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Boursa Kuwait promotion contributes to supporting national economy: Amir



Boeing ousts Muilenburg, names Calhoun CEO amid MAX crisis



Not so much a dog's life for **Jordan's pampered pets**



Pakistan seal triumphant Test cricket return with Lanka win



New Cabinet to take oath today amid controversy

MPs demand special debate on traffic 'chaos' · Minister hails report on demographics

Fire knocks out power to airport, residential areas



KUWAIT: Firemen battle a blaze in a main transformer in Omariya early yesterday.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Ardiya, Jleeb and backup fire centers responded to a fire in a main transformer in Omariya that resulted in a power outage in a number of areas including the airport. The area was secured and a team from the ministry of electricity and water cut the power supply. The fire was put out and no injuries were reported. Ministry Undersecretary Mohammad Boushehri announced forming a panel yesterday to investigate the fire.

Boushehri said in a statement that Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Khaled Al-Fadhel ordered setting up Directorate's PR department said the committee to examine in detail the technical causes of the blaze. The power lost due to the incident was estimated at 185 megawatts, he said, adding that technicians had scrambled instantly after the outage and restored power to the airport in half an hour. The power outage affected Kuwait International Airport and the residential neighborhoods of Rehab, Rabia, Ishbiliya, Ardiya, Riggae, Farwaniya, Omariya, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Industrial Shuwaikh.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The new Cabinet is due to take oath in the National Assembly today amid a controversy over the inclusion of Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Ghadeer Aseeri, who is accused of tweeting in support of anti-government protests in Bahrain. Islamist opposition MPs have threatened to grill new Prime Minister HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah if he does not dismiss Aseeri before the oath session, but nothing has happened yet and the minister denied she has resigned.

Aseeri, a liberal Shiite academic, allegedly posted tweets in 2011 backing the anti-government protests in neighboring Bahrain and for calling on Gulf troops, sent to back the government, to withdraw. Opposition MPs insist that the minister should not have been included in the Cabinet over her views, which contradict government policies.

Opposition Islamist MP Mohammad Al-Mutair, who openly threatened to grill the premier over Aseeri, yesterday placed another condition for cooperation with the government. He called on the government not to stand in the way of approving a draft law providing a general amnesty to opposition former MPs and activists who were sentenced to years in prison for storming the National Assembly building in 2011.

A group of lawmakers are also planning to file a motion to investigate an arms deal to purchase around two dozen Caracal helicopters signed with France a few years ago. MPs have been pressing to investigate a number of key arms deals, including the multibillion-dollar Eurofighter jet deal. Allegations of corruption were one of the reasons for the resignation of the former government.

Meanwhile, Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said he has received a request

signed by 10 MPs to hold a special session on Jan 9 to debate what MPs call traffic chaos following the death of a Kuwaiti citizen riding a bicycle on Sheikh Jaber Causeway. Minister of Finance Mariam Al-Ageel said yesterday that a report on the demographic structure was sent to the Council of Ministers and its positive results will be announced after its approval.

The minister described the results in the reports as excellent that were achieved as a result of decisions and regulations by the interior ministry to amend the demographic structure and others by the foreign ministry to bar maids from certain nationalities. She said that the decisions to increase the percentage of Kuwaitis in the private sector will be applied shortly, adding that the private sector is not opposed to these decisions and companies which want to employ other nationalities should pay the specified fees.

Saudi sentences five to death over Khashoggi murder

RIYADH: Five people were sentenced to death yesterday over Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder, but two top officials were exonerated as authorities said the killing was not premeditated. Khashoggi, a Washington Post contributor, was murdered in October last year in Saudi Arabia's Istanbul consulate in what Riyadh called a "rogue" operation, tipping it into one of its worst diplomatic crises.

Out of individuals indicted in the case - most of whom remain unnamed - five were sentenced to death, three face jail terms totaling 24 years, and the others were acquitted, the public prosecutor said. The verdict - lambasted by Turkey and rights groups as a travesty of justice underscores Saudi efforts to draw a line under the crisis as it seeks to reboot its international image ahead of next year's G20 summit in

"The public prosecution's investigation showed that the killing was not premeditated at the start of this mission" but rather that it occurred in the heat of the moment, Saudi deputy prosecutor Shalaan Al-Shalaan told a press conference. The verdict can be appealed. Khashoggi, a 59-year-old Saudi insider-turnedcritic, was strangled and his body cut into pieces by a 15-man Saudi squad inside the consulate, according to Turkish officials. His remains have not been found.

Saudi prosecutors had said deputy intelligence chief Ahmed Al-Assiri oversaw Khashoggi's killing and the US Treasury had claimed the royal court's media czar Saud Al-Qahtani was "part of the planning and

Continued on Page 24



RIYADH: An image grab from a video released by the Saudi ministry of media yesterday shows Saudi deputy prosecutor Shalaan Al-Shalaan speaking in the capital. —AFP

News in brief

Saudi, Kuwait sign deal today

KUWAIT: Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will sign a deal today to resume production at two major oilfields in a shared neutral zone after five years of stoppage. The Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) said yesterday the signing ceremony will take place in the neutral zone where the offshore Khafji field and onshore Wafra field are located. The two fields were pumping some 500,000 barrels per day before production was halted first at Khafji in Oct 2014 and then at Wafra months later over a dispute between the two neighbors. Riyadh said at the time the decision was due to environmental issues.—AFP

Maid threatens to kill girl

KUWAIT: Security forces yesterday rescued a Kuwaiti girl after an angry Ethiopian housemaid put a knife to her neck and threatened to kill her at her sponsor's house in Saad Al-Abdullah, said security sources. The sources added that the child's father called the police to report the maid's threats. The maid was arrested and the child sustained a head injury in the process of freeing her. Further investigations are in progress. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

\$4m drugs seized in Gulf of Oman

LONDON: Britain's Royal Navy said yesterday one of its warships had helped to seize a batch of crystal meth worth more than £3.3 million (\$4.3 million) from smugglers in the Gulf of Oman. HMS Defender, a destroyer based at Portsmouth, southern England, sent a party to search a suspicious dhow as it conducted reconnaissance in the northern Arabian Sea. Royal marines discovered on the dhow 11 mailbag-sized sacks carrying drugs weighing 131 kg in total, the Royal Navy said in a statement. HMS Defender is one of several British warships deployed to the Middle East this year to help secure commercial shipping in the region.— Reuters

Modi party loses state election amid protests

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party lost control of another state yesterday, adding to a string of electoral losses since last December amid protests that mark the biggest challenge to the Hindu-nationalist leader. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) conceded defeat in the eastern state of Jharkhand, with an alliance of the main opposition Congress party and a regional bloc slated to take control of the resource-rich province. Last month, BJP also lost power in Maharashtra, home to Mumbai, in a major setback.

"I dedicate this victory to the people of Jharkhand," Hemant Soren,

leader of the regional Jharkhand Mukti Morcha party, said after claiming victory. The loss comes in the middle of a sometimes deadly wave of nationwide protests triggered by a new citizenship law, which critics say discriminates against Muslims and has brought thousands of people out on to the

streets in opposition. The polls in Jharkhand opened on Nov 30, before the demonstrations kicked off and do not represent the current public mood. However, the BJP's defeat will be a shot in the arm for India's opposition parties, some of which have used popular anger against the Citizenship Amendment Act to their advantage. The Modi government insists that the law is needed to help persecuted non-Muslim minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who came to India before 2015 by giv-

ing them Indian citizenship. **Continued on Page 24**



RANCHI, India: Congress-JMM alliance workers celebrate results projecting an assembly majority in Jharkhand state elections yesterday.— AFP

Army chief's death caps turbulent year for Algeria

ALGIERS: Algeria's powerful army chief General Ahmed Gaid Salah died of a heart attack at age 79 yesterday, threatening to deepen the country's political crisis at the end of a turbulent year. Gaid Salah was seen as Algeria's de facto strongman following the April resignation of longtime president Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the face of massive protests against his bid for a fifth term. "The deputy defense minister and chief of staff of the army died Monday morning of a heart attack," the presidency said in a statement read out on state news channel Algeria 3.

The general died at home of a heart attack at about 6:00 am (0500 GMT) before his body was transferred to a military hospital, the statement said. The lifelong military man had made his last public appearance Thursday at the swearing-in of new president Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who was seen as close to Gaid Salah. HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Tebboune, expressing sincere condolences over the demise of Gaid Salah. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

Gaid Salah was instrumental in pushing the Dec 12 vote that elected establishment insider Tebboune - in defiance of a months-long protest movement demanding deep-rooted political reforms before any poll. At Thursday's ceremony, Gaid Salah was also awarded the rank of "Sadr" in Algeria's National Order of Merit, an honor normally reserved for heads of state.

As chief of the military for a record 15 years and a veteran of Algeria's war for independence from France, the general was seen as the guardian of the militarydominated system that has been in power since. When Bouteflika appointed him in 2004 to head the armed forces - the backbone of Algeria's opaque regime - he became one of the North African country's most pow-

He loyally supported Bouteflika for years until the president's February announcement that he would run



for re-election sparked unprecedented protests by the youth-led "Hirak" movement. In early April, Gaid Salah called on his boss to resign. Bouteflika quit the same day, leaving the armed forces chief effectively in charge of the country. But the old soldier categorically rejected the Hirak movement's key demands: Deep reforms, the establishment of transitional institutions and the dismantling of the military-dominated regime.

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Boursa Kuwait promotion contributes to supporting national economy: Amir

Sheikh Sabah receives Boursa Kuwait, Capital Markets Authority officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, as well as officials from the Kuwaiti Capital Markets Authority, Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority and Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment and Enhancing Competitiveness in Kuwait.—Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Nasser Al-Roudhan, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and Managing Director of Kuwaiti Capital Markets Authority (CMA) Dr Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Melhem, CEO of Boursa Kuwait Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi and members of the CMA, on the event of Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) for Europe Australia and Far East (EAFE) announcing the upgrade of Boursa Kuwait to the emerging market category. His Highness the Amir commended the efforts exerted to make this great achievement by those responsible for it from all sides, which

contributes to supporting the national economy and enhances its position locally and internationally, advancing the Kuwaiti market globally.

His Highness the Amir also received Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment and Enhancing Competitiveness in Kuwait (PCK) Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and its members, on the occasion of Kuwait entering the list of ten countries that improved most in the Ease of Doing Business Index 2020 issued by the World Bank. His Highness the Amir expressed admiration for the efforts made by those responsible for this achievement and working towards



enhancing investment and economic opportunities.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Abdulrahman Nimesh Al-Nimesh, the head of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazahah), along with the visiting Head of Egyptian Administrative Control Authority (ACA) Major General Sherif Seif Al-Din Hussien. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received the former Minister of Social Affairs Saad Ibrahim Al-Kharaz, the ex-Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Services Dr Jenan Mohsen Ramadan Boushehri, former Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Mohammad Al-Azmi and

former Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fahad Ali Zayed Al-Shula. Amiri Diwan Affairs Deputy Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah attended the meetings.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received the former ministers at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness praised their efforts and contributions in carrying out their responsibilities with dedication and sincerity, expressing his appreciation for the energetic efforts during their tenure as well as, wishing them continuous success. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



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Farwaniya: Near Police Station Roundabout, Tel: 2227 1340 • Dajeej: Lulu Hypermarket, Tel: 2202 1378

Salmiya: Al Salam Mall, Tel: 2206 0062 • Fahaheel: Makkah Street, Tel: 2392 2148

Joyalukkas





KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives well-wishers.

— Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Sheikh Ahmad pledges to improve Defense Ministry performance

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed keenness on upgrading his ministry and enhance cooperation among the ministry's military and civilian sectors. Sheikh Ahmad called on all ministry personnel to put the national interests above all considerations and consolidate the principles of equality and justice. He made the comments during his meeting at the Army Officers' Club with well-wishers who congratulated him on the confidence placed in him by the political leadership. He thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah - the Supreme Commander of the Armed



Forces, 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 for entrusting him with the Ministry of Defense. The audience included Chief of Staff of the Amry Lt Gen Staff Mohammad Al-Khudher and senior ministry officials. —KUNA



Tuesday, December 24, 2019 Local

Kuwait Cabinet lauds stock exchange growth: Positive step to lure investments

Finance minister briefs Cabinet about contracts' hurdles



KUWAIT: Kuwait stock exchange's indices have recorded collective gains before the national bourse is set to shift to "emerging market" status on investment research firm Morgan Stanley's rankings next year, Commerce Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan told the Cabinet yesterday. The Cabinet hailed the progress as a "positive step" towards luring more foreign investment into Kuwait, which in turn, would help transform the country into a regional "financial hub."

Meanwhile, Minister of Finance Mariam Al-Aqeel briefed the Cabinet about a final report prepared by the commission for examining contracting measures for government departments, shedding light on main obstacles at this level. Aqeel, who doubles as Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs, addressed the ministers during the weekly session, held at Seif Palace, about key recommendations aimed at tackling shortcomings and hindrances that delay projects' execution. She also presented the executives, during the session chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, with

proposals by competent authorities to deal with these issues. Among the proposals is conducting studies on legislations that regulate contracts, applicable ideas to shorten red tape and minimize bureaucracy, in addition to suggestions on transactions at government departments and coordination among authorities to ensure ventures' speedy execution.

Reading the Cabinet statement after the session, Anas Al-Saleh, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, said the ministers expressed deep gratitude for the commission members' efforts and decided to refer the report to the joint commission for economic affairs and public services. At start of the session, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah informed the ministers about outcome of Thursday's visit to the country by the Canadian minister of defense. Moreover, the ministers discussed parliamentary affairs and examined queries and proposals by some MPs. In light of a Decree issued on December 17 with respect of forming the government, the ministers examined draft decrees and resolutions on setting up higher councils and ministerial committees.

