



6 UK opposition chief Corbyn 'sorry' for election wipeout



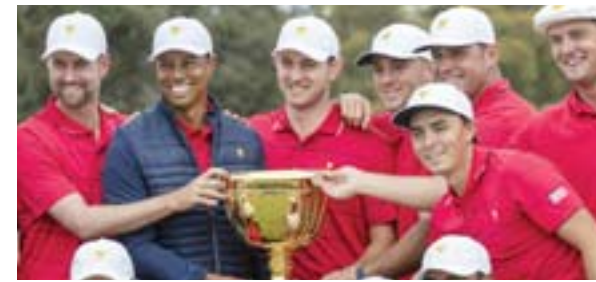
19 Jamaican crowned Miss World, will work for sustainable change



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28 Woods leads US Presidents Cup fightback to crush Els dream



MPs reject any withdrawals from future generations fund

\$10bn for 2019-20 development plan • Call for curbs on private sector labor support

Applicants for work visas now need two PCCs

KUWAIT: The interior ministry has stipulated that anyone coming to Kuwait to work for the first time must produce two certificates showing a clean criminal record. The first police clearance certificate (PCC) must be from their country, authenticated by the Kuwaiti embassy if present, and should be obtained no more than three months before entering Kuwait. The other PCC must be issued by

the forensics department in Kuwait and should also be less than three months old. The Civil Service Commission told government departments that the interior ministry said any expatriate who applies for a work visa in the government sector must submit the two certificates to guarantee they have a clean record and have not been convicted before for a crime. — Al-Qabas

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MPs rejected yesterday the possibility that the government might be compelled to withdraw from the Reserve Fund for Future Generations as suggested by Fitch Ratings in a report on Kuwait's finances. The agency said in the report that the government could be forced to withdraw from the fund to meet a growing budget deficit amid low oil prices and the depletion of the state reserve fund, which the government normally taps in case of need.

Head of the National Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee MP Safa Al-Hashem categorically rejected the suggestion, saying no funds can be withdrawn from the future generations fund because it is exclusively for the next generations. She said that

the Assembly has repeatedly warned the government to diversify sources of income against an almost total dependence on oil for public revenues and also cautioned the government to take measures to raise income and reduce expenditure.

The lawmaker said that if the government had adopted a prudent financial policy to raise and diversify revenues and cut spending, the country would not have reached this stage. The report comes amid warnings that the state reserve fund is running out of money faster than expected. It also comes after the National Assembly refused to debate a draft law allowing the government to seek debt. Hashem said that the bill was not debated because government officials did not have answers to where the loans would be spent.

MP Adel Al-Damkhi said the government

should stop squandering public funds, adopt measures to boost public revenues and diversify sources of income away from oil. Damkhi said rejecting to debate the public debt bill was not because of political problems, but because there were financial sources other than debt, adding that the Assembly had asked the government to specify where the debts would have been spent. He said he is opposed to any withdrawal from the future generations fund because there are other avenues to get money, adding that the government must collect its debts.

Head of the Assembly's budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad called yesterday for regulating financial aid given by the government to encourage Kuwaitis to seek jobs in the private sector.

Continued on Page 24

UN climate talks a 'lost opportunity'

MADRID: A major climate summit wrapped up in Madrid yesterday with a compromise deal that left little to show, prompting UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to lament a "lost opportunity" to act. Almost a fortnight of COP25 talks just squeezed out hard-earned compromises from countries over a global warming battle plan that fell well short of what science says is needed to tackle the climate crisis.

"I am disappointed with the results of COP25," Guterres said. "The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation and finance to tackle the climate crisis." The summit's final declaration "expresses the urgent need" for new carbon cutting commitments to close the gap between current emissions and the Paris treaty goal of capping temperature at below two degrees, host country Spain said.

Continued on Page 24

Brazil opens trade center in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: Brazil opened a trade office in Jerusalem yesterday, in a ceremony attended by President Jair Bolsonaro's son and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Speaking at the ceremony, Eduardo Bolsonaro, a lawmaker, said his father intended to make good on a pledge he made early this year to move Brazil's embassy in Israel from the city of Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"He told me that for sure - it's a commitment - he's going to move the embassy to Jerusalem, he's going to do that," the younger Bolsonaro said, in Netanyahu's

presence. President Bolsonaro in January pledged to follow US President Donald Trump's controversial step and relocate his country's embassy from Tel Aviv. The Brazilian head of state visited Israel in March, when he announced his country's intention to open a trade office in the disputed city.

Israel claims all of Jerusalem as its capital, while Palestinians view east Jerusalem as the capital of its own future state. Virtually all countries maintain their embassies in the city of Tel Aviv, insisting Jerusalem's status be defined through Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The United States broke with that decades-long consensus in May 2018 and relocated its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, with only Guatemala following suit so far. Paraguay made the move but later backtracked. Hungary has also opened a trade office in Jerusalem.

Continued on Page 24



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends with his wife Sara and Brazilian Federal Deputy Eduardo Bolsonaro (right) the opening ceremony of the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency yesterday. — AFP

Israel eyes Dubai expo as 'portal' to Arab world

TEL AVIV: With the world's largest trade fair opening in an Arab country for the first time next year, Israel is stepping up preparations, hoping to boost nascent ties with regional neighbors. The Dubai Expo 2020 trade fair will gather nearly 200 countries vying for the attention of a projected 25 million visitors over nearly six months from October. Like most Arab countries, the United Arab Emirates has no diplomatic relations with Israel.

But the Jewish state has been quietly moving closer to Gulf Arab countries on the basis of shared security

interests and a common enemy - Iran. An Israeli pavilion at an Arab-hosted expo presents a unique opportunity to speed up the "normalization" of relations and reach out to Arab peoples, officials say. "To us, the added value is in the Arab and Muslim visitor," said Elazar Cohen, the Israeli foreign ministry's pointman for the expo, which is organized by the Paris-based Bureau International des Expositions (BIE).

So far public overtures between Israel and Arab nations have been cautious, but notable, with Israeli athletes and officials increasingly allowed into Gulf countries. The expo is "a unique meeting between cultures and languages and people who don't routinely meet", said David Knafo, the Tel Aviv-based architect behind the design of Israel's pavilion.

Designed to reflect Israel's sense of belonging to the region as well as the openness the Jewish state seeks to broadcast to its Arab neighbors, "the pavilion is therefore an open space - a living room to host the expo vis-

itors". Concept videos of the pavilion reveal stairs leading up a representation of a sand dune. Described as a "pavilion with no walls and no borders", the stairs are arched by large LED screens showing images of different aspects of Israeli society.

The aim, Knafo said, is to symbolize Israel's transformation of its deserts through culture and technology, hinting at the possibility that other desert lands could do the same. An auditorium below the pavilion will offer visitors an interactive multimedia experience, the foreign ministry's director general Yuval Rotem told AFP. It aims to showcase "the Israeli spirit and culture" in innovations and developments from fields such as water, medicine and information technology, he said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has described the Israeli expo pavilion as part of "the continued progress of normalization with the Arab states". Past Israeli leaders saw peace with the Palestinians as the

Continued on Page 24



TEL AVIV: Israeli architect David Knafo, who designed Israel's pavilion for the Expo 2020 Dubai, speaks during an interview in his Aviv office on Nov 28, 2019. — AFP

6 dead in protests against Indian citizenship law

GUWAHATI, India: Angry protesters in northeast India vowed yesterday to keep demonstrating against a contentious citizenship law as the death toll from bloody clashes opposing the bill rose to six. Tension remained high at the epicenter of the unrest in Assam state's biggest city, Guwahati, with troops patrolling the streets amid tight security. In Assam, four people died after being shot by police, while another was killed when a shop he was sleeping in was set on fire and a sixth after he was beaten up during a protest, officials said.

Some 5,000 people took part in a fresh demonstration in the city yesterday, with hundreds of police watching as they sang, chanted and carried banners with the words "long live Assam". The legislation, passed by the national parliament on Wednesday, allows New Delhi to grant citizenship to millions of illegal immigrants who entered India from three neighboring countries on or before Dec 31, 2014 - but not if they are Muslim.

Besides stoking concern among Muslims, the proposed changes have also led to demonstrations by residents unhappy about an influx of Hindus from neighboring Bangladesh who stand to gain citizenship. "Assam

will continue to protest. India is a democracy and the government has to listen to us," said Karan Mili, a colleague of one of the victims, 25-year-old Iswor Nayak, who died yesterday. "We don't want violence but protests will continue... Assamese will not stop until government revokes the law," another demonstrator, Pratima Sharma, told AFP.

Officials said oil and gas production in the state were hit by the curfew, although the restrictions were eased during the day yesterday with some shops opening. In West Bengal state, where protests stretched into a third day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee - who has spoken out against the national government's push for the law - suspended Internet services in several districts.

Demonstrators set fire to tyres, staged sit-ins on highways and railway tracks, and torched trains and buses, with riot police brought in to disperse protesters and train services suspended in some parts of the east. In India's capital New Delhi, video shared on social media showed a bus on fire and police appearing to fire tear gas at protesters.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi blamed the opposition Congress party for the violence. "To give respect to those who fled to India and were forced to live as refugees, both houses of parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill," he said yesterday at a rally in eastern Jharkhand state. "Congress and its allies are stoking fire over the Citizenship Act but people of northeast have rejected violence... They

Continued on Page 24



NEW DELHI: A man walks on a street as a bus is on fire following demonstrations against the Indian government's Citizenship Amendment Bill yesterday. — AFP

Kuwaiti Amir congratulates Bahraini King on National Day

Sheikh Sabah offers condolences to French, Philippines presidents



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 National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



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



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



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



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 Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent congratulatory cable yesterday to Bahrain's King Hamad Bin Issa Al-Khalifa, on the Kingdom's 48th National Day. In the cable, His Highness the Amir emphasized the depth of the long-standing and historic ties shared by Kuwait and Bahrain. In addition, His Highness the Amir wished the Bahraini King everlasting health, as well as prosperity for the brotherly people of Bahrain. 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.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir received as well National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir received as well His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received the President of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional

Court Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, as well as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent yesterday a cable of condolences to French President Emmanuel Macron over the victims of floods and winds that struck southwestern France and resulted in a number of casualties. In the cable, His Highness expressed sincere condolences to the French President and the victims' families, wishing mercy for the deceased and a

swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister voiced similar sentiments in a couple of separate cables to the French President.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to President of Philippines Rodrigo Duterte on the earthquake that struck northwest of Davao del Sur province, which resulted in one victim and several injuries. In the cable, His Highness wished mercy for the deceased and a swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to President Duterte. — KUNA

ABK sponsors cancer control center's event

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) sponsored a fun day event organized by the Kuwait Cancer Control Center at Faisal Sultan Center for Radiology and Radiotherapy in Shuwaikh, on December 11, 2019. The event was an opportunity for patients, their families and the Center's staff to interact and enjoy a number of activities including games, face painting, henna art, mascots and a magician. Gift items were also distributed to attendees. Faisal Sultan Bin Essa Radiology Center falls under the umbrella of Kuwait Cancer Control Center which was established in 1968 to cater for the treatment and wellbeing of cancer patients. ABK is committed to supporting organizations and initiatives that contribute to the overall wellbeing of the society.



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received yesterday at his office Palestinian Ambassador to the country Rami Tahboub. — KUNA

VIVA wins four prizes at Kuwait Creativity Award 2019

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 won four prizes at the Kuwait Creativity Award 2019. VIVA sponsored the seventh version of the event organized by the Arab Media Forum at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre, where different companies and entities

participated in presence of many valued figures in the Kuwaiti society.

Danah Faisal Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at VIVA, received the awards from Madhi Al-Khamees, the Secretary-General of the Arab Media Forum, in the categories of: Fast Growth - Marketing operations, Television Creativity - Excellence in national campaigns, Television Commercial - Excellence in creativity, and Television Commercial - Excellence in the idea. These accolades came in recognition of VIVA's uniqueness in its advertising methodology which contributed to the National Day campaign and Ramadan campaign during 2019, and activities that fall under the products and services umbrella highlighting the VIVA app, significant customer service and experience as well as the advanced network that covers all areas nationwide.

On this occasion, Jasem commented: "I am so proud to have received these awards. I am so proud to have received these awards on behalf of VIVA as this happy occasion endorses VIVA's leadership stance in the local and regional telecommunication/ICT market in line with the fast-moving digital transformation process, and the high level of creativity that VIVA has reached through its participations in various campaigns and national activities, with an aim to strengthen ties between VIVA and its customers and the community as a whole." She added: "This also reflects the big efforts exerted by different divisions at VIVA to push clear communication with our customers and the public through different advertising methods, business channels and social media platforms. Thus, we came up with innovative and unique ideas, not only limited to commercial marketing, but also those that embed awareness, national and social informative messages."



Local

Kuwait could again allow labor agencies to rehire domestic helpers

Six Kuwaiti charities authorized to collect donations for refugees

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Public Authority for Manpower officials are expected to meet with their counterparts from the union of domestic labor agencies later this month to discuss the possibility of cancelling an earlier decision preventing local domestic labor agencies from rehiring domestic helpers with different employers than their original recruiters. The meeting is expected to happen after the formation of the new Cabinet and naming the minister to be responsible for the authority, well-informed sources said.

The union has earlier filed a protest in this regard to the manpower authority and discussed the complaint with Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel, said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The union explained its demands to cancel the decision over moves by many foreign labor agencies to suspend exporting workers to Kuwait out of fear of the growing numbers of helpers that would return to their countries as a result, and that the decision causes embarrassment to Kuwait while negotiating with other countries.

The sources added that the domestic labor agencies believe that rehiring laborers is a right they have been deprived of since implementing law number 68/2015; which the government had enacted in a bid to fight human trafficking. The sources said the manpower authority will discuss the request soon and a decision is expected within the next two months at most. "The authority also plans on making a list with the names of fake and unlicensed domestic helper agencies to warn citizens and expats from dealing with them," the sources concluded.

Donations for refugees

Six local charities recently obtained the approval of the charities department at the ministry of social

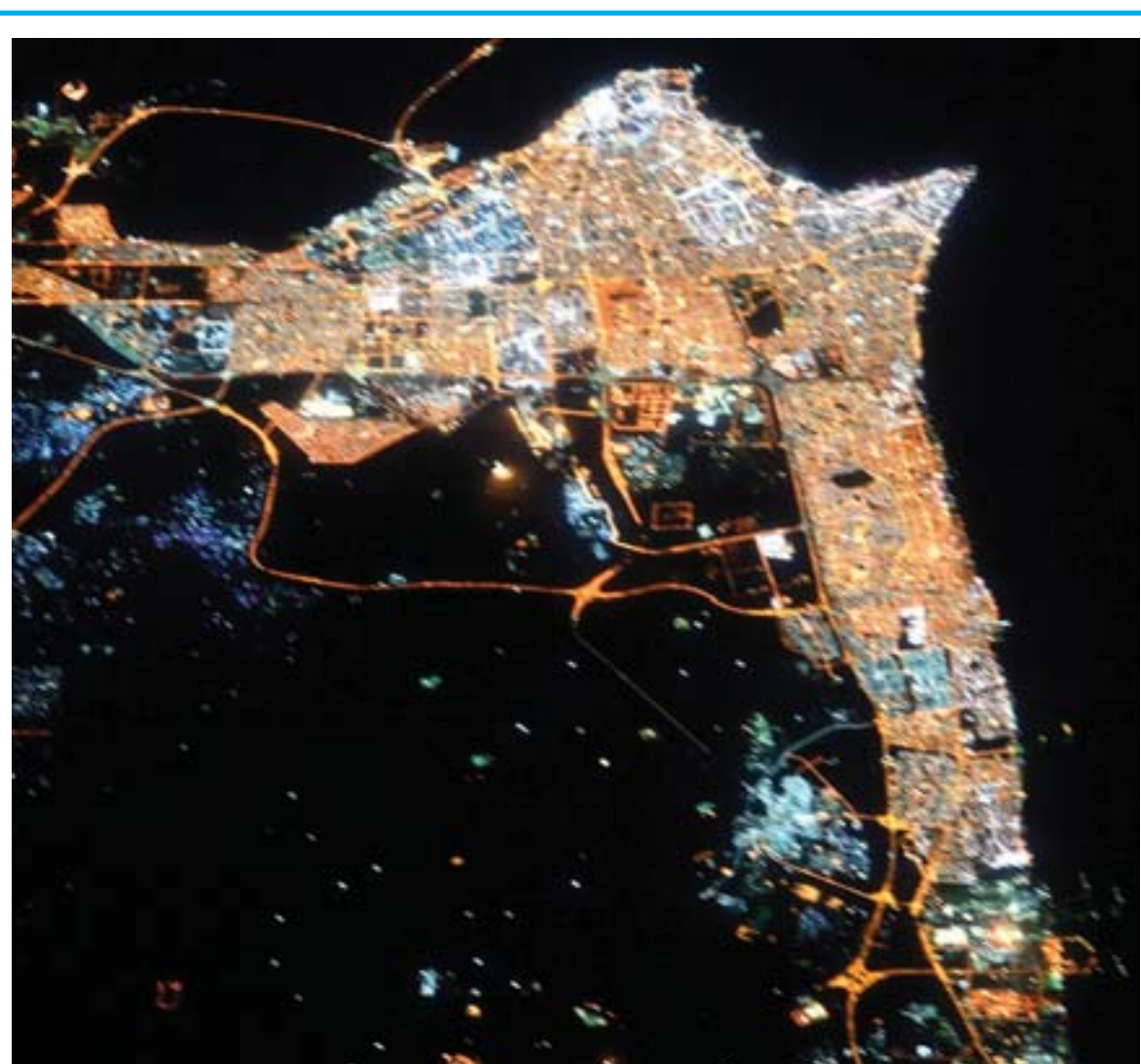
affairs to organize fundraising campaigns to collect donations to be used in countries harboring refugees. In this regard, informed sources said the charities signed affidavits to respect related laws and regulations including banning all cash donations and using K-Net, online donations, bank remittances, mobile apps and SMS messages through telecom companies instead.

'Sorcery' report denied

With the beginning of the first term exams in grades up to 11, it was reported that a student was caught in one of the schools with the possession of sorcery and witchcraft items while sitting for the exam. However, Education Ministry's assistant under-secretary for public education affairs Osama Al-Sultan denied any such reports, adding that he toured some primary and intermediate schools in the capital governorate on the first day of exams and everything was fine. Notably, midterm exams for the academic year 2019-2020 for grades 5-11 started yesterday with strict measures including inspections and banning mobile phones for both students and teaching staff before entering the exam halls.

Insurance agencies

In implementation of the fatwa and legislation department's decision, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) started putting law number 25/2019 into practice by launching intensive inspection campaigns of various insurance agencies and closing some of them. In this regard, informed sources said MoCI closed at least three agencies working without a license. They added that Kuwait has a total of 136 insurance agents responsible for 75 percent of the insurance business in Kuwait in return for 25 percent per policy as fee, except for Afiya and government insurance policies.



"Like a diamond sparkling" on the Arabian Gulf; that's how NASA astronaut Jessica Meir described Kuwait in a caption posted on her verified Twitter account on Saturday, with a picture showing Kuwait at night that she took from the International Space Station.

Foul play suspected in woman's death

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Salmiya medical center staff told police a woman was brought in dead with severe beating marks on her body. They said a Kuwait army soldier who brought her claimed the bruises were already on her body when she came to him. Detectives detained him for questioning. Separately, a motorist died after his sports utility vehicle (SUV) collided with a truck loaded with gravel near Doha Spur. A case was filed, and an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the accident.

Two fires

Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said firemen put out a "limited fire" reported in a warehouse of mechanical equipment in the basement of the oil complex building in Shuwaikh, which caused minor damage but no injuries. Capital and Hilali fire stations handled the incident. In another case, a blaze reported in an Ahmadi



KUWAIT: The scene inside an Ahmadi house where a fire was reported.

house prompted Ahmadi and Fahaheel fire stations to respond. The fire was in a three-storey house and spread from the first to the second floor. The house was evacuated and the flames were put out. Fifteen persons were rescued, seven of whom were injured and handled by paramedics.

NSA, NATO plan to bolster cooperation

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait's National Security Apparatus (NSA) Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with the Commandant of the NATO Defense College General Chris Whitecross, focusing on plans to increase bilateral cooperation. The talks also covered other matters, such as bilateral ties and current happenings around the world, according to a statement by the apparatus. The meeting comes some 15 years after the launch of NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative of 2004, a drive on the part of NATO to establish closer links with the Middle East and North Africa. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait's National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah meets with the Commandant of the NATO Defense College General Chris Whitecross. — KUNA

Kuwait praises IOMS for follow up of innovations

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah yesterday lauded the Islamic Organization of Medical Sciences (IOMS) for its follow-up on global medical innovations and developments in the field. The organization ranks among the leading ones for staying abreast of "all innovations that have emerged worldwide and studying them in a realistic and scientific method that conforms with realities in the Arab and Islamic States," said the minister.

Sheikh Dr Basel was addressing a statement on behalf of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the inaugural session of a conference themed 'The Islamic document for ethics of workers in the medical services.' The IOMS has presented a "wonderful image to the world on Islam's capacity to absorb all innovations and resolve problems that cannot be solved by the West due to lack of references," said the minister at the convention-

organization by the IOMS in cooperation with Jeddah-based International Islamic Fiqh Academy, the regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashed Al-Maktoum Award. The organization has earned respect and membership of international agencies for proving that Islam is applicable at all times and has turned into a reference for medical ethics, he added. He eulogized the late Dr Abdulrahman Al-Awadhi, the IOMS founder, who had launched many initiatives that impacted positively on image of Kuwait and other Islamic States.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohammad Al-Jarallah, the IOMS President, noted that the organization had worked out a document on ethical rules of the profession; such as medical confidentiality and privacy. "We have examined a lot of references from most of the world States and selected what suits us and what is compatible with our religion," he said. In the meantime, Dr Ahmad Al-Hashemi, addressing a statement on behalf of Dubai Deputy Ruler and President of Sheikh Hamdan award, indicated at Al-Awadhi's role in tackling diverse issues namely prohibited and non-prohibited medical practices in Islam. "Our religion calls for good ethics in all activities," he said, also noting that Islam calls for respecting peoples' dignity and privacy regardless of all kinds of affiliations, stressing that patients' rights must be respected. — KUNA



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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Downtown Kuwait City as seen from Al-Shaheed Park at night. — Photo by Hajer Al-Ofaisan (KUNA)

Ooredoo Kuwait sponsors 'Digitalizing Strategic Communication' conference

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KUWAIT: Mijbil Al-Ayoub is honored at the conference.

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, first to launch innovated digital services in Kuwait has recently concluded its sponsorship to the second digital public relations conference and exhibition entitled "Digitalizing Strategic Communication for Confronting Public Relations Crises", which was held at Kuwait's National Library last Tuesday under the patronage of the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohamed Al-Jabri, and in the presence of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Integrated Systems for Training and Consultancy Company Sheikh Suhail Al-Sabah and a number of guests from the fields of media and digitalization.

Ooredoo's sponsorship of this conference confirms its commitment towards leading digital transforma-

tion that helps to enrich the lives of all the individuals in the community, while believing in the importance of keeping up to date with the latest developments in the industry of communications technology.

During his speech, Ooredoo Kuwait's Senior Director of Corporate Communication Mijbil Al-Ayoub said that, "I am pleased to be with you today at this conference that with the attendance of a unique group of experts in the field of Public Relations and digitalization. We would like to announce that Ooredoo has launched many digital services aimed at creating a thriving environment for digital intellect.

We are constantly striving to maintain our reputable brand image at a time where fake news and electronic attacks on social media are

spreading rapidly. We are also proud to have cooperated with various ministries and government entities by supporting them with helping them to send awareness and warning messages to stop any crisis that may face our dear country, such as the rain crisis that took place last year, in which we have sent awareness and warning text messages to citizens and residents in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Civil Defense."

Ayoub added: "Our sponsorship of this conference confirms our commitment to provide full support to all entities and sectors that help in developing new systems that support these developments, pushing a new generation of young entrepreneurs to grow towards more success in innovating everything new in this sector."



A group photo in front of Ooredoo's pavilion.

Zain receives four awards at 7th Kuwait Creativity Award

In recognition of its outstanding media and advertising efforts in 2019



Madhi Al-Khamees and Waleed Kanafani present Zain's awards to Waleed Al-Khashti.



Waleed Al-Khashti with the recognized personalities during the event.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, proudly received four awards as part of the seventh Kuwait Creativity Award. The award was organized by the Arab Media Forum at Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) in strategic partnership with the International Advertising Association (IAA-Kuwait), Kuwait Media Association, and Integrated Media Academy. Zain was awarded in recognition of its outstanding media and advertising efforts during 2019.

The ceremony featured nearly 100 creative personalities in media, advertising, and art from across Kuwait and the region. The event witnessed the presence of the Director of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Al-Khamees, Director of the International Advertising Association (IAA-Kuwait) Waleed Kanafani, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, as well as many

great actors, artists, and public personalities from Kuwait and the GCC.

During the ceremony, Zain received four awards: TV Commercial Award for its Ramadan TVC, Direction Award for its Eid TVC, Creativity Award for its National Day TVC, as well as the Customer Service Excellence Award presented to Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti.

Zain won the Creativity Award for its National Day televised commercial 'Al-Zain Yihlalik Helo,' which reached over one million views on its official YouTube channel during the first few days of its launch in February. The TVC was launched to mark the company's celebration of Kuwait's National and Liberation days. The production's lyrics, which reflected values of national pride, were written by the great Kuwaiti poet Bader Bourisli. The TVC received overwhelming feedback from across the Kuwaiti communi-

ty, and featured three different eras starting from Kuwait's rich history to its bright future.

This recognition comes in light of Zain's distinguished advertising and media involvement, and further showcases the company's role as a leading private sector company launching distinguished marketing and advertising campaigns all year round. Zain will continue supporting this very important field which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole, whether through traditional or modern media tools.

The Kuwait Creativity Award 2019 was organized for the seventh year by the Arab Media Forum, which has proven itself to be one of the region's most prominent events that attend to Arab Media. Each year, the event brings together many ministers, media executives, journalists, academics, authors, actors, businessmen, and social figures from all around the Arab world.



Zain's four awards.

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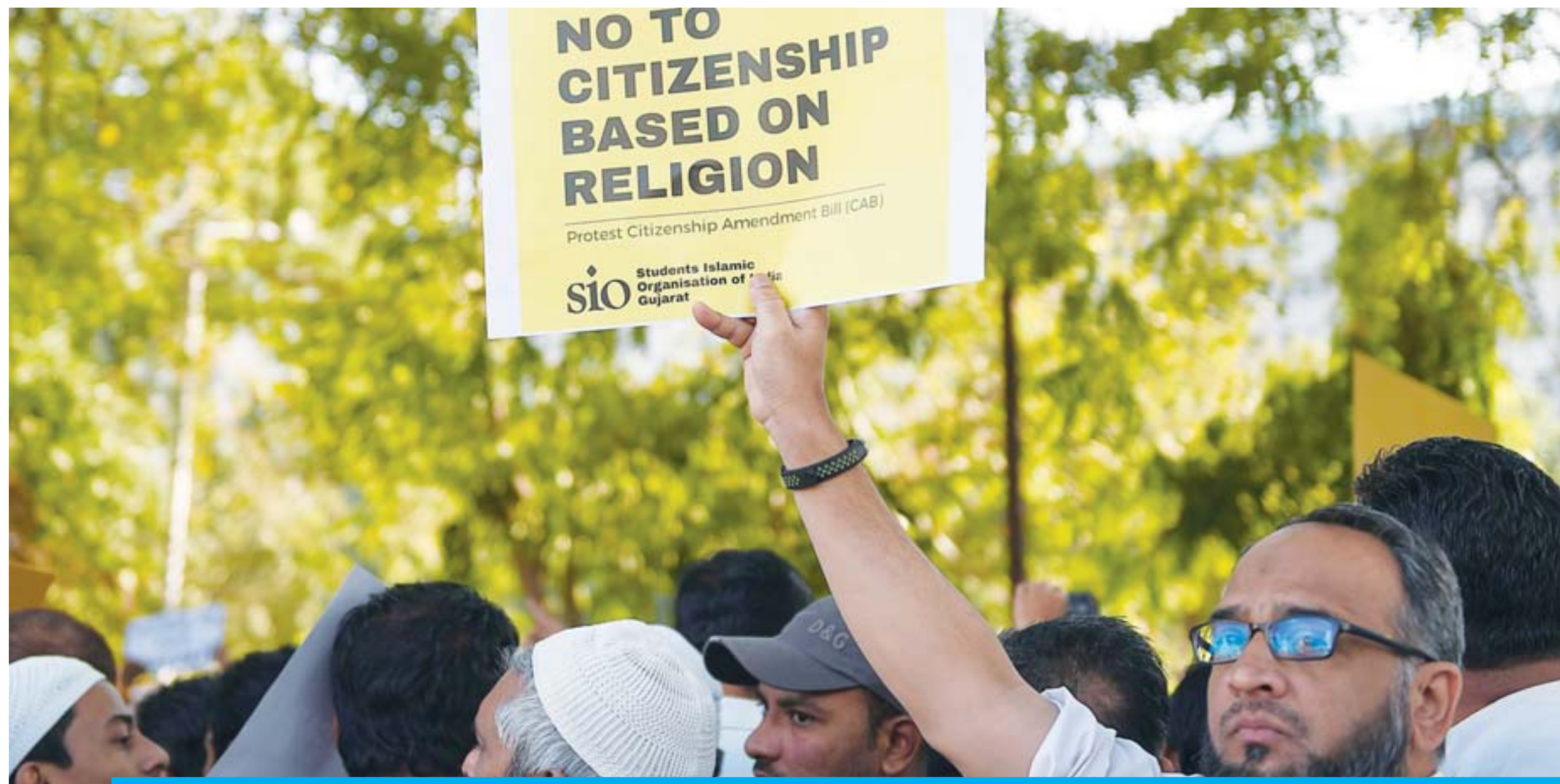
The American University of Kuwait received its Institutional Accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC), Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait, and has a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with Dartmouth College (Hanover, New Hampshire - USA).

