	22:00
KAC	352	Kochi	11:35	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JZR	701	Beirut	22:15
SYR	341	Damascus	12:00	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:25
GFA	209	Bahrain	12:05	ALK	230	Doha	22:25
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	RBG	552	Alexandria	23:00
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	MSC	502	Alexandria	23:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:50	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	RBG	214	Sohag	23:10
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	KAC	783	Jeddah	23:15
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	QTR	1083	Delhi	23:20
				KAC	543	Doha	23:30
				KAC	303	Mumbai	23:40

India passes citizenship bill amid violent protests

GUWAHATI: India's parliament yesterday passed a contentious bill that seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants from some countries, as hundreds of troops were deployed in the northeast which has been hit by violent protests. The bill will let the Indian government grant citizenship to millions of illegal immigrants who entered India from three neighboring countries before 2015 - but not if they are Muslim.

The legislation was passed 125-105 by the upper house, after the lower house voted in support of it just after midnight on Tuesday. It will be sent to the president to be signed into law, with his approval seen as a formality. "A landmark day for India and our nation's ethos of compassion and brotherhood!" Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted.

"This Bill will alleviate the suffering of many who faced persecution for years." Opponents of the legislation have threatened to challenge it in the Supreme Court, saying it violates the principles of equality and secularism enshrined in the constitution. For Islamic groups, the opposition, rights groups and others this is part of Modi's Hindu-nationalist agenda to marginalize India's 200 million Muslims - something he denies.

Besides stoking concern among Muslims, the proposed changes have also led to demonstrations in the northeastern states where residents are unhappy about an influx of Hindus from neighboring Bangladesh who stand to gain citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB). In a third day of protests in the far-flung region, several hundred troops were deployed in Tripura state and in Guwahati, Assam's biggest city, a senior army official said.

Police fired tear gas in different parts of Guwahati as several thousand demonstrators attempted to barge past security barriers to converge on the adjoining state capital Dispur. Tripura and parts of Assam suspended mobile internet services, with Assam wanting to avoid social media posts that could "inflame passions". Gatherings of more than four people were banned for 24 hours. "We appeal to all the students, civilians, tea garden workers and all sections of the society to come out to the streets again tomorrow to protest," local activist Akhil Gogoi said ahead of the upper house vote.

'Eerie similarity' to Nazi laws

Derek O'Brien, an opposition lawmaker in the upper house yesterday said the legislation bore an "eerie similarity" to Nazi laws against Jews in 1930s Germany. "In 1935 there were citizenship laws to protect people with German blood ... today we have a faulty bill that wants to define who true Indian citizens are," he said. Modi's government - re-elected in May and under pressure over a slowing economy - says Muslims from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan are excluded from the legislation because they do not face discrimination in those countries.

Also left out are other minorities fleeing political or religious persecution elsewhere in the region such as Tamils from Sri Lanka, Rohingya from Myanmar and Tibetans from China. Many Muslims in India say they have been made to feel like second-class citizens since Modi stormed to power in 2014. Several cities perceived to have Islamic-sounding names have been renamed, while some school textbooks have been altered to downplay Muslims' contributions to India.



GUWAHATI: Demonstrators setup a bonfire on a street as they protest against the government's Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB), in Guwahati yesterday. — AFP

In August, Modi's administration rescinded the partial autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, and split it into two. A citizens' register in Assam finalized this year left 1.9 million people, many of them Muslims, facing possible statelessness, detention camps and even deportation. Modi's government has said it

intends to replicate the register nationwide with the aim of removing all "infiltrators" by 2024.

Amit Shah, Modi's right-hand-man and home minister, has likened illegal immigrants to "termites". "The Indian government is creating legal grounds to strip millions of Muslims of the fundamental right of equal

access to citizenship," Human Rights Watch said yesterday. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom on Monday termed the bill as a "dangerous turn in the wrong direction". India's foreign ministry retorted that the remarks were "neither accurate nor warranted" and "guided by their prejudices and biases". — AFP

Myanmar denies 'genocidal intent'...

Continued from Page 1

She argued that the army was responding to an attack by hundreds of Rohingya militants in 2017. "It cannot be ruled out that disproportionate force was used by members of the defense services in some cases in disregard of international humanitarian law, or that they did not distinguish clearly enough between fighters and civilians," she said. But she said that Myanmar was undertaking its own investigations, adding: "Surely under the circumstances genocidal intent cannot be the only hypothesis."

'Allegations are rubbish'

The Gambia, which is mostly Muslim, accuses Myanmar of breaching the 1948 genocide convention and has asked the court to take emergency measures to stop further violence. UN investigators last year concluded that Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya amounted to genocide while rights groups have detailed a catalogue of alleged abuses.

Suu Kyi however said that the court, set up in 1946 to rule on disputes between member states, had not confirmed genocide in cases of mass expulsions of civilians in the 1990s Balkans war. Around 250 pro-Myanmar protesters gathered in front of the International Court of Justice, carrying placards with Aung San Suu Kyi's face reading "We stand with you" and carrying pictures of the leader. "These allegations against Myanmar and Suu Kyi are rubbish," said Chomar Oosterhof, 53, a Burmese living in the Netherlands. "We just want our country to prosper and Suu Kyi is the person to do it."

Meanwhile, a small group of pro-Rohingya supporters were also gathered at the court, shouting: "Aung San Suu Kyi, shame on you!" Another lone protester was holding up a poster of one of Myanmar's generals, saying "Wanted for Mass Murder." The 74-year-old Suu Kyi sat impassively through graphic accounts of mass murder and rape on Tuesday as Gambia set out its case against Myanmar. Gambian Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou, who opened his country's case, said it would be "extremely disappointing" if Suu Kyi repeated her previous denials of wrongdoing by Myanmar. He urged the court to tell her to "stop the genocide".

Support at home

ICJ judges have only once before ruled that genocide was committed, in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia. Suu Kyi's decision to personally lead her country's case at the court has proved popular at home, where the Rohingya are widely regarded as illegal immigrants.

Flag-waving supporters joined rallies in support of Suu Kyi in several Myanmar cities on Tuesday and rally organizers in Yangon told AFP they had permission from authorities to live stream yesterday's ICJ hearing on a big screen outside the City Hall. Huge billboards of Suu Kyi and three smiling generals have also appeared around the country. Aung San 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 defense of the same military that once kept her locked up has since caused international condemnation. Myanmar meanwhile 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 personally mentioning Suu Kyi. — AFP

MP Khalil Abul criticized the delay in the formation of the new Cabinet, saying that the Cabinet must be formed as soon as possible in order not to obstruct the working of the government and the Assembly. Head of the Assembly Budgets Committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said yesterday that procedures governing appointments at the Fatwa and Legislative Department, the government's legal body, should be changed. He said the committee found out that the government lost around KD 23 million in court cases defended by the department in the previous 2018/2019 fiscal year - an increase of 43 percent.

The government is now trying to persuade wealthy families and institutions to buy Aramco shares after trading begins, in a last-ditch effort to reach the \$2 trillion mark, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday. The Saudi government itself has pumped in huge funds to boost the IPO, which was originally intended to raise external funding for the kingdom's diversification plan. Two-thirds of the shares were offered to institutional investors. Saudi government bodies accounted for 13.2 percent of the institutional tranche, investing around \$2.3 billion, according to lead IPO manager Samba Capital.

"It's likely that we will see Aramco bid up to \$2 trillion or higher in the first days of trading, and potentially to trade limit up on the first day," Zachary Cefaratti, chief executive officer at Dalma Capital Management - which bought shares in the IPO - told Bloomberg News. The IPO is a crucial part of Prince Mohammed's plan to wean the economy away from oil by pumping funds into megaprojects and non-energy industries such as tourism and entertainment.