In the meantime, the Cabinet congratulated the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Boris Johnson over his re-election and praised the bilateral and historic ties between Kuwait and the UK. The Cabinet also congratulated Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on taking the oath of office, expressing best wishes for the new leadership in Algeria, and prosperity for the Algerian people. Furthermore, the Cabinet expressed sincere congratulations to Ashraf Ghani on his victory in the Afghan presidential elections, wishing him success in achieving the aspirations and hopes for the good of the friendly Afghan people. In addition, the Cabinet denounced a recent shooting incident in Moscow, which resulted in the killing of a number of people, as well as an attack on a number of mosques in Amhara in Ethiopia, stressing the position of Kuwait in rejecting all acts of violence and terrorism. — KUNA

Kuwait's budget 'launchpad' for economic reforms

KUWAIT: Kuwait's state budget will be the "launchpad" for a spate of economic and financial reforms, the country's Finance Minister Mariam Al-Aqeel said yesterday. Speaking to reporters, the minister said she would begin outlining plans aiming to bring a myriad of economic reforms to fruition, saying the country is at the cusp of a very critical juncture. On plans to increase 'Kuwaitization' of jobs in the private sector, Aqeel, who doubles as minister of state for economic affairs, said the process has slowed due to ongoing reevaluations ensuring that the strategy meets international standards. She went on to say that the "partnership" between Kuwait's private and public sectors will form the focal point of national development plans. On the topic of addressing Kuwait's demographic imbalance, Ageel said that a report was sent to the Cabinet containing recommendations on that regard, adding that these recommendations will be announced once approved by the Cabinet. — KUNA

Saudi to receive 1,000 bedoon pilgrims from Kuwait

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources said that preparations for bedoon pilgrims' hajj this year will start earlier than previous years, and that the Saudi authorities have already notified Kuwait with their approval to receive 1,000 bedoon pilgrims according to the usual conditions. "This early approval will result in starting to electronically register bedoons for hajj immediately after Ramadan," the sources said, noting that those who had already performed hajj will be excluded and that the names of elderly bedoons and those who had not performed hajj will be selected in a public raffle at the Grand Mosque.

The sources added that the raffle will be necessary because applicants usually exceed the number Saudi Arabia allowed this year, and that selected pilgrims will be distributed to five low-cost hajj convoys to be contracted through a tender to be offered for public bidding in March. The sources explained that each of the five convoys will serve 200 bedoon pilgrims for a fee of KD 500-650, while the Awqaf secretariat general will pay the balance of the low-cost hajj's usual fee of KD 1,000-1,200 per pilgrim.

In a related concern, the sources said the awgaf ministry undersecretary and the head of the supreme hajj committee Fareed Emadi recently signed four agreements with Saudi parties to arrange hajj affairs and

needs in Makkah and Madinah for this season. Emadi said that the agreements were signed early this year so that both the ministry of awqaf and hajj convoys can have enough time to prepare. He said the agreements were signed in a meeting with the deputy Saudi hajj and umrah minister Dr Abdul Fattah bin Suleiman Meshlet, during which last year's services were discussed to build upon this year.

Travel bans

In other news, recent statistics issued by the justice ministry's execution department showed that over 78,000 summonses had been issued in the 10 months of 2019. Statistics also showed that 68,888 travel bans were issued against citizens and expats, 36,114 travel bans were lifted, 67,440 summonses were annulled and over 31,000 arrest warrants were issued.

Meanwhile, official justice ministry sources said the results of tests conducted for applicants to be appointed at the experts department will be declared within a week at most. The sources added that the ministry had stressed its approval to parliamentary requests to investigate the alleged violations committed on appointing the experts and referred the entire issue to the public prosecution. Moreover, the sources said two committees formed by Minister Fahd Al-Afasi to investigate the matter will commence work this week.

Municipal Council approves building two universities

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council agreed during its weekly session yesterday to allocate two plots of land in Sulaibiya and Abu Hlaifa respectively in order to build two universities there. The council also approved the storage regulations chart, postponed naming some streets until the Cabinet issued a related regulation, agreed to divide the Messila Palace property and approved a request made by the state property department to offer various multi-floor parking buildings around Kuwait to private sector investors.

In other news, Kuwait Municipality

Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi hailed the success achieved by the municipality's executive body, Ahmadi and Jahra safety departments as well as the legal department in documenting the violations committed by certain companies on vast areas of state property, and filing official citations in this regard. Manfouhi added that the efforts exerted by the legal department proved fruitful when the court of appeal passed a final sentence in favor of the municipality, and ordered a company to pay KD 5 million in compensation for illegally using 1.1 million square meters of state property in Julaia and Mubarak Port.



KUWAIT: Yesterday's Municipal Council session in progress. — KUNA



Local

Photo of the Day



Amir's UN humanitarian leader award well-deserved: UNGA chief



KUWAIT: Newly-elected United Nations General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande said His Highness the Amir of Kuwait's UN humanitarian leader accolade was "well-deserved" due to the country's "remarkable" global humanitarian record. Discussions he held with officials, amid a visit to Kuwait, focused on how the country could support countries in need, individually or through collective efforts with other nations, he told KTV at UN House. The UN official's discussions with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also touched on support Kuwait extends to UN agencies.

Kuwait extends to CN agencies.

Kuwait has "taken the lead" for many years on humanitarian issues worldwide, particularly through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development initiatives, said the Nigerian diplomat, who was elected UNGA President in June, this year. As a current member of the UN Security Council, Kuwait's efforts are "important for all of us," he pointed out, particularly its "engagement"

with other member countries on crucial issues. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was handed the honor for his "exemplary humanitarian leadership" by former UN chief Ban Ki-moon at a ceremony in New York in 2014.

Meanwhile, Muhammad-Bunde's visit to Kuwait saw him giving a speech at the Kuwait Diplomatic Institute, where the UN official listed several matters he viewed as priorities amid his one-year term. The peaceful settlement of disputes through conflict prevention and cooperation, the inclusion of women, youth and the disabled, poverty eradication and urging nations to commit to climate action were amongst the topics of his address. Speaking to KTV, he also alluded to the importance of "partnerships" between nations to solve shortages one nation might face compared to others. Where one nation lacks resources, another, with an abundance, may provide, he suggested. — KUNA



Three e-businesses compete in Tmkeen Award final round

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company and the Youth Empowerment Organization (Tmkeen) held the final judging round to determine the winner of the Fifth KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs. Competing in the final round were three e-media and technology businesses: Drop In (@dropin_kw) - a local concierge application that allows you to place orders from stores near you; Fanajeen (@fanajeenbooks) - an application that offers audio and written summaries of books that you can read in under 20 minutes; and Routine (@lets.routine) an application that offers users healthy nutrition options and subscriptions. The judging panel comprises of KIPCO's Group Chief Strategic Initiatives Officer, Joe Kawkabani; CEO of Alsayer Franchising Company, Hamad Alsayer; and CEO of Boutiquat, Abdulwahab Alessa. The entrepreneurs each gave a 15-minute presentation about their businesses, which was followed by an extensive feedback and Q&A session.

Eman Al-Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director, said: "KIPCO and its Group companies are delighted to continue to support the young entrepreneurial community through this award. While the businesses presented to the final judging round are at different stages of launch and development, the common element in all of them is the creativity with which their founders have sought to solve problems, and the passion they have to take their work to the next level. I would like to thank the judges for the invaluable feedback they gave to the young entrepreneurs. We look forward to announcing the winner during the Youth Empowerment Symposium, which will take place in January."

Abdulrahman Al-Adsani, Head of the Tmkeen Symposium Organizing Committee, said: "Tmkeen takes prides in its collaboration with KIPCO to organize this award on an annual basis. We would like to congratulate the entrepreneurs who participated in this year's award for making it to the final round. They have shown passion for the work they do and commitment to continue face challenges in order to grow their businesses. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners, KIPCO Group, in encouraging and supporting Kuwait's youth in creating a better tomorrow."

The Youth Empowerment Symposium will take place on January 26-27, during which the winner of the KIP-CO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs will be announced. This year's winner will be awarded with \$100,000 worth of services from the KIPCO Group as well as \$15,000 in cash. In addition, the second and third place winners will be rewarded with \$10,000 and \$5,000 respectively. The award is support by Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, OSN, United Real Estate, KAMCO Investment Company, Qurain Petrochemical Industries, United Networks, United Education Company and Marina FM.

Local Tuesday, December 24, 2019

Filipino Christians in Kuwait welcome Christmas with 9-day dawn masses

Three churches celebrate 'Simbang Gabi' which ends today







By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: One of the best known Filipino traditions during Christmas is Simbang Gabi (dawn mass), a nineday ritual from Dec 16 to 24 to welcome the Christmas season. This year, the first day of Simbang Gabi was officiated by Pope Francis, where he led the Filipino congregation at the Vatican for dawn Mass. In Kuwait, three churches are celebrating Simbang Gabi - The Holy Family Cathedral in Kuwait City, The Saint Therese Church in Salmiya and Our Lady of Arabia Parish Church in Ahmadi. The start of dawn mass is at 4:30 am.

Filipinos braved the cold weather every day for nine days to usher Christmas. "This is already a tradition in my family to complete the nine-day masses, not for anything but a promise to God to faithfully fulfill and complete the nine days. I have to thank God for all the blessings in the family. I am grateful for life and the reason why I am here on earth," said 50-year-old Alice Mercado, who has lived in Kuwait for the last three decades. "Christmas to me is always a very memorable

moment because the 24th of December is my birthday. I will share blessings with the people, I will cook some food to be shared with attendees tomorrow," she noted.

It's also traditional for many churchgoers in Kuwait to stay after the dawn mass to share sumptuous food with the faithful. They normally share traditional Filipino soup, porridge, rice cakes and other dishes in the church compound. Simbang Gabi devotees attend dawn mass in anticipation of good fortune, luck or blessings like finding a boyfriend/girlfriend, a house and plot, or a good career and life.

Another country celebrating dawn mass is Puerto Rico, which calls this practice Misa de Aguinaldo. In the Philippines, Simbang Gabi was introduced during the Spanish era, when the majority of Filipinos worked in rice fields of rich people and oligarchs. The dawn Mass was introduced for farmers so they have enough time to hear Mass and yet go early in the fields to work. During the Spanish era, church bells started ringing as early as 3 o'clock, waking people up so they could get ready for the 4 o'clock dawn mass.



Market tour reveals drop in Xmas trees' availability in Kuwait





By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The availability of Christmas trees in Kuwait is not as it was in the past, when apart from artificial Christmas trees, real trees were also available. Searching the market now, real trees are not available anywhere. Even artificial trees are not available in many popular hypermarkets or stores that used to sell them in the past.

At a popular supermarket selling many US products that previously sold real trees. Kuwait Times found artificial trees in various sizes, but only in green color. Depending on the size of the tree, the price varies from KD 5 up to KD 50. A wide range of decorations for the trees is also available.

According to a saleswoman at another popular store (for household items) in Shuwaikh, they were banned from selling Christmas trees. "We used to sell Christmas trees for many years, but two years ago, we were banned from selling them. Unfortunately, the tree is not available in all of our branches," she told Kuwait Times. Another popular supermarket that was selling Christmas trees in the past doesn't have any in all of their branches. The staff in charge noted that the trees are not available, without providing any reasons.

At another popular hypermarket selling many Asian products, Christmas trees are available in various sizes. The trees are in green only, but some have white snow on them, and some are ready with decorations. Depending on the size, the price ranges between KD 7 and KD 29.

Meanwhile, customers can find Christmas trees at toy stores in different colors. A toyshop in Rai has

white, green and even gold Christmas trees, but only in one size. Other toyshops in Jabriya have a wide range





Fatma Al-Qadiri, Kuwaiti musician with global status

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti musician Fatma Al-Qadiri is an outstanding musician who received multiple international accolades for her work. Qadiri said in a statement yesterday that she is working hard to enlist her music in international events. Her name is enlisted in the French Lumieres Award for her music in the movie 'Atlantics.' The film is a 2019 internationally co-produced supernatural romantic drama directed

of trees that customers can choose from.

by Mati Diop. It was selected to compete for the Palme d'Or at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival. Qadiri composed music for the film. She said that she was honored in the Carthage Film Festival last October and received the 'best musician in a movie' award. Qadiri was born in 1981 in Senegal and is interested in exploring the impact of war and western aspects of other cultures through her work. — KUNA



NCCAL opens sports caricature gallery



KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) opened on Sunday the first sports caricature gallery in collaboration with the Al-Arabi SC and Kuwait Cartoon Society. The event aims to enrich the cultural movement in the country and signals care for talented artists, NCCAL's President Kamel Alabdel-Jalil said in a speech to the opening ceremony. He praised the

eminence of Kuwait cartoonists, saying this gallery, which gathered 26 cartoonists and displays 70 sports caricatures, will catalyze the artistic movement and portray sports as a sort of art. Among the other speakers at the ceremony were Al-Arabi SC Board Chairman Abdulaziz Ashour and the Qatar cartoonist Abdulaziz Sadeq - the guest of honor at the event. —KUNA







Mystery of missing 15-year boy found in closet grips Germany

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Indian states propose land rights amid citizenship fears

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Israeli strike on Syria kills 3 regime men

Syria forces advance in Idlib, nine civilians killed

Meanwhile, regime forces have seized

dozens of towns and villages in northwest

Syria from jihadists following days of violent

clashes, fuelling an exodus of civilians, a war

The fresh advances in Idlib came as Russian

warplanes continued to pummel the province's

south, killing nine civilians who were trying to

escape the flashpoint area on Sunday, the

Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human

monitor said Sunday.

BEIRUT, Lebanon: A war monitor said yesterday that air raids in Syria the previous night, blamed on Israel, killed at least three foreign pro-regime fighters south of the war-torn country's capital. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Sunday night's attack hit Syrian regime and Iranian positions south of Damascus. It said three non-Syrian loyalist fighters were killed by a rocket blast between the suburb of Aqraba and the nearby Sayyida Zeinab neighborhood, home to a shrine revered by Shiite Muslims.