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Decades on, Soviet bombs still killing people in Afghanistan

Cuba-US relations backslide five years after landmark thaw



AHMEDABAD, India: A Muslim man holds a placard as he participates along with others in a peaceful protest against the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) yesterday. —AFP

Rare criticism in US over Modi agenda

Condemnation has been more strongly worded from outside the administration

WASHINGTON: For the past two decades India has been enthusiastically feted in Washington, with politicians across the spectrum eager to nurture an alliance between the world's two largest democracies. But as Prime Minister Narendra Modi pushes forward his Hindu nationalist agenda, India has suddenly found itself in an unusual position - facing reprimands from the United States.

Few observers expect a serious deterioration of relations, and India's foreign and defense ministers are due in Washington on Wednesday for wide-ranging talks that could further boost the countries' military relationship. Still, Washington's long reverential tone toward India, including muted reactions on human rights issues, has shifted after Modi revoked autonomy to Muslim-majority Kashmir and parliament passed a citizenship law that opponents say discriminates against Muslims.

After the citizenship law's approval, a State Department spokesperson said: "The United States urges India to protect the rights of its religious minorities in keeping with India's constitution and democratic values." Sam Brownback, the US envoy on religious freedom, voiced respect for India's institutions. However he said the United States was "concerned" with the citizenship bill, and called on India to "abide by

its constitutional commitments."

Criticism has been more strongly worded from outside the administration. A resolution proposed by Representative Pramila Jayapal, a Democrat born in India, urges New Delhi to free people rounded up in Kashmir since autonomy was terminated in August, to lift remaining restrictions on communications and to allow human rights observers and foreign journalists to enter. It also implicitly criticizes India's rival Pakistan, acknowledging the challenges from "state-sponsored cross-border terrorism".

Call for sanctions

In the most outspoken criticism, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom called for sanctions to be considered against Home Minister Amit Shah - a stalwart of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party - over the citizenship bill. The Commission, which advises the US government but does not set policy, called the bill "a dangerous turn in the wrong direction".

The citizenship bill has set off deadly protests. Critics, including opposition figures, say Modi is excluding the country's 200 million Muslims from a definition of what it means to be Indian. The Modi government denies that is the intention, saying that the law fast-tracks citizenship for religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh

and Afghanistan and does not include Muslims because they do not need such protection in India.

India's foreign ministry denounced the criticism by the US religious freedom commission, saying that anyone regardless of faith can still seek citizenship through regular channels. It is "regrettable that the body has chosen to be guided only by its prejudices and biases on which it clearly has little knowledge," foreign ministry spokesman Raveesh Kumar said in a statement. India has contacted all members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee about Kashmir, telling them that the reforms will stimulate the economy, officials said.

Impact in question

Since president Bill Clinton's landmark 2000 visit to India, the two countries estranged in the Cold War have been steadily building relations, with New Delhi becoming one of the biggest buyers of US weapons. The dialogue Wednesday is likely to look for ways to boost economic and strategic cooperation in the face of a rising China. Michael Kugelman, a South Asia expert at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, noted that the toughest criticism of India has come from institutions with little responsibility for managing US-India relations. He said that many lawmakers were responding to

constituents, including Pakistani-Americans.

But while doubting the overall relationship was in trouble, Kugelman said the misgivings were sincere. "I do think that Washington, like most other Western capitals, holds India to a particularly high standard," Kugelman said. "I think there is some genuine surprise and disappointment that the world's largest democracy appears to be undercutting its longstanding and fundamental traditions of secularism, democracy and pluralism," he said.

President Donald Trump has sent mixed messages. He stunned India in July when he told Pakistan he was ready to mediate on Kashmir, on which New Delhi has refused outside involvement. But Trump two months later joined Modi at a joint rally in Houston, where the two bonded by vowing together to fight "radical Islamic terrorism".

A congressional aide said that Trump - both through his words and his own hardline approach against immigration - had muddled what would have been a unified message, allowing India to cast concerns on its record as coming just from Democrats. The aide said there was "totally bipartisan" concern on India's direction - but acknowledged that US criticism was unlikely to sway Modi. "Domestic politics are going to rule the day," he said. —AFP

Opposition chief Corbyn 'sorry' for election wipeout

LONDON: Britain's main opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn apologized yesterday for waging a disastrous campaign that handed Prime Minister Boris Johnson a mandate to take the UK out of the EU next month. But the veteran socialist defended his far-left platform and blamed the media for helping relegate his century-old party to its worst performance since before World War II. "I will make no bones about it. The election result on Thursday was a body blow for everyone who so desperately needs real change in our country," Corbyn wrote in the Sunday Mirror newspaper. "I wanted to unite the country that I love but I'm sorry that we came up short and I take my responsibility for it."

Thursday's snap general election turned into a rerun of the 2016 EU membership referendum in which Johnson championed the Brexit cause. Johnson now commands an 80-vote majority in the 650-seat House of Commons - a margin last enjoyed by the late Tory icon Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. A sombre but combative Corbyn said Friday that he will step aside once Labour completes a period of "reflection" about its mistakes.

The party is expected to have a new leader in

place before England votes yet again in local polls in May. Yet the 70-year-old has no clear successor after a year of fighting between a protectionist old guard backed by the unions and more metropolitan members with pro-European views. Corbyn tried to find a balance between the two camps by taking a neutral position on Brexit - a decision that Labour finance spokesman John McDonnell proved to be fatal. "What we tried to do is bring both sides together and we failed," McDonnell told the BBC.

Labour's campaign was also dogged by allegations of anti-Semitism that forced a handful of senior lawmakers to resign. Corbyn tried to shift the campaign's focus on bread-and-butter social issues important to Labour voters. "But despite our best efforts, this election was ultimately about Brexit," Corbyn admitted in his letter. "The Tory campaign, amplified by most of the media, managed to persuade many that only Boris Johnson could 'get Brexit done'," he said in reference to Johnson's campaign slogan. "We will learn the lessons of this defeat."

Soul-searching

The soul-searching and recriminations have been accompanied by questions in other Western countries about how far left traditionally liberal voters are prepared to go. "Look what happens when the Labour party moves so, so far to the left," US Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden warned Friday. Yet Corbyn signaled yesterday that he wanted to leave behind a radical legacy that keeps

Labour's focus on vast social spending and redistribution of wealth.

He came under intense criticism from more moderate supporters Sunday for claiming that his platform ultimately proved right. "I am proud that on austerity, on corporate power, on inequality and on the climate emergency we have won the arguments and rewritten the terms of political debate," he wrote in a separate column in The Observer newspaper. Several prominent Labour members who are viewed as potential leaders sharply disagreed. "It's time to try something different, rather than re-enacting old battles," lawmaker Jess Phillips wrote in The Observer. "Everywhere I campaign, I heard the same thing. It was less about Brexit and more about belief. In these places of generations of Labour voting, they did not believe a Labour government would or could deliver for them."

Labour parliamentarian Lisa Nandy agreed that the party had "lost touch with the day-to-day... experience of many of the people we want to represent". "If we are going to represent the country, we need to understand it, to see it as it really is, not how we might imagine it to be," she wrote in The Observer. —AFP



Jeremy Corbyn

Smog forces schools to shut in Iran



TEHRAN: A general view taken from northern Tehran shows a blanket of smog covering the city as heavy pollution hit the Iranian capital yesterday. —AFP

TEHRAN: Air pollution forced schools to close yesterday in parts of Iran including Tehran, as the capital lay under a thick cloud of smog considered hazardous to health. The pollution level in the capital was "unhealthy for sensitive groups" and officials warned the young, elderly and people with respiratory illnesses to stay indoors, with sporting activities suspended.

The decision to shut schools in the capital was announced late Saturday by deputy governor Mohammad Taghizadeh, after a meeting of an emergency committee on air pollution. "All of (Tehran) province's schools except for Firuzkuh and Damavand counties are closed for Sunday," he said, quoted by state news agency IRNA. Schools in the capital will close today, the third day of the Iranian working week, he added later in a state TV interview. An "odd-even" traffic scheme based on vehicles' registration numbers was imposed to restrict traffic in the capital. IRNA reported. Trucks were banned outright in Tehran province. Taghizadeh added that all activities at Tehran province's numerous sand quarries would also be halted. Schools were also closed in the northern province of Alborz and in the central cities of Qom and Arak. IRNA reported. "We are forced to live with and tolerate this situation," a Tehrani dentist, giving her name as Iran, told AFP. "I think no one does their job properly in this country, be it the authorities or the people," she added, fumbling with a white mask, worn commonly on the capital's polluted days.

Grey cloud

A grey cloud hung over Tehran yesterday, obstructing the view of the mountains overlooking the city to the north. Average airborne concentration of the finest and most hazardous particles (PM2.5) was at 145 micrograms per cubic metre for the 24 hours until yesterday noon, according to government website air.tehran.ir. That is close to six times the World Health Organization's recommended maximum of 25 microgrammes per m3. Tehran citizens AFP talked to blamed the authorities for rampant construction and lack of public transport diversification, leading to continuous pollution in the capital. "As long as officials sit in cars with grey-tinted glass, they don't realize there's air pollution. Once they sit in cars like mine, they'll know the air is polluted and something must be done," said Mohammad, a taxi driver. He said the solution is the "electrification of public transport" such as buses and taxis and expanding Tehran's usually crammed metro.

For the Tehrani Reza, the main suspect is the municipality because of "the construction permits given without considering that there must be green spaces, too". To them, "money comes before citizens' health," Reza said. The problem worsens in Tehran during winter, when cold air and a lack of wind traps hazardous smog over the city for days on end, a phenomenon known as thermal inversion. —AFP

International

As displacement soars, global meet to seek new paths to help refugees

Desperate need for resettlement spots in third countries

GENEVA: As the number of people forcibly displaced from their homes continues to climb worldwide, a global summit in Geneva this week will aim to drum up fresh and concrete support for refugees. The Global Refugee Forum will officially open tomorrow, exactly a year after the UN General Assembly adopted a framework aimed at creating a more predictable and equitable approach to providing assistance to refugees and host communities.

The meeting will be the first of its kind, pooling together heads of state, government ministers but also business leaders, humanitarians and refugees themselves to offer ideas and pledges for more efficient assistance. "We are at the end of a decade that has been more than tumultuous in terms of levels of displacement," UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly Clements told AFP in an interview. "We see the need for states, for international organizations, for the private sector (to help explore) how the international community can better help to respond," she said.

At the end of 2018, nearly 71 million people were living in forced displacement due to war, violence and

persecution, including nearly 26 million people who had fled across borders as refugees. And the UNHCR expects those numbers could rise further when the 2019 statistics are calculated. "Unfortunately the trendline is not positive," Clements said, pointing to "the lack of political solutions we see among member states, the complications and the complexity of conflict today and the stalemate in political discussions."

"The outlook is not bright," she acknowledged, saying this meant broad and concerted support from the international community for refugees and host communities was increasingly vital. The so-called Global Compact for Refugees agreed last December called for a ministerial-level summit to be held every four years to evaluate and promote progress.

Spotlight on Erdogan

Clements insisted the first such forum would take a dramatically new approach to the age-old issue, with a wide range of pledges expected for concrete actions to help refugees and their hosts in the areas of education, employment, and energy, among oth-

ers. In addition to financial aid donations, some countries are expected to announce policy changes making it easier for refugees to work, while companies may promise technical support to help refugees get connected.

French power company EDF is expected to announce assistance for electrifying a refugee camp in Bangladesh housing some one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. The Geneva meeting, which is expected to draw some 3,000 participants, will open with statements by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, followed by a number of high-profile speakers.

Much attention is likely to be paid to an address by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose country is the world's largest refugee host, with more than three million mainly Syrian refugees on its soil. Clements said Erdogan's presence would be a good reminder of the importance of providing not just support to refugees but also to generous host countries. Erdogan is expected to renew demands for more

international support.

Observers are also wary he might reiterate his threat to allow millions of Syrian refugees to go to Europe if the international community does not do more. "This is not the place for that," a European diplomat who asked not to be named told AFP. Erdogan might also use the platform to discuss his desire to repatriate a number of Syrian refugees to a "safe zone" in northern Syria, a move humanitarian groups such as Amnesty International say amounts to sending them back to a war zone.

There should also be much focus during the meeting on the desperate need for resettlement spots in third countries for vulnerable people already living as refugees. Clements stressed that refugee resettlement is today only offered to a tiny fraction of those who need it. "We have estimated for 2020 that there are 1.44 million people in the world, refugees, who are in need of resettlement as a form of international protection. But the number of slots available are in the tens of thousands," she said. "There is a tremendous need to step forward with regards to this." —AFP

Lebanon interior minister orders probe after protest violence

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Interior Minister Raya El-Hassan yesterday ordered the country's security forces to open a "rapid and transparent" enquiry, after dozens of people in Beirut were wounded in clashes the night before. Security forces in the capital used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators, who had gathered Saturday evening to demand an independent technocrat government ahead of talks due to begin today to appoint a new premier.

Hassan demanded the identification of those responsible for the most violent episode since the largely peaceful anti-government protests began on Oct 17. She warned against "infiltrators" seeking to use protests to provoke "confrontations". Amnesty International's Diala Haidar decried the "excessive use of force" in response to "overwhelmingly peaceful protest". "The intention was clearly to prevent protesters gathering," she said, denouncing the presence of masked men in civilian clothes joining security forces in "violently attacking protesters".

Yesterday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Lebanese leaders should push to resolve the crisis paralyzing the country. "Political authorities should get moving because the country is in a dramatic situation," he told French public radio.

Lebanon's government stepped down on Oct 29, but bitterly divided political parties have subsequently failed to agree on a new premier.

Saturday's clashes erupted at the entrance to the street leading to parliament, as security forces beat protesters who tried to breach metal police barricades. Lebanese civil defense took 36 injured to hospital and treated 54 people at the scene, the organization said on Twitter. The Lebanese Red Cross transported 15 injured to hospital and treated 37 people on site, an official with the organization told AFP.

Both protesters and security forces were injured, the organization said, with some affected by tear gas and others struck by hurled stones. Lebanese security forces said on Twitter about 20 from its ranks were hospitalized, while others were injured and treated on the spot. An AFP photographer saw men in plainclothes bludgeoning protesters, while anti-riot police fired rubber bullets at protesters throwing stones. The clashes lasted several hours until the first hours of yesterday.

Protesters chanted against parliament speaker Nabih Berri and resigned premier Saad Hariri. Protests calling for the complete overhaul of a political class deemed inept and corrupt have been generally peaceful, but clashes have increased in recent weeks. The protesters have demanded a government made up solely of experts not affiliated to the country's traditional political parties, but analysts have warned this could be a tall order. The process of forming a government will take place as Lebanon faces a deepening economic crisis. —AFP

Libya closes Egypt embassy citing 'security' reasons

CAIRO: Libya's embassy in Egypt was closed indefinitely from yesterday, the mission said on its Facebook page citing security concerns. "The embassy of Libya in Cairo... suspended its work due to security reasons starting yesterday and until further notice," a statement said without giving further details. It however flatly denied in a separate statement reports suggesting that some embassy staff had broken ranks with the UN-recognized Government of National Accord based in Tripoli.

The GNA's foreign ministry confirmed that the embassy had been closed indefinitely, in a statement on Facebook. It said the work at the mission was suspended in order to protect staff after a series of

recent "violations" targeting the embassy, including attempts by some to "blackmail" employees in order to obtain money. The foreign ministry gave no further details but said "work is underway with the Egyptian authorities to put an end to these violations and secure the embassy as required". The embassy would resume its operations when it is secured, it added.

The Libyan embassy in neighboring Egypt has long been at the center of a power struggle between the country's rival administrations in the east and the west. Libya has been mired in chaos since a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The UN-recognized government is contested by a parallel administration in the east, backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar who in April launched an assault to seize Tripoli. On Thursday, Haftar announced a "decisive battle" to wrest the capital from the GNA. GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha responded saying his government was ready "to push back any mad attempt by the Haftar putsch leader". —AFP

Boko Haram kill 19 Nigeria herders in clashes

KANO: Boko Haram militants gunned down 19 cattle herders Saturday in northeast Nigeria, civilian militia sources and residents told AFP yesterday. Ethnic Fulani herders, besieged by a spate of armed attacks targeting their cattle, pursued Boko Haram, sparking a fierce gunfight outside Fuhe village, near Ngala close to the border with Cameroon. "The insurgents killed 19 of the herdsmen in the fight," anti-jihadist militia leader Umar Kachalla told AFP.

Bodies of the slain herders were brought to the police by militiamen, Kachalla said. The herders had earlier repelled an attack by Boko Haram fighters who invaded the village to steal

livestock, killing one of the militants, Mada said. The herders then decided to pursue the militants and fight them "once and for all", Mada said, but were overwhelmed. "The herdsmen were subdued by the better armed Boko Haram gunmen," he said.

Jihadists then returned to Fuhe village and burnt homes and food supplies while herds fled, according to Ngala resident Abubakar Yusuf, who saw the dead bodies at the police station. Boko Haram has increasingly targeted farmers, herders and loggers, accusing them of spying and passing information to the military and the local militia fighting them. They have also been raiding herding communities, seizing cattle - a valuable commodity in the region - to fund their operations.

Boko Haram and rival Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) are known to operate in areas around Ngala and the neighbouring town of Gaboru. ISWAP has focused on target-

ing military installations and troops since 2018 while Boko Haram faction is notorious for indiscriminate attacks on civilians. However, ISWAP has been blamed for a recent increase in attacks on civilians.

In August 2014 Boko Haram seized Ngala and Gaboru, a trading hub, but Nigerian troops retook both towns in September 2015 with the help of the Chadian military. Despite the recapture of the area, jihadist fighters continue to launch sporadic attacks, ambushing troops and vehicles, as well as attacking and abducting farmers. In November last year Boko Haram abducted around 50 loggers at Bulakesa village outside Gaboru. The decade-long conflict has killed 35,000 people and displaced around two million from their homes. The violence has spread to neighboring Niger, Chad and Cameroon, prompting the formation of a regional military coalition to fight the militants. —AFP



BEIRUT: Lebanese riot police fire teargas canisters during clashes with anti-government demonstrators in the capital on Saturday. —AFP

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International

Cuba-US relations backslide 5 years after landmark thaw

Washington has piled pressure on Havana in recent months

HAVANA: Five years ago this week, Washington and Havana surprised the world when they agreed to reopen diplomatic ties severed in 1961, but relations have since slid downhill as if on a fresh layer of Cold War ice. United States President Donald Trump has regularly assailed Cuba on Twitter and tightened sanctions over the Communist-run island's human rights record and its support for Venezuela's socialist regime.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel, who assumed power last year amid high hopes of reform, has in turn cracked down on dissidents. Relations are at "a very low point" the top Cuban diplomat with responsibility for relations with the US, Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, told AFP. And according to Fernandez de Cossio "they could get even worse", saying the Americans were pushing to weaken existing diplomatic ties until they were broken off.

"It's hard to imagine the relationship improving significantly unless the Cuban government takes real steps to allow dissenting voices, to respect the rights of its people, and to cease its malign activities in the region," said Carrie Filipetti, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cuba and Venezuela at the SU State Department. "There will continue to be costs for the Castro regime's violations of human rights, and our sanctions are helping to ensure that," Filipetti said in a written response to questions from AFP.

Ordinary Cubans like Odaydis Marante, 34, say the two countries are like "a couple who don't get along" as she walked across the aptly-named Square of Sighs in Havana. The two countries "are always looking for one excuse or another to argue unnecessarily," she said. Close to the US embassy, the square was a gathering place for people awaiting appointments for a US visa. The place is mostly deserted now, as the embassy's consular services have been shut down.

Washington has piled pressure on Cuba in recent months, cutting the amount US-based Cubans can send home in remittances, ending US cruise-ship stopovers in Havana, and imposing fines on oil deliveries from its key supplier Venezuela.

Cuba reluctant to cut ties with US: Top official

HAVANA: Cuba is bracing for the possibility of the United States breaking off diplomatic ties but will seek to maintain them nonetheless, Havana's top diplomat in charge of relations with Washington told AFP. "We must be aware that this can get worse," said the official, Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, summing up months of mounting tension between the two countries. The reason for the downturn in relations - five years after an historic thaw between the Cold War foes - is simple, he said in an interview with AFP.

"Those in charge of US policy towards the Western Hemisphere have attitudes and positions that are extremely aggressive towards our country. We are seeing that what they want to do is to break all the existing links, to close the embassies," he said. "We hope that this won't be the case but we cannot trust that this will not happen," said Fernandez de Cossio, director general of the US desk at Cuba's foreign ministry. "We are prepared, ready for such an eventuality but we do not wish it."

The embassies were reopened in 2015, months after US President Barack Obama and Raul Castro agreed to revive

50 bodies unearthed from Mexican mass grave

GUADALAJARA, Mexico: The bodies of at least 50 people have been unearthed from a mass grave at a farm outside Mexico's western city of Guadalajara, local authorities said. The grim site was discovered just over three weeks ago in Jalisco - a state hard-hit by violence linked to organized crime. The local prosecutor's office said Saturday 13 of the dead - 12 men and a woman - have been identified and the remains given to their families. The process of identifying more of the victims and how they died will continue, it added.

A mass grave with 34 bodies was discovered in a suburb of Guadalajara on Sept 3, while another was found nearby in May with the remains of 30 people. Nearly 2,500 murders were reported between January and November in Jalisco - where the powerful Jalisco Nueva Generacion cartel is based - state authorities have said. — AFP

Int'l backlash after re-arrest of Nigeria opposition figure

LAGOS: Rights groups and the media have reacted furiously to the re-arrest of journalist and opposition figure Omyele Sowore by Nigeria's secret service earlier this month. Civil society groups and newspaper editorials were scathing when the journalist was re-arrested a day after a court ordered him freed, following months of detention for having called for protests against the president.

These critics place the blame squarely on President Muhammadu Buhari, accusing the former military ruler of an "authoritarian drift" towards "dictatorship". The outcry reflects rising fears over the increased detention of journalists and opposition figures since Buhari took office in 2015. And dramatic smartphone footage of a brawl as what appeared to be government agents tried to seize the journalist during a courtroom hearing have only added to the mounting anxiety.

Agents of the Department for State Services (DSS) initially detained Sowore back in August, after he called for

'Cold War mentality'
It's all a far cry from the optimism surrounding the historic Dec 17, 2014 agreement by US President Barack Obama and his Cuban counterpart Raul Castro to turn the page on more than five decades of Cold War and revive diplomatic ties. Most analysts point to Trump's rise to the White House as the catalyst for the change.

Michael Shifter, president of the Washington-based Inter-American Dialogue, says there are three motives behind Trump's aggressive policy: Florida, where the votes of exiled Cubans could be decisive in the 2020 election, a "Cold War mentality" that seeks revenge for 60 years of Cuban socialism, and Havana's persistent support for Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolas Maduro.

But "the Cubans have their responsibility because they lost an opportunity when Obama opened up," as the ultra conservatives in the Communist Party put the brakes on what they saw as a too-rapid change. "Instead they hardened their position, they closed more, they became more repressive because they felt threatened," said Shifter.

There were further signs of that tougher policy last Tuesday - International Human Rights day - when around a dozen journalists and Cuban militants said they were prevented by the police from leaving their homes, a tactic often used the authorities to control protests on symbolic dates. "It's not just Trump's hostile policy that has led to a tougher response, internally, from the Cuban government. That had already begun before," says Alina Lopez Hernandez, researcher and editorialist for the online La Joven Cuba.

Inside the ruling Communist Party "conservative tendencies are naturally encouraged, and reinforced as the US government acts as it does now," she said. Obtaining "real change" on the island, as Washington wants, "is difficult in these siege conditions."

The Ferrer case
A current point of friction is the case of well-known



HAVANA: In this file photo taken on March 21, 2016, Cuban President Raul Castro raises US President Barack Obama's hand during a meeting at the Revolution Palace. — AFP

diplomatic ties severed since 1961. It was a shining moment that drew a line under nearly six decades of Cold War rivalry, and promised a new era of openness. "It was an emotional moment for the Cuban people," said Fernandez de Cossio, recalling the hope that prevailed in his country at the time.

'Gradual erosion'
But five years on, he has mixed feelings about the



TLAJOMULCO DE ZUNIGA, Mexico: A staff member of the Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Missing Persons works in the El Mirador neighborhood of this city in the state of Jalisco on Nov 22, 2019. — AFP

protests against misrule in Nigeria under the online banner "#RevolutionNow". He was charged with treason and held pending trial - and although a court ordered his release in September, the DSS kept him locked up. He was only freed on Dec 5 - along with co-defendant Olawale Bakare - after a court again ordered his release and levied a symbolic fine against the DSS for having ignored the earlier order. But Sowore's freedom was short lived.

Courtroom brawl
A day after being freed, Sowore was back in court for the rest of his trial when armed men, some wearing hooded, forced their way into the high court in the capital Abuja. As they wrestled him to the ground and tried to drag him away, a crowd of supporters rushed to his defence. In the ensuing chaos, the chief judge had to be evacuated by a side door. One of Sowore's lawyers, Femi Falana, told AFP that it had been DSS agents who tried to re-arrest his client. Once they had promised to release him after ques-



Omyele Sowore



HAVANA: In this file photo taken on Jan 18, 2017, Cubans observe the arrival of a cruise ship bringing tourists to the capital. — AFP

activist Jose Daniel Ferrer, imprisoned since October 1. Leader of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU), he is accused of what human rights activists say is a trumped-up case of assault. The US chargee d'affaires in Havana, Mara Tekach, says Ferrer "is a political prisoner who is in grave danger."

Tekach has campaigned on social media for his release, which the official daily Granma - the Communist Party mouthpiece - has slammed as US "interference" in Cuban affairs. The government has long accused Washington of

progress made. The first two years were unremittingly positive: travel and trade restrictions were eased, a direct telephone link was restored, and Obama visited Havana. But then it all changed with the arrival of President Donald Trump in the White House. "In the last three years, there has been a gradual erosion (of the relationship) until the current moment when the US government is clearly declaring its aggressive intent towards Cuba."

As long as Washington maintains an economic embargo, which Obama failed to lift during his presidency, "it's very difficult to think seriously about sustainable progress in the bilateral relationship." Right now "it's at a very low point," Fernandez de Cossio said, citing what he called the "drastic" US measure of depriving 11 million Cubans of fuel by targeting shipments from ally Venezuela with sanctions. He also pointed to Washington's criticism of Cuba's foreign medical aid program under which it sends thousands of doctors abroad. That criticism, he says, "is an extreme which no American government has ever reached before."

The US has focused its ire on Cuba over two issues: Its human rights record and its support for Venezuela's socialist President Nicolas Maduro. Fernandez de Cossio dismissed the human rights criticism as "a pretext, totally hypocritical" given that Washington sponsors "the most brutal regimes on the planet." The Cuban government has always refuted the existence of political prisoners on its soil, estimated at around a hundred by various NGOs. — AFP

financing the local, illegal opposition. It says that Tekach "personally directs" Ferrer, a claim the US refutes. "We summoned her and told her that Cuba will not allow the United States to intervene in the internal affairs of our country," said Fernandez de Cossio.

Esteban Morales, a specialist on US-Cuba relations, says he is "convinced this is an escalation" with a final objective in mind: "Trump will want to break off diplomatic relations". "Diplomatic relations are almost a joke," Morales says. "There aren't any anyway." — AFP

Malema re-elected as head of South African radical left

JOHANNESBURG: The controversial head of South Africa's far left Economic Freedom Fighters, Julius Malema, was re-elected unopposed as at a party congress in Johannesburg. "For the position of president, it is Mister Julius Malema, may he please come forward," vote organizer Terry Tselane of the Institute of Election Management Services in Africa announced to some 3,000 delegates late on Saturday. Malema, 38, formed the EFF in 2013 after he was thrown out of the ruling African National Congress, whose youth league he once led, following hate speech convictions.