But skeptics say the proceeds will barely cover the kingdom's budget deficit for a year. The IPO was heavily focused on Saudi and other Gulf traders. International investors have remained skeptical about the secretive company's targeted valuation. The market debut also comes with oil prices under pressure due to a sluggish global economy hit by the US-China trade war and record output by non-OPEC crude exporters. — AFP

Qatar lists 'blockade' busting dairy farm on the stock market

DOHA: Baladna farms, which has led Qatar's charge for food self-sufficiency following a regional economic embargo, listed on Doha's stock exchange yesterday after raising \$390 million for three-quarters of the company. When the Saudi-led boycott began in June 2017, Qatar responded with sweeping measures like liquidating a quarter of its cash reserves to steady the economy and its currency. Meanwhile, Baladna also flew in hundreds of Holstein cows.

The Riyadh-led alliance has accused Doha of backing Islamist groups and Tehran, issuing a raft of terms Qatar must accept before it will lift the embargo that includes a ban on direct air, land or sea trade. Doha strongly denies

the allegations and has refused to meet the demands that also stipulate the closure of its flagship state-run broadcaster Al Jazeera. The new Baladna herd was part of a plan to establish food security in the event that import routes were blocked - concerns that saw supermarket shelves emptied in the opening days of the embargo.

Baladna now meets more than 90 percent of the country's fresh dairy needs from its farms 55 kilometers north of Doha. "This is really a proud day for Qatar, it proves that their strategy they envisioned a couple of years ago - especially after the blockade - was sound," Baladna chief executive Kamel Abdallah told AFP after a bell-ringing ceremony to mark the start of trading. "It's a reflection of success, of resilience... to execute a very challenging project in record time." The opening price hovered between the initial sale price of one riyal (\$0.27) per share and 1.04 QAR in the first 15 minutes of trading after 9:30 am. The event was dwarfed by neighboring Saudi Arabia's stock market listing of oil giant Aramco, also yesterday, but represents an important landmark for Qatar's fledgling food industry. — AFP

UN 'can't confirm' Iran involvement in Saudi oil attack

UNITED NATIONS: The UN has been unable to confirm Iranian involvement in a dramatic attack on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia earlier this year, secretary-general Antonio Guterres said Tuesday. Drones and cruise missiles were used in the September bombardment, which knocked out half of the kingdom's crude

production and fueled a record surge in prices. Saudi officials, the United States and several European countries accused Iran of responsibility for the attack, which Tehran has denied.

UN investigators had been given access to debris of the weapons used in the attack, Guterres said in a six-monthly report to the Security Council on Iran's nuclear program, seen by AFP on Tuesday. But the investigation was not able to "independently corroborate that the cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles used in these attacks are of Iranian origin," the report said. An investigation into the attack is continuing and will be submitted to the Security Council when finished, Guterres said. — AFP

Water-scarce Gulf countries bank on...

Continued from Page 1

water has come through pipes and we've had no cuts." But these benefits - relying on energy intensive processes that produce carbon emissions - do not come without a cost, particularly as global temperatures rise. The United Nations says 2019 is on course to be one of the hottest three years on record. And there is another impact: the desalination plants produce highly concentrated salt water, or brine, that is often dumped back into the ocean. Researchers say more than 16,000 desalination plants around the globe produce more toxic sludge than freshwater.

Salty slurry

For every litre of freshwater extracted from the sea or brackish water, a liter-and-a-half of salty slurry is deposited at sea or on land, according to a 2019 study in the journal Science. All that extra salt raises the temperature of coastal waters and decreases the level of oxygen, which can conspire to create biological "dead zones". The super-salty substance is made even more toxic by the chemicals used in the desalination process. Oman's bigger neighbors produce the bulk of the brine.

More than half comes from just four countries - Saudi Arabia, at 22 percent, United Arab Emirates with 20 percent, and smaller shares by Kuwait and Qatar, according to UN data. "Brine production in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Qatar accounts for 55 percent of the total global share," according to the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health. It said new strategies are needed "to limit the negative environmental impacts and reduce the economic cost of disposal". This would help "to safeguard water supplies for current and future generations".

Savings, recycling

At the Sur plant, "almost no chemicals" are used during the pre-treatment phase, as the water is naturally filtered through the cracks of karst rocks, said

Mahendran Senapathy, operations manager at French company Veolia which runs the plant along with an Omani firm. There are other ways to safeguard freshwater supplies, from encouraging savings and efficient recycling of wastewater. Antoine Frerot, chief executive of Veolia, said wastewater recycling will help resolve the problem of water scarcity.

He also pointed out that "reused water is less costly," nearly one third less than that won through desalination. Omani authorities continue to mount campaigns urging people to use water wisely, mindful that other demands - especially the energy sector - also guzzle up large amounts. Across the Gulf, huge amounts of water are used not just for homes, gardens and golf courses, but also for the energy sector that is the source of the region's often spectacular wealth.

Thirsty fracking

On the edge of the Arabian peninsula's "Empty Quarter", the world's largest expanse of sand, lies the Khazzan gas field, operated by BP and the Oman Oil Company. The method used to extract the gas here is hydraulic fracturing - more commonly known as fracking - said Stewart Robertson, operations manager at the site.

The method requires huge amounts of water. The site is supplied by a facility that provides 6,000 cubic meters of water a day, extracted from an underground aquifer 50 kilometers away. Fracking involves directional drilling and then pumping water, sand and chemicals at high pressure to fracture rock and release the hydrocarbons. The rock formations that hold the gas are "like a big sponge with lots of little holes in it," said Robertson, explaining that fracking is the process "to open those holes slightly to take the gas out".

So the more the region extracts oil and natural or shale gas, "the more they need water," said Charles Iceland of the World Resources Institute. "The Middle East is projected to need more and more energy," he said. "So that means the situation is going to get worse." "On the other hand," he said, "if they can produce power using solar photovoltaic technologies, which are getting reasonably priced in the Middle East, that would take care of a lot of the problem because solar PV doesn't need much water." "You need just some water to clean the solar panels." — AFP

MPs demand resumption of...

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The lawmaker said the supervisory and legislative roles of the Assembly must be activated in order to face corruption which is spreading fast in government agencies.

Aramco shares rocket on debut...

Continued from Page 1

ambitious strategy to overhaul the oil-reliant economy. Wealthy Saudi families are reportedly under pressure from the government to invest in the Aramco stock, with nationalists calling it a patriotic duty. Aramco also dangled sweeteners for local investors, including promises of higher dividends and the possibility of bonus shares if they hold on to the stock. The IPO process had put the energy giant's value at \$1.7 trillion, far ahead of other firms in the trillion-dollar club including Apple and Microsoft.

The listing of Aramco, with its huge capital value, boosts the Saudi bourse - known as Tadawul - to the ranks of the world's top ten. But the scaled-down offering is still a far cry from the blockbuster originally planned by Prince Mohammed who had eyed a \$2.0 trillion valuation. The much-delayed stock sale, first announced in 2016, was initially expected to raise as much as \$100 billion from the listing of up to five percent of the company. The government's plans to raise additional funds by listing on a major international market are also on hold.

Sports

Foster pledges to restore All Blacks' aura after taking top job

'He brings world-class international experience to the role'

WELLINGTON: Ian Foster pledged to restore the All Blacks' aura of invincibility yesterday as the former assistant coach was promoted to the top job, tasked with rebuilding the three-time world champions after a disappointing World Cup.