It did not specify their nationality but said they were likely Iranian.

Syrian state news agency SANA reported the attack just before midnight on Sunday. It said Syrian air defenses fired on "hostile missiles" coming from "the Occupied Territories", referring to Israel. It said one missile came down in Aqraba, southeast of Damascus.

Israel has not publicly claimed responsibility for the raids. An Israeli army spokeswoman contacted by AFP said Israel does not comment on reports in foreign media. Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, Israel has conducted hundreds of strikes in Syria against Iranian targets and pro-Tehran militias allied with the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad. An Israeli strike on November 20 killed 21 pro-regime fighters including 16 foreigners, along with two civilians, according to the Observatory. In July, six Iranians and three pro-regime Syrian fighters were killed in reported Israeli missile strikes in the southern provinces of Daraa and Quneitra, according to the Observatory. A month later, the Israeli army carried out a strike in Aqraba, killing two Hezbollah and one Iranian fighter.

Rights said. The ground assault by loyalists of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime brings them closer to capturing one of the largest urban centres in Syria's last major opposition bastion.

Maaret Al-Numan," Observatory head Rami Abdul Rahman told AFP. Residents of the southern Idlib town flooded out of the area, fearing further advances, an AFP correspondent there said. According to the Observatory. more than 30,000 people had fled the flashpoint area in southern Idlib in recent days. More than 40 civilians were reportedly killed in the region in the past week.

'This push is an attempt to get closer to

Abu Akram, a resident, said rescue workers and local relief groups were struggling to get families out. "Everybody is working at full capacity but they can't handle such a large number of people," the father of five told AFP after he could not find a vehicle to drive his own family further north.

'Nowhere is safe'

The jihadist-dominated Idlib region hosts some three million people, including many displaced by years of violence in other parts of Syria. The Damascus regime, a Russian ally, has repeatedly vowed to take back the area and bombardment has continued despite a ceasefire announced in August, claiming the lives of more than 290 civilians and hundreds of fighters from both sides.

Heightened regime and Russian bombard-

ment on the Maaret Al-Numan region since December 16 has forced tens of thousands of vulnerable people to flee their homes, according to the United Nations. The UN has called for "immediate de-esca-

lation" and warned of further mass displacement if the violence continues. "Nowhere is safe. If we stay inside our homes, or if we flee outside, we will die either way," said Abu Akram. Damascus loyalists have since Thursday been locked in battles with jihadists and allied rebels, seizing a total of 29 towns and villages from their control, according to the Britain-based Observatory.

Four days of fighting has killed 110 jihadists and rebels, as well as 77 regime lovalists. added the monitor, which relies on sources inside Syria for its reports.

The Idlib region is controlled by the country's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham. Pro-government forces launched a blistering offensive against the region in April, killing around 1,000 civilians and displacing more than 400,000 people from their homes.

Reports of Israeli strikes

On Sunday evening, Syrian anti-aircraft defense fired on Israeli missiles, hitting one that fell outside Damascus, the official Syrian news agency Sana reported. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, there were three explosions in the Damascus suburbs after the missiles targeted "Syrian regime and Iranian positions".

A Turkish team was in Russia yesterday for talks on the conflicts in Syria and Libya, following reports that tens of thousands more Syrians were heading to Turkey, which is already host to the world's biggest refugee population. President Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday more than 80,000 civilians in Syria's northwest Idlib province were migrating towards Turkey, after Russian and Syrian forces intensified their air strikes in the area in recent days. Turkey-based Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) said 120,000 Syrians in south Idlib were fleeing towards the border. The visit to Moscow by the Turkish delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal, was taking place before Russian President Vladimir Putin visits Turkey, a member of the NATO alliance that has angered the United States and other Western allies by buying a

Russian missile defence system. Turkey already hosts about 3.7 million Syrians, the largest refugee population in the vorld. It worries about a new influx. "We are putting up every effort with Russia for the attacks to stop, and we will continue to do so. In fact, we are sending a delegation to Moscow," Erdogan said in his comments on Sunday. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has vowed to recapture the Idlib region, the last significant area of Syria still under rebel con-

trol after 8-1/2 years of civil war. Turkey has backed Syrian rebels fighting Assad, while Russia and Iran support Assad's forces. Ankara, Moscow and Tehran have been working on a political solution to the conflict. The Turkish delegation will also discuss Turkey's potential troop deployment and military support to Libya, after Ankara and Tripoli signed a military cooperation accord last month. —Agencies

Iran and India agree to speed up major port project

TEHRAN: Tehran and Delhi have agreed to accelerate the development of an important Iranian port, India's foreign minister said during a visit to the sanctions-hit Islamic republic yesterday.

Chabahar port-being jointly developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan-is on the Indian Ocean about 100 kilometers (62 miles) west of the Pakistan border. But development has stalled, despite waivers to sanctions that the United States began reimposing last year after withdrawing from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. "Just concluded a very productive #IndiaIran Joint Commission Meeting," Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar

"Reviewed the entire gamut of our cooperation. Agreed on accelerating our Chabahar project," he added as he wound up a two-day visit to the Iranian capital.

Washington withdrew from the nuclear accord and reimposed sanctions on Tehran as part of a campaign of "maximum pressure" aimed at reducing its arch-enemy's regional role and missile program. The rare exemptions from the sanctions are due mainly to the pivotal role of the port, and a planned railway line, in breaking landlocked Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan for trade.

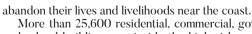
Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday in a joint news conference with Jaishankar that the project would boost trade in the region. "Completing the Chabahar-Zahedan railway and connecting it to Iran's national railway can elevate the position of Chabahar port, revolutionise regional commerce and help transport goods on a cheaper and shorter route," he said.

Rouhani said maintaining regional security was an important topic for Iran and India.

"In the current situation where America stands against nations with unilateral sanctions, we have to try to continue bilateral cooperation. "This situation certainly will not last, and America will be forced to stop its maximum pressure against Iran sooner or later," he said, without elaborating.

India stopped buying Iranian oil after the US abolished waivers for some countries in May, in a move meant to wipe out the Islamic republic's main source of revenue.

Despite tensions in their relationship, Iran and India have sought to move forward and develop partnerships. —AFP



More than 25,600 residential, commercial, government and school buildings are inside the high-risk area, which was almost completely wiped out in 2004, according to a Reuters analysis of city data. City officials say about 50,000 people live there today-nearly the same as in 2004.

Immediately after the disaster, the government considered banning construction within a two-kilometer (1.2 mile) coastal buffer zone. But the plan was dropped after communities, many dependent on fishing, took to the streets to protest such attempts to move them away from their ancestral lands and livelihoods. Survivors like Munandar, who received around 25 million rupiah (\$1,700) each in reconstruction aid, rebuilt in the hazard zone. The government spent 2.2 trillion rupiah rebuilding 25,000 houses throughout the city, including inside the hazard zone, according to officials.

Poor enforcement

Srinivasa Tummala, an oceanographer who heads the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, says governments in Indonesia and the region need to do more to control coastal populations and prepare communities by holding regular tsunami drills, marking out evacuation routes, constructing shelters, and enforcing minimum building standards. "Realistically, there needs to be both stricter enforcement and building community resilience,"



PALU: Ruins and damaged building are pictured nearly one year after an earthquake and tsunami at a beach in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, September 26, 2019 in this photo. —Reuters

Jalaluddin, head of the public works and spatial planning department in Banda Aceh, said that since foreign aid had dried up the city government no longer had the funds needed to relocate residents or create seawalls near the coast. Even where building codes and zoning laws existed, there was little urgency to enforce them now that the 2004 disaster was 15 years in the past, and stronger structures were expensive to build, he said. This meant most buildings did not meet minimum standards to withstand earthquakes or strong waves.—Reuters

Rebuilding in Indonesia's tsunami zone leaves city in peril

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia/NEW YORK: When 12-meter (39 ft) waves slammed into Banda Aceh on the northern tip of Indonesia's Sumatra island on Boxing Day in 2004, Arif Munandar lost his wife, three sons, and 20 other members of his family as much of the city was obliterated.

The tsunami - triggered by a massive 9.1 magnitude quake - also hit at least six other countries along the rim of the Indian Ocean, killing more than 230,000 people. Indonesia was hit hardest, with more than 168,000 killed. Fifteen years on, Munandar and tens of thousands of others have been allowed to rebuild in the same low-lying areas of Banda Aceh despite continuing risks of tsunami and other coastal hazards like flooding, Reuters found. Officials and experts say it's because of lax law enforcement, a lack of government resources for relocation, and an entrenched reluctance on the part of many survivors to

After Ethiopia crash, victims' relatives say they were hounded by US law firms

Lawsuits against Boeing could be lucrative for law firms

NAIROBI/ADDIS ABABA: Days after the March 10 crash of a Kenya-bound Ethiopian Airlines' Boeing jet that killed all 157 people on board, strangers began calling or visiting bereaved families, saying they represented US law firms.

They showed up uninvited at memorials and at homes full of weeping relatives. They cold called. They left brochures. In one case a grieving husband was offered money for an appointment. One woman offered counseling and another said she was creating an emotional support group, without disclosing they were working for lawyers. Reuters interviewed 37 relatives of the victims, or their representatives, and found that 31 complained of inappropriate approaches by those saving they represented US law firms.

In some instances, the behavior may have been illegal or unethical under US laws and rules barring solicitation and deceptive practices, several legal ethics experts said. Six firms were particularly aggressive in courting prospective clients after the Boeing plane nosedived into an Ethiopian field: Ribbeck Law Chartered and Global Aviation Law Group (GALG) of Chicago; The Witherspoon Law Group and Ramji Law Group from Texas; and Wheeler & Franks Law Firm PC and Eaves Law Firm of Mississippi.

Witherspoon, Wheeler and Eaves denied any wrongdoing. Ribbeck, GALG and Ramji did not respond to requests for comment. Ribbeck Law and GALG have jointly filed two lawsuits against Boeing seeking "all damages available under the law" without being specific about the size of the claims. Three suits filed by Ramji have been dismissed. The other firms haven't filed any suits. By Thursday, there were 114 cases filed against Boeing in Chicago federal court on behalf of 112 crash victims, according to lead counsel for the plaintiffs, Robert Clifford. More than three dozen law firms are representing them. No trial date has been set.

Boeing has said it is "cooperating fully with the investigating authorities" and said that safety is its highest priority. It has acknowledged errors in failing to give pilots more information on 737 MAX software involved in a Lion Air crash that killed 189 in Indonesia in October 2018 and the Ethiopian crash five months later, but Boeing has not admitted any fault in how it developed the aircraft. The 737 MAX is currently grounded. Boeing declined to comment on the lawsuits.

Uninvited guest

An uninvited stranger turned up at Paul Njoroge's family home in Kenya just hours after a memorial service for his wife, his three small children, and his mother-in-law, who all died in the crash. Njoroge said the visitor gave him promotional materials for the law firm Wheeler and Franks

"I said, I don't know who directed you to this place.

Everyone here is praying," Njoroge told Reuters. Two other families said they received visits around the time of memorial services from Wheeler's lawyers or people who said they represented the firm. James Ndeda, who Wheeler represented after he was injured in the 1998 embassy bombing in Kenya, said he visited Njoroge. The firm's partners, Bill Wheeler and Jamie Franks, asked Ndeda to help the firm connect with crash victims' families, Ndeda said. Wheeler sent him literature featuring his firm and another Mississippi firm, Eaves Law Firm.

Ndeda said he went to visit victims' families either by himself, sent employees or accompanied Bill Wheeler or Jamie Franks, and sometimes Leo Jackson, an investigator with Eaves. Jackson declined to comment. Wheeler and Franks, and Eaves, said in a joint emailed statement they only met families if invited. "The story you have been told is completely wrong," they wrote. "We contacted no families without an invitation." They declined to answer further questions.

Many overtures

Ethiopian Bayihe Demissie, whose flight attendant wife Elsabet was a victim, told Reuters a man who said he was from The Witherspoon Law Group called him three days after the crash. Bayihe said he was too upset to speak. People saying they represented more than 30 firms contacted him over the next few months, including Witherspoon again, and GALG, said Bayihe. The constant calls about compensation hurt because it felt like people were suggesting he could benefit from his wife's death, he said. Witherspoon denied the allegations.

"This firm does not solicit or engage in any illegal practices. We do not represent any of the families involved in the tragic crash," Witherspoon's founder Nuru Witherspoon said



Rejected approaches

A woman named Mihret Girma sent a Kenyan victim's family a message in August, inviting them to attend a meeting with a grief counsellor and the Law Society of Kenya.

At that time, she did not reveal she had ties to the firms GALG and Ribbeck, according to the family, who shared messages received from Mihret. Mihret was in a WhatsApp group with GALG staff and US lawyers Manuel Ribbeck and Monica Ribbeck Kelly within three weeks of the March crash, other messages reviewed by Reuters show. Dozens of the messages show GALG staff and the Ribbecks discussing how to reach bereaved families.

Mihret did not return calls or messages seeking comment. The Illinois state disciplinary commission censured Monica Ribbeck in 2014 for filing an aviation accident suit on behalf of someone who had already terminated her. In 2015, the

commission's hearing board recommended she be suspended for 60 days for filing what it alleged was a frivolous action for legal discovery over the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines' Flight 370. That was overturned after a review.