Clad in his trademark red beret, Malema portrays himself as the defender of society's most disadvantaged. He backs radical wealth redistribution with the black majority still comprising the bulk of the poor a quarter century after apartheid ended. His anti-capitalist rhetoric as well as his support for the seizure of white land without compensation has earned him several run-ins with the courts - as well as his eviction from ANC ranks.

In last May's general election the EFF scored almost 11 percent to capture 44 seats. "We are here as the representatives of the poor and the down-trodden, united by our love for our people, and our determination to unchain them from their inhumane realities," Malema told the EFF congress. "The scars of colonialism and apartheid live on. The failure to undo the ownership patterns of our economy and the failure to give back the land to our people has resulted in our people having political rights, but no economic freedom," he added to applause.

The congress has been marred by the party's refusal to accredit various local media, including the online Daily Maverick news site which has published several articles accusing party leaders of embezzlement. Malema dismissed the allegations, charging that "sensationalism is now the order of the day; starting storms in a tea-cup against those the media simply declares as enemies of society." In solidarity with the banned media the eNCA news channel decided to suspend coverage of the congress. "Good riddance," was the EFF response to that news. — AFP

and do nothing," he said. Yet footage of the courtroom struggle has sparked a backlash from the country's media. The Punch, one of the oldest and most widely circulated newspapers in Nigeria, published a scathing editorial, denouncing the "autocratic" drift of the president, elected in 2015 before winning a second term in February. From now on, it announced, it would refer to Buhari using the rank he held "as a military dictator in the 80s, Major General, and refer to his administration as a regime, until they purge themselves of their insufferable contempt for the rule of law". Other newspapers were similarly scathing.

International condemnation
Sowore's re-arrest also provoked international condemnation. On Twitter, US Democratic senator Cory Booker and presidential contender denounced it as "a shocking affront to the country's rule of law..." "Nigeria must cease its dangerous attacks on freedom of expression," he added. Sowore's family lives in Booker's New Jersey constituency. The British embassy in Abuja said it was closely monitoring Sowore's detention.

And now concern is growing about government plans announced at the beginning of the month for two new laws to combat "internet falsehood" and hate speech. Amnesty International, which last month adopted Sowore as one of its "Prisoners of Conscience" has already condemned the bills as "attempts to censor and punish social media users for freely expressing their opinions". — AFP

International

Decades on, Soviet bombs still killing people in Afghanistan

Explosives dropped like deadly rain across the country

BAMIYAN, Afghanistan: Gholam Mahaiuddin sighs softly as he thinks of his 14-year-old son, who was killed in the spring by a bomb dropped last century in the hills of Bamiyan province in central Afghanistan. "We knew the mountain was dangerous," said Mahaiuddin, who found his son's remains after he didn't come home one day. "We were aware of mines but we could not find them. They were buried in the soft sand after the rain."

Forty years after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan - and three decades since the conflict ended - the war's legacy continues to claim lives across the country. Mahaiuddin's son, Moujtaba, was killed along with two friends, aged 12 and 14, on May 17 when they went looking for berries in this idyllic landscape where chocolate-colored mountains are topped with snow.

When none of them had returned the next day, Mahaiuddin and other residents from his tiny village, called Ahangaran, started searching. "I found my son with just his chest and head left," Mahaiuddin recalled. Moujtaba and his friends had been killed by what is known as an AO-2.5 RTM submunition. The cluster bombs were used extensively by Soviet forces, who dropped them like deadly rain across Afghanistan in the years following their Dec 1979 invasion.

Mahaiuddin, 44, remembers the war well. He said he used to bring tea to mujahedeen fighters who would hide in the mountains and launch ambushes against Soviet patrols. More recently, the cluster weapons have been used in Syria, according to a 2016 Human Rights Watch report. "It is the most dangerous, it is very sensitive to vibrations," said Bachir Ahmad, who heads a team of deminers from the Danish Demining Group (DDG).

1980s battlefield

The humanitarian organization has been working in several Afghan provinces since 1999 to clear explosives

left from a war most of the country's current, young population never lived through. The hills of Bamiyan, which is famous as the home of two giant 6th-century Buddha carvings that the Taliban blew up, have been extensively scoured for mines and other explosives. Near the site of the blast that killed Moujtaba and his friends, DDG workers have painted white pathways showing which areas are clear of danger.

"This is the last battlefield we are cleaning in Bamiyan, it dates back to 1986," said Habib Noor, the DDG's head for the province. Bamiyan, a region dominated by Shiite Hazaras and relatively unaffected by today's violence ravaging the rest of Afghanistan, will soon be the first of the 34 provinces in Afghanistan where all known contaminated areas have been cleared. The DDG found 26 explosive devices just in the area around Ahangaran. "We explored the area with information from the people, finding locals who had fought up there," Noor said.

Tedious work

At the site near Ahangaran visited by AFP, deminers worked under a bright blue sky, with a doctor and team leader always on hand. The team of eight, wearing bright blue body armor, picked quietly at the ground, their silence broken only by the sound of crows crying and metal detectors buzzing. Zarkha, 26, said she had found her first cluster bomb a few days earlier. "I was very scared," she said, describing how her team had carefully dug around the sensitive device and then destroyed it in a controlled explosion.

Last year, mines and other "explosive remnants of war" (ERW) killed or wounded 1,391 Afghans, according to government statistics. More than half of the victims were children. "The explosive is still operable after one hundred years. The metal and plastic will degrade but not the explosives," said Abdul Hakim Noorzai, DDG's chief of demining operations based in Kabul.



BAMIYAN, Afghanistan: In this photograph taken on Nov 14, 2019, Afghan deminers working for the Danish Demining Group (DDG) scan a combat zone dating back to the Soviet invasion in Ahangaran. —AFP

Ahmad, the demining team leader, said he was angry his country remained devastated by the Soviet war. "They destroyed our lives. Because of them we have to do demining instead of being a doctor or engineer or teacher," he said, adding that he had been demining since 2003 and was bored with the tedious work. While heading down the mountain, the team finds a gang of

children playing outside the village's modest school. Nahida, 11, smiles shyly under the little white scarf covering her hair. She remembers Moujtaba well. "He was my cousin. I cried when I learned that he was dead," she said. Asked if she knew anything about the war with the Soviets, she replied: "I don't know where the bombs came from." —AFP

Child killed as quake strikes S Philippines

MANILA: A powerful earthquake hit the southern Philippine island of Mindanao yesterday, killing a child, injuring dozens and damaging buildings in an area still recovering from a string of deadly quakes in October. Police said a rescue operation had been launched at a heavily damaged market building in Padada near the 6.8 magnitude quake's epicentre, which is about 90 km south of the major city of Davao. Patients were evacuated from hospitals as a precaution and nervous crowds massed outside shopping malls after the jolt and dozens of smaller, but strong aftershocks.

"We can no longer use our office because the walls cracked and the stairs collapsed," local police spokeswoman Lea Orbuda told AFP. "The power is off and the water taps are dry." A provincial police commander said the number of injured across the hardest hit areas had reached 62, with one confirmed fatality after a child was crushed under

a collapsed structure. The commander, Alberto Lupaz, said there appeared to be some people trapped under the damaged market building but rescue efforts had been delayed. "They (rescuers) were attempting to check the rubble... the aftershocks were too strong," Lupaz said.

President Rodrigo Duterte, who is from Davao, was caught up in the earthquake but was unharmed, officials said. "The First Lady... said the car she was riding (in) was swaying," spokesman Salvador Panelo said. "They are unharmed." There was no threat of a tsunami, said the US Geological Survey, which initially reported the magnitude at 6.9.

The Philippines is situated on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic activity that stretches from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin. Three quakes above 6.0 magnitude hit roughly the same area of Mindanao in a matter of weeks in October, killing some two dozen people and heavily damaging office buildings, schools and apartments. Tens of thousands of people were forced into shelters by the string of tremors, the government said, either because their homes were damaged or they were too afraid to return. —AFP



PADADA, Philippines: Residents look at a destroyed house with a vehicle squashed underneath after a 6.8 magnitude earthquake in this town in Davao del Sur province on the island of southern Mindanao. —AFP

14 killed in Nepal pilgrimage crash

KATHMANDU: At least 14 people died after a bus carrying pilgrims veered off a highway and rolled down a steep slope in central Nepal yesterday, officials said, the latest deadly traffic accident in the Himalayan nation. Police said the bus carrying 32 passengers plunged 70 m onto a lower stretch of the winding road in Sindhupalchowk district, around 80 km north-east of the capital Kathmandu. "We have recovered the bodies of 12 passengers from the accident," police officer Prajwal Maharjan told AFP, adding that two others had died in hospital. Four of the dead were children, traffic police added.

Some 18 passengers who were injured were taken to hospital, with officials unclear if the bus driver was among them or had fled the scene of the crash. The passengers were returning from a pilgrimage to Kalinchowk Bhagawati, a popular Hindu temple located at a height of almost 4,000 m in the hills of Nepal's Dolakha district, around 140 km east of Kathmandu.

The cause of the accident was not yet known, but police said reckless driving down the steep and winding road could have been a key factor. Deadly traffic accidents are relatively common in the impoverished Himalayan nation because of poor roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving. At least 18 passengers were killed when a bus plunged into a gorge in central Nepal last month. —AFP



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Business

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CALIFORNIA: A cargo ship arrives into the Port of Los Angeles, the busiest container port in the US, after departing from the Port of Yantian, China. — AFP

US, China truce offers 'breathing space'

2020 will be another tough year, experts warn

BEIJING: A truce in the US-China trade war offers Xi Jinping breathing space as he faces a slowing economy and political trouble in Hong Kong, but experts warn 2020 will be another tough year for the Chinese president. The pared-down "phase one" deal announced Friday includes a reduction in US tariffs on China, in exchange for an increase in Chinese purchases of US goods and better protections for intellectual property.

But tussles over the most controversial Chinese trade practices—including steep state subsidies—have been left to future talks. The trade war launched nearly two years ago by President Donald Trump isn't over, analysts say, as there's always the risk of Beijing not upholding its end of the bargain and the mercurial US leader throwing more tariff bombs.

The mini-deal is a "delay tactic to buy the Chinese Communist Party breathing space and allow it to stay in the game against overwhelming odds," said Larry Ong, senior analyst with risk consultancy SinInsider. Growth of the Chinese economy slowed to six percent in the third quarter—its most sluggish rate in nearly three decades—as demand for exports cooled and Chinese consumers tightened their belts.

In November exports fell 1.1 percent from a year earlier, the fourth straight fall, and exports to the US nosedived 23 percent as the trade war disrupted supply chains and left investors on edge. Trump has cancelled a new round of tariffs that had been due to kick in yesterday and would have affected smartphones, toys and laptops among other goods, while Beijing also called off levies planned in retaliation.

In another major concession, Washington will also slash in half the 15-percent tariffs imposed on \$120 billion in Chinese goods, like clothing, that were imposed on September 1. However, this "unexpected" tariff rollback will only have a "marginal" impact on China's economy, said Lu Ting of Nomura bank. "The worst is not yet over and 2020 looks set to be yet another tough year."

'Different interpretations'

On the political front, Washington's decision to back the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong and to criticize China's mass detention of mostly Muslim minorities has cast a shadow over trade negotiations. Xi has faced six months of increasingly violent demonstrations in Hong Kong, while on the other side of the world Trump is facing a



SHANGHAI: Photo shows a bank employee counting out 100 yuan (14.6 USD) notes at a bank in Shanghai. — AFP

congressional vote on impeachment for abuse of office next week.

And with Trump's 2020 reelection campaign gathering pace, he needs to show voters that his habit of starting bruising trade wars is bearing fruit. Barry Naughton, an expert on China's economy at the University of California in San Diego, said the mini-deal—which caused

US stocks to whipsaw—may have been announced too soon.

"People worry that both sides were under so much time pressure to conclude something before yesterday, that they may have once again prematurely announced an agreement," he said. US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said he expected the deal to be signed in early

January, taking effect 30 days later. US officials also said China has promised to import \$200 billion worth of US goods—including farm produce, energy and services—over the next two years, but China declined to offer any details.

"Different interpretations of what has been agreed upon are potential obstacles to completing the deal," Lu from Nomura said. Trump said existing tariffs of 25 percent on \$250 billion of Chinese imports would stay in place pending further negotiations on a second-phase deal. Although he tweeted Friday that talks will start "immediately", the Chinese side are treading more cautiously. Starting talk on the next phase "will depend on the implementation of the phase one agreement", China's deputy finance minister Liao Min said.

"I expect things will grind to a halt," said Naughton. "China has no more it is willing to give. The US will slip into wait-and-see mode, monitoring Chinese compliance." Ong from SinInsider said the CCP is notorious for not living up to its promises and warned factional struggles among the party will make it harder to meet China's "phase one" deal commitments. "We can expect President Trump to become a 'Tariff Man' again once China is found to have lapsed." — AFP

Lofty promises for autonomous cars unfulfilled

NEW YORK: The first driverless cars were supposed to be deployed on the roads of American cities in 2019, but just a few days before the end of the year, the lofty promises of car manufacturers and Silicon Valley remain far from becoming reality. Recent accidents, such as those involving Tesla cars equipped with Autopilot, a driver assistance software, have shown that "the technology is not ready," said Dan Albert, critic and author of the book "Are We There Yet?" on the history of the American automobile.

He questioned the optimistic sales pitch that autonomous cars would help reduce

road deaths - 40,000 every year in the United States, mostly due to human error - because these vehicles themselves have caused deaths. As a result, self-driving maneuvers in the technology-laden vehicles are limited to parking, braking, starting or driving in a parking lot.

Are autonomous cars on the roads?

Autonomous vehicles have only been deployed in limited test projects in a few cities. "When you're working on the large scale deployment of mission critical safety systems, the mindset of 'move fast and break things' certainly doesn't cut it," said Dan Ammann, CEO of self-driving car company Cruise. General Motors, Cruise's parent company, had promised a fleet of autonomous vehicles would be on the roads in 2019.

There are driverless shuttles running on specific routes on university campuses, and Waymo, Google's autonomous car division,

has been offering robotaxi service "Waymo One" for about a year around Phoenix, Arizona. However, there is a trained driver in the cars to take control in case of emergency. Waymo is expanding that program, and since the summer it has offered truly driverless service in some Phoenix suburbs that is free in the afternoon and sometimes in the evening. The company is also teaming up with ride-hailing app Lyft to expand to more areas.

Is the technology ready?

"Automation may be used in areas such as closed campuses, where speeds are low and there is little or no interaction with other vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists or inclement weather," said Sam Abuelsamid, engineer and expert at Navigant Research. The big problem is "perception": the software's ability to process data sent by the motion sensors to detect other vehicles, pedestrians, animals, cyclists or other objects, and then predict

their likely actions and adapt accordingly, he said. And that part is key, said Avidesh Zakhor, engineering and computer science professor at the University of California-Berkeley. "The perception part is not solved yet. The most advanced publicly available is 80-85 percent (reliable). That means that 15 percent of the time, it's going to hit objects and kill and destroy them," she said.

What are the obstacles?

Laws in place in some 40 US states only allow testing of these vehicles. The industry players hope the accumulation of thousands of miles traveled by self-driving vehicles will reassure authorities the technology is safe. Authorities also will have to adapt road signage to these smart cars. Contacted by AFP, the main road transportation regulator, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), declined to provide a status update.

When will it be on the road?

Not for a few years. "We should see the deployment of autonomous fleets, likely at a regional level, over the next five years," according to Aurora, a start-up specializing in autonomous driving supported by Amazon and Fiat Chrysler. But Navigant's Abuelsamid said driverless vehicles should be running soon on a small scale.

"We may see some limited numbers in a few locations by mid- to late-2020 with increasing deployments in 2021 and beyond," he said. Elon Musk, the founder of Tesla, said in late October that his cars will be "able to drive from one's house to work, most likely without interventions," although "it will still be supervised." Albert, the analyst, told AFP that Tesla may have overpromised, and he cautions that customers who paid \$3,500 in advance for the promised fully autonomous features "effectively gave the company a no-interest loan." — AFP

Business

Christmas mayhem feared as French strike continues

France reels under a crippling public transport strike

PARIS: France reeled under a crippling public transport strike for a 10th day aimed at forcing the government to scrap a pension revamp, as fears grew of travel mayhem during Christmas. Train traffic was severely disrupted with only one out of four TGV high speed long-distance trains and three of 10 regional trains running across the country. But Paris and its environs remained the worst hit. Nine metro lines in the capital remained closed and there were skeletal transport services between the city and its suburbs. Only 60 percent of the city's bus services were running.

Strikers have warned of similar disruptions today and national rail operator SNCF and the RATP Paris transport network confirmed service would be very limited with just one in four TGVs running. On Saturday, SNCF managing director Rachel Picard, told Le Parisien daily that "half of the passengers" would have trains to visit family for Christmas but did not elaborate. Unions are hoping for a repeat of 1995, when they forced a rightwing government to back down on pension reform after three weeks of metro and rail strikes just before Christmas.

The prospect of a protracted standoff has businesses fearing big losses during the crucial year-end festivities, and travelers worried that their holiday plans will fall through.

On Friday, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe asked SNCF chief Jean-Pierre Farandou to draw up a list of exactly which trains would be running during the festive season. Philippe told the Parisien daily in an interview for its Sunday edition that the French would not accept being "deprived" of festive transport options. "I can well see that everyone is worried as they see Christmas near. Christmas is an important time.

"Everybody must take their responsibilities. I do not think the French would accept people depriving them of this moment," Philippe warned. But unions said they would not give in - and that the government would have

to. "If the government wants the conflict to end before the holidays, they have all of next week to take the wise decision and scrap the point-based pension plan," Laurent Blum, the general secretary of the hard-line CGT-Cheminots, the main SNCF union said.

Historic reform

The reform would do away with 42 separate regimes, some of which offer early retirement and other benefits to public sector workers such as train drivers, dockers and even Paris Opera employees. The strike organizers have announced a massive protest for Tuesday when tens of thousands are expected to take to the streets again. Meanwhile teachers, who have been mobilized since the start of the protest, on Friday gained guarantees from the government of salary reviews which would cost the state 10 billion euros. The details were not revealed.

Policemen meanwhile ended their protest on Friday after managing to get assurances that their early retirement scheme would be maintained, owing to the "dangerous" nature of their job. Both Paris operas, the Garnier and the Bastille, cancelled Friday performances, and more through the weekend. President Emmanuel Macron's government insists the changes will make for a fairer system and help erase pension system deficits forecast to reach as much as 17 billion euros (\$19 billion) by 2025. The average French person retires at just over 60, years earlier than most in Europe or other rich OECD countries. Prime Minister Philippe has held talks with union leaders and more negotiations are scheduled over the coming week. Philippe on Friday struck a combative note, saying he "has absolutely no fear of implementing this reform". Macron, who has maintained a studied silence since the protests began, told reporters in Brussels on Friday that it was a "historic reform", while expressing solidarity with those affected by the fallout.—AFP

Arab Media Forum honors Gulf Bank for CSR efforts

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank was awarded the prestigious Kuwait Creativity Award in recognition of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts at a ceremony organized by the Arab Media Forum on Thursday, Dec 12 at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center. The Gulf Bank team received this honor in recognition of their efforts at the annual Gulf Bank 642 Marathon.

As one of the most important social sporting events in the country, the annual marathon aims to raise the level of health awareness and encourage the local community to adopt a healthier lifestyle. This year, Gulf Bank 642 Marathon partnered with Kuwait Red Crescent Society to bring medical aid to those who are unable to afford medical treatment.

This year's marathon also attracted more than 9,300 participants representing over 100 nationalities from around the world, and more than 300 volunteers. Ahmad Al Amir, Assistant General Manager of External Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "Since its foundation, Gulf Bank has been committed to maintaining a robust corporate social responsibility program.

Our aim is to drive the development of our local society by supporting a variety of local organizations and initiatives that promote local youth initiatives, women empowerment, sustainability, Kuwaiti heritage, and health and fitness. We are very pleased to receive this generous recognition from the Arab Media Forum for Gulf Bank's efforts in corporate social responsibility. This is an excellent opportunity to highlight our duty to serve our local society, and to renew our commitment to continue our efforts for the benefit of the country."



The Kuwait Creativity Award ceremony honored 100 creative entities and figures across a variety of creative fields, including media, advertising and artistic creativity. Awards were given according to the conditions and criteria approved by the jury, which consisted of: the International Advertising Association, the Kuwait Media Association, and the Integrated Media Academy, in addition to a number of private entities and influential local and regional figures in the fields of public relations, marketing and advertising.

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

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draws on Al Najma Account and the draw on the 'Salary and Cash on Top' campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Dalal Al-Mutairi. The results of the draw were as follows: (1) Al Najma weekly account - the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars and was for the share of Batlah Mubarak Al-Mutairi. (2) The 'Salary & Cash on Top campaign' prize of 1,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars and was for the share of Abdullah Abdulhameed Hassan Bualyan.

The Bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000. Al Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes.

As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all

draw on 10 prizes of KD250 each, in addition to 3 special draws on Jeep Wrangler Sport cars.

draw on 10 prizes of KD250 each, in addition to 3 special draws on Jeep Wrangler Sport cars. KFH offers "Hesabi for Youth" with a variety of privileges as part of its continued endeavor to provide adequate customer care, innovate new products and services and fulfill the needs of all customers of various age categories and interests. Services and products are tailored to suit customers' needs and provide distinguished service as per global standards regarding quality, accuracy and speed.

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

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

Burgan Bank announces Yawmi account winners

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000. The lucky winners are: (1) Ahmad Samir Mohamed Elawam (2) Rashed Hmoud Yousef Hamadah (3) Entisar Marzouq Abdulla Albasri (4) Ali Hasan Eissa Alawadh (5) Saleh Radie Ateya Melbes.

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly

Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

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

Al Saedi receives Jeep Wrangler Sport car from KFH 'Win with Hesabi' campaign

KUWAIT: Bader Al Saedi received his Jeep Wrangler Sport car from Kuwait Finance House (KFH) after he was announced the winner of the 4th draw of "Win with Hesabi" campaign in the draw that was held at KFH Headquarters under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Al Saedi received his car from KFH Auto. He expressed his happiness to win this valuable prize from KFH.

The Campaign offers 3 Jeep Wrangler Sport cars and 120 cash prizes worth KD250 each. It comes as part of KFH continuing efforts to add value to Hesabi customers including advantages, discounts, prizes and exclusive rewards. Once the social allowance is transferred to Hesabi program, customers enter the monthly



Bader Al Saedi receiving his car from KFH Auto

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.050
Euro	341.750
Sterling Pound	408.950
Canadian dollar	232.990
Turkish lira	54.290
Swiss Franc	313.130
US Dollar Buying	296.600
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.781
Indian Rupees	4.295
Pakistani Rupees	1.977
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.677
Nepali Rupees	2.680
Singapore Dollar	226.480
Hongkong Dollar	39.016
Bangladesh Taka	3.542
Philippine Peso	6.012
Thai Baht	10.113
Malaysian ringgit	77.762
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.134
Qatari Riyal	83.565
Omani Riyal	790.253
Bahraini Dinar	807.890
UAE Dirham	82.836
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.800

Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.880
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.221
Tunisian Dinar	110.160
Jordanian Dinar	428.990
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.209

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.700
Canadian Dollar	231.295
Sterling Pound	406.340
Euro	339.265
Swiss Frank	301.525
Bahrain Dinar	807.650
UAE Dirhams	83.090
Qatari Riyals	84.325
Saudi Riyals	81.880
Jordanian Dinar	429.635
Egyptian Pound	18.835
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.680
Indian Rupees	4.289
Pakistani Rupees	1.960
Bangladesh Taka	3.541
Philippines Peso	6.008
Cyprus pound	18.070
Japanese Yen	3.775
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.681
Malaysian Ringgit	74.440

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.015
Thai Bhat	11.040
Turkish Lira	52.705
Singapore dollars	223.015

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL			
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	
Europe			
British Pound	0.399837	0.413737	
Czech Korune	0.005319	0.014619	
Danish Krone	0.041472	0.044672	
Euro	0.331690	0.345390	
Georgian Lari	0.121340	0.121340	
Hungarian 0.001146	0.001336		
Norwegian Krone	0.029732	0.034932	
Romanian Leu	0.065136	0.081986	
Russian ruble	0.004893	0.004893	
Slovakia	0.009083	0.019083	
Swedish Krona	0.028540	0.033540	
Swiss Franc	0.302910	0.313910	
Australasia			
Australian Dollar	0.201312	0.213312	
New Zealand Dollar	0.194818	0.204318	
America			
Canadian Dollar	0.225772	0.234772	
US Dollars	0.299950	0.305250	
US Dollars Mint	0.300450	0.305250	
Asia			
Bangladesh Taka	0.002973	0.003774	

Chinese Yuan	0.042085	0.045585
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036891	0.039641
Indian Rupee	0.003624	0.004396
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002706	0.002886
Korean Won	0.000249	0.000264
Malaysian Ringgit	0.009629	0.007529
Nepalese Rupee	0.002621	0.002961
Pakistan Rupee	0.001285	0.001255
Philippine Peso	0.005996	0.006296
Singapore Dollar	0.219554	0.229554
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001316	0.001896
Taiwan	0.010114	0.010294
Thai Baht	0.009732	0.010282
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.800056	0.808398
Egyptian Pound	0.018916	0.021657
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000199	0.000259
Jordanian Dinar	0.422857	0.431857
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000103	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021153	0.045153
Omani Riyal	0.784617	0.792499
Qatar Riyal	0.083089	0.083921
Saudi Riyal	0.079993	0.081293
Syrian Pound	0.001289	0.001509
Tunisian Dinar	0.102858	0.110858
Turkish Lira	0.045757	0.055602
UAE Dirhams	0.082150	0.082976
Yemeni Riyal	0.000988	0.001068

Business

Italy cabinet mulls 1 billion euro rescue for ailing bank Pop Bari

Bank struggling to cope with mounting loan losses

ROME: Italy's cabinet was expected to meet in evening to approve a decree that would provide a 1 billion euro (\$1.1 billion) lifeline to cooperative lender Banca Popolare di Bari, two sources with knowledge of the matter said. The bank, which said last week it needed an urgent injection of up to 1 billion euros, has struggled to cope with mounting loan losses during a slump that has devastated Italy's economy, notably in Popolare di Bari's home region in the south.

It was placed under special administration by the Bank of Italy on Friday but the government led by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte failed to approve a rescue package as several ministers boycotted a hastily convened cabinet meeting. Conte will make a fresh attempt at pushing through an emergency decree to bail out the bank, with a cabinet meet-

ing due to be held at 2000 GMT, the sources said. One of the sources, who has seen a draft of the decree, said the plan called for the injection of 1 billion euros into state-owned Banca del Mezzogiorno-Mediocredito Centrale. Of these funds, 500 million would be used to recapitalize Popolare di Bari and the rest would be set aside in case of future requirements. The government wants a deposit guarantee fund financed by Italian banks to take part in the rescue by providing as much as 500 million euros.

The Interbank Deposit Protection Fund (FITD), whose executives are due to meet this week, said this month it had been asked for help by Popolare di Bari but wanted to examine the bank's business plan before making a deci-

sion. The crisis at Popolare di Bari has heaped pressure on Conte's coalition, which brings together the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and the centre-left Democratic Party. Only hours before the urgent cabinet meeting on Friday night, Conte said the banking system was in good health and there would be no need for state bailouts, prompting the right wing opposition League party to call on him to resign.

The meeting ended without approving an expected rescue package for Popolare di Bari as ministers from 5-Star and a small party led by former PD leader Matteo Renzi stayed away. 5-Star leader Luigi Di Maio said on Saturday he wanted to know why the bank had been allowed by the Bank of Italy, the sector supervisor, to

deteriorate so badly and which bank managers were responsible before approving the rescue.

Since 2016, Italy has had to rescue several of its banks, including Monte dei Paschi di Siena and two Veneto lenders, rescues which 5-Star - which at the time was in opposition - slammed as a waste of taxpayer money to help bankers. With 5 Star and the PD at loggerheads over a growing list of economic issues, from the fate of airline Alitalia to the troubled Ilva steel plant in southern Italy, the crisis could have potentially serious implications for the government. Like thousands of Italians who invested savings in the shares and bonds of local banks, Popolare di Bari's 69,000 shareholders stand to lose their money in a rescue. — Reuters

NBK Weekly Market Report

Brexit conundrum might be coming to an end



KUWAIT: The two major risks to the global economy have diminished substantially last week as the Conservative party won the UK's general election with a landslide and reports reached markets that President Trump had agreed to a limited "Phase One" trade deal with China. As the year comes to an end, the geopolitical atmosphere seems to be cooling down. In spite of the current optimism seen in financial markets, the trade prospects could easily disappoint again, which has occurred several times over the course of the year.

If both nations formally agree and sign the phase one deal, it could limit the deterioration of the bilateral relationship. However, the disputes facing the two largest economies are complex and include many different aspects. Therefore, they are unlikely to all be resolved quickly. Officials acquainted with the negotiations said that American negotiators were proposing to roll back existing tariffs on Chinese goods by around 50% and postpone the upcoming tariffs scheduled on December 15 if China promises to purchase US farm products worth \$50 billion in 2020.