New Zealand Rugby opted for continuity in naming Foster, who was the preferred candidate of illustrious departing coach Steve Hansen, under whom he worked for eight years. He beat main rival Scott Robertson to the job, despite the Crusaders mentor winning three straight Super Rugby titles, with NZR saying the 54-year-old offered "fresh energy".

"He brings world-class international experience to the role, an incredibly strong coaching team, and we think he'll do an outstanding job," chairman Brent Impey said in a statement. Foster, who has signed a two-year contract — which stops short of the 2023 World Cup in France — said he was humbled to take over one of the most coveted roles in rugby.

He said he was pleased to step into the shoes of the "big fella" Hansen and wanted to build on his legacy of a success rate approaching 90 percent. "Obviously we need to grow, we need to tweak, we didn't get what we wanted in the last World Cup, losing that semi-final," he said, referring to the 19-7 defeat by Eddie

Jones' England in Japan.

"I'm extremely passionate about adding a new touch, to really grow and get some mana back on the field, which we felt we've lost a little bit," Foster added, using the Maori word for aura.

Despite working under Hansen during a period of outstanding All Blacks success, including winning the 2015 World Cup, Foster is a controversial choice for some Kiwi rugby fans. Critics point to an uninspiring eight-year spell in charge of the Waikato Chiefs, when their best result was a losing appearance in the 2009 final.

NZR are gambling that he can maintain the success achieved under Hansen and repeat the smooth transition his predecessor made from assistant to head coach. However, the fact that his contract does not run until the next World Cup may be a sign that NZR chiefs are hedging their bets.

'UTTERLY PREDICTABLE'

Foster is widely seen as a conservative option, unlike the break-dancing, left-field Robertson. His appointment comes as no surprise and follows a selection process that some pundits have described as deeply flawed, believing Foster was always going to get the job.

Hansen announced in December 2018 that he would leave after the this year's

World Cup in Japan, yet the search for a replacement did not officially begin until the tournament ended 11 months later.

In the meantime, many leading Kiwi candidates had committed themselves elsewhere rather than gamble on breaking into a coaching set-up renowned for promoting from within.

Jamie Joseph opted to stay with Japan, Dave Rennie took over the Wallabies and Warren Gatland signed on with Waikato Chiefs, while Joe Schmidt announced he was taking a career break.

It set up a two-way contest between Foster and Robertson, despite NZR's insistence it had invited 26 candidates to apply. Rennie was frank about the fact that NZR had left its request for his CV too late to prevent him from signing for arch-rivals Australia.

Another complication was the fact that red-hot favourites New Zealand not only failed to win the World Cup, they were humbled in the stunning semi-final loss to England.

The manner of the defeat raised uncomfortable questions about whether the All Blacks' coaching team had become stale and needed to be revitalised.

New Zealand Herald columnist Dylan Cleaver described reaction to Foster's appointment as "collective ennui". "It's



TOKYO: File photo taken on September 23, 2019, shows New Zealand's assistant coach Ian Foster speaks during a press conference in Tokyo during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup. New Zealand Rugby named Ian Foster as the new All Blacks head coach yesterday. — AFP

totally underwhelming, utterly predictable news," he wrote. Crusaders chief executive Colin Mansbridge said he was disappointed for Robertson but glad he was staying with the Christchurch-based team.

"While this announcement means he will remain in the head coach position with the Crusaders, it is bittersweet for us in that we would have loved to see him get the All Blacks role," he said in a statement. — AFP

20th FINA Junior Water Polo championship begin today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah Olympic Swimming Pools Complex will be the venue of the opening ceremony of FINA world men's junior water polo championship, Kuwait 2019 under the patronage of House Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim.

Kuwait water polo team will start its competition with a strong match with its Iranian counterpart at 2:20 pm today as part of the third group, of which Italy and USA will meet at 6 pm. Kuwait's team is hoping to start with a win in what is considered to be a strong group that includes Italy which was champion in (1993, 1999, and 2013) and shares the record with Spain and Montenegro which won the championship when it was part of Serbia in 2003 and 2005.

Competition will start with a match between South Africa and Croatia at 9 am, followed by Japan against China at 10:20 am, from the first group. Serbia (champions in 2011 and 2015) and Croatia (champions in 1997 and 2009) seem to be more likely to qualify from this group.

Spain will play Hungary at 7:20 pm, and Egypt against Canada at 1:00 pm from the second group.



Spain, champion in (1983, 1987, 1991) and Hungary, champion in (1995 and 2007) are likely to advance to the next round, and their meeting today is considered the top match in the first round. Both of them will have tough competition from Canada and Russia which was champion in 1981 and 1985.

Greece will start the defence of its title against Australia at 3:40 pm while Uzbekistan will play New Zealand at 11:40 am in group four.

Greece won the 19th championship which was held in Serbia two years ago, which Croatia was second and Serbia third.

Director General of Public Authority for Sport Dr Humoud Fulaiteh said Kuwait's hosting of the cham-

ampionship is within the efforts of making Kuwait a world center for hosting the strongest world sport competitions in the future, and is considered the start of a rise for water games in Kuwait.

Fulaiteh commanded the efforts of Kuwait Swimming Federation to organize a competition at the highest level in a newly constructed facility.

He said he is confident that competition will be of high standard as the best national teams of the world are participating and wished Kuwait's team the best of luck. Dr Fulaiteh welcomed participants in Kuwait and pointed to the comments of the senior officials of FINA as they lauded Kuwait's preparations, and the outstanding facility that hosts the competition.

Late Sheikh Abdallah shooting tournament

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Shooting Cup Championship will start today with participation from Kuwait Shooting Sport Club and National Guard shooters.

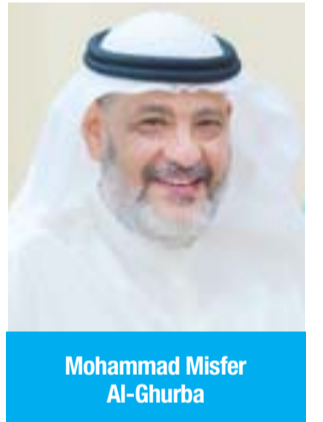
Competition will be in 10m air pistol and rifle and Olympic archery for men, women and juniors.

KSSC Assistant Secretary Eng

Mohammad Misfer Al-Ghurba commended the role of the family of the Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah towards the Kuwait Shooting Community and their support.

He said that today will see the official training of Olympic Archery for all categories (men, women and the open) starting at 4 pm, then at 5 pm the 10m pistol and rifle official training will start.

Competition will be on Friday and Saturday, while the closing ceremony will be on Saturday Dec 14, at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, at 5:30 pm.



Mohammad Misfer Al-Ghurba

US captain Woods picks himself to lead off Presidents Cup

MELBOURNE: Captain Tiger Woods will lead from the front when the United States begin their Presidents Cup defence after yesterday picking himself and Justin Thomas for the opening fourball match at Royal Melbourne.

The 43-year-old Woods and world number four Thomas will tee off first today against Australian Marc Leishman and Chilean rookie Joaquin Niemann for Ernie Els' International team. "I think from our side, we had a game plan, who we wanted to start out, and we were committed to putting Justin and myself out there, and that's who we're rolling with," said Woods.

"I got a chance to play all of yesterday. Played a little bit today. Just to try to get a feel for this golf course. "It is quick and it has dried out and hopefully the forecast will hold for each and every day. The preparation is very simple."