This year, the Ribbecks set up a new entity, GALG, according to messages between GALG and the Ribbecks that have been viewed by Reuters. GALG staff directed clients to the Ribbecks, messages and emails shared by several bereaved families show. GALG set up its website on March 28, only 18 days after the accident, and filed its articles of incorporation in Illinois on April 24. Amos Mbicha, whose sister and nephew died in the crash, said he helped more than ten law firms, including GALG, connect with bereaved families. He said he stopped working with GALG in October when the firm tried to contact a victim's relative after he had warned them not to. —Reuters

Sudan opens Darfur crimes probe against Bashir, 50 others

KHARTOUM: Sudan said on Sunday it had opened an investigation into crimes committed in the Darfur region by ousted president Omar al-Bashir and 50 members of his former regime.

Prosecutor general Tagelsir Al-Heber said "we started an investigation about the crimes that have been committed in Darfur from 2003", speaking on his arrival in Khartoum from a visit to the United Arab Emirates. "Fifty-one members of the former regime, including Omar al-Bashir and Ahmed Haroun (a former cabinet minister and governor), will be investigated. They will face justice," he

The investigation will be the first to be launched since Bashir was ousted by the army in April following massive protests against his 30-year rule.

Bashir, who is behind bars for corruption and awaiting trial on other charges, is wanted by the International Criminal Court in The Hague for his role in the bloody Darfur conflict. The ICC issued

warrants for Bashir's arrest in 2009 and 2010 on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in the conflict that left around 300,000 people dead and 2.5 million displaced, according to the United Nations.

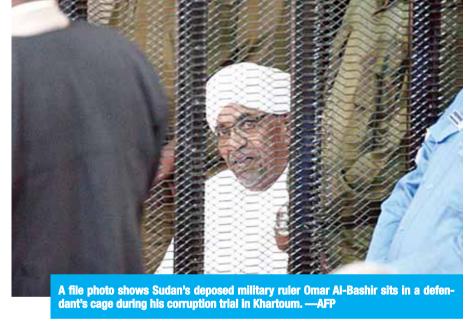
Haroun, who was governor of Sudan's warn-torn South Kordofan state, is also wanted by the ICC on war crimes charges. The Darfur fighting broke out in 2003 when ethnic minority rebels took up arms against Bashir's Arab-dominated government, which they accused of marginalizing the region.

Human rights groups say Khartoum targeted suspected pro-rebel ethnic groups with a scorched earth policy, raping, killing, looting and burning villages. Despite numerous calls for his extradition, the ex-dictator has not been sent to The Hague.

'Thanks but it's too late'

Yacoub Mohammed, an official at the sprawling Camp Kalma facility where tens of thousands of people displaced by the conflict in Darfur have been living for vears, said the initiative came "too late".

"Thanks to the prosecutor general, but it's too late because... almost 17 years (have passed) and the investigation cannot find any evidence," he said. "The evidence has disappeared. And there is no mention of these crimes (crimes against humanity), it is not written in



Sudanese law. For this we want these criminals to be taken to the ICC," he added. Swept to power in a coup backed by Islamists in 1989, Bashir was deposed on April 11 by the army, after months of protest against his regime that left dozens dead. Following a deal reached in August between the military and protesters, Sudan is now led by a transitional government tasked with paving the

way for civilian rule.

The investigation was announced on Sunday as the new government has vowed to establish peace in the country's conflicthit regions, including Darfur. On December 14, Bashir was sentenced by a court in Khartoum to two years' detention in a correctional center for corruption in the first of several cases against him. He is also under investigation for his role in the 1989 coup, which he led against the democratically elected government. —AFP

As a result, COGAT said, "entry permits for Jerusalem and for the West Bank will be issued in accordance with security assessments and without regard to age." Gaza has only around 1,000 Christians, most of them Greek Orthodox, in a population of 2 million in the narrow coastal strip. Last year, Israel granted permits for close to 700 Gaza Christians to travel to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and other holy cities

that draw thousands of pilgrims each holiday season. Christian leaders in Jerusalem had condemned the initial entry ban and said they would appeal to Israeli authorities to lift it. —Reuters

Israel reverses ban, Gaza Christians can visit Christmas sites

JERUSALEM: Christians in the Gaza Strip will be allowed to visit holy cities such as Bethlehem and Jerusalem at Christmas, Israel authorities said on Sunday, reversing a decision not to issue them permits.

with "security orders" Gaza Christians would be allowed to travel abroad but none would be permitted to go Israel or the occupied West Bank. Gaza for the Christmas holiday".

On Sunday, the liaison office, known as COGAT. announced on Twitter that its director has "extended the travel facilitations for the Christian population of

Israel tightly restricts movements out of the Gaza Strip,

territory controlled by Hamas, an Islamist group that it

considers a terrorist organization. In a break from its

usual Christmas holiday policy, Israel's military liaison

to the Palestinians said on Dec. 12 that in accordance

Putin takes first train across Crimea bridge MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin yesterday stood in the driver's cabin of a

train for the official opening of a railway bridge that links annexed Crimea to southern Russia. During his ride starting in Kerch in Crimea in a shortened three-carriage

train, Putin also spent time drinking tea with engineers on the 227-billion-ruble (\$3.6-billion) project. The rail bridge, which Putin praised as "magnificent," is 19 kilometers (12 miles) long. The bridge for car traffic opened in May last year when the president drove a truck across it.

The total rail route from the northwestern city of Saint Petersburg to the Crimean port city of Sevastopol covers a distance of 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles). Putin said the bridge would

restore rail links to Crimea severed in 2014 when Moscow annexed the peninsula, sparking an ongoing separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine that has claimed some 13,000 lives.

The company of Putin's close ally, billionaire businessman Arkady Rotenberg, won the construction contract for the bridge. He sold the company last month. Putin told workers an anecdote about receiving an emotional call from "your main boss with the simple Russian surname Rotenberg," after the completion of a key stage of the project. "He called me at night and spoke in such a voice that I asked him 'Have you been drinking?" said the strongman.

The coverage of the project has been reminiscent of Soviet infrastructure projects, with a newsreader on state-controlled Rossiya 24 television channel calling the opening "without exaggera-

Russia says it is the longest in Europe. Ukraine was unhappy about both the rail link and Putin's presence at the opening. President Volodymyr Zelensky's representative office for Crimea said in a



Yevgeny Ditrikh after the opening ceremony of the railway part of the Crimean Bridge, connecting Crimea to mainland Russia in Taman yesterday. —AFP

statement on Facebook that the rail link and Putin's visit to Crimea were "a gross breach by the Russian side of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

It showed "disregard by the Kremlin of the universally recognized principles and norms of international law," the statement said. —AFP

Iran leader ordered crackdown on unrest: Do whatever it takes to end it

TEHRAN: After days of protests across Iran last month, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei appeared impatient. Gathering his top security and government officials together, he issued an order: Do whatever it takes to stop them. That order, confirmed by three sources close to the supreme leader's inner circle and a fourth official, set in motion the bloodiest crackdown on protesters since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. About 1,500 people were killed during less than two weeks of unrest that started on Nov. 15. The toll, provided to Reuters by three Iranian interior ministry officials, included at least 17 teenagers and about 400 women as well as some members of the security forces and police.

The toll of 1,500 is significantly higher than figures from international human rights groups and the United States. A Dec 16 report by Amnesty International said the death toll was at least 304. The US State Department, in a statement to Reuters, said it estimates that many hundreds of Iranians were killed, and has seen reports that number could be over 1.000. The figures provided to Reuters, said two of the Iranian officials who provided them, are based on information gathered from security forces, morgues, hospitals and coroner's offices. The government spokesman's office declined to comment on whether the orders came from Khamenei and on the Nov. 17 meeting. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment for this story. What began as scattered protests over a surprise increase in gasoline prices quickly spread into one of the biggest challenges to Iran's clerical rulers since the 1979 Islamic

By Nov 17, the second day, the unrest had reached the capital Tehran, with people calling for an end to the Islamic Republic and the downfall of its leaders. Protesters burned pictures of Khamenei and called for the return of Reza Pahlavi, the exiled son of the toppled Shah of Iran, according to videos posted on social media and eye witnesses. That evening at his official residence in a fortified compound in central Tehran, Khamenei met with senior officials, including security aides, President Hassan Rouhani and members of his cabinet. At the meeting, described to Reuters by the three sources close to his inner circle, the 80-year-old leader, who has final say over all state matters in the country, raised his voice and expressed criticism of the handling of the unrest. He was also angered by the burning of his image and the destruction of a statue of the republic's late founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"The Islamic Republic is in danger. Do whatever it takes to end it. You have my order," the supreme leader told the group, one of the sources said. Khamenei said he would hold the assembled officials responsible for the consequences of the protests if they didn't immediately stop them. Those who attended the meeting agreed the protesters aimed to bring down the regime.

"The enemies wanted to topple the Islamic Republic and immediate reaction was needed," one of the sources said. The fourth official, who was briefed on the Nov. 17 meeting, added that Khamenei made clear the demonstrations required a forceful response.

"Our Imam," said the official, referring to Khamenei, "only answers to God. He cares about people and the Revolution. He was very firm and said those rioters should be crushed." Tehran's clerical rulers have blamed "thugs" linked to the regime's opponents in exile and the country's main foreign foes, namely the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia, for stirring up unrest. Khamenei has described the unrest as the work of a "very dangerous conspiracy." —Reuters

Mystery of missing 15-year boy found in closet grips Germany

Boy found in a closet at the flat of a suspected paedophile

FRANKFURT: The case of a missing 15-year-old boy child's disappearance "is still being looked into", he added. found in a closet at the flat of a suspected paedophile has gripped Germany, but his mother says she just wants to celebrate Christmas with her son. Marvin had been missing for over two years when he was found hiding in a cupboard last Friday as police searched the home of a 44year-old man suspected of distributing child pornography.

The stunning discovery in the western German town of Recklinghausen has drawn comparisons to the Austrian case of Natascha Kampusch, who was held by her kidnapper for eight years before she escaped in 2006. Marvin, who disappeared after saying goodbye to his carers at a youth shelter early on June 11, 2017, is currently in psychi-

"I want to visit him for Christmas, to celebrate a little with him," his mother Manuela B., 53, told Germany's bestselling tabloid Bild. A police spokesman yesterday said the decision on when Marvin can go home "is up to the doctors, not the police".

Many questions remain answered in the case that German media have dubbed an "Advent miracle"-including how the boy ended up at the flat and if he could have left at any time. The 44-year-old suspect at whose flat Marvin was found has been arrested and charged with a serious

Prosecutors in Bochum on Monday said the man already had a 2018 conviction for possessing child pornography but was only given a ten-month suspended sentence. The boy was already staying with the man at that point as he is understood to have lived at the flat for "at least two years", chief prosecutor Christian Kuhnert told

What exactly happened in the first months after the

TV appeal

Police said in a statement that the officers who discovered Marvin "did not see any indications at that point that he was being held against his will". But Marvin's mother, who was briefly reunited with her son on Friday, doubted he was there entirely out of free will.

"The man whose place they found him at must have manipulated him," she told Bild.

"I could go crazy thinking about what's been done to him." She said Marvin was found wearing the same clothes as on the day he vanished, and said he looked like "a bro-

"He now needs to process what's happened over the past two and a half years. This is all so painful."

His stepfather Michael B. told the RTL broadcaster he believed the boy hadn't stayed at the flat voluntarily, adding that Marvin "didn't talk much" when he saw his mother. An RTL reporter standing outside the flat at the weekend saw investigators carry away boxes of dirty nappies and described an overwhelming stench of urine coming from the building. Marvin was 13 when he was living in a care home for young people, reportedly after he had trouble processing the death of his father.

After the investigation into his disappearance had gone cold, Marvin's mother and sister made a fresh appeal for information in the TV show "Aktenzeichen XY" in July, which tries to solve missing cases.

But in the end the boy's discovery was entirely coincidental. Marvin's mother told Bild she already knows what she will give her son for Christmas. "I want to give him new clothes." — AFP



The house in Recklinghausen where the boy was found.

Croatian president to face leftist ex-PM in run-off

ZAGREB: Croatia's conservative president narrowly made it to a run-off election against a leftist former premier on Sunday, after a nationalist folk singer won over a large chunk of her camp's far-right wing. The hotly contested first round vote signalled the appeal of populism in a Balkan country struggling with an influx of migrants at its borders, an emigration exodus and widespread corruption.

It also leaves Croatia waiting to know who will be head of state as the country takes over the European Union's rotating presidency in the new year.

With nearly all ballots counted, centreleft former prime minister Zoran Milanovic took the lead with 29.5 percent of the vote,

according to the electoral commission. Incumbent President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic garnered 26.6 percent, eking out a second place finish just two points ahead of 57-year-old far-right singer Miroslav Skoro. Skoro, whose patriotic folk tunes were a hit in the 1990s, won nearly a quarter of the vote with campaign promises such as pardoning a notorious war criminal and deploying troops to stop migrants at the border. Though Skoro's nationalist pledges didn't push him to round two, analysts said the strong showing revealed a clear shift to the right among Croatia's electorate. As Grabar-Kitarovic addressed



ZAGREB: Presidential candidate of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) party

supporters late Sunday, the 51-year-old urged them to unite for the run-off on January 5. "Now we have to get together and let's go for a victory!" she said, this time describing her opponent Skoro as a "co-candidate on my political spectrum".

Unite the right

Grabar-Kitarovic became Croatia's first female president-a largely ceremonial rolein 2015 with the backing of the centreright HDZ, which has led Croatia for most of the past three decades.

She has often wavered between representing moderates and pandering to the nationalist faction. If she fails to unite the two wings of the party in the run-off, analysts say it would spell trouble for HDZ's moderate Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic

when he faces general elections next year. "The radical right showed its force." said political analyst Tihomir Cipek, adding it mirrored trends in other parts of Europe. "We will see whether it will be repeated in the parliamentary elections," he said.

In the meantime, Plenkovic's government will be tasked with holding the EU presidency for a six-month term, with thorny issues like Brexit and the Western Balkans' membership bids on the agenda.