Looking at the worst performers in the FX market, the Japanese yen took the lead followed by the US dollar. Safe haven currencies were continuously trading the red zone, while currencies of export oriented economies thrived. The USD/JPY is heading towards a 7-month high, while the dollar index fell to a 6-month low of 96.588. On a weekly basis, the dollar index has shed 0.53% of its value versus a basket of currencies. The yen is down by nearly 0.70% against the USD in the past five trading days.

In the US bond market, the yield on the 10-year note rose to a four-week high of 1.903% after the positive developments on trade, from 1.79% seen on late Wednesday. It was evident from the rise in yields that bonds were in selling mode. As trade worries eased, the yield curve steepened for the first time in four days, with the spread between the two-year and 10-year note yields expanding to as much as 23.10 basis points, the widest gap in four weeks.

FED cements its neutral stance

The outcome of last week's FOMC meeting offered no surprises as the overnight rate remained unaltered at 1.50-1.75% with a unanimous support from the committee. The majority of members on the FOMC expect policy to finish 2020 at the same level seen in 2019, while the market is pricing in one cut by late 2020. Thirteen members expect rates to stay on hold next year, while four see a hike. In September, there were seven FED officials recommending a rate above 2% for 2020. Now there are none.

The FED Chairman portrayed a resilient picture on the US economy by stating that "our economic outlook remains a favorable one despite global developments and ongoing risks." "As long as incoming information about

the economy remains broadly consistent with this outlook, the current stance of monetary policy will likely remain appropriate."

Looking at projections, policy setters displayed more confidence in the US labor market by lowering their predictions for unemployment for the next three years. They dropped the long-run unemployment rate to 4.1% from 4.2%. GDP is seen at 2% next year and 1.9% in 2021, both unchanged from the last estimates. Inflation is expected to hit 2% in 2021, also unchanged from the prior projection. Overall, the monetary policy message is that the central bank is on hold for now and that it would take some significant change in the outlook to induce the FED to move in either direction.

Europe & UK

The Brexit turmoil which has created a cloud of uncertainty for years and almost pushed the UK economy into a recession is on the verge of conclusion. PM Boris Johnson's snap election gamble has paid off remarkably as the Conservative party secured a crushing victory. The Conservative party (Tories) won 365 seats in Parliament easily securing a majority and is considered as the largest win for the Tories since the late 80s. On the other hand, the Labor party attained 203 seats only, the worst result for the party since 1935.

The election results indicate that British citizens are in favor of leaving the EU with Boris's agenda; the Tories' strong pledge to "Get Brexit Done" clearly echoed well with the public. All of the elected Tory members are in favor of Johnson's Brexit deal, so it should be relatively smooth sailing for the government to pass its Brexit bill. The new Conservative government will be less reliant on hard Brexiters which could make concessions and negotiations easier with the EU.

The election results brings some short term clarity on Brexit, however the debate might rapidly shift from the risks of a 'no deal' Brexit to the risks of a 'no trade deal' one. Hence, the Brexit drama isn't out of the woods yet. Brexit may continue to pressure economic activity as the challenging task of forging the UK's new trading relationships is just beginning.

The Sterling pound was the top performer among G10 currencies last week, climbing to a 19-month high of 1.3514 after the polling results were released. In weekly terms, the GBP gained around 185 basis points against the greenback. Markets may witness a less volatile Sterling pound in the months ahead as the Brexit risk becomes a less vital driver of performance. Since the Brexit referendum, the pound's trajectory has been mainly dominated by

political headlines. This political trend could come to an end with economic fundamentals back in play.

New ECB president

The European Central Bank maintained its loose monetary policy rate at a record low of -0.50% and stuck to its asset purchase program of 20 billion euros per month. The ECB restated its key message from the previous meetings, saying that rates will not rise "until it has seen the inflation outlook robustly converge to a level sufficiently close to the 2% objective." Moreover, the new ECB president Christine Lagarde mentioned that interest rates could move lower until the inflation objective is achieved. It looks like years of negative interest rates and more than €2.6 trillion of ECB bond purchases have failed to boost prices and growth.

In conclusion, no new light was shed on the European economic outlook and monetary stance of the ECB. Consumer inflation is currently at 1% y/y, way below the ECB's objective and as such rates are likely to remain in a negative environment for the time being. Financial markets currently expect the ECB to maintain its monetary settings throughout next year, a view that was fortified by the FED signaling that it was unlikely to touch US interest rates in 2020.

Negative interest rate

It was no surprise that the Swiss central bank voted to uphold its negative interest rate environment at -0.75%, especially with annual inflation at -0.3% in October and -0.1% in November. The Bank's tone remained extremely dovish and labeled the Swiss franc as 'highly valued'. The SNB reiterated the importance of negative rates and FX interventions to curb the appreciation of the currency if warranted. The SNB chairman said "It would make no sense to conduct an irresponsible monetary policy only to get rid of the negative rates."

As soon as the outlook will change, then we will change, but we have no good idea when that will happen because it really depends on the international environment." On the expectations front, price growth forecasts were cut for the second successive quarter. Inflation is now seen by the SNB at only 0.1% in 2020 and 0.5% in 2021, instead of 0.2% and 0.6% projected in September. The Bank assumes a pick-up thereafter but inflation is not expected to exceed 1% until Q3 of 2022.

All in all, the SNB vowed to stay active in the FX market to ease upward momentum on the CHF, which has gained around 3% in value against the euro this year. Policymakers also indicated that further rates cuts were probable, but the consequences to act remain relatively high given the side effects of negative rates. For the Bank to lower rates further it would probably require a significant risk aversion event leading to a stronger franc. In such a scenario, the risk to the price stability mandate would probably make rate cuts more likely.

The single currency (EUR) has appreciated tremendously last week and rose to a 4-month high of 1.1199 versus the USD. Optimistic expectations on trade and Brexit combined with Germany's ZEW indicator of economic sentiment that turned positive in December, rising to the highest level in 21 months paved the way for the euro's rise. The week ended with euro gaining 0.57% over its dollar counterpart.

S Africa's businesses marooned by rolling blackouts

JOHANNESBURG: As if choreographed by a puppet master, stores along the aisle of a Johannesburg mall hurriedly shut their doors one by one as power outages strike slap-bang in the middle of the day. "We have to close the store immediately because people can steal... the card machines also don't work without electricity," a 23 year-old clothing retail worker told AFP.

Since 2008, state utility Eskom has sporadically implemented rolling blackouts - rationing up to 4,000 megawatts at a time - to help prevent a collapse of the electricity grid, a process known as "load shedding". But this week, the crisis suddenly worsened as Eskom rationed 6,000 megawatts from the national power grid, prompting the worst cuts in the country so far. The power outages have caused many businesses to lose out on hours of sales during the peak festive season, threatening an already fragile economy.

"Most of them have to close shop as they can't afford alternative solutions such as generators and renewable energy such as solar systems," the CEO of the Black Business Council, Kganki Matabane, told AFP. Across town about 60 kilometers south of Johannesburg in the crucial industrial manufacturing hub known as the Vaal Triangle, industrialists reel from the unstable supply of power. "The big industries that start up furnaces lose an obscene amount of money when there are blackouts," said Jaco Verwey, vice-chairman of the Golden Triangle Chamber of Commerce.

"Firstly they lose money on downtime. Secondly they lose money on restarting again because they need more electricity to restart their furnaces." The organization boasts around 450 member businesses, 33 of which pay a combined electricity bill of 100 million rands (\$6.8 million) a month. Businesses, big and small, are plunged daily into darkness for nearly five hours at a time, sometimes even multiple times a day.

Large underground mines, among the largest contributors to GDP, suspended some shifts this week to avoid trapping miners in the belly of the earth when the electricity cuts out. AngloAmerican spokesman Sibusiso Tshabalala told AFP that its "South African operations have been impacted by Eskom load shedding". "While we have response plans... this is not a sustainable solution as it is costly to run generators," he said, adding that sustained power outages resulted in reduced revenues and production.

Hundreds of tourists, hoping to catch the aerial cableway at the top of Table Mountain, were left stranded for nearly three hours this week after load shedding escalated to stage 6. Even telecommunications networks were forced to beef up on backup power to maintain customers' connectivity during load shedding. African giant MTN reportedly spends up to 100 million rand on battery generators for every three days of electricity blackouts. — AFP

NBK Capital: \$3 billion in expected passive inflows to Boursa Kuwait

KUWAIT: The year 2017 will be remembered as a watershed year for Boursa Kuwait during which its journey to achieve Emerging Market (EM) status started. FTSE was the first to reclassify Kuwait as a Secondary EM market in September 2017, which was implemented in two phases in September and December of 2018. We estimate that Kuwait's inclusion into FTSE EM index attracted passive flows in the range of USD 950 million - USD 1.1 billion.

Kuwait received an additional USD 300 mn in March 2019 from FTSE index related passive flows due to lifting of Kuwait banks' FOL (Foreign Ownership Limit). Following FTSE's EM inclusion, S&P Dow Jones EM announced its intent to upgrade Kuwait in December 2018, adding Kuwait to its Global Benchmark Indices with an EM classification in September 2019. Finally, in June 2019, MSCI decided to conditionally reclassify Kuwait to EM. The reclassification was subject to fulfilling two criteria before November 2019 (more on this in a following section).

MSCI will make a final decision before 31 December 2019. As per recent announcements, CMA in cooperation with Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company have made notable progress in fulfilling both requirements ahead of the

specified time period. In case of a positive announcement from MSCI in December, Kuwait will be added to MSCI EM index during the May 2020 semi-annual index review. Kuwait's weight in the MSCI EM index is likely to be around 0.60% - 0.64% resulting in expected passive inflows of around USD 3 bn.

Kuwait is the latest GCC market to join the EM club, following Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia. All else equal, an upgrade to EM status is generally associated with attracting greater foreign flows, which could result in an overall improvement in liquidity. A market upgrade also diversifies the investor base, increases the attractiveness of the country's capital markets, and improves the overall transparency and corporate governance.

Conditional Upgrade

On 25 June 2019, MSCI decided to conditionally reclassify Kuwait to EM status. The reclassification was subject to fulfilling two criteria before November 2019 - extending omnibus account structures to international investors and allowing same National Investor Number (NIN) cross trades. At the time of the MSCI press release, only locally licensed entities were allowed to trade using omnibus accounts and same NIN trading was available to certain exempt "non-discretionary" local accounts.

The decision came as a surprise to market participants, as Omnibus structures are not available in any other GCC markets classified as EM and same NIN crossing for international investors was introduced by Saudi Arabia only after it was upgraded to EM status in June 2018. It remains unclear why MSCI is applying a higher standard for Kuwait in terms of market preparedness.

Nonetheless, in Oct. 2019, the Kuwait Capital Market Authority (CMA) announced that it issued resolutions, amending some provisions of the executive bylaws and rules related to implementation of omnibus accounts and same (NIN) crossing for international investors. On 12 November 2019, MSCI announced that it was seeking feedback from market participants until 29 November 2019 on new resolutions / amendments as mentioned earlier.

Expected foreign flows

In case of a positive announcement from MSCI in December, Kuwait's weight in the MSCI EM index is likely to be around 0.60%, and is expected to result in passive inflows of around USD 3 bn. This will be significantly higher than the \$1 billion or so of passive inflows from the FTSE EM upgrade event. We also estimate the potential upgrade would result in additional active flows in addition to the passive flows. The updated provisional list for MSCI standard index comprises of seven constituents.

Impact on market so far

The impact of the MSCI upgrade process on the Kuwaiti market can be clearly observed through the increased traded values, foreign flows, and the performance that the market has witnessed so far this year. On traded values, the Kuwaiti market has traded in excess of \$22 billion till end of October 2019, which is almost double that of the same period last year. Net foreign flows increased significantly this year to \$1.74 billion till October 2019, more than triple the flows received during the same period last year.

Even adjusted for the \$300 million or so of passive inflows triggered by the increase in FOL for banks in March, this remains the

Figure 2: Kuwait Vs Key Markets: Comparative Returns

Index	Total Return (%) YTD Nov. 2019	Total Return (%) 2018	Total Return (%) 15th Oct 2016 - 30th Nov. 2019
MSCI Saudi Arabia	1.4%	19.3%	60.1%
MSCI UAE	3.1%	-7.7%	-0.2%
MSCI Qatar	-5.1%	30.7%	10.2%
MSCI GCC	4.4%	16.6%	46.6%
MSCI EM	10.6%	-14.2%	26.1%
MSCI Kuwait	26.8%	15.4%	96.1%

Source: Factset and NBK Capital - MENA Asset Management

highest net foreign flow figure on record (Boursa Kuwait's data goes back to 2008).

On performance, Kuwait continues its strong performance YTD until end of November and the MSCI Kuwait index is up 26.8% compared to 4.4% for the MSCI GCC Index and 10.6% for the MSCI EM Index. We believe the anticipation of a positive announcement from MSCI regarding the upgrade is in part a driver for the out-performance of Kuwait this year, in addition to solid results from certain sectors such as banking.

Conclusion

We remain constructive on MSCI's final decision in December considering the

promptness shown by CMA and Boursa in effecting the necessary changes required by MSCI, and also for successfully executing a slew of structural initiatives which were critical to Kuwait's ascend to EM status. From a structural perspective, we are also very excited about the reforms that are taking place in Kuwait to open up the market further, and adopting global best practices when it comes to market regulations. The reform process initiated by both CMA and Boursa Kuwait is creating a more robust trading platform. Moreover, this will lead to a better functioning of the market, and is at the heart of the push to upgrade Kuwait to EM status.

Business

Villains or visionaries? Hedge funds short companies they say 'greenwash'

'Sustainable' investments attract tens of trillions of dollars

LONDON: Tens of trillions of global investment dollars are pouring into companies touting robust environmental, social and governance credentials. Now short-sellers spy an opportunity. Such hedge funds, often cast as villains of the piece because they bet against share prices, scent a profit from company valuations they believe are unduly inflated by ESG promises or which they say ignore risks that threaten to undermine the company's prospects.

The fact short-sellers, who look to exploit information gaps, are targeting the ESG sphere underlines the complexities facing investors in accurately gauging companies' sustainability credentials. Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg last week spoke of CEOs masking inaction with "creative PR". Against a backdrop of growing public and political concerns about climate change and economic inequality, companies are under increasing pressure to show they are taking greater responsibility for how they generate their profits.

Investments defined as "sustainable" account for more than a quarter of all assets under management globally, according to the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance. About \$31 trillion has been invested, buoyed by analyst reports that show companies with strong ESG narratives outperform their peers.

Some short-sellers, including Carson Block of Muddy Waters, Josh Strauss of Applesseed Capital and Chad Slater of Morphic Asset Management, argue share prices can be bolstered by corporate misrepresentation about sustainability, or so-called "greenwashing". "Greenwashing is absolutely rampant now," says Slater, whose fund bets on both rising and falling share prices. If companies fail to engage with long-term investors, he sees a red flag.

"From the short side, it's quite interesting." Analytics companies that provide corporate ESG ratings use a combination of company disclosures, news sources and qualitative analysis of third-party data.

They are a major source of information for investors, but it is not an exact science. Hedge funds have various strategies for selecting targets, often focusing on those they think show both ESG and more traditional financial or operational weakness. A high ESG rating can attract short interest.

A Reuters analysis of data from financial information company Refinitiv and national regulators in Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Italy shows the five companies in each country with the best ESG scores collectively were being shorted more than those with the worst scores. The short positions against the companies deemed to have the best ESG credentials were 50% greater in size than those placed against the worst-performers. For an interactive version of the graphic. For additional graphics covering the other countries mentioned, see related content.



Thunberg berates business chiefs for 'creative PR'

Patchy data

ESG data providers compile ratings based on a slew of measures ranging from energy usage to board gender make-up, salary gap data and the scale of negative press reports on the company from newspapers across the world. Refinitiv, part-owned by the parent company of Reuters News, factors in more than 400 ESG measures for each company, taken from a range of sources including company reports, regulatory filings, NGO websites and news articles.

A key problem, though, is scant regulations governing what ESG measures and risks companies must disclose and their patchy nature, said Diederik Timmer, executive vice president of client relations at Sustainalytics, a major ESG data provider. "When things go well, companies report quite well on those,

when things don't go so well it gets awfully quiet," he added. Some policymakers, largely in Europe, are pushing for standardized disclosures to help investors better gauge the risks, something which will leave less wriggle room for companies and make scores even more reliable.

Two leading global asset managers interviewed by Reuters, who manage nearly \$1 trillion in assets but declined to be identified, said they had tested their portfolios using several data providers and found the correlation between ESG ratings to be so low, they are building their own ranking system. Peter Hafez, chief data scientist at RavenPack, which helps hedge funds analyse data to get a trading edge, agreed.

"There's no perfect ESG rating out there," he said. The influence of news flows on investor sentiment was underlined by a Deutsche Bank study published in September that mapped 1,600 stocks and millions of company announcements and climate-related media reports over two decades. It found companies that had a greater proportion of positive announcements and press over the preceding 12 months outperformed the MSCI World Index by 1.4% a year, on average, while those with more negative news underperformed by 0.3%.

Big risks for shorts

Short-sellers borrow shares, pay the lender a fee and sell them on, betting the price will fall before buying them back and returning them to the original lender - pocketing the difference, minus the fee. But it is not for the faint-hearted. If funds trigger a share price fall, they can earn millions, but the downside, should shares

rise, is unlimited. The perils of the practice were shown by the shorts burnt by a 17% surge in the shares of Elon Musk's Tesla in October after a surprise quarterly profit. Short-sellers suffered paper losses of \$1.4 billion, erasing most of their 2019 profits, according to analytics firm S3 Partners.

And in a decade-long stock market bull-run, short-selling can be tricky. Morphic's joint chief investment officer Slater said the Sydney-based money manager's standalone short positions in its Trium Morphic ESG long-short fund had weighed on the portfolio over the past 12 months. Niche activist short-sellers, who can torpedo company valuations by publishing negative reports on targets - often alleging fraud or serious failures - are often criticized for undermining long-term company objectives and blurring the lines between whistleblower and market manipulator.

Short-sellers agree they are biased, but argue no more than long investors, the banks that raise money for the company and the company's management. Carson Block, founder of American short-seller Muddy Waters, who shot to prominence spotting wrongdoing in some Chinese-run companies, is now seeking a "moral short" on ESG - branching out from a traditional focus on corporate governance issues to targets whose success he says hinges on secretly harming society.

As an example of what he is seeking, he points to the US opioid crisis, which has triggered around 2,500 lawsuits by authorities seeking to hold drug-makers responsible for stoking a scandal that has claimed almost 400,000 overdose deaths between 1999 and 2017. "I'm really sceptical of ESG," he says, likening the use of the acronym by the corporate world to the token straw slipped into a large plastic cup with a plastic lid. "ESG is the paper straw of investing," he says. "I definitely want to find companies like that because I know they're out there and I want to help put them down." —Reuters

Ahli United Bank congratulates the Al Hassad winners

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on the 11th of December 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al Hassad has over 850 prizes, over a 12-month period. The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 Saad Ayed Almutairi.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Abdulwahab Abdullah Alwazzan, Khalid Ali Sabty, Abdulhakeem Ibrahim Mubarak, Mohammad Bashar Aldandash, Sanad Hamed Alsanad, Hanean Abdullah Alshabaan, Anna Tiholaz Albousairi, Zelfi Zaid Al Zaid, Khaled Saad Almunefi, Fadullalah Abbas Yadullahi, Nahawand Abdulrahman Aldoghaji, Salwa Mohammad Alazmi, Fajer Othman Alsaed, Mohamed Abdulla Ebrahim, A Karim Sardar Mohamed, Huda Nabeel Ali, Naeema Ali Mohsin, Karim Hamza A.Karim E. Mohd Shawqi Mohd & Mohd Ayman, Isa Saleh Ahmed.

On the occasion Ahli United Bank congratulate its winning customers, and commented that there are many chances to win waiting for our customers. Draws are held every Wednesday at AUB Kuwait or AUB Bahrain depending on the draw plan. On public holidays, the draw is postponed to the next business day. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 4 quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000.

One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid ul Fitr and Eid Al Adha, when the winning customers will receive the eid prizes of KD 100,000 each. May the Eid always bring prosperity and blessings to the Islamic nation. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 21 weekly prizes comprised of a grand prize of KD 10,000 and 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each.

In addition to the highly attractive package of the prizes, there will be the annual expected profits on, which makes the Al Hassad account a useful tool: for family and other savings, both for the short term and for the longer term - a fact which well appreciated by a large multitude of new and old customers. It is worth mentioning that there is possibility to open the account online for non-customers and there is possibility to transfer the salary to Al Hassad account. In addition Al Hassad customers can issue an ATM immediately and have the freedom to deposit and withdraw any time.

To be eligible to participate in the draw, the customer should have a minimum balance of KD 100, whereby the customer has two chances to participate, with a maximum of 30,000 chances per draw, in addition to annual profits for all participants. Every KD 50 invested for at least 15 days entitles the customer to one chance in the each draw. The longer the customer keeps his balance the bigger the changes of participation in the draw. For more information on Ahli United Bank's products and services, customers are invited to visit any of the Bank's branches or dial the customer service "Hayakom" on 1812000, or log on the Bank's website www.ahliunited.com.kw

HUAWEI nova series: A fresh and new look for HUAWEI nova 5T

KUWAIT: Today's mid-tier smartphone segment is filled with generic light-versions of flagship devices with monotone designs. However, Huawei is known for breaking this mold with its reputed nova series. One of Huawei's most unique and dynamic series, the Huawei nova series is packed with devices that deliver both design and functionality. Refreshing this series with a whole new look and feel will be the upcoming HUAWEI nova 5T, the latest addition to the fan-favorite series and a trend-setter for the mid-tier segment.

Taking its name from both "innovation" and "new star" in Latin, the nova series is Huawei's youthful and chic product line packed with innovative devices. The nova series is quite well known for its trendsetting devices, allowing it to create a niche market within the mid-tier segment as light flagship smartphones. These devices pack the style and trends of the segment but with features and

hardware seen on flagship devices, including premium camera hardware, flagship-grade Kirin chips, GPU Turbo technology and more.

This has led to the huge popularity of the nova series, with over 100 million users to date using nova devices. Founded on the principle of innovation, Huawei's nova brand is aimed at bringing new concepts fresh ideas to its audience which include but are not limited to powerful hardware and flagship features but also caters to every user's need for spiritual expression.

The nova series also incorporates an element of chic design into its devices, making it perfect for those who complement their outfits with smartphones. Thanks to its unique design elements, the nova series always stands out from the rest of the crowd. This uniqueness is what the nova series stands for, encouraging its users, primarily youngsters to do the same with these powerful devices to find their own identity.

What to expect

The HUAWEI nova series is known for its flagship grade features and camera hardware that sets it apart from the competition in the mid-tier sector. We can expect the HUAWEI nova 5T to come with an upgraded pro-grade camera setup

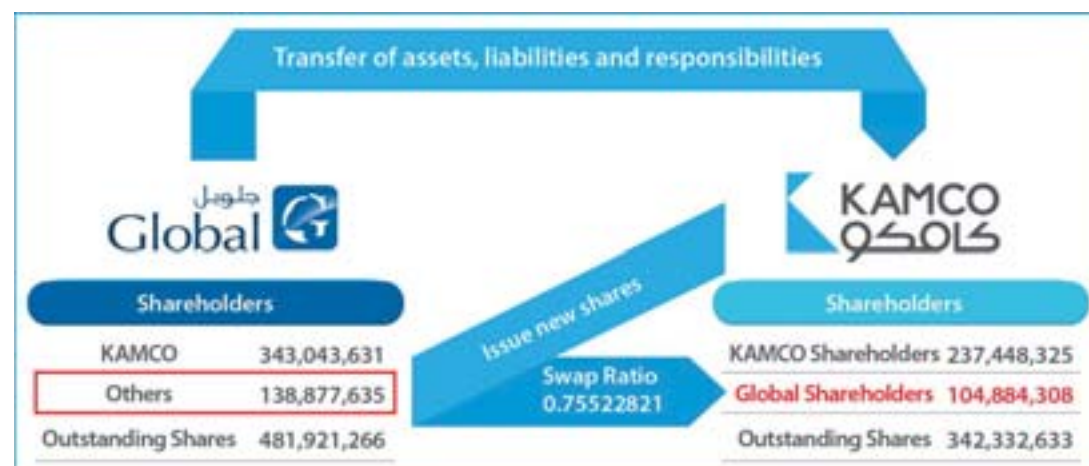


that will come with 5AI powered cameras that enable Multi-Scenario Photography.

The four cameras on the back of the phone is rumored to consist of a 48MP HD main camera, 16MP wide-angle lens, 2MP macro lens and a 2MP bokeh lens, while a 32MP High Resolution Selfie Camera sits upfront, once again giving another nova smartphone the title of a selfie superstar. Along with a premium camera setup, we can also expect flagship-grade hardware in the HUAWEI nova 5T. Not only will this contribute towards solid performance on par with most flagship

devices, but it will also pave the way for a smoother entertainment and gaming experience with minimal lags and enhanced graphics.

The HUAWEI nova 5T will be powered by Android and will bring all users favorite apps in a pretty solid device. The HUAWEI nova 5T is all set to revitalize the mid-tier smartphone sector. Not only does it put powerful and stylish devices in the hands of youngsters and creative people, but by creating a new identity for the series itself, it also helps to bring a flagship-grade look and feel to an otherwise mellow sector.



KAMCO completes legal execution of merger with Global

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company KSC (Public), a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the GCC, announced the successful completion of the legal execution of the merger by amalgamation with Global Investment House (Global), whereby KAMCO is the merging company and Global the merged.

This announcement comes after the cancellation of treasury shares and the successful completion of the share swap of 138,877,635 Global shares (owned by shareholders other than KAMCO) against the issuance of 104,884,308 new KAMCO shares according to the swap ratio of 0.75522821 KAMCO share for each Global share. The share swap was concluded on Thursday 12th of

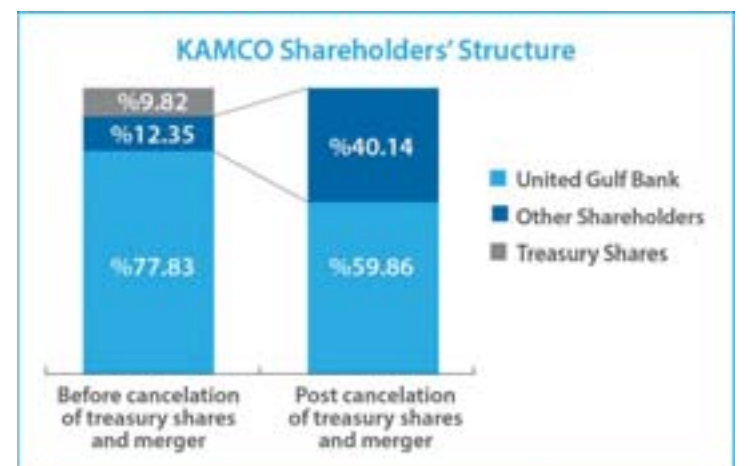
December 2019 where minority shareholders in Global have now become shareholders in KAMCO.

Newly issued shares will be eligible for trading on Boursa Kuwait starting Sunday 15th of December 2019. Following the merger, the authorized, issued and paid up share capital of KAMCO stood at KD 34.2mn. Commenting on the completion of the merger process, KAMCO's CEO, Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, said, "We are pleased to have completed the legal execution of the merger within the preset time frame.

In the coming weeks, we will work towards integrating our operations and systems in preparation for a fresh start in 2020." He added, "We welcome new shareholders to KAMCO ensuring them of our commitment to continue creating value for all stakeholders through our fee-based business model that is client driven with focus on innovative strategies and team capabilities."

Shareholder structure

KAMCO enjoys a larger and more diversified shareholder base with non-controlling shareholders repre-



senting more than 40% of total issued shares. Sarkhou concluded by expressing his gratitude and appreciation towards the Capital Markets Authority, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Central Bank of Kuwait, Boursa Kuwait, as well as other regulatory authorities for their ongoing support and cooperation throughout this process. He also thanked the boards of directors and teams of both companies for working side by side to ensure the successful outcome of this transaction. Sarkhou also thanked clients and shareholders for their trust assuring them of KAMCO's commitment to create value for all stakeholders.



Faisal Sarkhou

What's On

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa organize blood donation campaign with KCBB



As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and the hotel's continuous efforts to highlight the importance of CSR, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa conducted a Blood Donation Campaign at the resort in association with Kuwait Central Blood Bank (KCBB).

The hotel management allocated one of its distinct venues, Al Sadu, to establish the unit for donating blood and provided the necessary facilities for the medical staff of the Kuwait Central Blood Bank.

Employees from various departments participated in the campaign, as the Kuwait Central Blood Bank took the necessary measures and brought in medical equipment and beds to facilitate the donation process. The campaign had an overall positive impact on the hotel team with great interaction seen by employees, managers, and head of departments.