Vice-captain Fred Couples said ahead of the draw that he expected Woods would play at least three matches over the four days of the biennial matchplay showdown. Woods has a record of 24 wins, 15 losses and one half in matches at the Presidents Cup, second only to Phil Mickelson's record of 26 wins. Steve Stricker will be captain while he is on the course. Woods resisted any temptation to leave Patrick Reed on the sidelines for the first day's pairings after a row sparked by the two-stroke penalty for moving sand and improving his lie in the Bahamas last week.

But International captain Els did omit Australian Cameron Smith who became embroiled in the squabble by calling Reed a cheat. China's Li Haotong and Americans Rickie Fowler and Matt Kuchar are the other player to miss out today's action.

Reed will partner Webb Simpson against Japan's Hideki Matsuyama and Taiwan's debutant CT Pan in



MELBOURNE: US team captain Tiger Woods looks at the trophy as he waits for his teammates for a team photo ahead of the Presidents Cup golf tournament starting today, in Melbourne. — AFP

match four on a course that has a reputation for having some of the fastest greens in the world.

Canada's Adam Hadwin and South Korea's PGA Tour Rookie of the Year Im Sung-jae tee off second against Xander Schauffele and Patrick Cantlay. They will be followed by veteran Australian Adam Scott, like Woods in his ninth Presidents Cup, joining South Korea's debutant An Byeong-hun against Bryson DeChambeau and Tony Finau.

The final match pits another newcomer in Mexico's Abraham Ancer and experienced partner Louis Oosthuizen of South Africa against the big-hitting duo of US Open champion Gary Woodland and former world number one Dustin Johnson, who is playing his first event since knee surgery in September.

Els has a young team with five of his seven rookies employed on the opening day and said leaving out Smith in front of his home fans was part of the bigger picture. "I'll tell you Sunday night what exactly has

been transpiring, but we have a system we are following, and I can't let anything out of the bag more than that," he said.

"But there's enough Australians out there tomorrow to rally a lot of guys." The International team having only won the title once, but that was in 1998 at Royal Melbourne, and both captains have good memories of the famous sandbelt layout.

Els holds the course record of 60 set in 2004 while Woods sank the winning putt for the United States at the venue in 2011. The Americans, who won the 2017 event on home soil 19-11, hold a proud record of 10 wins, one draw and just one defeat.

Tomorrow's second day will see five foursomes, or alternate shot, matches. Saturday is a crunch day with four fourballs and four foursomes matches before 12 singles clashes on Sunday. With one point awarded for a win in each match the first team to 15 1/2 points will secure the cup. — AFP

Rugby fans mob Japan's Brave Blossoms at victory parade

TOKYO: Thousands of flag-waving rugby fans cheered Japan's national team at a celebratory parade in Tokyo yesterday, hailing the Brave Blossoms' best-ever World Cup performance. The hosts reached the quarter finals for the first time at this year's World Cup, bagging stunning wins over Six Nations sides Scotland and Ireland before a gutsy last-eight loss to South Africa.

Their performance won the heart of a nation hooked on baseball and sumo — with supporters packing out fanzones and millions tuning in to watch a sport that has a relatively small fanbase in Japan.

On Wednesday, excited fans cheered as the players, led by captain Michael Leitch, walked through a downtown Tokyo street fringed with yellow ginkgo trees and high-rise buildings. "I'm surprised to see so many people here, and I'm very happy to see that we were able to make such a great impact on Japan," said Leitch.

The crowds packed out the 800-metre (2,600-foot) route through the sleek Marunouchi business and shopping district. "It's a great feeling that so many rugby fans are gathered here," said Koji Kabuki, a 48-year-old salaryman in Tokyo, wearing the red-and-white uniform of the Brave Blossoms.

"I hope to see rugby become popular among the younger generation," said Kabuki, who himself played the sport as a university student. Masae Honma, 51, was in town from Tochigi prefecture, north of Tokyo.

"I'm so delighted to have had a close-up look at players, now I know how tall they are." "Honestly, I wasn't interested in (rugby), but after watching the historic (tournament) moments I became a fan of rugby, and now I think it is a great sport," she said.

The World Cup was widely hailed as a success, and the Japan squad's slogan "One Team" was chosen as one of most memorable buzzwords of the year in Japan. — AFP

Sports

Pakistan dominate Sri Lanka in first home Test for ten years

Visitors lose four wickets within just 31 runs in post lunch session

RAWALPINDI: Test cricket made its long-awaited return to Pakistan after a deadly attack in 2009, with the home team led by fast bowler Naseem Shah dominating Sri Lanka yesterday.

Naseem, who is just 16, grabbed 2-51 on the opening day of the first Test which marked a momentous occasion in Pakistan cricket at Rawalpindi stadium.

Sri Lanka won the toss and batted and closed the day at a precarious 202-5 after bad light stopped play 20.5 overs early.

At close Dhananjaya de Silva was unbeaten on 38 and Niroshan Dickwella not out 11 as Sri Lanka spoiled a good 96-run start given by skipper Dimuth Karunaratne (59) and Oshada Fernando (40).

Pakistan struggled for wickets in the first session

as Sri Lanka reached 89-0 at lunch. Shaheen Shah Afridi trapped Sri Lankan skipper Karunaratne leg-before soon after lunch to trigger a collapse which saw the visitors lose four wickets within just 31 runs in the post lunch session.

Karunaratne hit nine boundaries in his 110-ball knock. Naseem then had Fernando caught at slip for 40, an innings laced with six boundaries and a six. It was Naseem's first Test wicket after he came away empty-handed from his debut in Brisbane against Australia last month.

He also had Angelo Mathews caught in the slips for 31. Mathews added 62 runs for the fifth wicket with De Silva. Usman Shinwari also claimed his first wicket when Kusal Mendis edged him to wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan for 10, while Mohammad Abbas bowled Dinesh Chandimal for two with a beautiful delivery.

Pakistan, who in a surprise decision left out their key spinner Yasir Shah, had struggled for a breakthrough in the first session. Naseem was the stand-out bowler in the morning as he generated pace, hitting Karunaratne on the helmet in the 19th over. Sri Lankan skipper, then on 42, fell down but showed no further signs of discomfort, hitting Shaheen Shah Afridi for his eighth boundary to reach his 24th Test fifty.

HISTORIC OCCASION

Around 8,000 fans chanted slogans and sang national songs as home team captain Azhar Ali tossed the coin to open proceedings. Sri Lanka are on the first Test tour of Pakistan since a gun-and-rocket attack in March 2009 killed eight people and wounded visiting players and officials, plunging Pakistan into sporting isolation. With foreign teams refusing to visit, Pakistan have since played their "home" fixtures in the United Arab Emirates. All of their current team are now playing their first Test on home soil.



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's Mohammad Abbas (R) celebrates after bowling out Sri Lanka's Dinesh Chandimal (L) during the first day of the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi yesterday. — AFP

However, as security has improved, Pakistan has gradually revived international cricket at home with limited-overs matches against Zimbabwe, World XI, the West Indies and Sri Lanka over the last four years. "Of course, a historic day in Pakistan cricket and we all are excited," said Azhar. "We want to make this occasion memorable by winning." Karunaratne, whose team was presented with special

caps to mark the occasion, agreed.