Past still present

The left appeared to rally around Milanovic, a 53-year-old who served as prime minister from 2011 to 2016 and hails from the Social Democrat opposition. Considered driven by supporters but pompous by critics, he has been trying to make a comeback with a promise to make Croatia a "normal" liberal democracy with an independent judiciary and respect for

"We are going into a second round and not a war, wars are over," he told supporters after Sunday's vote, in an apparent reference to his rivals' frequent references to Croatia's 1990s independence war.

"I want a country of equality," he added. While Croatia is known globally for its stunning coastline and island getaways, the Adriatic country is no paradise for locals who are fed up with a sluggish economy and rampant corruption. And yet the campaign was light on policy ideas with many candidates instead attacking each other with war-era grievances.

"They stole the space for issues of vital importance to most people's lives, including the young who are leaving in increasing numbers," lamented Matija Horvat, a 27vear-old economist.

The government has struggled in particular to curb the outflow of Croatians who are packing their bags for better pay and professional opportunities in wealthier

Many who leave also cite the culture of nepotism and corruption at home, plus poor public services, as key motivations. Labor gaps have started to affect key industries like tourism, which accounts for a fifth of Croatia's GDP. — AFP

Shoppers dream of a 'guilt-free' Christmas

LONDON: Menstrual cups or wormeries may not top everyone's Christmas wish lists but with the rising tide of anti-consumerism, ethical businesses are hoping to boost sales this year.

Nearly two-thirds of consumers globally prefer to buy from companies that reflect their personal values, according to research firm Accenture. Social enterprises - or businesses set up to tackle environmental or social problems such as homelessness or waste - see this as an opportunity to cash in at this time of year. "Any social product is removing the guilt from purchase, which is really the big problem of consumerism -that guilty feeling," Dave Linton, founder of luggage social enterprise Madlug, told the Thompson Reuters Foundation. Based in Armagh, Northern Ireland, the business was founded in 2015 to give bags to children in the care system bags to move their belongings between homes rather than using bin bags.

Madlug operates a buy-one-give-one model, with a piece of luggage given to a child or homeless person with every purchase. "People are making choices, more and more, that if they're going to spend something then why not spend and make a difference," he said.

Whether it is renting Christmas trees, making decorations at home, buying experiences over objects, or choosing to forgo gifts altogether, attitudes towards gifts are shifting.

Almost a third of British consumers said they bought presents with lower environmental impact last year, while 38 percent said they thought it was important to buy ethically-sourced gifts, according to data from consumer research company Mintel. About two thirds of consumers felt it was the retailers' responsibility to promote gifts with less waste.

Less waste

"As people are becoming more aware of the toll mass consumerism can have on the environment, there is a push towards adopting less wasteful Christmas habits," Chana Baram, senior retail analyst at Mintel. "Even though, for the most part, people will continue to partake in holiday purchasing, it is important for retailers and brands to encourage more ethical consumption."

For retailers whose business models are based on selling as much stock as possible and creating desire through marketing, this change in attitudes can present a challenge. Many retailers rely heavily on November and December for sales, but increasing numbers are latching onto the changing consumer sentiment and including environmental or social messages in marketing.

US-outdoor apparel brand, Patagonia, which is a certified ethical company, famously placed an advert in the New York Times in 2011 telling people not to buy one of its jackets on Black Friday, a day of heavy discounting in late November. This year hundreds of retailers took a similar stance, with a Green Friday campaign highlighting the environmental implications of mass consumption.

Yet with big retailers now trumpeting their environmental or social credentials with mega marketing budgets, it can be hard for social enterprises to get their messages heard.

Social Enterprise UK, a trade body, partnered with German technology brand SAP to launch a directory for social enterprise gifts this Christmas. Social Supermarket, an ecommerce site born out of frustration that there was no one place to buy from social enterprises, reported good interest in its ethical hampers. The hampers, which include items like tea from a company that hires refugees and beer made from waste bread, have accounted for about 70 percent of sales on the site, which launched about a year ago, according to founder Jamie Palmer.

Palmer said corporate clients were also showing increased interest in ethical businesses, aiming to distinguish themselves by buying gifts that are different and showcase their values. "Transparency is putting a lot more pressure on companies ... to be more transparent about a whole raft of different of elements in their supply chain, so this pushes these issues right up to the top of the priority list," he said. — Reuters

EU charts path for 'challenging' post-Brexit UK deal

BRUSSELS: The EU will keep engaging with the UK through the WTO and the UN as both sides work out a deal on their future ties once Britain leaves the bloc, according to the top Brexit negotiator in Brussels. Agreeing and ratifying a post-Brexit relationship by the end of 2020 "will be immensely challenging, but we will give it our all, even if we won't be able to achieve everything," the official, Michel Barnier, wrote in a weekend online commentary for the Project Syndicate magazine website.

The two sides will have just 11 months to settle that agreement following Britain's formal departure from the EU on January 31. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson insists he will not seek an extension beyond 2020 to fine-tune a deal. He has also made it clear his country will drop EU labour, environmental, financial, health and safety standards, spurring Brussels' concerns about British trade "dumping" and making prospects of a quick and comprehensive deal

'New Year's resolutions'

Barnier, who was unfailingly courteous when he negotiated the terms of Britain's withdrawal in a way to protect the EU's single market and citizens, said he had three goals-framed as "New Year's resolutions"for the upcoming talks on the future relationship.

To work together on global issues, "the EU will continue to engage positively with the UK, both bilaterally and in global fora such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and the G20," he said. In terms of security issues, while it is "simply not possible" for Britain to have the same access to data as EU members, "tackling terrorism, cyberattacks, and other attempts to undermine our democracies will require a joint effort". Barnier said there should be "unconditional commitment from both sides" to building a security alliance. — AFP

Spanish woman knits butterflies as call to stop domestic violence

BARCELONA: A Spanish woman whose two children were murdered by her abusive ex-husband has begun knitting purple butterflies to rally support for action against domestic violence, with politicians from the prime minister downwards donning her handiwork

Itziar Prats' two daughters, Nerea and Martina, aged six and two, were murdered last year by their father, Ricardo Carrascosa, at their home near Valencia in eastern Spain. He then jumped out of a window to his death. Prats, 43, said she filed complaints with the police and courts several times over her ex-husband's death threats to the girls and his violence but her case was classified as "low risk" and her complaints were not taken seriously.

Going public with her story and butterfly campaign, Prats has joined a growing a debate over how gender violence is treated by police and judiciary in Spain where about 55 women have been murdered by partners or expartners so far this year. "For me, the sharing of the butterflies signifies that (my daughters) are still with me and means I can help other people who face violence in their day-to-day lives," Prats told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Prats said she was determined to give greater visibility to gender violence in Spain, where a total of 1,033 Spanish women have been murdered since 2003 by partners or ex-partners, according to latest government data.

Prats normally makes between 10 and 15 deep purple butterflies a day, and has given away more than 3,000, including to school children during educational visits, she said. She said she wanted to rally support for action, including taking away the rights of violent partners to visit their children until they have been rehabilitated and getting better help for minors in domestic violence situations.

National outrage

She is also demanding an official investigation into the way her own children were treated by the judiciary. "I would like ... for children to be heard and taken into account and, above all, be protected," she said.

Several high-profile figures, including Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, have been photographed wearing



Purple butterflies knitted as a call to end domestic vio ence are pictured in this handout photo. — Reuters

her butterflies. "He threatened to kill them. Itziar reported it but something failed," Sanchez wrote on Twitter last month, alongside pictures of himself with the butterflies.

We must focus on the protection of women and minors who are victims of domestic violence. We can't fail again." A debate over how gender violence cases are treated by Spain's police and judiciary hit the spotlight again last month when a Barcelona court cleared five men of raping a 14-year-old girl and jailed them on a lesser charge of sexual abuse. The men took turns to have sex with the teenager after a party in Manresa, north of Barcelona, in 2016, the court heard, but they were charged with sexual assault not rape because the girl was drunk, did not fight back, and they were not violent. The verdict reignited a debate over the Spanish judiciary's treatment of women, which intensified with the 2016 "Wolf Pack" case, in which an 18year-old woman was gang-raped by five men during the running of the bulls festival in Pamplona.

The men, including a former policeman and a former soldier, shared videos of the incident in a WhatsApp group and joked about it afterwards but were convicted of sexual abuse. However after mass protests across Spain over chauvinism and sexual abuse, the Supreme Court in July this year ruled the men were guilty of rape. The case helped put the treatment of women at the heart of public debate in Spain during campaigning for April's election, and prompted a government promise to change the law. — Reuters

Tuesday, December 24, 2019 International

Indian states propose land rights amid citizenship fears

Assam, West Bengal vow to protect land rights of indigenous people, refugees

MUMBAI: Authorities in the Indian states of Assam and helping non-Muslim minorities from Afghanistan, West Bengal have vowed to protect the land rights of indigenous people and refugees amidst protests against a new citizenship law that critics say discriminates against Muslims. In the northeastern state of Assam, a planned law will prevent indigenous people from selling land to non-indigenous persons, Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

"That means our land will be preserved for our people," Sarma told reporters at the weekend after the state cabinet passed the measure. But there is little clarity on the definition of an indigenous person in the state, where nearly two million people were left off a citizens' register earlier this year.

In addition, nearly two-thirds of the land in the state, which borders Muslim-majority Bangladesh, is common land, said Walter Fernandes, a senior fellow at the North Eastern Social Research Centre, a think tank. "When so much of the land belongs to the state, there is no question of selling or transferring that land," he said.

"There are also several definitions of indigenous people, including tribal people, Assamese people, and others who have lived in the state for several decades. So it is not clear who the law will benefit," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government says that the new Citizenship Amendment Act is aimed at Bangladesh and Pakistan who fled to India before 2015, with a pathway to Indian citizenship. But many Indians believe that the law discriminates against Muslims and violates the country's secular constitution by making religion a test for citizenship.

India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which spells out refugee rights and state responsibilities to protect them.

Nor does it have a domestic law to protect the more than 200,000 refugees it hosts, including Tibetans, Sri Lankans, Afghans, Bangladeshis and Rohingya from Myanmar. Modi, in a rally on Sunday, said his government has introduced reforms without any religious bias.

At least 21 people have died in clashes with police as thousands of people took to the streets in towns and cities across India to protest the law, marking the biggest challenge to Modi's leadership since he first swept to power in 2014.

Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal's chief minister, said she will not implement the citizenship law in the state. She said her government will expedite giving land rights to tens of thousands of immigrants who have lived in the state for nearly five decades. "The state has been granting land titles to migrants from Nepal and Bangladesh, which gives them an identity and some measure of protection," said Fernandes. "It lets them be counted as legal." — Reuters



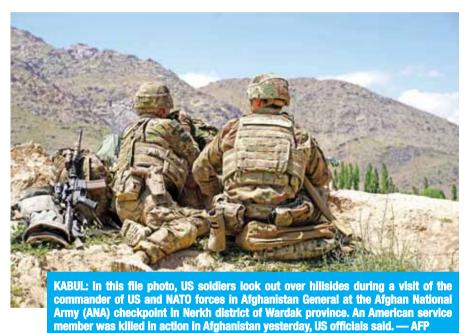
SILIGURI: Supporters and activists of Trinamool Congress (TMC) take part in a rally against India's new citizenship law in Siliguri yesterday. The wave of protests across the country marks the biggest challenge to Modi's government since sweeping to power in the world's largest democracy in 2014. — AFP

Taleban claim attack that killed US soldier in Afghanistan

KABUL: The Taleban claimed responsibility for an attack yesterday on American troops that killed one US soldier and, according to the insurgents, wounded several more. The killing is likely to have consequences for ongoing talks between the US and the Taleban. President Donald Trump in September declared negotiations "dead" after the Taliban killed a US soldier in a Kabul bombing.

Negotiations have since restarted in Doha, but were earlier this month put on a "pause" following yet another bombing, this time at the Bagram air base north of Kabul. In a WhatsApp message to AFP, Taleban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said insurgents "blew up an American vehicle in Char Dara district of Kunduz" overnight Sunday-Monday. He said "several" other US and Afghan forces were also

US Forces-Afghanistan said one American service member was "killed in action" yesterday. A US official told AFP that the service member had been inspecting a weapons cache when it exploded.



"This was not the result of an attack as the enemy claims," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Kunduz province is in northern Afghanistan and has been the site of repeated insurgent attacks and attempts to seize Kunduz city itself.

Deadliest year

Depending on how one qualifies a combat-related death, about 20 American troops have been killed in action in Afghanistan this year following yesterday's

announcement. That makes 2019 the deadliest for US forces since combat operations officially finished at the end of 2014, and highlights the woeful security situation that persists across much of Afghanistan. About 2,400 US troops have been killed in Afghanistan since the US-led invasion in October 2001.

Currently, the Pentagon has 12,000-13,000 troops in Afghanistan. Trump has said he wants to cut that number to about 8,600 or lower as he seeks to show voters

he is making good on a campaign pledge to end America's longest war. The deal between the US and the Taleban had been all but signed before Trump nixed it at the last moment, though a relative improvement in Kabul's security situation and the release of two Western hostages in a prisoner swap paved the way for a resumption of talks on December 7. Those talks were paused for a few days following the Bagram attack, but have since started again.

The initial version of the deal would have seen the Pentagon pull thousands of troops out of Afghanistan in return for Taleban guarantees they would tackle Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group.

But some members of Trump's own Republican party, including close confidant Senator Lindsey Graham, say the idea of the Taliban conducting counter-terrorism operations is risible.

Yesterday's attack comes one day after officials announced preliminary results in Afghanistan's presidential elections that put President Ashraf Ghani on track to secure a second term.