Commenting on the blood donation campaign,

Assistant Director of PR and Communications, Yasmine Ismail said, "We thank KCBB for their support towards the Blood Donation Campaign, which serves the local community and helps in raising awareness about society-related humanitarian initiatives and activities. The blood donation campaign sheds a light on the prominence of spirit of collaboration and a culture of giving to members of society. Due to our great belief in the significance of these campaigns and their role in saving the lives of many patients, we are always keen to pay attention to issues that would serve society, especially humanitarian services. Blood donation contributes to saving and treating many patients, and this is one of the highest and noble goals of social responsibility. We are happy to witness a huge success with the number of employees who have participated, and appreciative to them for showing great interest in supporting such an honorable cause."



Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre's new batch of local resident artists

Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre's New Batch of Local Resident Artists showcased past masterpieces and discuss future works. Continuing to foster a local sense of creative community and dialogue, Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre's Artist-in-Residence programme now includes Abdullah Alotaibi, Ahmad Alholi, Asrae Yazdani, Husain Albanay and Meshari Alnajjar.

Abdullah Alotaibi

Abdullah is a painter, sculptor and etcher. His research investigates abstraction and representation of human emotions, dreams and ambitions.

Ahmad Alholi

Ahmad is a digital illustrator with an architectural background. His research focuses on local botany, environmental understanding and anthropological interpretation of nature.

Asrae Yazdani

Asrae explores the potential of calligraphy beyond the written tradition. Her mixed-media paintings shed light on the Kereshmeh

style, where composition and form merge.

Husain Albanay

Husain is a realist painter and sculptor. His artwork aims to depict Kuwait's notable figures who contributed to the nation's history and modernization.

Meshari Alnajjar

Meshari works with digital illustrations and mixed-media. His work emphasizes life cycles of buildings, whose stories encompass urban, social, and cultural facets of Kuwait.



Food Choice provides golden sponsorship to Horeca 2020

Food Choice CEO, Marwan Fares strongly praised the Horeca Kuwait exhibition and its ability to attract companies specializing in hospitality, food industries and hotel requirements in addition to travel, transport, oil and construction companies.

Fares added that with that in mind, Food Choice decided renewing its golden sponsorship to Horeca Kuwait and do the same in the 2020 Horeca exhibition due to be organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Co at Mishref International Fair Grounds in the period of January 20-22, 2020. "The exhibition will display the latest in food products and food service according to HACCP food safety standards", he underlined.

Further, Fares stressed that following the success it has been achieving ever since establishment in 2005, Food Choice intends to continue growing and expanding internationally using various unique creative ideas while, at the same time, being so keen on supporting new creations and observing healthy quality standards in catering and retail services needed for hotels, restaurants and department stores. He added that Horeca expansion and yearly progress made it a perfect annual forum where Kuwait's most effective hospitality and food industry experts meet.

Further, Fares stressed that Food Choice would display around 50 of its international brands products in the exhibition. "Our products and services are found in Kuwait and in our branches in KSA and Dubai", he added noting that the company had recently displayed those products and services in various family festivals, specialized workshops and the Lebanese products festival.

On its part Leaders Group reminded of the success achieved in Horeca 2019 last January in terms of the growth of the number of visitors and also hailed the outstanding participation of Food Choice during the past cycles noting that its section had always attracted humongous numbers of visitors, especially keen on visiting its 6 main branches of catering services, seafood, beverages, retail and grocery, dairy products and Pastries and bakeries all run according to HACCP food safety standards.

Notably, Food Choice has recently acquired agency for several trademarks including Khoury products, Al-Wazeer Olive Oil and Al-Wadi Al-Akhdar products from Lebanon. It is also expected to get new agencies in 2020 and, following six years of successful cooperation with Nestle International and achieving the highest rate of sales in the ME in 2019, a delegation from Nestle visited Food Choice headquarters last month where it presented a special trophy to Fares and discussed further cooperation.



Marwan Fares

TIES Centre

The TIES Center cordially invites you to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) tomorrow, Monday, December 16th, at 7pm. In that class, we will focus on verses 9 and 10 of Surat Al-Mujadilah (She who Argued).

We will discuss why it is said that Islamic injunctions give us life, examine true reliance on Allah (SWT), and its conditions and benefits.

We will also discuss the importance of social norms such as the impressibility of engaging in a private conversation when in the company of others, and learn Ibn Umar's solution for speaking privately with someone while he was with another person.

We will also discuss why hypocrisy was prevalent in Medina, unlike Makkah, examine the various ploys the Devil uses to tempt humans to sin, and learn when to be discrete about our plans and good deeds. Come and learn more about the Book of Allah (SWT) in a serene, friendly and encouraging environment.

IWG visits National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters



Mrs Anita de Vogel, President of the International Women's Group (IWG) accompanied by members of the IWG Board paid a courtesy visit to National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) on Tuesday 10 December 2019. Kamel Suleiman Al-Abduljalil, Secretary-General of NCCAL accorded them a warm welcome and showed great hospitality.

RCCG Grace Sanctuary holds 'Christmas Carol'

It was an awesome moment at the Redeemed Christian Church of God Church (Grace Sanctuary) as Christians from different denominations celebrate Christ in a unique way. The program featured Christian songs, bible study, drama and worship songs - as Christians from different countries worship and celebrate the birth of Christ in their own languages. In his message, the host pastor Jolly Joe Nwaluka urged Christians to follow the footsteps of Christ. He praised the Kuwait leadership for promoting religious tolerance and peace in the region.



Representing a group of Kuwaiti women, Narjis Al-Shatti recently signed a contract with the Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Kuwait and representative of a charity organization in her country, Ayesha Tomas to dig a number of water wells in a number of villages with limited fresh water supplies in Sierra Leone. Digging will start by the beginning of next year and all the wells, due to be launched in April, would be named after Kuwait.

Health & Science

This little piggy went to court: German piglets 'sue over castration'

BERLIN: Little piggies go to market, but in Germany they also go to court. In a legal first, animal rights activists have asked Germany's top court to ban the practice of castrating young male pigs without anaesthetic — with the piglets themselves listed as the plaintiffs.

The painful procedure has become increasingly controversial in Europe and has been banned in Sweden, Norway and Switzerland. Farmers argue that the castration of piglets a few days after birth is necessary to prevent "boar taint," the occasional occurrence of a foul smell when cooking pork from male pigs past puberty.

The German parliament outlawed castration without pain relief in 2013 but it offered farmers a five-year transition period to help them adapt to the change — a timeline that was extended last year until 2021. Outraged by the inaction, the PETA campaign group filed a lawsuit with Germany's Constitutional Court in November on behalf of the baby pigs.

The group wants judges to recognize that pigs have rights similar to human rights and that these are being violated by the "cruel act" of castration without pain relief. "Non-human entities like companies and associations have legal personhood. So why not animals too?" said lawyer Cornelia Ziehm, who is supporting PETA in representing the piglets in court.

'Little chance of succeeding'

PETA argues that under German law, animals cannot be harmed without reasonable explanation. "The castration of piglets — with or without anaesthesia — is in clear violation of this, giving Germany's male

piglets only one option: to sue for the enforcement of their rights in court," the group said in a statement. The crux of the case is their argument that in Germany "everyone" (jedermann) can file a constitutional complaint if they believe their basic rights have been violated — even a pig. But Jens Buelte, a law professor at Mannheim university, doubted whether the judges in Karlsruhe would see it the same way. "Animals do not have their own rights under German law," he said, giving PETA's lawsuit "little chance of succeeding."

Monkey selfie

It is not the first time campaign groups have filed a case on behalf of animals. PETA made global headlines in 2015 when it asked an American court to grant a macaque the copyright to a selfie it snapped on a wildlife photographer's camera. The picture of the broadly grinning monkey went viral but the court eventually ruled that animals cannot bring copyright infringement suits.

PETA condemned the verdict, saying the monkey was "discriminated against simply because he's a non-human animal." However, in Argentina in 2016 a judge ordered Cecilia the chimpanzee to be released from Mendoza Zoo after agreeing with activists that she was entitled to basic rights and her solitary confinement was unlawful.

Alternatives

German farmers, who remove testicles from roughly 20 million piglets each year, have long

resisted the push to end castration without anaesthesia. They say there is a lack of workable alternatives to tackle boar taint, in an industry already struggling with fierce foreign competition.

Local anaesthesia and gene editing are not yet viable or too expensive, they say, and would raise the cost of pork in a country famous for its love of schnitzel and sausage. The government agreed in late 2018 to give the farmers a final two-year extension before the ban takes effect — a decision decried by the opposition Greens and far-left Die Linke, who

argued it put the interests of the meat industry above animal protection. Some German pork producers are pinning their hopes on a vaccine that requires just two injections to prevent boar taint — already a popular alternative abroad. A pilot project involving 100,000 German piglets is currently ongoing, though critics say the vaccines are costly too. A similar debate is raging in France, where agriculture minister Didier Guillaume recently said castration of piglets without pain relief should be banned by the end of 2021. — AFP

Malaysia to work with UNICEF on polio vaccination

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's health authorities yesterday said they are working with UNICEF to bring polio vaccines to the state of Sabah in Malaysian Borneo, where the country's first polio case in nearly three decades was detected last week.

A three-month-old infant was diagnosed with polio on Dec 6 after being admitted to hospital with a fever and muscle weakness, the first such case since 1992. It comes after the Philippines, north of Borneo, reported its first cases of polio since 1993 in September.

Malaysia's health ministry had said the child was

infected with a polio strain that shared genetic links with the virus detected in the Philippines. "We are planning to work with the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, to get vaccine supply at a low cost for an immunization program for non-citizen children in Sabah," Director-General of Health Noor Hisham Abdullah said in a statement.

Noor Hisham said the plan is to have UNICEF subsidize the cost of the vaccines, and to administer the vaccinations with the help of selected non-governmental organizations and the Philippines government.

No new cases have been detected so far, though authorities are still waiting for the results of stool samples taken from people who had close contact with the infant and the surrounding area where the child lived, Noor Hisham said. "The health ministry would like to stress that the best way to eradicate polio is through immunization. Contagious diseases such as polio know no boundaries," Noor Hisham said. — Reuters

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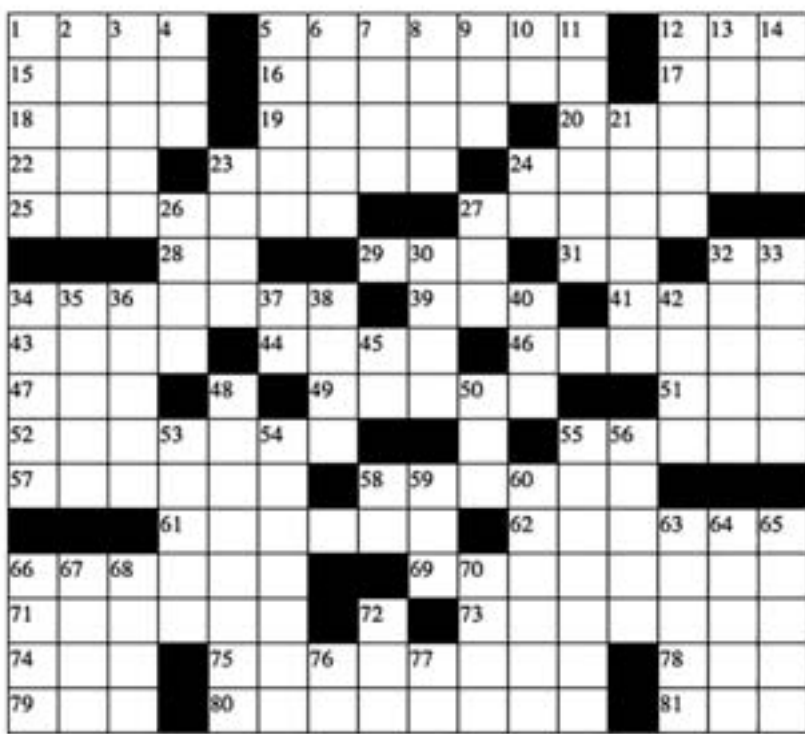
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2386



ACROSS

1. Long green edible beaked pods of theokra plant.
5. An ardent early supporter of a cause or reform.
12. A period of time spent sleeping.
15. Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
16. Sometimes placed in family Convallariaceae.
17. Used of a single unit or thing.
18. Japanese army officer who initiated the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and who assumed dictatorial control of Japan during World War II.
19. A tract of land with few or no trees in the middle of a wooded area.
20. A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.
22. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
25. Covered patchily.
28. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
29. A member of the genus Canis (probably descended from the common wolf) that has been domesticated by man since prehistoric times.
31. A soft silvery metallic element.
34. Diffusing warmth and friendliness.
39. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
41. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
43. The actions and activities assigned to or required or expected of a person or group.
44. German organist and contrapuntist (1685-1750).
46. A member of the Algonquian people of Maine and southern Quebec.
47. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
49. Place (seeds) in the ground for future growth.
51. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
52. Any of a group of proteases that mediate apoptosis.
57. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
61. Grammatical number category referring to two or more items or units.
62. A state in northwestern North America.
66. Ski downhill.
69. Being in a state of proper balance or equilibrium.
71. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
73. Tropical American tree with large peltate leaves and hollow stems.
74. Standard time in the 7th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 105th meridian west.
75. Lacking gonads.
78. A decree that prohibits something.
79. The basic unit of money in Bulgaria.
80. The fleshy part of the human body that you sit on.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. The cardinal number that is the sum of seven and one.
2. The basic unit of money in Sweden.
3. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
4. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
5. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
6. Thrown together in a pile.
7. Toward the mouth or oral region.
8. Large genus of tropical shrubs or herbs some of which yield fibers of mucilaginous substances.
9. Having a toe or toes of a specified kind.
10. A long-playing phonograph record.
11. In an unnatural cery manner.
12. An extreme state of adversity.
13. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
14. English Quaker who founded the colony of Pennsylvania (1644-1718).
21. Pertaining to or resembling amoebae.
23. Divulge information or secrets.
24. A state in north central United States.
26. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
27. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
30. An island of central Hawaii (between Molokai and Kauai).
32. Large dark brown North American arboreal carnivorous mammal.
33. Goat-like antelope of central Eurasia having a stubby nose like a proboscis.
35. Marine microorganism having a calcareous shell with openings where pseudopods protrude.
36. Tastelessly showy.
37. 16 ounces.
38. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
40. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
42. A demon who swallows the sun causing eclipses.
45. A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
48. A town in southeastern New Mexico on the Pecos River near the Mexican border.
50. A crystalline rock that can be cut and polished for jewelry.
53. A Pacific island north of Australia.
54. Highly seasoned minced meat stuffed in casings.
55. Possible to sell.
56. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
58. An informal term for a father.
59. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
60. Of or relating to the palm of the hand.
63. A device (trade name Aqua-Lung) that lets divers breathe under water.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. (law) A comprehensive term for any proceeding in a court of law whereby an individual seeks a legal remedy.
68. A television system that has more than the usual number of lines per frame so its pictures show more detail.
70. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
72. A son who has the same first name as his father.
76. A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.
77. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You know who and what are the priorities in your life. Your sense of appreciation is heightened. This is a time you are able to beam with pride when you look at your life situation. You are highly respected and others admire you for what a success you have become. Be sure to appreciate the fact that others seem to always look to you for advice and guidance. Remember to take time for you. You may tend to take the problems of those you love to personally. You can not carry the weight of the world on your shoulders alone. Spend time this evening to unwind. This could prevent you from becoming overwhelmed.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This seems to be a time of great focus on your relationship. You may find yourself searching for and discovery all of the beauty this world has to offer. You find beauty in your surroundings each today, but today you have a greater appreciation for it. This is a very satisfying experience for you. Peace and harmony are great desires in your world and you are entering a phase where you will feel this way often. You may find that your relationships are the key to your emotional success. You may find yourself surrounded with love and support today. Focus on your loved one today and you may find this is where your needs will be fed.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may feel an emotional distance to your loved ones at this time. You are deeply focused on your ideas at this time. Personal concerns are trivial to you as your level of thinking and focus deepens to that which is new, edgy, and unusual. An abstract way of thinking. You are fascinated by the more eccentric things in life. You may find that you are surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals as you have no tolerance for those who do not appreciate your points of views on matters. Within the company of these individuals you find your communication skills to be on point today and feel as if you are in your element.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Everything is going your way. It is your time to shine. You may feel as if the world is revolving around you. Enjoy each breath you take. Live life to the fullest and seek the beauty in all that surrounds you. You are beaming with pride and a sense of accomplishment and others will be drawn to you today. Enjoy this feeling and spread joy wherever you go.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are full of wit. A very eccentric side of you shines through. You may have insights and breakthroughs. This is a very enlightening time in your life. New beginnings are on the horizon. You may experience a breakthrough concerning your living situation. This is a great time to follow your gut feeling and take action. Your independence and unique qualities seem to draw others in. You may find yourself surrounded by those who admire you today.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

People are attracted to your non-judgmental attitude. You always give the benefit of the doubt. This leads people to trust you when you make suggestions for change or improvement. Your friends and coworkers all know they can depend on you to come through for them. The downside may be that you don't see character flaws. This can lead to deep disappointments. Don't change your attitude Virgo. It's a valuable asset. Just watch for the clues.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are ready to get serious about taking care of you! Meal planning seems to appeal to you. Organized and healthy are a great combination. You feel great about yourself and about who you are. It is time to take the new healthy you to a new level. You have previously made small changes and now you are ready to dive head first into a new lifestyle. Join the gym, take the walk, get up and get going. Changes now will bring great reward in the future. Live out loud.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find yourself tense and anxious about a situation you have found yourself in. You may feel under pressure and feel somewhat anxious. This may lead to you mentally checking out. You may use this as a coping mechanism for the stress you are under. An out of body feeling in a dreamy state may be the way your mind chooses to handle this conflict. Others may not be fond of this side of you and this could result in conflict with someone close to you. You will find your way and through your ability to get to the root of your problems, this too will be solved. Scorpio. You may find a negative result from the escape you take from reality as it may cause an opportunity you have been hoping for to pass you by.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may find yourself feeling emotionally detached from your surroundings. Ideas are what are important to you now. You may not have tolerance and find yourself distancing yourself from those who do not see things this way. You seem to be drawn to all that is unusual and a bit on the eccentric side. From the way you are beginning to think to the material possessions you wish to acquire, your taste is changing. You have a desire to travel and are focused on your relationships with friends and those who are in your social circle. Pay close attention to any red flags that seem to appear. Do not ignore these signs as they may be just the encouragement you need to take a detour and avoid some type of conflict or setback.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be feeling a need for change. A deep desire for emotional security takes hold now and you feel your most content when surrounded by family and those closest to you. Relationships are a priority in your world now. You feel as if things in your life are monotonous and you are ready to spice things up. This may mean a shiny new car purchase, a vacation, or simply surrounding yourself with a new group of friends. Any direction you choose, this will be a time of excitement and give you a fresh start and a more focused outlook. We all need a bit of change from time to time. Keep life interesting and exciting.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Details are important today. Be aware of what you say. Be sure anything you put on social media communicates what you intended. Words can be misinterpreted, and you may not have an opportunity to correct a misunderstanding. Written words are a permanent record, and they can come back to haunt you. Relationships can be permanently damaged because the reader did not get the message that was intended. Choose your words wisely today.



Pisces (February 19-March 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, Pisces. Don't worry. They will grow to love the new you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

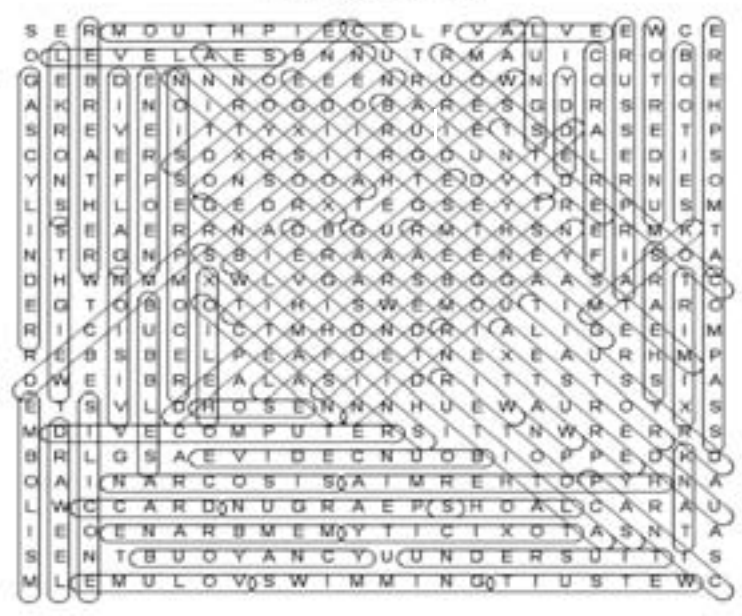
Sewing

Find and circle all of the Sewing words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an old saying.



- | | | | |
|------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| AWL | HEM | PINS | SPOOL |
| BOBBIN | HOOCS | QUILTING | STITCH |
| BUTTONS | LACE | RIBBON | TAILOR |
| CLOTH | MAGNIFYING GLASS | SCISSORS | TAPE MEASURE |
| DARNING | MENDING | ROTARY CUTTER | TEARS |
| DRESSMAKER | NEEDLES | SEAMSTRESS | THIMBLE |
| ELASTIC | PATCH | SHEARS | THREAD |
| EMBROIDERY | PATTERN | SNAPS | TRACING PAPER |
| EYES | PENCIL | | TRACING WHEEL |
| FABRIC | PINCUSHION | | ZIPPER |
| GROMMETS | | | |

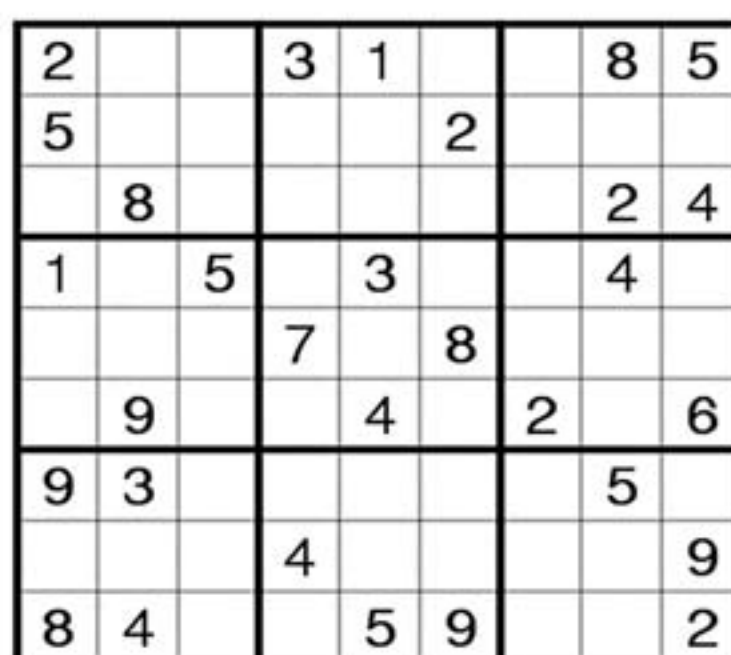
SCUBA Diving



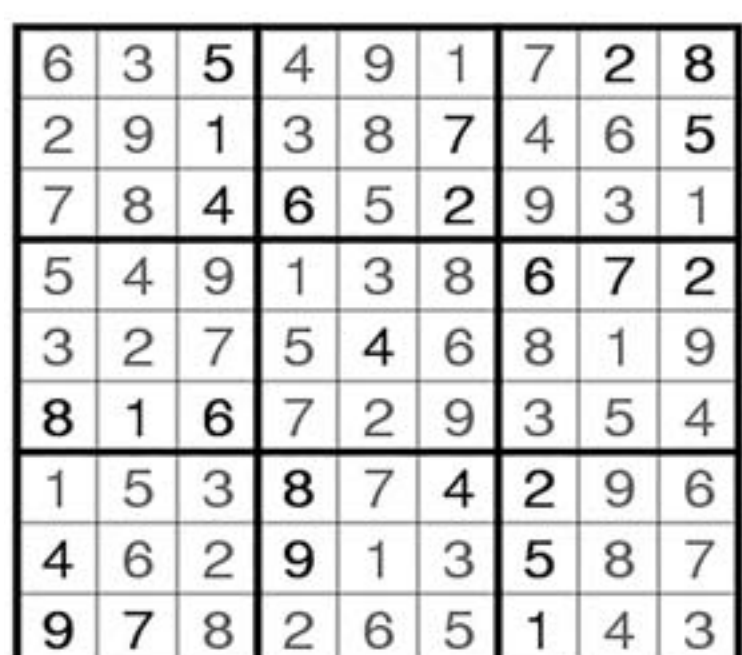
- | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| AIR PRESSURE | CURRENT | HYPOTHERMIA | RECOMPRESSION | TIDE |
| ALTITUDE DIVING | DECOMPRESSION | LEEWARD | REGULATOR | TOXICITY |
| ANKIOSA | DEPTH GAUGE | LUNGS | SCOOTER | TRIMIX |
| BAROTRAUMA | DIVE COMPUTER | MASK | SEA LEVEL | UNDERSEA |
| BOTTLES | DIVE FLAG | NEMBRANE | SHEARS | UNDERSTUT |
| BOUNCE DIVE | DIVE MESH/SHAL | MOUTHPIECE | SILICONE | UNDERTOW |
| BUBBLES | DRYSUIT | NARCOSIS | SILICONE | VALVE |
| BUDDY SYSTEM | EDDY | NEOPRENE | SNORKEL | VISION |
| BUOYANCY | EMERGENCY | NITROGEN | SPEAK GLUN | VOLUME |
| C CARD | GAS CYLINDER | OCEAN | STROBE | WATER |
| COMPASS | GAS MIXTURE | DYNGEN | SWIM FINS | WEIGHT BELT |
| COMPRESSOR | GIANT STRIDE | EMERGENCY | SWIMMING | WEIGHTS |
| CORAL REEF | HELIUM | HOSE | REBREATHER | WETSUIT |
| | | | THE BENDS | WINDWARD |

The hidden message is: SELF CONTAINED UNDERWATER BREATHING APPARATUS

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019



Miss World 2018, Mexico's Vanessa Ponce de Leon crowns Miss World 2019 Miss Jamaica Toni-Ann Singh during the Miss World Final 2019.— AFP photos

Miss Jamaica crowned Miss World



Newly crowned Miss World 2019 Miss Jamaica Toni-Ann Singh poses for a photograph with her father and her mother during the Miss World Final 2019.

Jamaican psychology student Toni-Ann Singh was crowned Miss World 2019 Saturday at a ceremony in London, with Miss France and Miss India runners-up in the beauty pageant. "To that little girl in St. Thomas, Jamaica and all the girls around the world - please believe in yourself," Singh, 23, tweeted. "Please know that you are worthy and capable of achiev-

ing your dreams. This crown is not mine but yours. You have a PURPOSE," she wrote. Singh was crowned by last year's winner, Mexican Vanessa Ponce de Leon. Singh is the fourth Jamaican to win the title. France's Ophely Mezino and India's Suman Rao were the runners-up.— AFP

Miss Mexico Ashley Alvidrez performs during the Miss World Final 2019.



Lifestyle | Gossip



Stormzy, Maya Jama texting once again

The 26-year-old rapper and Maya, 25, split earlier in 2019 - but Stormzy recently addressed their break-up on his track 'Lessons' and they're now said to be texting each other once again. An insider told The Sun on Sunday newspaper's Biz on Sunday column: "Stormzy has been texting Maya. He knew that he would bring their relationship centre stage again by releasing a track about it, and he felt it was right to reach out." People close to the high-profile duo remain hopeful that they'll rekindle their romance in the future. The source added: "Now they are getting on

well again, and their close friends are hoping they might give their relationship another chance." Stormzy recently confessed to having "publicly disrespected" Maya, saying he felt he needed to address the summer split in his music because she deserved a "public apology". He said: "That's something we shared and it's on a public forum, everything happened so publicly. It was a hot topic and I'm going on record now and I'm apologizing. "I'm trying to lay it all bare and be very truthful and be very clear in my truth.

Daisy Ridley was left in 'utter fear' by stalkers



The 27-year-old actress - who plays the role of Rey in the 'Star Wars' franchise - has become one of Hollywood's most recognizable stars in recent years, but she's also experienced the darker side of fame. Daisy explained: "I've had a couple of stalking incidents and absolutely nothing can prepare you for the absolute fear you feel." The first one was in New York a couple of years back when this really big guy followed me back to my hotel late at night. I didn't know if he was just an obsessive fan or somebody with bad intentions, but any girl is going to be freaked out. "I started screaming and he ran away. But I can remember the utter fear that came over me. "I had to have some therapy after that, it really scared me." Daisy has occasionally wondered what her life would've become if she hadn't been cast as Rey. Speaking to The Sun on Sunday newspaper, Daisy explained: "I wouldn't change my 'Star Wars' experience for the world, but you do wonder, 'Would this have happened if I wasn't in the films?' "Star Wars' is the biggest franchise on the planet, and you know when you are a part of something so big that life is going to change.