"Exciting day so we are all excited and once the game starts the focus will be on cricket." And the fans were over the moon. "Thank you Sri Lanka for coming to play Tests in Pakistan," said 21-year-old Shaista Naveed, a university student from neighbouring city Islamabad. The second Test starts in Karachi from December 19. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the opening day of the first cricket Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at Rawalpindi stadium yesterday:

Sri Lanka 1st innings

D. Karunaratne lbw b Shaheen	59
O. Fernando c Sohail b Naseem	40
K. Mendis c Rizwan b Shinwari	10
A. Mathews c Shafiq b Naseem	31
D. Chandimal b Abbas	2
D. de Silva not out	38
N. Dickwella not out	11
Extras: (b 5, lb 3, nb 3)	11
Total: (for five wickets: 68.1 overs)	202

Still to bat: D. Perera, V. Fernando, K. Rajitha, L. Kumara

Fall of wickets: 1-96 (Karunaratne), 2-109 (Fernando), 3-120 (Mendis), 4-127 (Chandimal), 5-189 (Mathews)

Bowling: Abbas 20.1-7-50-1, Shaheen 16-6-37-1 (nb3), Shinwari 14-4-47-1, Naseem 16-4-51-2, Sohail 1-0-9-0, Masood 1-1-0-0

Pakistan: Shan Masood, Abid Ali, Azhar Ali, Babar Azam, Haris Sohail, Asad Shafiq, Mohammad Rizwan, Usman Shinwari, Mohammad Abbas, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Handball team goalkeeper will have his retirement ceremony under the patronage of Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Sports Club Khalid Ali Al-Ghanim, to coincide with the 19th Asian championship for men to be held in Kuwait in January. Al-Ghanim lauded goal keeper Yousuf Al-Fadhly's career being at clubs or national teams, and asked him to keep contributing to the sport in different capacities.

Stars win after firing coach

DALLAS: Ben Bishop recorded 26 saves as the Dallas Stars posted a 2-0 victory over the visiting New Jersey Devils on Tuesday mere hours after firing coach Jim Montgomery. Assistant Rick Bowness was behind the bench as interim coach in place of Montgomery, who was dismissed for "unprofessional conduct inconsistent with the core values and beliefs of the Dallas Stars and the National Hockey League," per general manager Jim Nill. Radek Faksa and Joe Pavelski scored in the first period for the Stars, who improved to 17-4-2 in their past 23 games overall and 10-1-0 in their past 11 home contests. Mackenzie Blackwood turned aside 33 shots for the reeling Devils, who dropped their sixth straight game (0-5-1) and were shut out for the fifth time this season.

FLAMES 5, COYOTES 2

Michael Frolik and Zac Rinaldo each had a goal and an assist as Calgary defeated Arizona in Glendale, Ariz. Johnny Gaudreau, Sean Monahan and Milan Lucic also scored for the Flames, who improved to 5-0-0 under coach Geoff Ward since he replaced the fired Bill Peters. Goaltender Cam Talbot made 46 saves, one shy of his career high, set for the Edmonton Oilers at Boston in December 2015. Jakob Chychrun and Phil Kessel scored for the Coyotes, who opened a three-game homestand. Antti Raanta stopped 24 of 29 shots.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, CANUCKS 1

John Tavares broke out of a scoring slump with two goals and an assist as Toronto defeated host Vancouver.

Auston Matthews and Zach Hyman also scored for the Maple Leafs, and goaltender Frederik Andersen made 38 saves. Andersen has won six of his past eight starts to improve to 15-7-3. Toronto earned its second win in a row after losing three of the previous four. Josh Leivo scored the lone goal for the Canucks, who were 3-1-0 in their previous four games. Vancouver goalie Jacob Markstrom, making his first start since Dec. 1 after leaving the team to attend his father's funeral, stopped 22 of 25 shots.

KINGS 3, RANGERS 1

Dustin Brown, Tyler Toffoli and Adrian Kempe scored goals, and Jonathan Quick was dominating in the net as Los Angeles returned home to earn a victory over New York and end a four-game losing streak. Quick made 29 saves and earned his first win since Nov. 27 against the New York Islanders. He lost his shutout with 31 seconds remaining when Artemi Panarin scored for the Rangers on the power play. It was Panarin's team-high 15th of the season. Henrik Lundqvist had 23 saves for the Rangers, who saw their three-game road winning streak come to an end after entering 6-2-1 in their past nine games. The Rangers narrowly avoided their first shutout loss of the season.

CANADIENS 4, PENGUINS 1

Visiting Montreal rode three second-period goals en route to a win over Pittsburgh. Tomas Tatar, Joel Armia and Shea Weber scored the second-period goals, and each also had an assist. Brendan Gallagher added an empty-net goal and an assist for Montreal, which has won two straight and three of four since going eight games without a regulation win. Jake Guentzel scored for the Penguins, who had won three straight



GLENDAL: Vinnie Hinostroza #13 of the Arizona Coyotes passes the puck around Elias Lindholm #28 of the Calgary Flames during the second period of the NHL game at Gila River Arena in Glendale, Arizona. The Flames defeated the Coyotes 5-2. — AFP

and had their 10-game home point streak (8-0-2) snapped. Pittsburgh goaltender Tristan Jarry, who had shutouts in his previous two starts, ran his personal shutout streak to a club-record 177:15 before giving up the three goals.

LIGHTNING 2, PANTHERS 1

Andre Vasilevskiy outduelled Sergei Bobrovsky, and Steven Stamkos scored his fourth goal in the past three games, leading Tampa Bay past Florida in Sunrise, Fla. Vasilevskiy made 27 saves. Bobrovsky, his fellow Russian, had a season-high 46 saves. Stamkos has a team-high 11 goals. Before this surge, he had gone six straight games with no goals and just two assists. Alex Killorn added a

Lord's and Hove to stage inaugural Hundred finals

LONDON: Lord's and Hove will stage next year's inaugural finals of English cricket's controversial new Hundred competition, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced Tuesday. Hove, in Sussex, will be the venue for the women's final on August 14, with Lord's, widely regarded as the sport's spiritual home, staging the men's final on August 15.

"The Home of Cricket' is a great setting for the final of this brand new competition, which will provide MCC the opportunity to welcome many more young people and families into the ground, including the Pavilion, not only for the final but across the group stages with our team, London Spirit," said MCC chief executive Guy Lavender in a statement.

Hove is one of England's leading venues for women's cricket, having been sold out for women's internationals and the Twenty20 Super League finals in recent years.

The Hundred is a new tournament consisting of eight city-based franchise sides, breaking away from the traditional county system. Teams will bat for 100 balls each with overs lasting for 10 balls and bowlers either bowling five or 10 balls consecutively.

The players' draft was held in October but opposition remains amid concerns over fixture congestion in a schedule already featuring first-class, one-day and Twenty20 cricket as well as the potential knock-on effects of a new tournament on the county set-up and the development of players for Test matches.

But English administrators are adamant the Hundred is needed to attract a new audience to that will maintain cricket's financial and sporting health as they look to build on their men's team's success at this year's one-day World Cup on home soil.

"The Hundred is a really good way of protecting everything that we are serious about," ECB chief executive Tom Harrison said in October.

"It's about protecting Test match cricket, it's about protecting four-day Championship cricket, it's about getting kids playing more cricket at school." The Hundred begins with a men's match between the Oval Invincibles and the Welsh Fire at The Oval on July 17. — AFP

N Zealand sweat on Boulton fitness for Australia Test

PERTH: New Zealand were sweating on the fitness of pace spearhead Trent Boult yesterday for the first Test against Australia, but veteran batsman Ross Taylor was given the all-clear after taking a hit on the thumb.

Boult missed the second Test against England recently but recovered sufficiently from his side strain to make the journey to Perth for the day-night clash starting today. He remains under an injury cloud, with the Blacks Caps needing to determine whether it is worth risking him with two more Tests to come in Melbourne and Sydney.