The Taleban have long viewed Ghani as an American stooge and have refused to negotiate with him. Also yesterday, a bomb explosion at a funeral ceremony in Laghman province east of Kabul killed three civilians and wounded nine others, interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said. He blamed the Taleban for the blast that hit the crowd of mourners at a local tribal leader's funeral. The Taleban were not immediately available to comment. — AFP

Why India's new citizenship plans are stirring protests

MUMBAI: Thousands of Indians have been protesting against a new citizenship law as well as possible plans for a National Register of Citizens (NRC), alleging the measures are an attack on a secular constitution and against minority Muslims.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) aims to fasttrack citizenship for persecuted Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who arrived in India before Dec 31, 2014, from Muslim-majority Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The passing of the bill on Dec 11 triggered widespread demonstrations in the eastern state of Assam, as protesters feared it would convert thousands of illegal migrants from neighboring Muslimmajority Bangladesh into legal residents. Elsewhere in India, protesters say the citizenship law will be followed by the national register, which they fear is designed by the Hindu-nationalist government to expel Muslims who do not have sufficient citizenship documentation. The government has refuted those allegations and vowed to protect all citizens equally.

Why is the Citizenship Act controversial?

Under the law, India will grant citizenship to the six communities that Modi's government says have historically faced persecution in the three Muslim-dominated neighbors. The government says Muslims cannot be treated as persecuted minorities in those countries. Critics say the law discriminates against Muslims and undermines India's secular constitution. They question why the law does not include Muslims fleeing Sri Lanka and Myanmar, which are majority Buddhist.

What is the National Register of Citizens?

Authorities in the northeastern state of Assam began using the NRC to identify illegal immigrants in 2015, on the orders of the Supreme Court. It was only meant to be used for the ethnically-diverse region but since then, there have been calls from officials of the ruling party and its supporters for its nationwide implementation. A final list of citizens in Assam, published on Aug. 31, excluded nearly 1.9 million residents,

most of them Muslim but including some Hindus. What would a pan-India NRC look like?

The 2019 manifesto of Modi's ruling Bharatia Janata Party (BJP) said "in future we will implement the NRC in a phased manner in other parts of the country" but did not provide details. If a nationwide NRC is enacted, activists and opposition politicians expect that residents unable to prove citizenship would be taken to detention centers, as is happening in Assam. Most of India's 1.3 billion people are Hindu, about 14 percent are Muslim and the rest are Christians, Buddhists and others. In Assam, excluded people were given 120 days to prove their citizenship at quasi-judicial bodies known as Foreigners Tribunals. Those deemed to be illegal immigrants can appeal to higher courts.

Modi's laws

Religious minorities and liberals are growing increasingly uneasy with Modi's Hindu agenda, which appears to have gained emphasis since his re-election in May. The citizenship bill comes after a November Supreme Court decision that handed Hindu groups control of a contested site where a 16th-century mosque was razed by Hindu zealots in 1992, paving the way for the construction of a temple there, as long promised by the BJP. That followed a government decision in August to strip Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir state of its special status and split it into two federally administered regions in what the government said was a bid to integrate the restive region with the rest of India.

What happens next?

The CAA has been challenged in the Supreme Court by a Muslim political party, lawyers and rights groups on the grounds that it violates the secular constitution. The Supreme Court has said it would hear petitions challenging the law on Jan 22. On Sunday, Modi said his government had no immediate plans for a countrywide NRC, but his comments contradicted statements by his closest lieutenant, Home Minister Amit Shah. Government officials have not clarified the position. — Reuters

Australian PM dismisses 'reckless' calls to curb coal

SYDNEY: Under-fire Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday rejected calls for "reckless" and "jobdestroying" cuts to the country's vast coal industry in the face of a deadly climate-fuelled bushfire crisis. Morrison's conservative government has fiercely defended the lucrative coal industry in Australia, which produces a third of global coal exports and provides work in key swing electoral districts.

"I am not going to write off the jobs of thousands of Australians by walking away from traditional industries," Morrison told the Seven Network, in one of several morning interviews rejecting calls for further action. "What we won't do is engage in reckless and job-destroying and economy-crunching targets which are being sought," he told Channel 9, responding to calls for more climate-friendly policies.

Morrison's media blitz came as he sought to limit the political fallout from a much-criticized Hawaiian holidaytaken as bushfires destroyed an area the size of Belgium and unleashed toxic smoke into Australia's major cities. Holiday plans have been hit, with national parks closing camp sites and the main coastal road linking Sydney with southeastern beach towns again shuttered due to the impact of fires.

Conditions eased markedly yesterday, but authorities said in the last few days almost 200 homes have been damaged by fires in South Australia and New South Wales.

Authorities said little was left of the small town of Balmoral, southwest of Sydney, where 67-year-old artist Steve Harrison told public broadcaster ABC he had been forced to weather the fire from a make-shift kiln. "I ran to my ute (pickup) but my garden was already on fire, the driveway was on fire, the road was on fire so I couldn't evacuate," he said. "The day before I had actually built myself a small kiln down the backa coffin-sized kiln-just big enough for me to crawl inside.'

"I was in there for half an hour while the firestorm went over. It was huge, just glowing orange-red everywhere. Just scary. I was terrified."

'Responsible management'Bushfires occur frequently in Australia, but scientists say several weather phenomena have come together to make this spring-summer bushfire season among the worst on record. Record-low rainfall, record-high temperatures and strong winds have made the situation more combustible, and according to scientists, are influenced by climate change.

Morrison has insisted Australia will meet its 2030 emissions targets. "I'm going to maintain the course of responsible management, responsibly addressing the changes of climate change and responsibly ensuring that we can grow our economy in what is a very tough climate at the moment," Morrison told the Seven Network.

Australia committed at the 2015 UN climate summit to reduce its emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. However, environmental activists say those targets are not nearly enough to help the world keep global warming to safe levels, and that far deeper cuts are needed. Morrison's government has further been criticized for seeking to achieve its 2030 targets by counting credits under a complicated global accounting method, rather than through new reductions.

While Australia's national carbon emissions are low compared with major polluters, its fossil fuel exports-mostly coal-account for an estimated seven percent of the world's carbon emissions. Opposition leader, Labor's Anthony Albanese pilloried Morrison's "stubbornness" in refusing "to change course." "Clearly, this is not businessas-usual. But Mr Morrison is not listening," Albanese said. "People are scared of what is going on around them. And if Mr Morrison thinks that there's nothing to see here, it's because he can't see through the smoke and haze that's been created by these bushfires." - AFP



MANILA: In this photo taken early yesterday, residents who fell ill after drinking a coconut wine called "lambanog" sit as they wait for treatment at the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) in Manila. — AFP

Eleven die in Philippines after drinking coconut wine

MANILA: Eleven people died and hundreds were taken to hospitals in the Philippines after drinking coconut wine believed to contain high levels of methanol, authorities said yesterday.

The victims all attended gatherings over the weekend in the town of Rizal, southeast of Manila, and complained of stomach pains after drinking the wine, known locally as "lambanog". Nine victims are in a critical condition, Jose Jonas Del Rosario, spokesman for the capital's Philippine General Hospital, told AFP.

We asked many of our doctors on holiday leave to report to work just to

attend to the patients," he said, adding that the need to treat large numbers who arrived with symptoms of alcohol poisoning meant other people were turned away. In total, 300 victims were taken to hospitals. All drank the same brand of wine that had been bought in the area, police said.

The local government has imposed an immediate ban on the sale of the beverage, which is in high demand over the Christmas holidays. Much of the coconut wine on the market is manufactured by locals in backyard operations. The government had previously warned against selling unregistered alcoholic beverages. Del Rosario, a doctor, said one of the byproducts of coconut wine fermentation is methanol, which can cause blindness and death. Some manufacturers keep the methanol in, because it means greater volume and more profit, he added.

Last year, more than 10 people died from drinking coconut wine, samples of which were found by the government regulator to have a high methanol content. — AFP

Analysis



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Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief **ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN**

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P.O.Box 1301 Safat,13014 Kuwait. Email: info@kuwaittimes.com Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

US survival camps cater to new fear: Political unrest

iming an AR-15 rifle across a Colorado valley dotted with antelope and cattle, Drew Miller explains how members of his new survival ranch would ride out an apocalypse. The former US Air Force intelligence officer said his latest Fortitude Ranch community, under construction below mountain forests, will shelter Americans fleeing anything from a bioengineered pandemic to an attack on the electricity grid. For an annual fee of around \$1,000, members can vacation at the camps in good times, and use them as a refuge during a societal collapse.

"If you've got a lot of weapons, if you've got a lot of members at guard posts, defensive walls, we don't think we're going to need to fight," said Miller, crouching on top of a fortified position on the camp perimeter. The expansion of Miller's camp chain underscores the growing mainstream appeal of the "prepper" movement long associated with anti-government survivalists. In recent years prepping has overlapped with millennial interests in renewable energy, homesteading, minimalist living and concerns about climate change.

minimalist living and concerns about climate change.

Then there is politics. Increasingly, Miller said, clients fear sharp political divisions will deepen around the Nov. 3, 2020 US presidential election. "There is growing concern that after the 2020 election there could be massive, long-lasting civil unrest if people say, 'Hey, I don't buy the new president, I don't recognize him or her," said Miller, who has added "civil war" to his risk scenarios.

Skeptics said Fortitude Ranch was preparing for catastrophic events that were unlikely and possibly not worth surviving. There is a rational level of readiness for natural disasters or power outages, said New York University Professor Robyn Gershon, and then there is "hyper-extreme" preparedness. She predicted a bad ending for anyone holing up in a compound with strangers to make it through a global pandemic or nuclear war. "The quality of life will be degraded to a point where, for modern-day people, it probably won't be worth living," said Gershon, a clinical professor of epidemiology.

AR-15 or shotgun?

The solar-powered camps cater to middle-class Americans worried about their vulnerability in cities and suburbs. Unlike traditional survivalists, many are not schooled in off-the-grid living, and some have no idea how to hunt. Besides the annual fee, the main requirement for members is an AR-15 style rifle or pump-action shotgun for defense. The camps stock about three months of food and have goats and chickens. In a collapse situation, members would follow orders from camp leaders like Miller. Tasks would include collecting firewood and nuts, killing game and growing vegetables. Everyone would do guard duty.

Miller expects marauding gangs to pour out of cities if law and order breaks down. He expects his ranches to have superior firepower. The new Colorado camp has a .50 caliber rifle to take on armored vehicles. Anthropology professor Chad Huddleston said such fears sounded like "apocalyptic fiction". "The research around the world shows that communities come together first, before anything else," said Huddleston of Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, citing studies on the aftermath of disasters like Hurricane Katrina.

Fortitude Ranch has around 175 members from all ethnic groups, many with business or military backgrounds, and most distrust the government, said Miller. He asked that exact locations of camps not be disclosed. If he can find investors, Miller hopes to expand communities from two existing locations in Colorado and one in West Virginia to 10 more states.

'A special group'

Members like health insurance professional Kiki Bandilla, 53, of Castle Rock, Colorado, worry about over-dependence on modern technology and see the ranches as survival insurance. "We all need to have a certain level of preparedness," said Bandilla, who runs Denver's Self Reliance Expo showcasing everything from tiny homes to body armor. "I see it becoming a little bit more mainstream, because I believe what's happening in our government, on both the right and the left, is chaos."

Tom, a 52-year-old who runs a Maryland housing business, fears a 2021 economic meltdown and wants a place to take his girlfriend and children. "You're going to have a lot of people who are going to want to give up, but most of those people are not going to be at the ranch," he said, asking that his last name not be used. Just how many Americans are prepping is hard to measure as most keep their activities secret. People within the industry, including Roman Zrazhevskiy, chief executive of Ready To Go Survival, said interest is growing. — Reuters

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Vladimir Vchivtsev, a former Soviet reconnaissance officer in the Soviet-Afghan war, attends an interview with AFP in Moscow.



Tuesday, December 24, 2019

Ilias Daoudi, a former Soviet intelligence official and Soviet-Afghan war veteran, attends an interview with AFP in Moscow

Veterans still grapple with Soviet-Afghan war

t his home in the mountains north of Kabul, former mujahideen fighter Shah Sulaiman closed his damaged eyes, took a sip of green tea and thought bitterly of Afghanistan's war against the Soviet Union that started four decades ago. "When we fought against the Soviets, we were expecting a good future," said the 62-year-old father, who was blinded in one eye and suffered a leg wound when he trod on a landmine during the conflict in 1985. "Unfortunately things turned out for the worst."

This month marks the 40th anniversary of the Soviet Union's "intervention" - or invasion - of Afghanistan, the beginning of a decade-long guerilla war that killed up to two million Afghans, forced seven million more from their homes and led to the deaths of more than 14,000 Soviet troops. "(It) brought only misery and destruction to Afghans and Afghanistan," recalled Sulaiman, who commanded a unit of 12 men in the Panjshir valley, a heartland of mujahideen resistance north of the capital.

In the decades since the war, which ended in 1989, Afghan veterans like Sulaiman and former Soviet soldiers have had to grapple with the physical and emotional wounds of a bloody conflict whose purpose and consequences remain angrily contested. While the war was a mujahideen victory, what came next saw Afghanistan plunge deeper into misery and fighting, with veterans blaming the conflict for the rise of the Taleban and the ongoing violence that besets the country to this day.

In Russia, former Soviet soldiers are still trying to make sense of a war the public condemned at the time and that observers say hastened the collapse of the Soviet Union. "We defended our southern borders, and I still think our presence in Afghanistan was essential," said Ilias Daoudi, 52, a former Soviet intelligence official who lost a leg in a 1986 landmine blast in Herat, in western Afghanistan. "A big country like ours has to control what is happening in neighboring regions."

'Right' decision

Regular Soviet soldiers began arriving in Afghanistan after Moscow's Dec 24, 1979 deployment order to support a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul and quell a nationalist Islamist insurgency that was pushing back against the atheist communists and their reforms. More than 600,000 troops from the USSR would eventually cycle through Afghanistan, playing a part in a Cold War proxy conflict that also saw the United States arm and fund mujahideen fighters including Osama bin Laden. "It was my religious duty to do jihad (holy war) against the Soviets because our country was invaded by them and they were spreading communism and infidelity in Afghanistan," Sulaiman said.