PRINCE LOUIS - A BIG FAN OF MARY BERRY

The seven-month-old royal - who is the youngest child of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge - has become familiar with the popular TV star and food writer through her appearances on the BBC and various cooking books. Speaking to Mary, the Duchess of Cambridge - who is set to appear alongside her husband and Mary in a BBC festive special - shared: "One of Louis' first words was 'Mary', because right at his height are all my cooking books in the kitchen. "And children are really fascinated by faces, and your faces are all over your cooking books

and he would say, 'That's Mary Berry'. So he would definitely recognize you if he saw you." The Duke and Duchess are also both fans of Mary, who is best known for starring on 'The Great British Bake Off'. Meanwhile, it was recently revealed that the Duke encourages his children to treat each other equally. The 37-year-old royal - who also has Prince George, six, and Princess Charlotte, four, with his wife - likes to ensure his kids play fair when they take part in games.



Ashley Graham doesn't care about pregnancy weight gain

The 32-year-old model has gained 50 lbs during her pregnancy, but Ashley - who is around one month away from her due date - has embraced her new figure. The brunette beauty - who is one of the world's best-known models - wrote on Instagram: "Throughout my pregnancy so far I've gained 50lbs. And the best part is, I don't care! I have never felt better, and I am so thankful that my body and son have allowed me to be as mobile and flexible as I have been. Between working out, yoga, acupuncture and lymphatic massages- I finally feel like I figured out this whole pregnancy thing and how to feel my best. (sic)" Earlier this month, Ashley - who has been married to movie director Justin Ervin since 2010 - compared her pregnancy to a daily "sci-film". Ashley described herself as "large and in charge", and joked that her unborn baby was "like a little alien taking over" her stomach. Appearing on 'The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon', she joked: "It's like a little sci-fi film every day. "There's like a little alien taking over my stomach, and I swear he's on a treadmill, and like, one day, he's just gonna be running out of me. At least that's what I'm hoping."

Simon Cowell 'won't have another child'



The 60-year-old music mogul is a doting dad to five-year-old Eric - who he has with his girlfriend Lauren Silverman - but his long-time pal and former girlfriend can't see the 'X Factor: The Band' judge having any more kids because he's so "fulfilled and satisfied" with his little boy. Speaking to Closer magazine, she said: "I honestly don't know if Simon will have more children. I think he's so in love with Eric, and he's so fulfilled and satisfied, that there just isn't any love left. "He's completely besotted with Eric. Simon was always a softie - I've always said that to people." The 'So Macho' singer dated Simon on-and-off for 20 years but she's admitted the jealousy she

used to experience when she saw him with other women is no longer an issue. She said: "I used to suffer with jealousy sometimes, which is why Simon and I would always break up. But once you transition into the friend zone, there's nothing to argue about or get upset about anymore." The 56-year-old singer - who has adopted children Magdalena, 14, and Zac, 13, with ex-husband Andy Willner - doesn't believe her former flame has changed over the years. She said: "Simon is a really, really loyal friend. I mean, we've been friends for decades and he's still exactly the same person - the same sense of humor and everything. He didn't change with fame."

Cardi B gifted Offset \$500,000 for birthday

The 'Bodak Yellow' hitmaker dropped the hefty sum of money to mark her husband's 28th birthday on Saturday. Taking to his Instagram stories to post a video of the stacks of money, he said: "Bday gift 500K from my wife ... Man, this is my birthday gift. This girl is crazy." To surprise Offset with the present, Cardi put the money in the bridge. She said: "You got every car, you got every jewellery, you got everything. What else can I give someone that got everything ... the fridge!" When Offset tried to refuse the money, Cardi insisted to him: "I know I don't have to give you the money but I don't know what to give you, so I suppose I give

you the money. You could buy a car, you could buy more clothes, you could buy jewellery, you could buy me more Birkin bags. S**t, you could do whatever the f**k you want. I love you, muah. (sic)" Cardi previously revealed she decided to stay with her husband Offset after he was unfaithful to her because she "believes in forgiveness". She explained: "When me and my husband got into our issues - you know, he cheated and everything - and I decided to stay with him and work together with him, a lot of people were so mad at me: a lot of women felt disappointed in me. But it's real-life s**t.



Kim Kardashian West want 'relaxed' family Christmas card

The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star decided to just include her immediate family - her husband Kanye West and their kids, Psalm, seven months, Chicago, 23 months, Saint, four, and North, six - after last year's card caused so much stress. A source told People magazine: "It's been difficult for them for years to get everyone together for a Christmas card. Last year when Kim organized it, there was a lot of complaining. It really stressed her out. She was over the drama and decided to do one for just her family this year. She knew fans wanted to see her whole family together, so it was important for her to share a

special photo. The photo was taken at their house and it was just a relaxed event. No one was stressed, the kids were happy and it was perfect. Kanye is not a fan of glitz so this is why they are dressed casually." Kim released her family Christmas card on Friday, which sees the family of six dressed in casual grey outfits. Last year, fans were worried they wouldn't get the annual card as there had been talks about whether the famous family would or wouldn't be posing for the photo shoot alongside their children following the drama of 2018.



PAKISTAN FAISAL MOSQUE

A contemporary Islamic architectural wonder

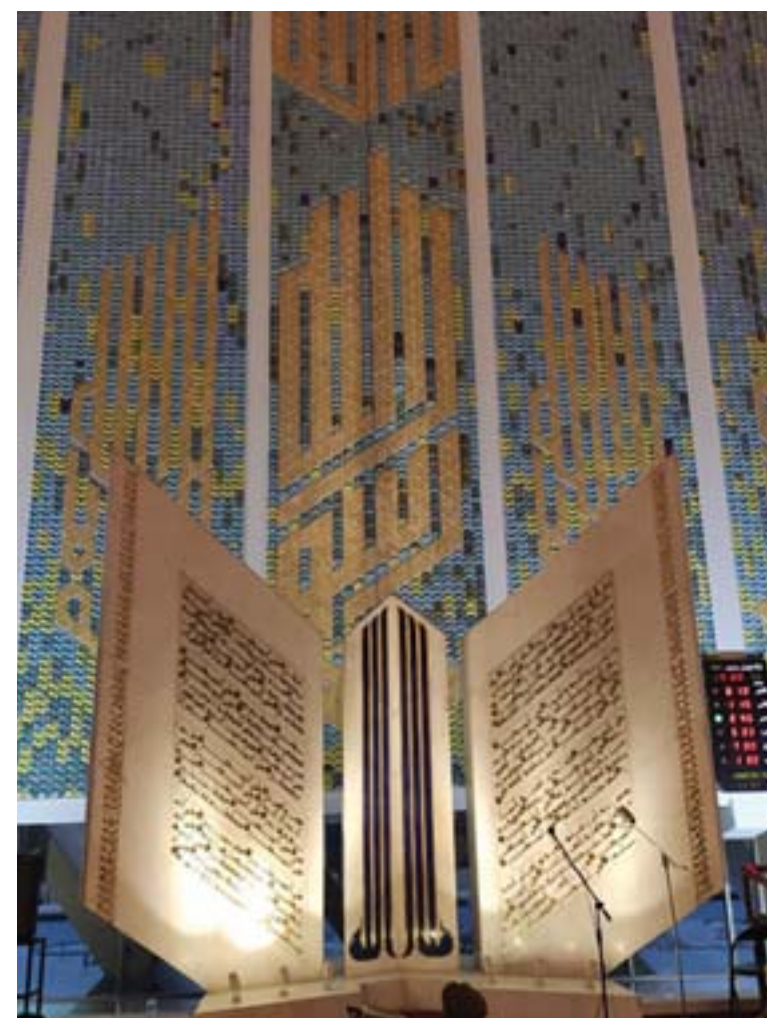


Pakistan's 'Faisal Mosque', located by Margalla Hills in capital city Islamabad, is reflective of the contemporary and influential feature of modern Islamic architecture, attracting foreign and local tourists with its eye-pleasing features. Faisal Mosque, the largest in Pakistan, has a post-traditional feeling to it due to its exquisite architectural feature.

Named after the Saudi King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the construction of the mosque began in 1976 with a generous grant from Saudi Arabia. King Faisal's successor King Khaled bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud laid the foundation stone for the mosque in October 1976 and signed the construction agreement on 1978. The combined struc-

ture covers an area of 54,000 square feet making it the fourth largest mosque in the world in terms of capacity.

The Faisal Mosque was the largest mosque in the world from 1986 until 1993. In 1969, an international competition was held in which architects from 17 countries submitted 43 proposals. The unconventional design by Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay was selected in the international competition. Without a typical dome, the mosque is shaped like a Bedouin tent, surrounded by four 90-meter-tall minarets, the tallest in South Asia. — KUNA



Behind the glitz, Nigerian entertainers struggle to cash in

Fake eyelashes fluttered, bespoke suits were on display and slick music videos played at the inaugural edition of The Entertainment Fair and Festival in Nigeria's economic hub Lagos in late November. But behind the glitter, the reality of the film and music sectors in Africa's most populous nation can often be far less glamorous: wages are low, there are no social protections and copyright law is rarely enforced.

That comes despite the country boasting the second most productive film industry in the world and some of Africa's biggest pop stars. Hits by singers like Burna Boy, Wizkid and Davido play non-stop on stations across the continent and Nollywood churns out some 2,500 movies each year. Despite the successes, revenues from Nigeria's entertainment and media sector in 2018 lagged well behind that of the continent's other leading economic powerhouse South Africa at \$4.5 billion compared to \$9.1 billion, PwC said.

That difference is not down to output or demand as Nigeria produces more, exports more and has a domestic market of some 200 million people, four times bigger than South Africa. Instead industry insiders insist it is a problem of organization. South Africa has better systems for ensuring roy-

alty payments for artists, stronger legal protections and more modern facilities such as film studios, concert venues and cinemas.

'Not taken seriously'

In a bid to help remedy the issues facing the industry, veteran Nollywood star Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde came up with the first entertainment business fair, known as TEFFEST. It is aimed at bringing together actors, singers, producers, insurers, lawyers and managers to better organize the sector. "The entertainment industry has grown without structures, without a roof," Jalade-Ekeinde, nicknamed "Omo Sexy" said.

"For decades, we were not taken seriously and the big corporation companies didn't consider us." The situation has changed as the industry has grown and now companies like Netflix are looking to step up their involvement in Nollywood and international labels attempting to tap Afropop stars.

"We produced, we grew, we became something suddenly and now the corporate world is trying to understand how we work and how they can deal with us," Jalade-Ekeinde, AKA "the Queen of Nollywood", said. But the problems riddling the industry

means it is often difficult to invest. "There is nothing to celebrate here," said Efe Omoregbe, manager of singer 2Face and former board member of the Copyright Society of Nigeria (COSON), which was dissolved by the government due to an internal conflict.

"We should be fixing and addressing major structural issues (...) We live in a culture of abuse when it comes to copyrights," PwC estimates that 80 percent of the pirate CDs globally can be found in Nigeria and singer Brymo says that in almost 20 years performing he has never received any money from his songs playing on local radio stations. "Internationally, we make money through digital distribution platforms that have taken over rapidly, but locally it's mostly with gigs or endorsement deals," he said.

Contracts or handshakes

Lawyer Simeon Okoduwa said he tries to insist on artists signing a contract with producers before working with them. "Too many film shoots or recordings are still done based on promises and handshakes," he said. This is an issue that leading actor Michelle Dede knows only too well. The star always demands a written contract before starting her next film-and says the

largest production companies now do offer written contracts as standard. "Before producers thought I was being pretentious," she said.

Despite the improvements she still decries the lack of protections for performers or a minimum wage for actors and others involved in the industry such as make-up artists, cameramen and technicians. Nollywood is a vast employer in Nigeria-with some estimates saying it offers jobs to one million people-but much of that is very precarious. "We make more money on building a brand than acting," said Dede. "But I shouldn't be focusing on how many likes I get on Instagram, I should be working on my roles."

Despite the drawbacks, the entertainment industry is still a major draw in a country where almost half the population live in extreme poverty. But Dede said she still has no regret of leaving her job in marketing in London to launch herself in Nollywood. "Nothing makes me happier than acting," she said. "Even though the pay is not good, there is no way I would give up on that." — AFP

Tunisian women perform Chilean song against rape

Around 60 Tunisian women on Saturday performed the feminist flash-mob song "The rapist is you!", a Chilean creation that went global, in front of the seat of government in Tunis. "We are here to denounce all forms of violence... social, institutional (and) domestic violence" said participant Shames Radouani. The Tunisian event comes as numerous women in the North African nation have complained of sexual harassment on social media, under the hashtag #EnaZeda — the local incarnation of the #MeToo movement.

The posts were sparked by a video that went viral in October showing a newly elected lawmaker allegedly masturbating outside a school. The footage was shot by a young girl. The lawmaker, Zouheir Makhlouf, said he is diabetic and had been urinating into a bottle. He walked free after being investigated for alleged sexual harassment and public indecency. Launched in late November in Chile by feminist collective Las Tesis, the anthem against violence "The rapist is you!" is a very visual dance, involving wearing a black blindfold and a scarf.

The women arrange themselves in line, singing their refusal to tolerate excuses for unwanted sexual advances, culminating in the words "the rapist is you!", sung with accusing fingers pointed forwards. The mobilization in Tunis on Saturday follows dozens of similar performances around the world, including in Paris, Madrid, Beirut and New York. —AFP



Photo shows pencak silat practitioners - a martial art indigenous to Southeast Asia, practice in Jakarta. The inclusion pencak silat on UNESCO's list of 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' practices was decided during a committee meeting in Bogota earlier in December 2019. — AFP photos

INDONESIAN MARTIAL ART PENCAK SILAT GETS UNESCO HERITAGE STATUS



Anwar bin Sholeh had something to cheer when he showed up at a Jakarta training centre to practice pencak silat - the Indonesian martial art was added to UNESCO's prestigious heritage list. "It's an honour that pencak silat has been recognized internationally," the 38-year-old, who has been practicing the art since elementary school said.

"This will motivate us to preserve our traditions and culture," he added. Dating back to as early as the 6th Century, one legend has it that the ancient martial art - which blends self-defense and artistic elements - originated after a woman watched a tiger do battle with a giant hawk, and copied their techniques to fight off a pestering group of drunken men.

The term pencak silat describes hundreds of indigenous combat styles in Southeast Asia, with fighters wielding a terrifying array of weapons such as knives, sickles and machetes. It has gained greater awareness outside Indonesia after being featured in Star Wars and John Wick films in recent years. "I'm glad that Pencak Silat is now not only recognized in Hollywood," said practitioner Rian Irawan bin Maswan Hasan. "It's a unique martial art because it is not only for health and self defense, but it also builds solidarity and brotherhood among its members," he added.

The inclusion on UNESCO's list of "Intangible Cultural Heritage" practices was decided during a committee meeting in Bogota last week. "In addition to their sporting element, traditions of Pencak Silat also encompass mental-spiritual, self-defense and artistic aspects," the United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization said. "The moves and styles of Pencak Silat are strongly influenced by various elements of art, involving a unity of body and movement fitting the accompanying music."

The martial art was featured at last year's Asian Games, where host Indonesia swept the gold medal tally. Traditional Pencak Silat covers a broad range of styles and can be different from what appears in official sporting competitions with set rules. "Many tradition-based silat practitioners could not take part in those competitions because the standards are very different," said 43-year-old Hasan. Indonesian batik and Wayang puppet theatre are among the Southeast Asian nation's other entries on the UNESCO list. — AFP



Pencak silat practitioners spar during practice in Jakarta.



Pencak silat practitioners taking part in a session in Jakarta.



Pencak silat practitioners spar during practice in Jakarta.

Classifieds

Monday, December 16, 2019



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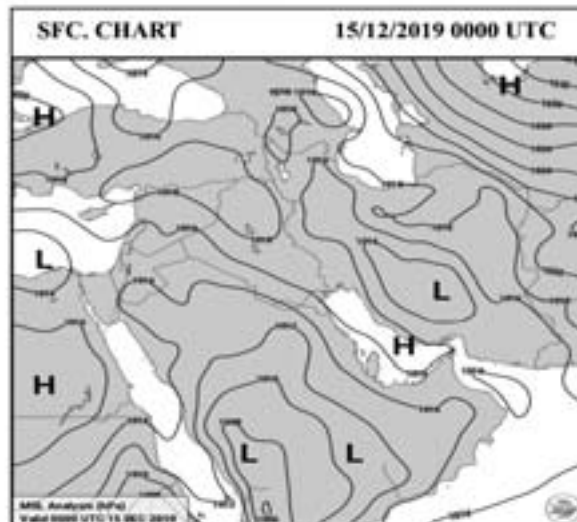
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy with light to moderate variable wind to light south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain over southern areas.

BY NIGHT: Rather cool and Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	15 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	11 °C
ABDALY	21 °C	10 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	12 °C
JAHRA	22 °C	12 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	19 °C	17 °C
AHMADI	21 °C	17 °C
NUWASIB	24 °C	15 °C
WAFRA	23 °C	12 °C
SALMY	20 °C	08 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	12/16	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	23 °C	14 °C	SE-NW	15 - 50 km/h
Tuesday	12/17	Mostly Sunny	21 °C	11 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	12/18	Mostly Sunny	20 °C	10 °C	NW	08 - 28 km/h
Thursday	12/19	Sunny	20 °C	09 °C	NW	10 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:10
Sunrise	06:34
Zuhr	11:43
Asr	14:33
Sunset	16:51
Isha	18:14

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	11 °C
MAX. RH	93 %
MIN. RH	38 %
MAX. Wind	NW 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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SUTHAN SUNIL SUNIL BHAVAN, S/o SUTHAN. Holder of Indian passport number N0423196 issued at Kuwait on 31/12/2015 and permanent address is SUNIL BHAVAN, West Of Pandavar Kavu Temple, Muthukulam North PO, Alappuzha, Kerala, and PIN 690560. I am residing in Kuwait at present, Hereby declare that Henceforth my name will be

FOR RENT

House for rent in Khaitan, Block 10, preferably for Indian investor
Tel: 65058800

read as under: Given name: SUNIL, Surname: SUNIL BHAVAN SUTHAN. (C 5477) 13-12-2019




Airlines

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

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Arrival Flights on Monday 16/12/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 16/12/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
PIA	239	Sialkot	00:05	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	JZR	115	Doha	13:00
JZR	716	Sohag	00:25	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	MSR	611	Cairo	13:25
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	781	Jeddah	13:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	105	London	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	504	Beirut	01:05	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:45
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:40	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	UAE	877	Dubai	15:40
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	KAC	773	Riyadh	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	675	Dubai	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SAV	501	Jeddah	16:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	541	Cairo	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:30
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:35
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	JZR	103	Bahrain	16:50
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	357	Kochi	17:35
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	619	Doha	17:35
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	FDB	052	Dubai	17:45
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
JZR	654	OSS	05:25	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	JZR	733	Doha	18:10
JZR	502	Lahore	05:35	JZR	715	Sohag	18:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:45	FEJ	374	Sohag	18:20
UAE	873	Dubai	05:50	SAV	511	Riyadh	18:20
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	301	Mumbai	18:35
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	KAC	381	Delhi	18:50
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:55
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	JZR	253	Amman	19:20
RBG	213	Sohag	07:10	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
FDB	120	Dubai	07:35	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
JZR	503	Dubai	07:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:10
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	622	Doha	08:30	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:25
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	058	Dubai	20:45
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:55	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	QTR	1091	Doha	21:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	21:45
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
QTR	8511	Doha	09:40	JZR	701	Asyut	22:15
JZR	1070	Doha	09:45	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	114	Doha	10:20	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KAC	783	Jeddah	23:15
KAC	352	Kochi	11:35	KAC	383	Delhi	23:20
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	KAC	543	Cairo	23:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	303	Mumbai	23:40
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	KAC	062	CNN	23:55
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:50				

Inked at the uprising: Iraq's teen tattoo artist

BAGHDAD: At 16, Maram is as old as the political system she and fellow Iraqi youth are railing against. But the spunky teen has her own way of protesting: inking tattoos. In the blue-tinted light inside a tarp tent, the petite teenager carefully moves her mechanized tattoo pen across the left shoulder of her skinny teenage friend. It's a sketch of Baghdad's Freedom Monument - a huge stone and bronze slab charting Iraq's path to a republic on Tahrir Square, the beating heart of Iraq's anti-government protests.

Its centerpiece is a dark figure with arms outstretched, wrenching apart a barrier. "I like to break down barriers," Maram Uday says, after filling in the miniature black version on her friend's bare shoulder. "It's not easy for people to accept this. Girls who tattoo typically work only in salons and on other girls," says Maram, who wears thick black eyeliner and a short, dramatic bob. "But I decided to leave behind the traditional because change is necessary."

The fine arts student and amateur model began tattooing eight months ago as a way to make some extra money. She joined the protests against government corruption and a lack of jobs in October and was so moved she drew a permanent memento on her left wrist. It reads "OCT 25," the date a second, continuous wave of demonstrations erupted in Baghdad and Iraq's Shiite-majority south.

'Plenty of memories'

Inspired, friends started lining up to get their own commemorative body art, which Maram draws for free. "There are people who decided to donate medicine or clothes, I decided to donate this," she tells AFP. She has drawn at least 15 protest-related tattoos, including "October 25," the Freedom Monument, and a gas mask of the type protesters use to protect themselves from volleys of tear gas canisters fired by security forces.

Youth make up around 60 percent of Iraq's 40 mil-

lion people - and about 100 percent of Maram's clients. She comes to Tahrir every morning with her portable tattoo kit, usually with a list of appointments booked through her Instagram page, which has over 80,000 followers. Hashem, 18, lifts his pale yellow shirt to show AFP the small gas mask tattoo he got on his right hip just a week ago - his first tattoo. "We have plenty of memories ... so I wanted to get a tattoo of it," he says. He has been in Tahrir for weeks and professes revolutionary rhetoric - but is still, at the end of the day, a teen. "I couldn't get one on my hand because my parents wouldn't accept it," he says sheepishly.

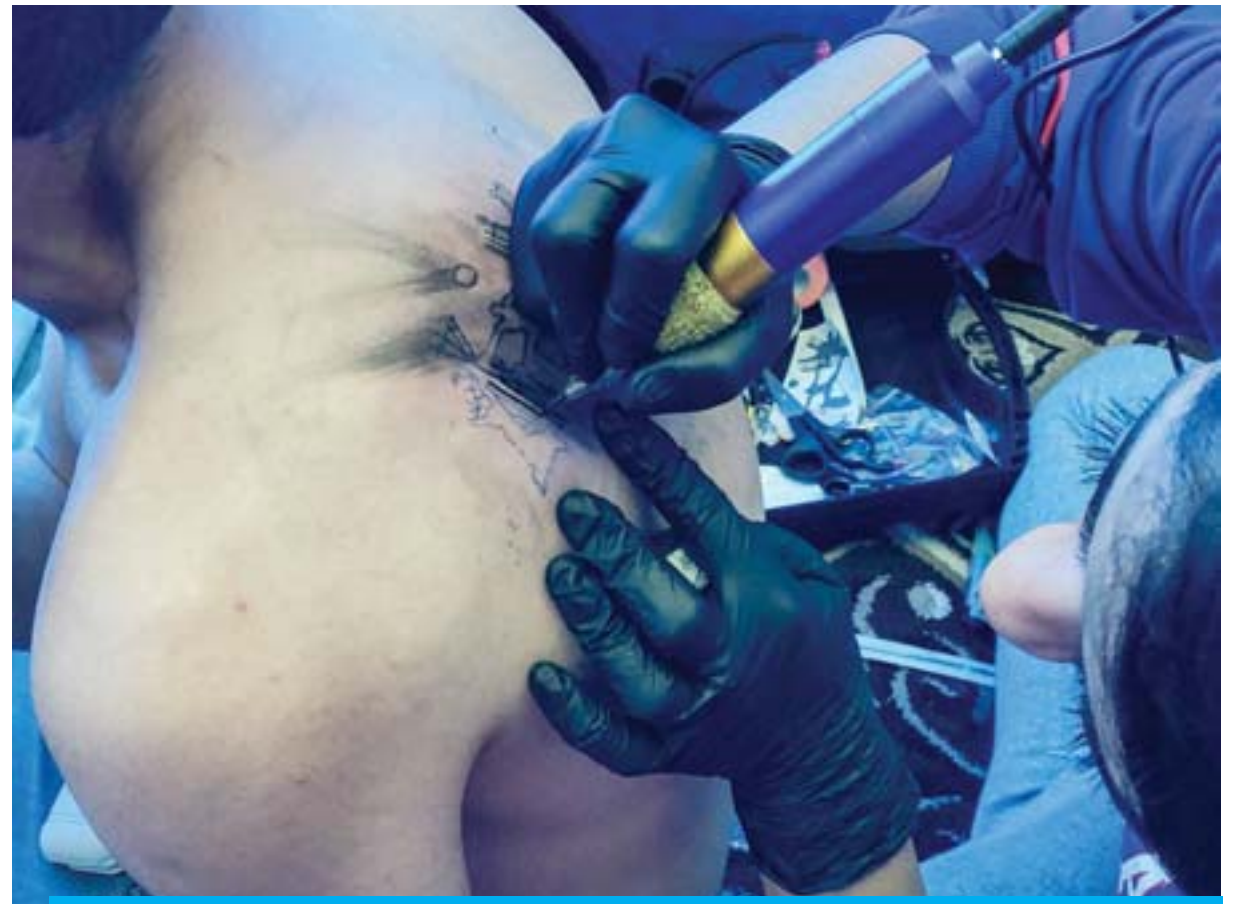
'A tattoo to remember'

The youth-dominated movement is unprecedented both for its spontaneity and resilience - but also for the violence with which it has been met. Around 460 people have died and 20,000 have been wounded, and all around Tahrir, small memorials have sprung up to commemorate them - murals bearing victims' names or small stands with personalized candles.

Maram's newest client, a 19-year-old who identified himself as "Crush," wanted a more permanent reminder of those who have given their lives. "I got it as a memento for my friends who died and were kidnapped," says Crush, gesturing to the fresh Freedom Monument on his shoulder. At 23, Mushtaq Taleb from the southern port city of Basra already sports more than a half-dozen tattoos on his arms.

His latest, on his right shoulder, is a compound image: The date of the uprising, a map of Iraq, and the Freedom Monument melting into two hands joined together in a stylized shape of a fist. "This tattoo represents the fact that the October 25 revolution erased something huge that the 16 past years couldn't erase: Sectarianism," says Taleb.

Among the Shiite-majority protesters on Tahrir are Sunni residents of other provinces and minority



BAGHDAD: An Iraqi man sits for a tattoo in the capital on Dec 9, 2019. — AFP

Christians, too - a large tent just a few doors down is adorned with pictures of Jesus. "I had to get this tattoo to remember," he tells AFP. "Tomorrow, the next day,

the next year, when we grow up, people will ask us, what's that tattoo? What happened? We have to explain what took place in this revolution." — AFP

Erdogan meets Libyan leader as tensions rise

ISTANBUL: Recep Tayyip Erdogan held talks with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez Al-Sarraj in Istanbul yesterday, just days after the Turkish leader said he was ready to send troops into Libya if requested by Tripoli. The closed-door meeting, which was not on Erdogan's official agenda, took place in Istanbul's Ottoman-era Dolmabahce Palace, the Turkish presidency said without giving details.

During the previous meeting between the two men, in Istanbul on November 27, the two countries agreed a deal on security and military cooperation, as well as maritime jurisdiction. The deal came despite calls from the Arab League - which includes Libya - to end cooperation with Turkey in protest at its military offensive against Kurdish forces in Syria.

Libya has been mired in chaos since a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE back Khalifa Haftar, a military strongman in eastern Libya who launched an offensive in April in a bid to seize the Tripoli from fighters loyal to the Government of National Accord (GNA) of which Sarraj is the prime minister.

Turkey and Qatar openly support the UN-recognized GNA. The November military deal was introduced in the Turkish parliament on Saturday. The maritime part of the deal expands Turkey's continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean. This is particularly important given the recent discovery of vast gas reserves that has triggered an exploration scramble between adjacent states and international oil companies.

The Turkey-Libya agreement was strongly condemned by several countries, including Greece and Cyprus. Erdogan declared on Tuesday that Turkey is prepared to send troops into Libya if requested. On Saturday his Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that there had not yet been any such request. In another sign of the Turkey-Libya rapprochement, Ankara announced on Saturday that Libyans younger than 16

or older than 55 would be allowed to enter Turkey without visas.

Strongman Haftar in April launched an assault to seize Tripoli. On Thursday, he announced a "decisive battle" to wrest the Libyan capital from the GNA government. GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha responded by saying his government was ready "to push back any mad attempt by the Haftar putsch leader".

Egypt, which has condemned the maritime deal as "illegal", urged other countries yesterday to stop intervening in Libya to enable the country to restore its own security and stability, in an apparent rebuke to Turkey. "... we have the ability to (intervene in Libya) but we haven't," Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi told a youth forum in the Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh.

Sisi expressed his support for "national armies" in Libya, an apparent reference to Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). Egypt is a regional rival of Turkey and one of the main backers of the LNA. In the past Egypt has carried out air strikes in Libya and has channeled material support to the LNA, according to UN experts.