"Trent, we'll have another look at him (on Wednesday night) before deciding anything," skipper Kane Williamson told reporters. "You look at it long-ish term, in terms of this whole series. He has tracked really nicely and felt good yesterday, so there's a number of factors in that decision."

Boult shapes up as a potential match-winner, should he play, on a Perth pitch expected to offer pace and bounce, along with fellow quicks Tim Southee and Neil Wagner. If he doesn't play, Lockie Ferguson is likely to be handed a Test debut.

It was better news for Taylor, who was struck on his right thumb during a net session on Tuesday and left practice early. "Ross is fine, just a bit of a knock but nothing major which is great," Williamson said, adding all-rounder Colin de Grandhomme was also recovering well after tearing an abdominal muscle in last month's first Test against England.

New Zealand will need their full armoury against an in-form Australian team and in a pink-ball Test, a format they haven't played for nearly two years. Williamson said the pitch looked enticing for the fast bowlers, with cracks likely to open up in the forecast searing heat. "It is different cricket here and that's why you need to adapt as quickly as possible," he said.

"It can be hard to dismiss certain players but trying to play the long game and stay in the fight for long periods is important." — AFP

Sports

Holders Liverpool, Chelsea through to Champions League last 16 as Ajax go out

Napoli progress by trouncing Genk 4-0 in Italy

PARIS: Holders Liverpool safely negotiated Tuesday's trip to Salzburg to take their place in the last 16 of this season's UEFA Champions League while Chelsea are also through, but Ajax suffered a shock group-stage exit. Six clubs secured spots in the draw for the first knockout round in their final group games, with Ajax and Inter Milan the big names to miss out. Jurgen Klopp's side just needed to draw in Austria to keep alive their bid to retain the European Cup, and they duly beat Salzburg 2-0 thanks to two goals in two second-half minutes, by Naby Keita and Mohamed Salah.

Keita headed in Sadio Mane's cross against his former club to put Liverpool ahead in the 57th minute, and Salah then rounded goalkeeper Cican Stankovic to score from an improbably tight angle. The result allowed Liverpool to progress as Group E winners, with Napoli going through in second place, while Salzburg are out and drop into the Europa League instead.

"What a team," Klopp told BT Sport. "What an effort. It was a tough game." "We scored two wonderful goals. We could have scored six or seven which is crazy. We won the group, we won the game, all good."

Napoli made sure of their progress by trouncing Genk 4-0 in Italy with Arkadiusz Milik scoring a first-half hat-trick, the third goal coming from the penalty spot. Dries Mertens converted another spot-kick in the second half to seal the win. There was high drama in Group H as Valencia beat Ajax 1-0 in Amsterdam, Rodrigo Moreno's strike taking the Spaniards through to the last 16 at the expense of last season's semi-finalists, and leaving their hosts stunned.

Ajax had again been impressive this season but were left to rue their inability to win either of their two matches against Chelsea, as Frank Lampard's team progressed in second place, a point ahead of the Dutch

giants, thanks to a 2-1 victory against Lille.

Tammy Abraham and Cesar Azpilicueta netted first-half goals for Chelsea, who held on after Loic Remy pulled one back for Lille. Chelsea, the 2012 Champions League winners, finish level on points with Valencia but come second due to their inferior head-to-head record.

"The Champions League is where Chelsea belong. We knew it was a tough group. We had to fight and recover after losing against Valencia at home in our first game," Azpilicueta told BT Sport.

Ajax drop into the Europa League along with Inter, as Antonio Conte's team contrived to lose 2-1 at home to a makeshift Barcelona. A win would have taken Inter through, and they were fancied to get the result they required as Barcelona left out a host of senior players, including Lionel Messi, with top spot in Group F already secured.

Carles Perez gave Barcelona the lead midway through the first half, but Romelu Lukaku fired in the equaliser. Inter then missed chances to score a second and Ansu Fati showed them the way, the substitute netting an 86th-minute winner to stun the home side and become the youngest ever goalscorer in the Champions League at 17 years and 40 days.

That record had been held since 1997 by Ghana's Peter Ofori-Quaye. Borussia Dortmund needed to better Inter's result and they did so, beating Slavia Prague 2-1 to progress in second. Julian Brandt got their winner after Jadon Sancho's opener was cancelled out by Tomas Soucek, with Dortmund holding on after Julian Weigl was sent off.

Meanwhile, Lyon went through in dramatic fashion in Group G, coming from behind to draw 2-2 with RB Leipzig. The Germans were two goals ahead at half-time thanks to two penalties, one scored by Emil



SALZBURG: Salzburg's Danish defender Rasmus Kristensen kicks the ball during the UEFA Champions League Group E football match between RB Salzburg and Liverpool FC in Salzburg, Austria. — AFP

Forsberg and the other by Timo Werner.

However, Houssein Aouar's curler gave Lyon hope just after the break and Memphis Depay levelled matters with eight minutes left. Leipzig win the group, while the draw proved enough for Lyon to finish second

because Zenit Saint Petersburg lost 3-0 to Benfica in Lisbon.

Franco Cervi gave Benfica the lead before a Pizzi penalty and a Sardar Azmoun own goal, as the Portuguese side finish third. — AFP

Blatter happy to testify in France on Qatar

ZURICH: Sepp Blatter, the former president of FIFA, told AFP yesterday that he had opposed awarding the 2020 World Cup to Qatar, but that he has a "clear conscience." Blatter said he is willing to testify to French prosecutors about the 2010 vote in favour of Qatar.

"If they ask me formally then I think I will go to France because I have a clear conscience," said the 83-year-old who already testified in Switzerland in April, 2017, at the request of the French authorities.

Qatar beat Australia, Japan, South Korea and the

United States to win the vote. However, the result has been consistently questioned. A three-year-old French investigation, was recently entrusted to a Paris investigative magistrate charged with looking specifically for "active and passive corruption".

Six months ago, Michael Platini, who was vice-president of FIFA and UEFA president at the time, was questioned about his decision to vote in favour of Qatar. The investigators are particularly interested in a meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris on November 23, 2010, just over a week before the vote, between French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Qatari prince Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani — who became Emir in 2013 — and Platini who subsequently voted for Qatar.

"When Platini said that he would have voted for Qatar anyway, especially for the development of football, it is not true," said Blatter. "We had a consensus within the Executive Committee of FIFA, which planned to award the 2018 World Cup to Russia and the 2022 World Cup

to the United States.

"Everything went well until eight days before the election when there was this famous dinner at the Elysee. Platini phoned me immediately after. He told me: 'Sepp, it's not going to work, we will have a problem for the election.' President Sarkozy had asked him, suggested, to vote for Qatar," said Blatter, who reported this telephone conversation to the Swiss judge in April 2017.

"I said to Platini 'Did he force you?' He said 'Not at all, but when a head of state asks you to do something, you do it so I will follow and I will take my friends with me.'" "His friends were the Cypriot Marios Lefkaritis, the Belgian Michel D'Hooghe who would have voted for Qatar anyway, his son having already had a post in Qatar, and the Spaniard Angel Maria Villar. So it made four voices that tipped the vote." Blatter, who was ousted from office in 2015, is serving a six-year ban from FIFA activities because of a separate payment of 2 million Swiss francs (1.84 million euros) to Platini. — AFP

NBA wins keep Heat, Sixers perfect at home

LOS ANGELES: Miami's Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo both posted triple-doubles as the Heat rallied late and dominated overtime to beat the Atlanta Hawks 135-121 on Tuesday and remain unbeaten at home this NBA season. Adebayo scored a career-high 30 points with 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his first career triple-double — producing double figures in three key statistical categories.