In Russia, veterans seek to recast the war as a necessary step to counter the threat of rising Islamism in Afghanistan and Muslim-majority Soviet republics. The decision to send troops in 1979 was the "right" one - not just for the communist bloc but on a personal level too, said Vladimir Vchivtsev, 58, who spent 16 months in Afghanistan as a Soviet reconnaissance officer. "War is the best school of life, where you learn to think quickly and find the best solutions", said Vchivtsev, who was blinded in an explosion in Khost province in 1987.

The conflict was extremely unpopular with the Soviet public at the time and was officially condemned in 1989 at the height of leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of "glasnost", or transparency. But as part of an overall re-evaluation of the war's legacy, Russia's parliamentary defence committee has - under pressure from veterans - backed a

draft resolution saying Soviet troops helped Afghan authorities fight "terrorist and extremist groups" and curbed the growing security threat facing the USSR.

Left with 'nothing'

Sidique Rasulzai was a teenager when the Red Army arrived in Kabul, and he had no idea what was coming. "I didn't know it was war. My parents told me that was something that happened in Palestine, I would never have thought that it could happen to us, that it would last 40 years," recalled Rasulzai, who joined the Soviet-backed Afghan army in 1985 and served for more than three years. He remembers the Soviets transforming Kabul, constructing apartment buildings with central heating, roads, and even an electric bus system. "I liked the communists," he said "They were educated not like the mujahideen."

said. "They were educated, not like the mujahideen."

To this day, signs of the Soviet war abound. Defunct tanks and abandoned helicopters and personnel carriers still dot parts of the countryside, and in cities such as Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, huge Soviet structures still dominate the skyline. After the Soviets left in February 1989, the communist government was unable to sustain itself and civil war broke out. By the mid-1990s, the Taleban - rooted in the mujahideen movement - were

sweeping to power.

Rasulzai ultimately fled Afghanistan for India in 2015 as the international military presence began to rapidly dwindle. He worries Afghanistan is headed for a new civil war once the US withdraws under an eventual deal with the Taliban. Rasulzai now has a small shop in New Delhi and barely manages to pay the bills. "In Afghanistan, I had everything," he said, "now I have nothing except for security." — AFP

Who is the Islamic State's new boss?

ust days after Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi was killed in a raid by US special forces in October, the Islamic State group announced the name of the man who has replaced him as leader. But the true identity of Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashimi Al-Quraishi remains shrouded in mystery, and with it the organization's strategy going forward. "We don't know much about him except that he is the leading judge of IS and he heads the Sharia (Islamic law) committee," said Hisham al-Hashemi, an Iraqi expert on the jihadist group.

But there are even doubts that the man designated "caliph", or religious ruler, exists at all. Some suggest the group was caught off guard and announced a name as a holding move, to create the impression it is on top of things. "The organization was taken by surprise by the brutality of Baghdadi's elimination," said Jean-Piere Filiu, an Arab world specialist at Paris' Sciences-Po university. "It has since communicated the identity of a successor

who we don't know if he truly exists or whether it is a decoy while the process of designating a true successor plays out in Syria and Iraq," he said.

Shortly after Baghdadi triggered a suicide belt during the American raid, US President Donald Trump announced to the world he had died "like a dog". Trump claimed that he knew "exactly" who the successor was, but a senior American official soon after said the new leader was a "complete unknown".

Strategic guidance

Since then, radio silence. "My understanding is the US knows who this is. In this world, you cannot keep secret who your leader is, no terrorist group today or yesterday can keep a secret as to how its leadership structure is. No one is that good," said Seth Jones of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. Whether he exists or not, the heir has not provided visible leadership. Under Baghdadi, who also avoided the limelight, the IS group experimented with running a proto-state - producing school textbooks and creating its own currency. Since the jihadist organization was driven out of its last patch of Syrian territory, the village of Baghouz, in March, it has resorted mainly to guerilla tactics. If Quraishi is to avoid an internal leader-

ship challenge, he will be forced to step out of the shadows, the experts say.

"There's going to be a tension between his need to assert himself and be effective, and his desire for security," said Daniel Byman, a researcher at the University of Georgetown in Washington. Opting for the latter could be costly, creating a void for jihadist groups to vie for supremacy. "We already see significant criticisms from other jihadists, who are saying that you can't really be a caliph if you don't have a caliphate," said Byman. "This person will have a very hard time establishing leadership." For Filiu, vicious attacks carried out by IS affiliates in the Sinai and Greater Sahara regions of Africa are

helping to give the central leadership time to reorganize. Robin Simcox, a researcher at the American Heritage Foundation, says a weakened IS has little hope of reconquering territory in the near future, meaning its fighters will go to ground and adopt "insurgency" tactics. "While that makes it a trickier adversary to track down in some ways, it also makes it harder for them to attract recruits in the same numbers as there is no longer a Caliphate for foreigners to travel to," he said. "It also makes it harder to raise funds, as ISIS previously brought in significant revenues through taxation and extortion of those who lived under its control in the Caliphate." — AFP

Back to pre-Internet stone age in Kashmir

In remote Indian Kashmir people have been offline since August, queuing for hours to pay bills or using government "Internet kiosks". As protests rage in other areas of India, it's something people outside the Himalayan region are also getting a taste of. Indian authorities, who according to activists lead the world when it comes to cutting the Internet, snapped Kashmir's access when New Delhi scrapped the region's seven-decade-old autonomy.

In the past two weeks of violent protests across India against a new citizenship law, mobile Internet has been cut in swathes of the country and fixed-line access in places too. In Kashmir, a security lockdown imposed in August has been eased and some cellphones now work again. But hundreds of political leaders and others remain locked up - and there is no Internet.

In the main city Srinagar, Mohammad Irfan waited in a long line inside a large hall run by a state-owned telecommunications firm. "I would (previously) do this in my spare time or even while walking (on my cellphone)," Irfan told AFP. "But now I'm standing in this queue for about an hour each time to pay my phone bill."

Flooded by complaints from businesses and people unable to do all the myriad things they used to online, authorities recently set up the Internet kiosks. There are

around a dozen of them for the region's seven million inhabitants, and people can only use the computers, when they function, for 10 or 15 minutes.

With New Delhi saying it wants to avoid the net being used by militants - a deadly separatist insurgency has raged in Kashmir for decades - usage is also closely monitored. People have to show their identity details and say exactly what they want to go online for, including what websites they intend to visit - and why. Visiting social media sites is not allowed. Officials pace behind the terminals, watching the screens closely and telling people to move on when they're done. Users suspect that every click is tracked by software too. "I should be preparing for my exams at home," said student Mubashir, who travelled more than 100 km through snowy Kashmir to a kiosk in Srinagar. "Instead, I am waiting here to obtain my registration card which is available only online."

WhatsOff

Mobile phones were only restored in October, but only ones with a contract and only for calls, not for data. WhatsApp is even deleting some accounts due to inactivity. Even civil servants need permission to use the Internet for government business, and in a dedicated office. Fixed-line cable Internet services have been restored to a select group of businesses like luxury hotels and some IT businesses.

But they have to ensure only staff use it, and not for "social media or political activity" or to create wifi networks, the rules say. USB ports must also be disabled. "We had to... agree to allow security forces to inspect our infra-



In this photo taken on Nov 26, 2019, Kashmiri students gather to use the Internet at the Divisional Commissioner's office in Srinagar. — AFP

structure anytime they want," a software firm owner told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Authorities recently restored some incoming text message services, so users can get pass codes that are used widely in South Asia for online purchases and banking. But this is not much use without Internet access as well, and people and businesses are reeling from being cut off from the online world enjoyed by the rest of India. "My company has not earned a single penny since the Internet shutdown four months earlier," Ishfaq Mir told AFP of his IT consultancy Sow Technology. "We're in a completely hopeless situation right now." — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019

Rising heat knocks the crown off Tunisia's 'queen of dates'

Al Mulla Automobiles organizes truck driving event for Mercedes-Benz trucks

NBK increases its human capital investment in 2019









French strike casts pall on Christmas

Train and metro drivers strike work for 19th straight day

PARIS: French train and metro drivers withheld labor for the 19th straight day yesterday in a standoff with the government over pension reform, casting a pall over Christmas plans with many unable to reach loved ones. Talks between the government and unions last week failed to find middle ground, and strikers vowed there would be no holiday truce unless the overhaul plan is scrapped.

Starting on December 5, the strike has hit daily commuters hard-especially around Paris and other large cities-and is now impeding tens of thousands of ticket holders who had planned to spend the festive season with family or friends.

On Saturday and Sunday, the last weekend before Christmas, the SCNF rail operator provided half the usual number of TGV high-speed trains, a third of regional TER services, a quarter of inter-city trains, and one in five connecting Paris to its outer suburbs.

This sent thousands scrambling for alternative transport, with car rental agencies unable to meet the surge in demand. Nor will there be reprieve for those staying in Paris from the stoppage that has slashed train and metro services and caused high levels of frustration on overcrowded carriages.

The SNCF has announced that today evening, Christmas Eve, it will halt trains between Paris and its suburbs. Some lines will reopen tomorrow morning, others only on Thursday, meaning many people will have to cancel plans to meet up with friends or family for Christmas lunch.

'Historic error'

Unions are angry about the government's plan to merge France's 42 pension schemes into a single points-based one, which would see some public employees-notably railway staff-lose earlyretirement and other benefits. The government insists the new system would be fairer and more transparent.

Workers are baulking particularly at the inclusion of a so-called "pivot age" of 64 until which people would have to work to earn a full pension-two years beyond the official retirement age. President Emmanuel Macron issued an appeal on Saturday for a holiday truce, urging strikers to embrace "a spirit of responsibility" and for "collective good

A poll by the IFOP agency published Sunday showed public backing for the action dropping by three percentage points, though 51 percent of respondents still expressed support or sympathy for the strikers. Unions are hoping for a repeat of 1995 when the government backed down on pension reform after three weeks of metro and rail stoppages just before Christmas-a cherished holi-

day for many French people.

But their action is taking a heavy toll on businesses, especially retailers, hotels and restaurants, during what should be one of the busiest periods of the year. Industry associations have reported turnover declines of 30 to 60 percent from a year earlier. Non-transport workers joined the protest yesterday, shuttering at least one oil refinery and a petrol depot in the south, while others blocked a bus depot in the northwest. In Paris, protesters briefly held up Metro Line 1—one of only two lines unaffected by the strike as they are driverless, unlike

the other 14.

In recent days, electricity workers had also interrupted power to thousands of homes. Yesterday, the leader of the Force Ouvriere union, Yves Veyrier, insisted the pension reform was a "historic error" and must be "discarded".—AFP

Boeing CEO ousted as 737 MAX crisis deepens NEW YORK: Boeing Co has Executive Officer Dennis Muilent a year of intense scrutiny and

NEW YORK: Boeing Co has ousted Chief Executive Officer Dennis Muilenburg, following a year of intense scrutiny and industrial setbacks set off by twin fatal crashes of its 737 MAX jetliner.

The departure comes as the world's largest planemaker struggles to win regulatory approvals for its grounded best-selling jetliner while trying to repair trust with passengers and airline customers.

"The Board of Directors decided that a change in leadership was necessary to restore confidence in the Company moving forward as it works to repair relationships with regulators, customers, and all other stakeholders," the company said. The company's shares, which have fallen more than 20 percent since March, rose more than 2 percent to \$335.24 in early trading.

Chairman David Calhoun will take over as CEO and president, effective Jan. 13, the company said.

The 737 MAX grounding was the biggest crisis of Muilenburg's 34-year tenure at Boeing, where he started as an intern in 1985, rising through the company's defense and services ranks to the top job in 2015. The company said this month it would suspend production of the MAX in January.

Speculation that Muilenburg would be fired had been circulating in the industry for months, intensifying in October when the board stripped him of his chairman title.

Board member Lawrence Kellner will become non-executive chairman of the board effective immediately, the company said. Chief Financial Officer Greg Smith will serve as interim CEO during the brief transition period.—Reuters

Zain offers the industry-defining Samsung Galaxy Note10+5G

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the offering of the all-new Galaxy Note10+ 5G, Samsung's latest 5G smartphone. The new line of premium smartphones combines elegant design with powerful performance and productivity tools to help users make the most of every moment on Kuwait's most powerful 5G network.

Zain offers the new generation of Samsung's flagship device knowing the passion customers have for the latest and most advanced products in the world of technology. The most powerful Galaxy Note is now available with support for 5G technology to best suit the needs of Zain's customers across all levels.

Zain's postpaid customers can now get the new Galaxy Note10+ 5G device with a variety of plans starting at KD 37 monthly only and enjoy 50 GBs of 5G Internet with 500 local minutes. Customers will also get the first four monthly installments for FREE,

as well as FREE four months of YouTube Premium. The company is keen on offering the most flexible and competitive plans to suit customers' unique personal and professional needs.

The Galaxy Note10+5G is a premium device featuring a 6.8-inch Infinity-O Display - the biggest screen yet seen on Galaxy Note devices. This visionary smartphone also includes rear 3D Depth Vision camera for Video Live focus and Quick measure, as well as a 4,300mAh battery with Super-Fast Charging so that consumers can take full advantage of the huge range of streaming and content possibilities brought about by hyper-fast 5G connectivity. With the Galaxy Note10+ 5G and a 5G network connection, users can download a full season of a TV show in minutes, stream movies or sporting events buffer-free, enjoy their favorite graphics-rich games with virtually no lag, engage in enhanced VR and AR experiences, and catch up with friends and family on real-time 4K-quality video calls.