Greece, which expelled the Libyan ambassador over the maritime boundary pact, has also condemned the

maritime accord and warned that Turkey is escalating tensions in the region. "Turkey must choose if it will follow the road of self-isolation, continuing to play the role of trouble-maker in the region, or behave like a good neighbour henceforth," Greece's deputy foreign minister, Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, told Sunday's Ethnos newspaper. Greece has also condemned new Turkish gas exploration off the coast of the divided island of Cyprus.

Yesterday, Israel's energy ministry told Reuters that a Turkish vessel had asked one of its research ships to leave an area where it was "legally located in Cyprus's commercial waters." Israeli and Turkish media said Turkey's navy escorted the ship away in the incident, which occurred two weeks ago.

According to the text of the military agreement sent to Turkish lawmakers, Tripoli could request vehicles, equipment and weapons for use in army, navy and air operations. It also provisions for new intelligence sharing. Utku Cakirozer, a lawmaker from Turkey's main opposition CHP and a member of the NATO parliamentary assembly, said it was "worrying" that Erdogan raised the prospect of sending troops and taking sides in the Libyan conflict. — Agencies

Israel eyes Dubai expo as 'portal'...

Continued from Page 1

gateway to ties with the broader Arab and Muslim world. But with the peace process frozen for years now, Netanyahu argues instead that building relations with Arab countries will push the Palestinians toward a peace deal with Israel.

The Israeli presence in Dubai "will create a buzz", said Cohen, noting that the lack of a peace agreement, or even process, with the Palestinians is still liable to draw the attention of at least some Arab visitors at the expo. The pavilion's display won't touch on politics, he added, instead "focusing on what Israel has to offer". Dore Gold, former director-general of the Israeli foreign ministry, said the "quasi-diplomatic presence" of the pavilion is one of several developments with "a cumulative effect".

He cited sporting competitions and the 2015 opening in Abu Dhabi of an Israeli mission to the International

Renewable Energy Agency, which is based there. "It's not normalization, but it's an enhanced presence," he said. While the Gulf Arab states have not lost interest in the Palestinian issue, "these countries are looking after themselves", Dore said, including enhancing security cooperation with Israel against Iran.

Gold, who heads the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs think-tank, said the expo was part of attempts to slowly publicize aspects of relations in the region not pertaining to security. "The name of the game is how to find joint interests that don't create a big stir," he said. "In any case, if you did public opinion surveys, you'd find that throughout most of the Gulf there's a kind of understanding that Israel's part of the region."

Diplomat Cohen and architect Knafo both noted the warm welcome they have received in the Gulf state, as work on the pavilion entered advanced stages and their visits to Dubai became more frequent. "The attitude of the hosts is excellent," Cohen said. "I didn't expect anything else but when you encounter it, it's heartwarming." The expo could be "a portal to a world that was blocked to us, and our pavilion is a portal to the Israeli experience at all its levels - scientific, cultural, human," said Knafo. — AFP

only for Brazil but to be an example for the rest of Latin America," the Brazilian lawmaker, who is also chairman of his parliament's foreign relations and national defense commission, said.

Speaking at the ceremony, Netanyahu noted "President Bolsonaro's commitment to open an embassy in Jerusalem next year". Netanyahu thanked Brazil for its support of Israel in international forums and noted recent bilateral aid the Jewish state provided to cope with natural disasters. "Israel was there, and Israel will always be there for the people of Brazil and for our common friendship," Netanyahu said. — AFP

envisages five planned ventures, execution of which remain in initial stages.

Overall expenditure on the envisioned projects in the first half of 2019-2020 amounted to KD 620 million (\$2 billion) against KD 1.8 billion (\$6.2 billion) during the same period of the 2018-2019 plan. Proportion of projects in executive phase in the 2019-2020 plan amounted to 56 percent compared to 59 percent in the 2018-2019 scheme and 53 percent in the 2017-2018 one. On challenges facing the execution, Mahdi said there were 212 administrative hurdles, 104 snags of financial nature, 161 technical obstacles, 85 issues with supervisory authorities and 19 for legal reasons. Up to 80 percent of these complications have been successfully tackled, he elaborated.

The number of strategic enterprises in the 2019-2020 plan reached 22, with annual financial allocations estimated at KD 2.7 billion (\$8.9 billion), 20.2 percent of which was spent by the end of the first half of the year. The strategic projects include four concerning high quality healthcare spending estimated at 9.68 percent, one on human creativity, 33.97 percent on spending and five on a sustainable living environment (8.05 percent). They also included six projects dealing with modern infrastructure (20.7 percent) and six on a sustainable and diverse economy with 22.73 percent expenditure.

6 dead in protests against Indian...

Continued from Page 1

(Congress supporters) are resorting to arson because they did not get their way."

Home Minister Amit Shah yesterday called again for calm, saying local cultures in northeastern states were not under threat. "Culture, language, social identity and political rights of our brothers and sisters from north-

UN climate talks a 'lost...'

Continued from Page 1

"Today, the citizens of the world are asking for us to move ahead faster and better," Carolina Schmidt, Chilean environment minister and President of COP25, told the closing plenary. But Tina Eonemto Stege, climate envoy for the Marshall Islands, denounced the response as inadequate for facing an existential threat of rising sea levels. "Unfortunately, the new text we adopted this morning does not reflect anything near what we would have wanted. It is the bare minimum and we regret that countries could not agree on a more ambitious text," Stege said.

Green youth activist Greta Thunberg - named 2019 Person of the Year by Time magazine - on Friday slammed world leaders for "still trying to run away from their responsibilities" while demanding a "year of action" in 2020. Following a year of deadly extreme weather and weekly protests by millions of young people, Madrid negotiators were under pressure to send a clear signal that governments were willing to double down.

The summit - moved at the last minute from Chile due to unrest - at times teetered on the brink of collapse as rich polluters, emerging powerhouses and climate-vulnerable nations groped for common ground in the face of competing national interests. "Based on the adopted text, there is a glimmer of hope that the heart of the Paris Agreement is still beating," Mohamed Adow, Director of Power Shift, said. "But its pulse is very weak."

Negotiators from nearly 200 nations came to Spain's capital with the aim of finalizing the rulebook for the 2015 Paris accord, which enjoins nations to limit global temperature to below two degrees Celsius. With the accord set to become operational next year, it had been hoped COP 25 would show the world that governments would be moved by protests, irrefutable science, and deadly storms and wildfires that marked 2019 to redouble their efforts.

east will remain intact," Shah added in Jharkhand, News18 television network reported him as saying. For Islamic groups, the opposition, rights activists and others in India, the new law is seen as part of Modi's Hindu-nationalist agenda to marginalize India's 200 million Muslims. He denies the allegation.

Rights groups and a Muslim political party are challenging the law in the Supreme Court, arguing that it is against the constitution and India's secular traditions. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ally in Assam, Asom Gana Parishad, which had supported the bill in parliament, told local media yesterday it now intended to challenge the law in the Supreme Court. — AFP

But greater ambition - how far each country is willing to slash carbon emissions or assist less wealthy peers to do likewise - has largely failed to materialize, leaving some veteran observers aghast. "Never have I seen such a disconnect between what the science requires and what the climate negotiations are delivering in terms of meaningful action," said Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy at the Union of Concerned Scientists and a 28-year veteran of the climate process. "Most of the world's biggest emitting countries are missing in action and resisting calls to raise their ambition."

The push for strengthening voluntary carbon cutting plans is led by small-island and least-developed states, along with the European Union. These have called out nations they see as blocking consensus - notably the United States, Australia and Saudi Arabia. China and India, the world's No. 1 and No. 4 carbon emitters, made it clear they see no need to improve on their current emissions reduction plans, which run to 2030.

These emerging giants chose instead to emphasize the historical responsibility of rich nations to lead the way and provide financing to poor countries. "Major players who needed to deliver in Madrid did not live up to expectations," said Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and, as France's top negotiator, a main architect of the Paris Agreement. "But thanks to a progressive alliance of small island states, European, African and Latin American countries, we obtained the best possible outcome, against the will of big polluters."

The summit was also meant to finalize a chapter on carbon markets in the Paris rulebook. Instead, the focus now switches to next year's COP 26 in Glasgow, when the true Paris deadline falls. The US, which is leaving the Paris deal next year, was accused of playing spoiler on a number of issues. This included so-called "loss and damage" funding to help disaster-hit countries repair and rebuild.

"The US has not come here in good faith," said Harjeet Singh, climate lead with charity ActionAid. "They continue to block the world's efforts to help people whose lives have been turned upside down by climate change." Even if all countries implement their current plans under Paris, Earth is on course to warm more than 3C by 2100. — AFP

Brazil opens trade center...

Continued from Page 1

Fears have been raised that moving the embassy could endanger Brazil's valuable meat exports to Arab markets but Eduardo Bolsonaro said any delay was due to Brazil wanting to prepare the move in a thorough manner. "We want to do a movement to Jerusalem not

MPs reject any withdrawals...

Continued from Page 1

He said that it is illogical to provide such aid to Kuwaitis who draw salaries as high as KD 17,000 per month, adding that the aid should not be paid to those who receive KD 5,000 or more monthly.

MP Saleh Ashour yesterday called on HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to speed up the formation of the Cabinet, saying it has taken too long, which is harmful to public issues. He also urged the prime minister to pay greater attention to resolving the issue of tens of thousands of stateless people or bedoons.

Meanwhile, financial allocations for Kuwait's development plan (2019-2020) amount to KD 3.3 billion (\$10.9 billion) against KD 3.8 billion (\$12.5 billion) in 2018-2019. Speaking at a news conference, Khaled Mahdi, Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, said 135 projects are included in the plan - 51 are 38 percent in the preparatory stage and 75 ones are 56 percent in the executive phase. The 2019-2020 plan

Sports

Bucks roll on, flatten Cavs for 18th straight victory

Jokic's triple-double leads Nuggets past Thunder

MILWAUKEE: The Milwaukee Bucks continued their franchise-best start and pulled within two games of matching their all-time longest winning streak on Saturday, routing the visiting Cleveland Cavaliers 125-108. Milwaukee faced little resistance from a struggling Cleveland bunch. The Bucks jumped to an 18-point halftime lead and expanded the gap to as many as 28 points in the third quarter on the way to their 18th straight win. The Bucks' 24-3 start is the best in the 52-year history of the organization. To match the 20-game winning streak of the Oscar Robertson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar-led 1970-71 Bucks, this 2019-20 squad will have to beat two of the hottest teams in the Western Conference, the Dallas Mavericks and Los Angeles Lakers, next week. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 29 points, and Khris Middleton added 24 points, leading six Bucks scoring in double-figures. Sputtering Cleveland dropped its 15th game over the last 17. Kevin Porter Jr. led the Cavaliers scoring 15 points off the bench. Jordan Clarkson added 13 points also in a reserve role.

MIAMI HEAT 122 - DALLAS MAVERICKS 118 (OT)
Jimmy Butler scored 27 points as Miami defeated host Dallas in a game that saw Luka

Doncic sprain his right ankle early in the first quarter. Tyler Herro finished with 19 points and Bam Adebayo collected a triple-double with 18 points, 11 boards and 10 assists for the Heat, who rebounded after dropping a 113-110 decision to the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday. Tim Hardaway Jr. made six 3-pointers to highlight his 28-point performance and Kristaps Porzingis had 22 points and 14 rebounds for the Mavericks, who have lost two of three after winning 10 of their previous 11. X-rays were negative for Doncic, who did not return to the game after stepping on the foot of Miami guard Kendrick Nunn while driving to the basket.

CHICAGO BULLS 109 - LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 106
Zach LaVine made a go-ahead layup with 2.0 seconds remaining and sank a free throw to complete a three-point play, and Chicago emerged with a win over visiting Los Angeles. LaVine finished with 31 points on 11-for-21 shooting, including 4 of 7 from beyond the arc. Thaddeus Young finished with 17 points, Denzel Valentine had 16, and Lauri Markkanen notched 13 points and 17 rebounds for the Bulls. Montrezl Harrell scored 30 points to lead the Clippers, whose four-game winning streak was snapped. Paul

George added 27 points in 31 minutes but missed a shot at the buzzer that could have forced overtime.

DENVER NUGGETS 110 - OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER 102
Nikola Jokic recorded 28 points, 14 rebounds and matched his season high of 12 assists for his fourth triple-double of the season to help Denver post a victory over visiting Oklahoma City. Will Barton scored 18 points, and Jamal Murray added 14 points and seven assists as Denver defeated the Thunder for the seventh straight time. Jerami Grant tallied 13 points and Gary Harris had 11 for the Nuggets. Dennis Schroder scored 22 points, and Steven Adams added 18 points and 14 rebounds as Oklahoma City lost its second straight to complete a 2-2 road trip.

TORONTO RAPTORS 110 - BROOKLYN NETS 102
Pascal Siakam finished with 30 points, 10 rebounds and five assists, and host Toronto won for the 16th time in its last 17 meetings with Brooklyn. Siakam added three steals and three blocks while hitting 3 of 5 3-point attempts. Norman Powell added 25 points for the Raptors before fouling out with 1:05 left in the game. Kyle Lowry scored 17 points,



MILWAUKEE: Donte DiVincenzo #0 of the Milwaukee Bucks drives to the basket during a game against the Cleveland Cavaliers at the Fiserv Forum Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. — AFP

Marc Gasol had 17 points and 15 rebounds and Serge Ibaka had 12 points and 12 rebounds off the bench. Spencer Dinwiddie had 24 points and eight assists for the Nets. Garrett Temple had 16 points and Taurean Prince had 14 points and 10 rebounds. Joe Harris added 13 points, David Nwaba scored 10, DeAndre Jordan contributed seven points and 13 rebounds and Jarrett Allen had seven points and 10 rebounds. — Reuters

Spain, Greece in q-finals in FINA Polo Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Water Polo team will conclude the first round of FINA World Men's Junior Polo Championship with a tough match against the Italian team, which won the championship three times previously, and a strong candidate to win the current one at 2:50 pm today as part of the fifth and final round in Group C of the championship being held at HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Swimming Pools Complex, as Greece was the first to qualify for the quarter finals by beating Uzbekistan 27-4 yesterday and Iran will meet Montenegro at 4:10 pm in Group C only.

Kuwait's team rested in the third round that was held Saturday and hopes for the best performance possible following losses to Iran and Montenegro, bearing in mind Kuwait players lack experience and not playing internationally especially during the suspension Kuwait sports suffered from.

As Italy seems closer to top its group,



the USA and Montenegro will compete for second and third place to qualify for the quarterfinals.

Croatia will play Japan at 9:30 am in Group A, while Serbia will play China at 10:50 am. Croatia and Serbia are competing for top spot, while Japan and China are fighting for third place.

In Group B Egypt will play Russia at 1:30 pm, while Hungary and Canada will meet at 12:10 pm, as Spain seems to have secured top spot, leaving Hungary, Canada and Russia fighting for second and third.

In Group D, Australia will face Uzbekistan at 5:30 pm, Brazil against New Zealand at 6:50 pm, while Greece already took top spot leaving New Zealand, Australia and Brazil fighting for second

and third, bearing in mind that Australia beat Brazil 9-6 yesterday.

Results of the third round that was held yesterday saw Croatia defeat China 24-5, Serbia defeated South Africa, Hungary defeated Egypt 19-7, Spain beat Russia 19-8, Italy beat Iran 16-4, USA defeated Montenegro 11-9, Australia beat New Zealand 8-7, Greece defeated Brazil 13-2.

Meanwhile, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, accompanied by KOC Secretary General, and first FINA Vice-President Hussein Al-Musallam inspected the swimming pools complex and checked preparations of the championship, and lauded the outstanding organization of the tournament.



Late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Sabah shooting tourney concludes



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The tournament of Late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, which was held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex came to a conclusion on Saturday evening, with the awarding ceremony, to the winners.

The tournament lasted three days with the participation of more than 100 shooters of both genders.

Results of the tournament are as follows:
10 meter air pistol men:
Ali Saad Al-Mutairi, Hassan Abdelmajid, Hamad Al-Namshan.
10 meter air rifle men:
Khalid Nasser Mohammad, Abdallah Al-Harby, Eid Milfi Jadid.
10 meter air pistol women:
Huthama Al-Baghlhi, Amir Awad, Mariam Al-Kandary.
10 meter air rifle women:
Hussa Al-Zayed, Mariam Irzouqi, Shamma Al-Rashidi.
10m air rifle women - juniors
Batool Ashkanani, Shamma Al-Rashidi, Fatima Awadh.
Olympic archery:

Abdallah Taha, Bader Al-Shilahi, Faisal Sindi.
Compound archery:
Mohammad Musallam, Abdallah Malallah, Salem Al-Saeed.
Open category archery:
Mohammad Al-Otaibi, Mohammad Al-Awadhi, Nashat Al-Otaibi.
Olympic archery women:
Hanan Al-Mayas, Suad Al-Bahar, Rawan Al-Kandary.
Sheikh Abdallah Khalid Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, who represented the family of late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak said the family is keen on organizing this championship annually in support of Kuwait shooters who always make good achievement in international arenas.
Sheikh Abdallah lauded the efforts of chairman and board members of Kuwait Shooting Sport Club, and congratulated the winners.
Meanwhile, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Secretary General of the Asian Shooting Confederation Eng Duaj Khalaf Al-Otaibi said the tournament witnessed tough competition with the club and National Guard shooters participating and results were very good in all events. Al-Otaibi appreciated the support of the late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak to Kuwait shooting by holding this tournament annually for a long time.



Abe opens Tokyo 2020 National Stadium

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe hailed the completion of the National Stadium built for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics yesterday, his speech at the Kengo Kuma-designed venue praising the efforts to finish on schedule after an early setback.
The stadium, built at a cost of 156.9 billion yen (\$1.44 billion), will have a capacity of 68,000 when it hosts the Olympic Games opening ceremony on July 24.
It will stage athletics and soccer events at the Games as well as the closing ceremony.
During his speech, Abe referred to the challenges organisers faced when the original design was scrapped because of a public outcry over spiralling costs.

The change meant construction did not begin until December 2016 and the stadium was unable to host matches at this year's Rugby World Cup as originally planned. "For this National Stadium, which will be the symbol of Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic games, I assume there must have been many difficulties for the process of its construction," said Abe.
"The design was changed during the process. It is purely the result of everyone's 'All Japan' contribution and hard work, so that we finally celebrate today."
Yesterday's ceremony was restricted to a small number of officials and the first public event will be on Dec. 21.
The Emperor's Cup soccer final will be the first sporting contest to be staged there on New Year's Day.
"We have to make next year's Tokyo Games an opportunity to share dreams and hopes, to create a proud legacy, show Japan's power to the world, and open up the future of this country," said Abe. The 2020 Olympics run from July 24 to Aug. 9. — Reuters

Sports

Australia thrashes New Zealand in Perth's first ever day-night Test

Home team lost seven wickets for 58 runs

PERTH: Australia recorded one of their biggest wins over New Zealand on the fourth day of the first Test at Perth Stadium yesterday.

Having trailed by 250 runs on the first innings the Kiwis were set a mammoth 468 to win — which would have been a record chase in Test cricket — on a deteriorating pitch after Australia declared at 217 for nine in their second innings.

The visitors were never in contention after losing their first wicket with just six runs on the board and

were unable to push the match into a fifth day after Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins cleaned up the Kiwi tail under lights in Perth's first ever day-night Test.

New Zealand were dismissed for 171 and were beaten by 296 runs, the last five wickets falling in a hurry for just 17 runs.

It was just one run shy of their biggest losing margin to Australia — in runs — in a match where both teams batted twice.

Australia's biggest win, other than innings victories, was 297 runs in Auckland in 1974.

Starc (4-45), who claimed nine wickets for the match, and Cummins (2-31) used the pink ball to good effect under lights to bring the match to a quick conclusion after none of the recognised Kiwi batsmen offered significant resistance.

The chase started poorly, with opener Jeet Raval making just one before being caught at gully by Nathan Lyon (4-63) from the bowling of Starc.

Star batsman and captain Kane Williamson then made just 14, before falling to Lyon's first ball of the innings.

Williamson got off to a fast start with boundaries from the first two balls he faced, but was caught at short leg fending a ball that bounced and turned sharply off his glove into the hands of Matthew Wade.

Ross Taylor was their last real hope of making a revival but on 22 he tried to pull a Starc delivery and got a bottom edge through to wicketkeeper Tim Paine to give the left-arm quick his seventh wicket of the match.

Tom Latham showed plenty of application to face 68 balls for his 18, but was given out leg before wicket to Lyon after an Australian DRS review, with umpire Aleem Dar initially giving him not out.

BJ Watling attempted to stem the tide with a gritty 40 and enjoyed a bit of luck as Australia didn't review when he got a faint outside edge through to Paine.



MELBOURNE: Australia's Pat Cummins (centre L) celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's Colin de Grandhomme on day four of the first Test cricket match between Australia and New Zealand at the Perth Stadium in Perth yesterday. — AFP

Smith then dropped a tough chance off the bowling of Lyon at first slip.

He was given out on review caught down leg side by Paine off the bowling of Starc after umpire Nigel Llong had turned down the appeal — a dismissal that signalled the end of the Kiwi resistance.

Earlier, Australia's second innings fell away dramati-

cally after being 131 for one at one stage on the third day.

The home team lost seven wickets for 58 runs, as they struggled against a sustained barrage of short-pitched bowling on another hot Perth day.

Tim Southee again impressed with 5-69, after also picking up four wickets in the first innings. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at end of the first Test between Australia and New Zealand at Perth Stadium yesterday:

Australia 1st innings 416 (M Labuschagne 143, T Head 56; Southee 4-93, Wagner 4-92)

New Zealand 1st innings 166 (R Taylor 80; Starc 5-52)

Australia 2nd innings 217

New Zealand 2nd innings

J. Raval c Lyon b Starc	1
T. Latham lbw Lyon	18
K. Williamson c Wade b Lyon	14
R. Taylor c Paine b Starc	22
H. Nicholls c Head b Lyon	21
B. Watling c Paine b Starc	40
C. de Grandhomme c Smith b Cummins	33
M. Santner c Head b Cummins	0
T. Southee c Smith by Lyon	4
N. Wagner c Paine b Starc	8
L. Ferguson not out	1
Extras: (lb6, nb1, w2)	9
Total: (all out: 65.3 overs)	171

Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Raval), 2-21 (Williamson), 3-57 (Taylor), 4-57 (Latham), 5-98 (Nicholls), 6-154 (de Grandhomme), 7-154 (Watling), 8-154 (Santner), 9-163 (Wagner), 10-171 (Southee)

Bowling: Starc 14-5-45-4, Cummins 19-6-31-2 (Inb, 2w), Lyon 22.3-3-63-4, Head 5-1-13-0, Labuschagne 5-0-13-0

Australia won by 296 runs.

Hetmyer, Hope hundreds help WI to easy win

CHENNAI: Shimron Hetmyer and Shai Hope hit centuries and combined in a stand of 218 to help West Indies to an eight-wicket victory over India in the opening match of their one-day international series at Chennai yesterday.

Hetmyer smashed 139 off 106 balls for his highest ODI score and his second-wicket partnership with Hope, who remained unbeaten on 102, helped West Indies chase down a target of 288 with 13 deliveries to spare.

Half-centuries from Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer had helped India recover from a shaky start and post 287-8 off their 50 overs after West Indies captain Kieron Pollard had won the toss and opted to field.

India seamer Deepak Chahar sent back opener Sunil Ambris early and gave the hosts hopes of defending their total on a slow surface at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. But the partnership between the 22-year-old Hetmyer and Hope ensured the Caribbean side faced little discomfort on their way to victory and a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

While the aggression came from the diminutive Hetmyer, who hit 11 fours and seven sixes, the solidity was provided by Hope. After Hetmyer holed out in the deep, Hope



CHENNAI: West Indies' Shimron Hetmyer celebrates after scoring 100 runs during the first one day international cricket match of a three-match series between India and West Indies, at the M.A. Chidambaram Cricket Stadium in Chennai yesterday. — AFP

added a further 62 runs with Nicholas Pooran, who was not out on 29, to take his side home.

Earlier, fast bowler Sheldon Cottrell dismissed opener KL Rahul and India captain Virat Kohli, who scored four, in the seventh over of the innings to put the hosts on the backfoot. Rohit Sharma also did not last long and was out for 36, leaving Pant and Iyer to reconstruct the innings.

Under-fire Pant, who was not in the best of form with the bat and lost his place in the test

side recently, hit seven fours and a six in his 69-ball 71, his maiden half-century in the 50-over format. Right-handed Iyer, who is India's latest choice for the troubled number four batting spot, looked solid and brought up his fourth straight ODI half-century.

Iyer and Pant added 114 for the fourth wicket but their dismissal in the space of three overs robbed India of momentum and ruined their hopes of posting a total in excess of 300. Visakhapatnam will host the second ODI on Wednesday. — Reuters

Abid achieves record in Pakistan's drawn Test

RAWALPINDI: Opener Abid Ali became the only batsman to score hundreds on both Test and one-day debuts as Pakistan's first home match in the long form of the game since the 2009 attack on the visiting Sri Lanka team ended in a tame draw against the same opponents yesterday.

On 95, the 32-year-old hit paceman

Vishwa Fernando for a boundary and then drove him through cover for two to complete his hundred, raising his hands in jubilation before kneeling on the ground to offer a prayer of gratitude.

His hundred came in 267 minutes, laced with 11 boundaries, and was the highlight of a Test badly affected by the weather.

Pakistan finished at 252-2, with stylish batsman Babar Azam knocking his third Test century with a boundary off spinner Dilruwan Perera.

Azam ended with 102 not out, which came in 151 minutes of punishing batting spiced by 14 crisp boundaries.

But the day belonged to Abid, one of 15

batsmen to score a hundred on their one-day international debut — against Australia in Dubai in March this year — since limited over cricket began in January 1971.

None of the others also scored a century on their debut in Test cricket, which started in 1876.

Abid is the 11th Pakistani batsman to score a century on Test debut.

"I don't have words to thank the Almighty," said Abid of his feat.

"My plan was to see off the new ball and then I gradually built the innings with plans for every five overs. So I kept trying to keep that up, and Babar gave me confidence in 90s.

Abid's feat spiced up the historic Test, the first in Pakistan since the 2009 attacks on the Sri Lankan team bus left international cricket suspended in the country.

Only 91.5 overs were possible on the first four days as rain, bad light and overcast conditions affected play. The fourth day was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

But there was bright sunshine yesterday as Sri Lanka batted for 20 minutes to declare their first innings at 308-6 with middle-order batsman Dhananjaya de Silva scoring an unbeaten 102.

With gates opened to the crowd for free, about 12,000 fans were kept entertained by Dhananjaya and then Abid.

Sri Lankan skipper Dimuth Karunaratne hopes his team moves on.

"We came two days before the Test and we've done a really good job. Washed out for a couple of days but Dhananjaya's effort and the two fast bowlers on this pitch did well," said Karunaratne. — AFP

S Africa's Boucher warns England: 'Beware a wounded buffalo'

CAPE TOWN: New South Africa head coach Mark Boucher is confident he can turn around the fortunes of the country's ailing test team and has warned England they will not roll over in the upcoming four-test series starting on Boxing Day.

South Africa have lost their last five tests, two shock home defeats to Sri Lanka and three thrashings in India. Former wicketkeeper Boucher, a veteran of 147 tests and the world record holder with 999 international dismissals across all formats, was unveiled as the new coach on Saturday.

"I've been involved in sides over the years where we have had some tough times. One of the toughest times was the Hansie Cronje saga (in 2000) and straight after that we beat Australia," Boucher told reporters.

"I think we've got a good chance of turning it around. Sport is an amazing thing, it can be turned around in a couple of days but I understand there is a lot of work to be done.

Crawford beats Kavaliauskas to retain WBO title

LOS ANGELES: Terence Crawford survived some early jitters to retain his WBO welterweight title on Saturday with a ninth round knockout of former Olympian Egidijus Kavaliauskas at Madison Square Garden.

Crawford, who improved to 36-0 with 27 knockouts, survived a scare in the third round before finding his rhythm in the fifth, knocking the Lithuanian down once in the seventh, and then twice in the final round.

In a tougher than expected tussle, heavy Crawford finished the heavy underdog challenger off with a right hook to the left ear 44 seconds into the ninth.

"When I let my hands go that's when I started landing more favourable shots," the American said. "After I dropped him with my uppercut I was like, I am going to face his jab, and come out with my right hook."

Kavaliauskas barely survived the end of the eighth round and Crawford wasted no time going to work in the ninth. He landed a barrage of punches to start the round, beginning with a left hook followed by a right that sent Kavaliauskas staggering back towards the ropes.

Crawford then moved in for the finish and connected with a right hook that floored Kavaliauskas (21-1-1, 17 KOs) for

"They've (England) been saying quite a few things in the media but I've got one thing to say to them: Beware a wounded buffalo, especially in Africa."

Boucher was appointed by South Africa's new director of cricket Graeme Smith, the most successful Test captain in history. Another former five-day veteran, Ashwell Prince, has been appointed South Africa A coach while bowling and batting consultants will be named in the coming week. "Our confidence is a bit down, but there's a wealth of knowledge in this country that can get utilized," Boucher said.