Butler scored 20 points with a career-high 18 rebounds and 10 assists for the Heat, who improved to 11-0 at American Airlines Arena. After surrendering an early lead Miami trailed 117-111 with less than a minute remaining in regulation. Atlanta's Trae Young told the Heat crowd "it's over" — but it turned out he spoke too soon.

Three-pointers from Duncan Robinson and Butler tied it up and the Heat opened overtime with a 16-0 scoring run. "We've got grit," Adebayo said. "When we go into that huddle in overtime we know what time it is. We couldn't get it done in regular, but we got it done in OT so I'm happy for that."

Robinson finished with a career-high 10 three-pointers on the way to a career-high 34 points. Kendrick Nunn led Miami with a career-high 36 points — one shy of the Heat rookie record — as the hosts notched a third victory over Atlanta this season.

DeAndre Hunter paced the Hawks with 28 points and Young added 21. Vince Carter contributed 12 for Atlanta and in the process became just the fifth player in NBA history to play in 1,500 games.

Carter, 42, joined Robert Parish (1,611), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (1,560), Dirk Nowitzki (1,522) and John Stockton (1,504) in reaching the milestone.

"You have to be a big time professional," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said of Carter's longevity. "You have to commit to your craft and to your body in a way that most professionals aren't willing to do."

"You have to go to great lengths to keep yourself young in a young league ... Then you have to continue to reinvent yourself." The Philadelphia 76ers also remained perfect at home, notching their third straight victory 97-92 over the Denver Nuggets. Sixers big man Joel Embiid scored 22 points, coolly draining two free throws with 15.3 seconds remaining to seal the victory.

Embiid added 10 rebounds and six assists — with two steals and a blocked shot — and Tobias Harris added 20 points as Philadelphia improved to 13-0 at home with their seventh win in eight games.

Will Barton led the Nuggets with 26 points, after Denver's top scorer Jamal Murray departed in the first quarter after a collision with Ben Simmons.

A change of scenery didn't help the New York Knicks, who opened a four-game West Coast road trip with a 115-87 loss to the Trail Blazers in Portland.

Damian Lillard scored 31 points and Hassan Whiteside added 17 points and 15 rebounds for Portland, who led by as many as 32 points against Knicks team that lost their 10th straight game. — AFP



MANILA: Philippine's Crisamuel Delfin competes in the non traditional men's open weapon final in the SEA Games (Southeast Asian Games) in Manila. — AFP

Filipino fighter wins SEA Games gold after underwear row

EDGAR CLARK: A Filipino martial artist was prepared to give up his chance of winning a Southeast Asian Games title because he didn't want to wear underpants beneath his traditional loincloth. Crisamuel Delfin eventually picked up gold for his weapon-wielding anyo routine in the arnis competition, but only after he was persuaded to wear skimpy underwear to avoid a wardrobe malfunction on live television.

"In the Ifugao Igorot culture, it's an insult to the cultural traditions if you wear undergarments under the loincloth," Senator Miguel Zubiri, the Philippines Arnis Federation president, told AFP yesterday.

The former world champion said Delfin's coach had a long argument with judges who had got their knickers in a twist, insisting the fighter wore underpants during his acrobatic routine in case the loincloth fell off and he was left "completely naked".

But the coach told them: "Well, I believe my athlete will just have to be disqualified." Zubiri said he stepped in at the Angeles University Foundation venue and convinced the trainer to "work something out".

"I knew this boy could win gold," he said. The senator met with the team and suggested: "Why don't we get a thong, like a string bikini brief, or something like that?" "Eventually he agreed to wear it. He was willing to be disqualified." Filipino 'arnisadors' are fiercely proud of their country, and the sport that symbolises their spirit of defiance. Moments after winning gold

with a display of somersaults, flips and war-cries, Delfin told AFP his feathered headdress was a sign of ferocity and painted tattoos show a warrior's accomplishments and place in society. "Being from the tribes of the northern provinces, it was very important that I was able to show my traditional costume and to revive and rekindle the spirit of being a warrior in the Philippines," the 25-year-old said through a translator.

"I was glad I was to bring out not just the movements, but the emotion and the feeling of being fierce and committed — the spirit of being a martial artist," he said. Meanwhile, the Philippines easily topped the Southeast Asian Games medal table with 149 golds, continuing a rich tradition at the regional Olympics whose flexible sporting programme is usually skewed in the hosts' favour.

The Philippines' best ever haul comes after they dominated all debut sports at the 30th SEA Games, and reintroduced their national martial art of arnis whose only previous showing was in Manila in 2005.

The previous best for the country was a total of 112 golds achieved at Manila 2005, followed by 91 in 1991 — also in Manila. But the Philippines is only following a trend at the biennial Games, where eight of the last 12 editions have finished with the hosts on top of the medals table. Bragging rights are with the Filipinos for now, but with the next edition of the Games in Hanoi in 2021, it would be safe to assume Vietnam will hope to do one better than their second place this time around with 97. Home advantage is a factor at many sports events including the Olympics, where hosts China topped the table for the first time in 2008 and Britain rose to third at London 2012. But the effect is especially marked at the SEA Games, where the Philippines won just 24 golds at the last edition in Kuala Lumpur in 2017 — as hosts Malaysia unsurprisingly finished top with 144 golds. — AFP

Minnows dream of date with Liverpool at Club World Cup

DOHA: Fresh from securing their place in the last 16 of the Champions League, Liverpool's involvement in the Club World Cup does not begin until next week but the fight for the right to face Jurgen Klopp's men in Qatar starts yesterday.

Competing as champions of the host country, Qatar's Al-Sadd — coached by Barcelona great Xavi Hernandez — entertain minnows Hienghene Sport of New Caledonia in the tournament's opening game at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium.

The winner of that game will advance to a tie against Mexico's Monterrey, the CONCACAF Champions League winners, on Saturday. Whoever emerges from that match will then be able to look forward to a plum semi-final against Liverpool on December 18. While Al-Sadd have a world famous coach and some notable players — former Atletico Madrid captain Gabi and the Algeria striker Baghdad Bounedjah — the story of Hienghene Sport is a remarkable one.

The amateur side from the French overseas territory are in Qatar, and dreaming of taking on Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane and company, after winning Oceania's Champions League in May.

"We have taken a route to get here, and even if it was at Oceania level, football is a worldwide game and we are allowed to dream. The dream is the reality," said Hienghene coach Felix Tagawa on Tuesday. Monterrey arrived in Qatar on Monday, giving them plenty of time to prepare for their opening game on Saturday, when Asian champions Al-Hilal of Saudi Arabia will face African champions Esperance of Tunisia.

Those clubs will play off for the right to meet Copa Libertadores winners Flamengo in the first semi-final next Tuesday. That same day, due to their hectic fixture schedule, Liverpool will be in action away to Aston Villa in the English League Cup, but Klopp and his biggest stars will have to skip that tie in order to come to Qatar to prepare for their Club World Cup semi-final the following day. That game, and all matches in the latter stages of the tournament, will take place at the Khalifa International Stadium. That is after Qatar postponed until next year the opening of Education City Stadium, its second newly built venue for the 2022 World Cup.

The venue was due to be inaugurated when it hosted Liverpool's semi-final, but delays to the certification of the stadium by the authorities put paid to those plans. Liverpool have never won the Club World Cup, although they lost the final in 2005 to Sao Paulo, and also twice lost the now defunct Intercontinental Cup, including to Flamengo in 1981.

The last six winners of the Club World Cup have all been European. However, the last English representative — Chelsea in 2012 — lost in the final. This will be the penultimate tournament in its existing — and often-criticised — seven-team format before FIFA's expanded 24-team Club World Cup starts in China in 2021.