"We need to get as much information going in the right direction and give the players the space to try and perform at their best. "We've got the talent in this country. It needs to be nurtured a bit and given the opportunities for information to come through."

Boucher also said he was open to having a discussion with the retired AB de Villiers about a return to international cricket for the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia next year. "When you go to a World Cup you want your best players playing for you. Why wouldn't I want to have a conversation with him?" he said. "I might have conversations with quite a few players and see where they are."

The first test against England starts in Pretoria on Boxing Day, followed by three more in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. — Reuters

the third and final time as the referee stopped the bout.

Kavaliauskas, who competed in the 2008 and 2012 Olympics, appeared to score the first knockdown of the fight in the third round. But the ref ruled that Crawford slipped. Regardless Crawford was in a load of trouble after absorbing an overhand right on the chin.

Crawford collected his thoughts and survived the round, but it wasn't until the fifth that he really started to look like his old self. Crawford's early troubles aside, he did a superb job of figuring out a tough opponent who came into the bout in excellent shape.

"He's a strong fighter, durable," said Crawford who denied he was in trouble in the third. "I wasn't hurt at all. I went straight for him. He caught me with a good punch." Crawford and his promoters are hoping to eventually land a fight with former two-time welterweight champ Shawn Porter. Whoever he fights it will surely be a much bigger test, which means Crawford can't afford to fiddle away five rounds before he gets comfortable throwing meaningful combinations.

"The rounds before my coaches were telling me to stop loading up. I was trying to give the crowd a knockout," he said. "I am not ducking anybody. Listen man, everybody knows who I want to fight. I don't have to name names. I want all the top guys."

On the undercard, Teofimo Lopez captured his first world title by knocking out Ghana's Richard Comney in the second round to take Comney's IBF lightweight crown in emphatic fashion. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

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

Sri Lanka 1st innings	Pakistan 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	102
N. Dickwella c Azam b Shaheen	33
D. Perera not out	16
Extras: (b5, lb7, nb3)	15
Total: (for six wks, 97 overs)	308
Did not bat: V. Fernando, K. Rajitha, L. Kumara	
Fall of wickets: 1-96 (Karunaratne), 2-109 (Fernando), 3-120 (Mendis), 4-127 (Chandimal), 5-189 (Mathews), 6-256 (Dickwella)	
Bowling: Abbas 27-9-72-1, Shaheen 22-7-58-2 (nb3), Shinwari 15-4-54-1, Naseem 27-5-92-2, Sohail 3-0-12-0, Masood 1-1-0-0, Shafiq 2-0-8-0	
	Shan Masood c Chandimal b Rajitha 0
	Abid Ali not out 109
	Azhar Ali c Karunaratne b Kumara 36
	Babar Azam not out 102
	Extras: (b 2, nb 2, w 1) 5
	Total: (for two wks, 70 overs) 252
	Did not bat: Haris Sohail, Asad Shafiq, Mohammad Rizwan, Usman Shinwari, Mohammad Abbas, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi
	Fall of wickets: 1-3 (Masood), 2-90 (Azhar)
	Bowling: Rajitha 6-2-5-1 (Inb), Fernando 13-1-49-0, Kumara 14-4-46-1, Perera 24-0-85-0, De Silva 11-0-48-0 (nb1), Oshada 1-0-3-0, Mendis 1-0-14-0.
	Result: Draw.

Sports

Teenager Greenwood rescues Man Utd in Everton draw

Third youngest player to score a Premier League goal

MANCHESTER: Mason Greenwood came off the bench to rescue Manchester United as the teenage striker's late equaliser secured a 1-1 draw against Everton yesterday.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side fell behind to Victor Lindelof's controversial first half own-goal after United's appeals for a foul on David de Gea were ignored by VAR. But Greenwood, introduced in the second half, underlined his vast potential with a clinical strike 13 minutes from full-time.

The 18-year-old is the third youngest player to score a Premier League goal at Old Trafford after former United forwards Federico Macheda and Danny Welbeck. Bradford-born Greenwood, a product of United's youth academy, now has seven goals in his breakthrough season after netting twice in his previous appearance against Alkmaar in the Europa League on Thursday. This was his second Premier League goal after his strike against Sheffield United in November and his rapid progress is a bright spot in a difficult season for Solskjaer's sixth placed team.

It was fitting that Greenwood scored in the 4,000th senior match in succession in which at least one youth graduate was represented in United's first-team or matchday squad, an extraordinary record stretching back over nine decades.

After their impressive wins over Tottenham and Manchester City in their last two league games, United's frustrating draw reaffirmed how much improvement is still needed under Solskjaer despite Greenwood's ascent. For Duncan Ferguson, Everton's caretaker manager, this spirited performance built on the momentum from last weekend's win over Chelsea.

Hit by injuries and illness, Everton avoided losing for the seventh time in their last eight away league match-

es. Another of United's homegrown products should have opened the scoring within 20 seconds when Fred's burst into the Everton area ended with Jesse Lingard swivelling onto the loose ball and shooting wide from 10 yards.

Daniel James' blistering pace was on full display when the winger raced clear for a low drive that flashed wide of the far post, prompting an angry exchange between Everton keeper Jordan Pickford and team-mate Lucas Digne about who was to blame for the break. Marcus Rashford tested Pickford with a swerving free-kick, but United — at their best when counter-attacking — were too often forced into slow build-up play that was easy for Everton's well-drilled defence to stifle. United were losing their grip and it was Everton who took the lead in bizarre fashion in the 36th minute.

When Leighton Baines sent over an inswinging corner, De Gea came and missed as he tried to punch clear, with the ball bouncing off Lindelof into his own net. United protested that Everton forward Dominic Calvert-Lewin had fouled De Gea by putting an arm across his face, but although the goal was reviewed by VAR it was allowed to stand.

The farcical goal meant United had failed to keep a clean-sheet in 12 consecutive top-flight matches for the first time since 1971.

United pressed harder after half-time and Luke Shaw drove forward from left-back for a stinging drive that Pickford pushed away to James, who accidentally drove the rebound into Lingard's face.

Everton were far more focused and combative than under the sacked Marco Silva. But Solskjaer introduced Greenwood with 25 minutes left and it proved an inspired move. Greenwood immediately had an



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's English striker Marcus Rashford (2L) weaves between Everton's Irish defender Seamus Coleman (R), Everton's English midfielder Tom Davies (2R) and Everton's English defender Michael Keane (L) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Everton at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

effort saved by Pickford and, with United firmly on the front foot, the teenage starlet equalised in the 77th minute. Picked out by James, Greenwood steadied himself on the edge of the area with a perfect first touch before drilling his low left-foot shot through a

crowd of Everton defenders and past Pickford.

In a tense finale, Alex Iwobi almost won it for Everton with a dipping shot that De Gea pushed away before Ferguson hauled off substitute Moise Kean only 18 minutes after putting him on. —AFP

Ronaldo double puts Juventus back top of Serie A

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice as Juventus bounced back from their first defeat of the season to beat Udinese 3-1 and move top of Serie A yesterday. Ronaldo struck twice in the first half to make it five goals in four games as champions Juve move one point ahead of leaders Inter Milan ahead of their trip to off-form Fiorentina later. Maurizio Sarri's side had taken just one point from their last two league games, falling 3-1 to Lazio in Rome last weekend after a 2-2 draw against Sassuolo the previous week. But Portuguese star Ronaldo tapped in his first after nine minutes at the Allianz Stadium, and burst through to finish off a Gonzalo Higuain cross on 36 minutes.

Leonardo Bonucci sealed the three points just before the break when he headed in from close range. Ignacio

Pussetto pulled a goal back for 17th-placed Udinese four minutes into injury time with his close range effort beating Gianluigi Buffon in the Juventus goal. Juventus play their final Serie A game before the winter break at Sampdoria on Wednesday, before a rematch against Lazio in the Italian Super Cup in Saudi Arabia next weekend. Atalanta fell 2-1 at Bologna just days after the Champions League newcomers sealed their place in the competition's last 16 despite losing their first three matches.

Rodrigo Palacio tapped in the first after 12 minutes for Bologna off a rebound after a Riccardo Orsolini effort came off the post. Andrea Poli nodded in the second eight minutes after the break, before Ruslan Malinovskyi connected with a Musa Barrow cross to pull a goal back on the hour mark.

Atalanta failed to take advantage of their numerical superiority late on, as Bologna played the last five minutes a man down after Brazilian defender Danilo was sent off for two bookable offences. Gian Piero Gasperini's side are sixth on 28 points, one point off the Champions League places, with European rivals Cagliari. Lazio and Roma still to play this weekend.

AC Milan were held to a goalless draw against

Sassuolo at the San Siro as the former European giants marked their 120th anniversary in tepid style. Theo Hernandez had a goal ruled out after half an hour following a Franck Kessie handball in the buildup, with Rafael Leao hitting the crossbar and the post.

Stefano Pioli's side failed to make it three wins in a row and sit 10th with Sassuolo four places and five points below. Hellas Verona battled back from three goals down with all three substitutes scoring in a 15-minute second-half spell to hold Torino 3-3.

Torino had taken a comfortable lead at the Stadio Bentegodi after Christian Ansaldi scored a brace with Alex Berenguer also on target for the visitors. But the hosts hit back with three goals after 69 minutes from players who all came off the bench.

Giampaolo Pazzini converted a penalty on 69 minutes after Gleison Bremer was deemed to have used his elbow to block the ball. Pazzini was then involved in the second with Valerio Verre smashing in off a rebound, before Mariusz Stepinski added a third by pouncing on a defensive error from Ola Aina to finish off.

Torino are ninth, with Verona two points back in 12th, in the hosts' final match before the winter break. Torino next play SPAL on Saturday. — AFP

Tottenham up to fifth after late win at Wolves

WOLVERHAMPTON: Jan Vertonghen's stoppage time header continued Tottenham's turnaround under Jose Mourinho as Spurs moved up to fifth with a 2-1 win at Wolves.

Mourinho's men were largely outplayed at Molineux, but were ruthless with their chances to inflict Wolves' first league defeat in 12 games. Adama Traore's spectacular strike had cancelled out Lucas Moura's early opener before Vertonghen stooped to guide home Christian Eriksen's corner.

"Three incredible points. We coped with their spirit. At 1-1, Wolves are not a team satisfied with a point. But we knew if we arrive in the last part of the match we could score," Mourinho said.

"Wolves are a fantastic team. This is a big victory. It is very difficult to control against them. Traore and Jota can kill you out of nothing, but we controlled parts of the game." Spurs can now move into the top four before Christmas if they beat Chelsea at home next weekend and Mourinho has his sights of qualifying for next season's Champions League.

"We went about a year without winning a Premier League game away and we've managed two in a short amount of time," Mourinho added. "Now we are not looking to the bottom of table, we're looking higher up. This game is a special game because the opponent is a special opponent."

That speaks volumes for the impact Mourinho has made in less than a month in charge as Tottenham trailed Chelsea and the top four by 12 points when he was appointed.

Wolves drop to eighth as their longest unbeaten run in the top flight since 1962 came to an end, but there was little more Nuno Espirito Santo's men could have done to at least avoid defeat.

After an industrious start by Wolves, it was Spurs who scored after eight minutes. Son Heung-min's drive was beaten away by Rui Patrício but the ball was worked to Moura, who glided into the area before rifling in high from an angle for his third goal in seven games under Mourinho.

Wolves remained undaunted though and after Paulo Gazzaniga gathered Traore's low effort they began to create openings. Diogo Jota was a menace and it was from his work Raul Jimenez nearly levelled after 26 minutes but his low effort flashed wide.

Soon after Jota was denied by the recovering Davinson Sanchez after the defender's initial mistake allowed the forward through. Wolves continued to dominate but should have been 2-0 down nine minutes before the break.

Referee Stuart Attwell played a good advantage after Moura was fouled to allow Eric Dier forward. He played a cute one-two with Dele Alli to leave the midfielder with just Patrício to beat but his low strike hit the post.

It would have been harsh on Wolves and they continued to push after the break. Jota failed to turn in Traore's cross and Gazzaniga pushed away Jimenez's shot. Spurs' defence had lived dangerously, with Vertonghen in particular struggling against the pace of Traore. Wolves finally got their reward on 67 minutes.

Traore had given the visitors problems all game and he made them pay, collecting Jimenez's pass and unleashing a rocket which flew past Gazzaniga from 20 yards. Tottenham then never looked like restoring their lead before the late drama.

Wolves remained the aggressors and Romain Saïss' glancing header four minutes later forced Gazzaniga into a fine stop. But Spurs silenced the hosts in the first minute of injury time when Vertonghen nodded in Eriksen's corner. —AFP

Capitals rout Lightning, Kucherov hurt

TAMPA BAY: Lars Eller and Garnet Hathaway scored 45 seconds apart to break a third-period tie in the Washington Capitals' win over the host Tampa Bay Lightning, who lost Nikita Kucherov — the NHL's MVP and points leader last season — to injury in the middle of the second period Saturday. Kucherov did not return after he took a blast from John Carlson directly on the laces at the top of his right skate and fell to the ice. Washington improved to an NHL-best 24-5-5 overall and 15-2-1 on the road. T.J. Oshie and Nicklas Backstrom each contributed a goal and an assist, and Tom Wilson tallied for the Capitals, who are also 15-3-2 since the start of November. Backup goalie Ilya Samsonov recorded 26 saves to move to 8-2-1. Brayden Point netted his 12th goal, and Jan Rutta scored his first as a member of the Lightning, who played their fourth game in six days (2-2-0).

SHARKS 4, CANUCKS 2

Logan Couture and Evander Kane each netted one goal and one assist, and goaltender Aaron Dell sparkled in net as San Jose won for the first time in seven games with a home-ice victory over Vancouver. It was the first win for interim coach Bob Boughner since he took over the bench duties from the fired Pete DeBoer during San Jose's losing skid — four straight defeats in regulation and a 0-5-1 slide. Dell made 33 saves and was especially strong in the first half-dozen minutes of the third period, when he denied J.T. Miller, Tanner Pearson and Brock Boeser on chances caused by his team's turnovers.

BRUINS 4, PANTHERS 2

David Pastrnak scored twice to extend his league-leading tally to 28 and power Boston past host Florida to break a five-game losing streak (0-4-1), its longest skid since March 2016. Backup goalie Jaroslav Halak earned the win, making 31 saves and improving his record to 8-3-3. Jake DeBrusk and David Krejci also scored for the Bruins, who built a 3-0 lead and hung on for the win. Torey Krug and Brad

Marchand added two assists each. Panthers star Aleksander Barkov left the game with 1:23 left in the third due to a possible leg injury. Sergei Bobrovsky, who had allowed just six goals in his past four games, took the loss. He had 38 saves on 41 shots. Mark Pysyk and Keith Yandle scored for Florida.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, OILERS 1

Alexander Kerfoot had a goal and an assist as Toronto defeated host Edmonton. Ilya Mikheyev, Frederik Gauthier and Mitchell Marner also scored for the Maple Leafs, who went 3-1-0 on a four-game trip that included stops in St. Louis, Vancouver and Calgary. Goaltender Frederik Andersen made 36 saves for his 200th NHL victory. Alex Chiasson scored the lone goal for the Oilers, whose winless streak reached a season-high four games (0-3-1). Mikko Koskinen stopped 28 of 31 shots. Edmonton's Connor McDavid, the league's leading scorer, was held pointless.

ISLANDERS 3, SABRES 2 (OT)

Anthony Beauvillier scored with 1:56 left in overtime as host New York edged Buffalo in Uniondale, N.Y. Beauvillier picked up a loose puck at the Sabres' blue line, raced up the ice and shuffled the puck a handful of times as he neared goaltender Linus Ullmark before firing a shot into the far corner of the net. Michael Dal Colle and Jordan Eberle scored for the Islanders, who have won three straight and four of five. Goalie Semyon Varlamov made 33 saves. Victor Olofsson scored in the second period for the Sabres, and Jack Eichel forced overtime by tying the game late in the third, extending his league-high active point streak to 16 games.

BLUES 4, BLACKHAWKS 3

Justin Faulk scored the game-winning goal as host St. Louis rallied from a 3-0 third-period deficit to defeat Chicago. Tyler Bozak scored twice for the Blues in his 700th NHL game, and Jacob de la Rose scored the game-tying goal in the third period. Jordan Binnington made 19 saves in his first career appearance against the Blackhawks. Brandon Saad scored twice. Jonathan Toews earned two assists and Patrick Kane also scored for the Blackhawks, who are winless (0-3-1) in their last four games. Corey Crawford stopped 34 of 38 shots.

WILD 4, FLYERS 1

Eric Staal scored two goals, and Alex



SAN JOSE: Tyler Myers #57 of the Vancouver Canucks skates between Mario Ferraro #38, Tim Heed #72, and Joe Thornton #19 of the San Jose Sharks at SAP Center in San Jose, California. — AFP

Stalock finished with 17 saves as Minnesota extended its home point streak to 12 games with a victory over Philadelphia in Saint Paul, Minn. Zach Parise and Carson Soucy also scored goals, and Jonas Brodin added two assists for Minnesota, which improved to 10-1-4 over its last 15 games. The Wild, who began the season with just one win and two points in their first seven games (1-6-0), moved within two points of the Vegas Golden Knights for the second wild-card spot in the Western Conference. James van Riemsdyk scored for Philadelphia, which lost its second straight game and for the third time in four games. Carter Hart stopped 24 shots.

DEVILS 2, COYOTES 1

Kyle Palmieri scored the go-ahead goal at 11:34 of the third period, and New Jersey ended a seven-game losing streak with a win over Pacific Division-leading Arizona in Glendale, Ariz. Jesper Boqvist scored the other New Jersey goal, Miles Wood and Michael Leod each had two assists, and Mackenzie Blackwood stopped 31 shots for the Devils, who got their first win since Nov. 28. Blackwood improved to 9-9-4 in net on the season. Alex Goligoski scored the Coyotes' only goal, and Vinnie Hinostroza recorded his fourth assist in two games. Darcy Kuemper had 31 saves on 33 shots.

STARS 4, PREDATORS 1

Blake Comeau scored a short-handed goal, the first of four Dallas goals in the

second period, to breeze to a victory over host Nashville. Roope Hintz scored his team-leading 12th goal, and Andrew Coglian and defenseman Jamie Oleksiak also tallied for the Stars, who continued to fluster the Predators after eliminating them in six games during their first-round playoff series in the spring. Anton Khudobin finished with 37 saves to improve to 4-1-0 in five appearances at home this season. The Predators' Pekka Rinne yielded four goals on 22 shots in his first start against Dallas since making 49 saves in an overtime loss in Game 6 of the first-round series. Austin Watson scored the Predators' only goal.

HURRICANES 4, FLAMES 0

James Reimer made 32 saves for his second shutout of the season, and Brock McGinn and Dougie Hamilton scored second-period goals, as visiting Carolina cooled off streaking Calgary. Warren Foegele added two short-handed goals late in the third period for the Hurricanes, who improved to 4-0-1 over their last five games. Reimer wasn't overly tested, but solid nonetheless in recording the 23rd shutout of his career. His other one this season came at Detroit on Nov. 24. Calgary, meanwhile, saw its season-high seven-game winning streak and nine-game run with at least a point end. It was also the Flames' first defeat in seven official games under coach Geoff Ward, who took over when Bill Peters resigned after he admitted to using a racial slur toward a former player. —Reuters

25 Bucks roll on, flatten Cavs for 18th straight victory



26 Australia thrashes New Zealand in Perth's first ever day-night Test

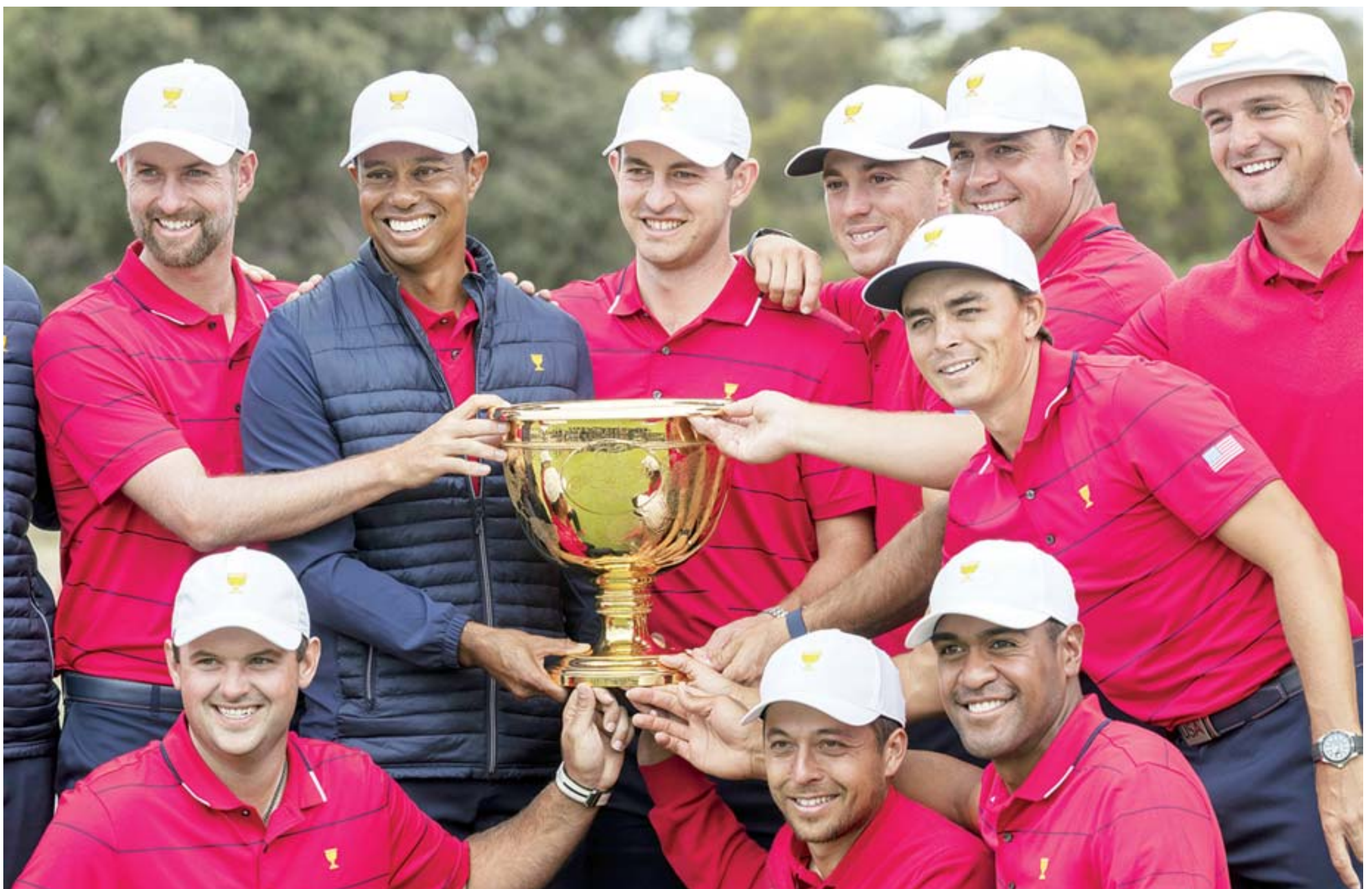


27 Teenager Greenwood rescues Man Utd in Everton draw



Woods leads as US wins Presidents Cup

Matt Kuchar the hero, with his winning putt on 17th in the penultimate match



MELBOURNE: US team captain Tiger Woods (top row, 2nd L) and his teammates pose with the Presidents Cup after their win over the International Team on the final day of the Presidents Cup golf tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

MELBOURNE: Tiger Woods' United States produced a stunning turnaround to deny the Internationals a first Presidents Cup in 21 years yesterday, dominating the singles on a tense final day that went to the wire at Royal Melbourne.

Veteran Matt Kuchar was the hero, with his winning putt on the 17th in the penultimate match enough to ensure victory, sparking wild celebrations from playing-captain Woods, who set the tone by getting the first point on the board.

It was a crushing loss for Ernie Els' young Internationals who led for the first three days of the biennial matchplay event. They went into Sunday's 12 singles matches with a 10-8 lead but Patrick Reed and Dustin Johnson were among those racing to big early leads as the scoreboard became swathed in US red.

Webb Simpson beat South Korea's An Byeong-hun to guarantee the US a share of the Cup at 15-12 with

three matches still in play. Australian Cameron Smith grabbed a point by beating Justin Thomas, ensuring a nailbiting finale with Kuchar's birdie to go one-up on 17 enough to secure at least half a point and ensure there was no way back for Els' team.

"I trusted all my 11 guys. I trusted them implicitly. I told them from the very get go. They went out there and got the points we needed. We fought," said Woods. "Even the points we lost, we were making them earn every one of them, and this Cup wasn't going to be given to us. We had to go earn it, and we did."

No side before had rallied to win on the last day after trailing for three days, further cementing the reputation of Woods, who went undefeated in his three matches. US President Donald Trump, an avid golf fan, immediately paid tribute on social media.

"Congratulations to Tiger and the entire US Team on a great comeback and tremendous WIN. True

Champions!" he tweeted. The playing-captain, in his ninth Presidents Cup, took the responsibility of going out first in the singles and won 3 and 2 against battling Mexican Abraham Ancer.

In doing so he passed Phil Mickelson to become the most successful Presidents Cup golfer in history with a 27-15-1 win-loss-tie record to his countryman's 26-16-13. "I could have made different choices in the singles today. I can take it on my shoulders," said Els. "The questions will come that I made mistakes in the selection of where I put my players, but I followed a plan 100 percent, and it didn't quite work out. But we came damn close."

At one stage the Americans were ahead in nine matches, and world number five Dustin Johnson ensured a second point, crushing Li Haotong 4 and 3. It ended a difficult Presidents Cup for the first Chinese player to take part — Li was overlooked for the open-

ing two days and never looked at ease.

Patrick Reed's caddie was banned after showing a fan on Saturday as tensions boiled over following the controversial American's penalty for improving his lie in the Bahamas last week.

The former Masters champion turned to his swing coach to carry his bag and raced to six-up through seven holes against Taiwan's CT Pan in front of taunting fans before closing out a 4 and 2 win. The US were on a roll and Tony Finau came from four down after 10 holes to snatch a half point on the final green against a stunned Hideki Matsuyama of Japan.

South Korea's Im Sung-jae was a bright spot. Only 21, the PGA Tour Rookie of the Year comfortably beat US Open champion Gary Woodland 4 and 3. It was the United States' 11th victory in 13 editions of the event. One was drawn with the lone International win coming in 1998, also at Royal Melbourne. — AFP

Dazzling De Bruyne ensures City bounce back at Arsenal

LONDON: Kevin De Bruyne scored twice and teed up Raheem Sterling for Manchester City's other goal as Arsenal crumbled to another humiliating 3-0 home defeat yesterday.

Victory sees City close the gap on runaway leaders Liverpool back to 14 points and edge to within four of second-placed Leicester, who they host next weekend.

Arsenal, on the other hand, remain ninth on the back

of just one win in their last 12 games in all competitions. That victory came at West Ham on Monday, but if there was any hope a corner had been turned under caretaker boss Freddie Ljungberg for the Gunners, it was quickly quashed by the brilliant De Bruyne.

Arsenal could have taken the lead even before the Belgian opened the scoring after just 90 seconds. Gabriel Martinelli retained his place ahead of Alexandre Lacazette after scoring for the first time in the Premier League on Monday and got the better of Fernandinho and Nicolas Otamendi to muscle his way in on goal before his shot was blocked by Ederson.

City broke straight up the other end and Gabriel Jesus's low cross picked out De Bruyne to stroke the ball into the roof of the net.

Pep Guardiola's men had been ruthlessly cut apart on the counter-attack in losing to Manchester United

last weekend and were conscious not to make the same mistake again as they allowed Arsenal possession for large spells before breaking at speed.

The visitors doubled their lead just 15 minutes in with De Bruyne this time the creator as he carried the ball forward before squaring for Sterling to slot home his 16th goal of the season.

De Bruyne showed his superior quality to any other player on the pitch again five minutes before half-time as this time he curled into the bottom corner on his weaker left foot from outside the box.

And only a brilliant save from Bernd Leno denied the City midfielder a first half hat-trick moments later as the German's fingertips turned another long-range De Bruyne effort onto the post.

Arsenal's preparation for the game had been disturbed by the controversy surrounding Mesut Ozil's

support for the Muslim minority Uighurs in Chinese province Xinjiang. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV pulled coverage of the match and Arsenal distanced themselves from Ozil's comments.

The German was still selected by Ljungberg, but made little impact before being substituted on the hour mark and his slow walk to the touchline with his side trailing 3-0 drew the wrath of some disgruntled Arsenal fans. Only Leno prevented the scoreline from becoming even more embarrassing for Arsenal as he saved one-on-one from Jesus and at his near post from Riyad Mahrez.

However, with just one win in five games since Ljungberg took temporary charge after the sacking of Unai Emery, the appointment of a new manager cannot come soon enough if they are to salvage anything from a thoroughly disappointing season so far. — AFP