Recent Club World Cup winners
2018: Real Madrid (ESP)
2017: Real Madrid (ESP)
2016: Real Madrid (ESP)
2015: Barcelona (ESP)
2014: Real Madrid (ESP)
2013: Bayern Munich (GER)
2012: Corinthians (BRA)
2011: Barcelona (ESP)
2010: Inter Milan (ITA)
2009: Barcelona (ESP). — AFP

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Kohli floors WI to secure T20 series win

Rahul top-scores with 91 from 56 balls, Kohli smashes seven sixes



MUMBAI: Indian cricket team pose with trophy after winning a three-match series between India and West Indies at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, yesterday. — AFP

MUMBAI: India captain Virat Kohli led a six-hitting fest against West Indies during a blistering unbeaten knock of 70 off 29 balls, guiding his team to a 67-run series-clinching victory in the third and final Twenty20 international yesterday.

Asked to set a target in the decider at Wankhede Stadium, the hosts batted the Caribbean side out of the contest with an imposing total of 240 for three from their 20 overs. In reply, the twice world champions in the format finished on 173 for eight with captain Kieron Pollard top-scoring with 68 from 39, his innings studded with six sixes and five fours.

Hard-hitting West Indies opener Evin Lewis suffered soft tissue damage to his right knee while fielding and was unable to bat, dealing them a blow before their chase even started. Once India's seamers reduced the tourists to 17 for three at the start of the fourth over, it was too much to ask even for the Caribbean power-hitters to turn the match around.

Shimron Hetmyer, who made 41 off 24, and Pollard added 74 for the fourth wicket to give West Indies

some hope before left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav dismissed the former. Kuldeep also dismissed the dangerous Jason Holder while Pollard holed out at wide long on off seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar after an entertaining knock at the stadium, which is the home to his Indian Premier League franchise Mumbai Indians.

Earlier, KL Rahul had top-scored with 91 from 56 balls and set the platform for India's massive score with an opening stand of 135 with Rohit Sharma, who made 71 from 34 deliveries.

Kohli smashed seven sixes, two more than his deputy Rohit, while Rahul went over the boundary ropes on four occasions.

The dismissal of Rohit and Rishabh Pant, who fell without scoring, in quick succession brought a temporary lull in India's scoring rate before Rahul and Kohli went on the attack. The duo added 95 for the third wicket and provided the late flourish before Rahul fell in the final over. The sides will next play three one-day internationals, beginning with the first match at Chennai on Sunday. — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the third and final Twenty20 international between India and West Indies in Mumbai yesterday:

India	West Indies (target 241)
R. Sharma c Walsh Jr b Williams 71	L. Simmons c Iyer b Shami 7
KL Rahul c Poooran b Cottrell 91	B King c Rahul b Kumar 5
R. Pant c Holder b Pollard 0	
V. Kohli not out 70	
S. Iyer not out 0	
Extras (b1, lb2, w4, nb1) 8	
Total (3 wickets, 20 overs) 240	
Did not bat: S. Dube, W. Sundar, D. Chahar, B. Kumar, K. Yadav, M. Shami	
Fall of wickets: 1-135 (Sharma), 2-138 (Pant), 3-233 (Rahul)	
Bowling: Cottrell 4-0-40-1 (w1), Holder 4-0-54-0 (w1), Pierre 2-0-35-0 (w1), Williams 4-0-37-1, Walsh Jr 4-0-38-0, Pollard 2-0-33-1 (w1, nb1)	
	S. Hetmyer c Rahul b Yadav 41
	N. Poooran c Dube b Chahar 0
	K. Pollard c sub (Jadeja) b Kumar 68
	J. Holder c sub (Pandey) b Yadav 8
	H. Walsh Jr b Shami 11
	K. Pierre c sub (Jadeja) b Chahar 6
	K. Williams not out 13
	S. Cottrell not out 4
	Extras (lb5, w5) 10
	Total (8 wickets, 20 overs) 173
	Did not bat: E. Lewis
	Fall of wickets: 1-12 (King), 2-17 (Simmons), 3-17 (Poooran), 4-91 (Hetmyer), 5-103 (Holder), 6-141 (Pollard), 7-152 (Walsh Jr), 8-169 (Pierre)
	Bowling: Chahar 4-0-20-2 (w1), Kumar 4-0-41-2 (w1), Shami 4-0-25-2, Dube 3-0-32-0 (w1), Yadav 4-0-45-2 (w1), Sundar 1-0-5-0 (w1).
	Result: India won by 67 runs.

Ancelotti's reign ends amid feuding as Napoli turn to Gattuso

NAPOLI: Carlo Ancelotti's reign at feuding Napoli came to an abrupt end on Tuesday as the veteran coach was sacked despite a 4-0 win over Genk sealing their spot in the Champions League last 16. The 60-year-old is set to be replaced by his friend and former AC Milan player Gennaro Gattuso, 41, later yesterday.

Napoli finished second in Group E, one point behind Liverpool, to break a nine-match winless run that came amid dressing room unrest and friction between the club, Ancelotti and the players.

"Napoli has decided to relieve Carlo Ancelotti of his role as first team coach," the Italian side said in a brief statement on twitter two hours after the game. The former Real Madrid, Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain coach had been defiant after the game.

"Resignation? I have never resigned in my life and I never will," he said. "The club have been in turmoil this season amid a row between club owner Aurelio De Laurentiis and the players after a series of disappointing results."

The players refused to go on a training camp after a 1-1 draw with Red Bull Salzburg in their Champions League group. De Laurentiis responded by freezing payments of players' wages, with stars including Kalidou Koulibaly, Dries Mertens, Jose Callejon, Allan and Lorenzo Insigne reported to be linked with January exits. The club sit seventh in the Italian top flight on 21 points, 17 points behind league leaders Inter Milan and, more worryingly, eight behind fourth-placed Cagliari, who hold the final spot for next season's Champions League.

In 18 months Napoli have gone from Maurizio Sarri's slick style of football to a team scrambling to save their season. Hopes had been high with the arrival of the much-travelled and trophied Ancelotti on a reported salary of six-million-euros (\$6.6 million).

He joined in July 2018 boosted by three Champions League titles as a coach, two with AC Milan and one with Real Madrid. "I would like Ancelotti to stay here for many

years, like (Alex) Ferguson at United. He is a winner and stability is good for our project," De Laurentiis had said.

The southern giants are trophyless since the days of Argentina great Diego Maradona, when they won their only Serie A titles in 1987 and 1990 and the UEFA Cup in 1989. Ancelotti guided the team to a runners-up finish in Serie A last season, when they missed out on the Champions League last 16 on goal difference to eventual winners Liverpool.

But they are without a win in seven Serie A games since October 19. For Ancelotti, who finished with a record of just 37 wins in 73 matches at Napoli, it was another failure after being sacked by his last club Bayern Munich.

A 1-1 draw against Udinese last weekend sealed Ancelotti's fate. "With your head held high," was the first reaction from the Ancelotti camp from his daughter Katia on Instagram. Captain Lorenzo Insigne, who had clashed with Ancelotti several times, wrote this on Instagram: "Thank you mister, it was an honour to have worked with you and your staff. In these two years I have known a special person. I wish you all the best!" Gattuso should lead his first training sessions on Tuesday afternoon, according to media reports. —AFP



NAPLES: Napoli's Italian head coach Carlo Ancelotti (L) and his son assistant coach Davide Ancelotti attend the UEFA Champions League Group E football match Napoli vs Genk at the San Paolo stadium in Naples. — AFP