The Galaxy Note10+ 5G is equipped with 12GB RAM and 256GB internal storage, expandable with an SD card up to 1 TB. To mark the launch of the first 5G enabled device in Kuwait, Samsung has launched the Note10+ 5G with a new special color, Aura Blue. The device is also available in Aura Glow, Aura White and Aura Black colors.

This offering comes in line with Zain's aim to pro-



vide its customers with a superior digital experience, and springs from its core understanding of their needs. The company aims at providing its customers with an unmatched experience on Zain's most advanced network. Zain emphasized its commitment to the needs of the largest customer base in Kuwait, and will continuously look into expanding its horizons to introduce the latest and most advanced solutions in the market to meet its customers unique needs and aspirations.

Business

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

Rising heat knocks the crown off Tunisia's 'queen of dates'

'The deglet nour is the best one because she shines, she is beautiful'

KEBILI, Tunisia: One way to wish someone a pleasant start to the day in Tunisia is: "May your morning (start) with milk and deglet dates". The most coveted and cultivated of those dates is the nour - "light" in Arabic - a variety some call the "queen of all dates".

"The deglet nour is the best one because she shines, she is beautiful," said Lazhar Ghiloufi, a date seller at a market in Kebili, the main town in Tunisia's most important date-producing region.

"The more luminous the date, the higher the price." But this year, much of the deglet nour harvest is dull, dry and wrinkled. Some dates came off the tree waxy yellow, a characteristic of fruit that never matures enough to become sweet, semi-soft and, in the best cases, transparent enough to see the pip.

Date experts say the culprit is rising extreme heat in Tunisia, a symptom of a warming planet.

"It's not just a one-off heatwave, (it is) the manifestation of climate change," said Nabila Kadri, head engineer at the Kebili Technical Centre of Dates, a state institution that supports farmers.

Tunisia is the world's biggest exporter of dates by value, with sales contributing more than \$260 million dollars to the Tunisian economy last year, according to the National Observatory of Agriculture (ONAGRI).

But 40-45 percent of the harvest of deglet nour dates - which make up 90 percent of dates cultivated in Tunisia - was lost this year due to high temperatures that lasted day and night, Kadri said.

Last week, UNESCO included date palm trees and traditions associated with them on its list of the world's important intangible cultural heritage. In the nomination, put forward by 14 countries, including Tunisia, the date was noted for its role in sustaining societies in hot and dry parts of the Arab world.

However, as heat becomes harsher - Tunisia is projected to see its average annual temperature rise by 1.6 degrees Celsius between 2000 and 2050 - the famed deglet nour is not coping well.

"This is the most catastrophic season that I've seen in 10 years," said Abdul Motaleb, 34, a seasonal worker who climbs the palm trees to cut down dates. "There were a lot of mites and too much heat - the dates come out dry like wood."

Too much heat

There are three main ways that climate change is affecting the deglet nour, according to Hamza Hamadi, a researcher at the Institute for Arid Regions, a state research body in Tunisia. In October, temperatures were much higher than usual, which led to a loss of about 30 percent of the crop, with the dates that were harvested of lower quality, he said.

Excessive heat not only dries out the dates but also feeds the growth of an acarid mite that buries itself in the flesh of the date, rendering it inedible. "If humidity decreases, the number of acarids increases - it is directly proportional," said Hamadi, pointing to piles of wrinkled dates on the floor of an oasis in Jemna, a town in Kebili.

"No animal would eat this," he said. Changes in temperature have also shifted the palms' flowering and pollination periods, causing the male and female plants to fall out of sync.

Farmers pollinate dates manually to maximize production but increasingly there are shortages of pollen because "either the male tree is too advanced, or the other way round," explained Kadri of the Technical Centre for Dates. As a result of pollination failures, around 10 percent of this year's harvest was yellow, hard, and dry. The deglet nour is much more vulnerable to climate change threats and diseases than other more resistant varieties like the less valuable lalligh, according to Hamadi. The queen of dates "is very delicate - you need the perfect climate," he said.

Need to diversify

For Hamadi, the declining fortune of the deglet nour underlines the need to diversify the dates being grown in Tunisa. Traditional oases contain a variety of date palms as well as other fruit such as pomegranates. But modern plantations, planted since the mid-1980s, are dominated by the deglet nour, which makes up 90-100 percent of production.

Date farming was encouraged by Tunisia's French colonial government in a bid to settle nomadic communities, with each family given 60 trees, explained Hamadi, whose grandfather was among the recipients. Later, an exportation drive transformed oases



from diverse subsistence ecosystems to intensive agribusiness with rows of just deglet nour date palms, said Imen Louati, a research officer at the Tunisian Economic Observatory.

Tunisia's date exports have shot up over the last 30 years. According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, annual exports were around 15,000 tonnes in the 1990s and 25,000 tonnes in 2000.

By 2018, exports had hit 125,000 tonnes, according to ONAGRI - almost all of them deglet nour. "It is the variety that sells the best for exportation and so other varieties have disappeared, given that it is more profitable for the farmer," Louati said.

"A house without dates"

In Islamic tradition, "people in a house without dates are in a state of hunger." This is literally true in the Kebili region, where around 50,000 families rely on dates, according to Kadri.

She said damage to the harvest this year has hit local farmers hard. "Imagine there are people waiting for the dates to marry their sons, for the studies of their children, to go to hospital," she said. Some unlucky farmers, who rely entirely on the date harvest for an income, lost the whole of their crop this year to mites, she said. "They have a harvest with zero product, zero profit. They just harvest to let the tree start again for next season," she said. —Reuters

German union threatens Lufthansa strikes

FRANKFURT: A German cabin crew union on Sunday threatened Lufthansa with fresh walkouts after Christmas as discussions to resolve a bitter dispute over pay and conditions failed to make progress.

Speaking after the latest round of arbitration talks, the UFO union said efforts to come up with a "credible and legally secure" resolution with the help of independent mediators had failed.

While there would be no walkouts on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or Boxing Day, "we could now announce a strike at any time," vice-chairman Daniel Flohr told reporters at Frankfurt airport.

Lufthansa flight attendants staged a massive 48hour strike last month that led to 1,500 flight cancellations at German airports, affecting some 200,000 passengers. As well as demanding higher wages, especially for entry-level jobs, the union is seeking better benefits and easier routes into longterm contracts. Lufthansa for a long time refused to discuss the demands, claiming the union no longer rightfully represented staff after an internal leadership struggle. It even challenged UFO's legal status in court. But Germany's flagship carrier changed its stance during November's stoppage, agreeing to arbitration with UFO leaders and two independent mediators. Lufthansa on Sunday said it continued to expect that through arbitration "good solutions can be found" for its 22,000 cabin crew employees. —AFP

Peugeot Al Shaya & Al Sagar sponsors 1st Alp'fest event

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automobile Import Company, Kaico Al Shaya & Al Sagar, the exclusive distributers of the French Peugeot cars in Kuwait, has announced its sponsorship of the first ALP'FEST exhibition in Kuwait, which was held on 27 and 28 October at the Radisson Blu Hotel. Peugeot's sponsorship comes as a way to give travel enthusiasts the opportunity to experience the finest tourist areas in Evian and the French province of Alpine Savoie.

The show included a VIP lunch, where renowned executive chef Frank Miguelrini visited Evian Resort as well as several outstanding chefs who all served a delicious menu from the French Alps.

During the exhibition, the mayor of Evian took the opportunity to introduce Evian-les-Bains as an excellent tourist destination all year round, with the famous international ski resorts near the winter as well as lake-based recreational activities or the rest of the year.

The Peugeot sponsorship comes in conjunction with the launch of the latest models of the all-new Peugeot 508 and the latest offers on the family of Peugeot cars.

The arrival of the new Peugeot 508, which offers top-end technological features for an intense driving experience, showcases invention in a new dimension. The radical sedan with a bold look makes no compromises on design. With its dynamic shape, aggressive front and muscular style, you can count on the new 508 to turn heads wherever you go.

The launch of the Peugeot offer comes as Kaico aims to enrich the experience of owning the Frenchmade car and enjoying excellence. Exclusive benefits include a cash gift up to \$1500 plus a package of five-



year warranty and 5-year free service.

As an additional option to distinguish clients and grant them peace of mind, the company introduced the leasing program for individuals that include periodic maintenance, comprehensive insurance and an alternative car

Kaico launched the leasing offer to meet the demand of customers who desire to drive a modern Peugeot that includes the latest technology and offers the smoothest ride without the hassle of waiting in the service centers or worrying about accidents. The company stated that it facilitates the completion of transactions in order to achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction.

"The decision to buy a Peugeot during this offer is certainly the best," Kaico added. The Peugeot cars have an impressive interior design and advanced driving style with the touch screen that supports Apple Carplay and AndroidAuto.

The luxury and comfort of the Peugeot, integrated with its efficiency and performance & striking designs, gives the customer a wide range of options to suit his



budget and priorities when visiting the Peugeot show-room. "As we celebrate the 50 years anniversary of the partnership with Peugeot in 2019, we have shared their success and development together in these years and as an authorized distributor, we will continue to provide customers with the best possible sales & after sales services," said Ashish Tandon, general manager of Valor

Nader Salmeh, Sr Division manager- vehicles added "We are delighted to sponsor this special event, and our offers will allow family car enthusiasts to acquire new Peugeot cars with the distinctive performance and contemporary design."

Peugeot cars are undergoing many difficult tests in the harshest weather conditions to suit the challenging climate in Kuwait and be the most prominent and safe partner in all daily trips and adventures.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co. EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Euro	340.450
Sterling Pound	399.240
Canadian dollar	232.380
Turkish lira	52.020
Swiss Franc	311.780
US Dollar Buying	297.000
	ASIAN COUNTRIES
Japanese Yen	2.782
Indian Rupees	4.281
Pakistani Rupees	1.972
Srilankan Rupees	1.672
Nepali Rupees	2.669
Singapore Dollar	225.490
Hongkong Dollar	39.037
Bangladesh Taka	3.545
Philippine Peso	5.992
Thai Baht	10.105
Malaysian ringgit	77.826
	GCC COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash

ARAB COUNTRIES
2

 Egyptian Pound - Transfer
 18.990

 Yemen Riyal/for 1000
 1.222

 Tunisian Dinar
 110.250

 Jordanian Dinar
 429.350

 Lebanese Lira/for 1000
 0.203

 Syrian Lira
 0.000

 Morocco Dirham
 32.235

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.940
Canadian Dollar	231.780
Sterling Pound	396.680
Euro	338.285
Swiss Frank	301.260
Bahrain Dinar	808.290
UAE Dirhams	83.155
Qatari Riyals	84.390
Saudi Riyals	81.945
Jordanian Dinar	429.975
Egyptian Pound	18.991
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.674
Indian Rupees	4.274
Pakistani Rupees	1.959
Bangladesh Taka	3.551
Philippines Pesso	5.990
Cyprus pound	18.085
Japanese Yen	3.775
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.667
Malaysian Ringgit	74.320

 Thai Bhat
 11.050

 Turkish Lira
 51.605

 Singapore dollars
 223.191

Chinese Yuan Renminb

Bangladesh Taka

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

43.805

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
	Europe	
British Pound	0.388514	0.402414
Czech Korune	0.005218	0.014518
Danish Krone	0.041026	0.046026
Euro	0.329419	0.343119
Georgian Lari	0.105417	0.105417
Hungarian 0.000928	0.001118	
Norwegian Krone	0.029819	0.035019
Romanian Leu	0.053670	0.070520
Russian ruble	0.004875	0.004875
Slovakia	0.009095	0.019095
Swedish Krona	0.028274	0.033274
Swiss Franc	0.303165	0.314165
	Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.201697	0.213697
New Zealand Dollar	0.194497	0.203997
	America	
Canadian Dollar	0.225717	0.234717
US Dollars	0.300200	0.304750
US Dollars Mint	0.300700	0.304750
	Asia	

0.002976

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0.042058 0.045558 Chinese Yuan Hong Kong Dollar Indian Rupee Indonesian Rupiah 0.003598 0.004370 0.000017 0.000023 0.002694 0.000251 0.002874 0.000266 Korean Won Malaysian Ringgit 0.075511 Nepalese Rupee Pakistan Rupee 0.002624 0.002964 0.001317 0.002087 0.005933 0.006233 Philippine Peso Singapore Dollar Sri Lankan Rupee 0.218811 0.228811 0.001898 0.009964 0.010144 Thai Baht 0.009740 0.010290 Arab Bahraini Dinar 0.801016 0.809062 0.018933 0.021674 Egyptian Pound 0.000084 0.000085 Iranian Riyal 0.000199 0.423210 0.000259 0.432210 Jordanian Dinai 1.000000 1.000000 Kuwaiti Dinar 0.000101 0.000251

Moroccan Dirham

Omani Riyal

Saudi Rival

Syrian Pound

. Tunisian Dina

Turkish Lira

UAE Dirhams

0.021180

0.785263

0.082929

0.080060

0.001290

0.102755

0.044721

0.082217

0.045180

0.793151

0.083763 0.081360

0.001510

0.110755

0.054566

0.083043

Business

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

Al Mulla Automobiles organizes truck driving event for Mercedes-Benz trucks

Event includes launch of new Mercedes-Benz Actros MP5 truck





KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles, Mercedes-Benz "Commercial Vehicles Division", organized the first driving experience of Mercedes-Benz trucks in Kuwait at Kuwait motor town. This experience in which the attendees tested the strength of the trucks' performance and the most prominent safety and security features that they provide, especially the Mercedes-Benz Active Brake Assist safety system that was tested in front of the audience and demonstrated its high efficiency in safety especially in cases of driver's lack of attention, as the system automatically stops the truck to prevent collision.

The event witnessed testing one of Oula Fuel Marketing Company trucks, which is the first company in Kuwait to own a whole fleet of all-new Actros trucks (Fuel tanker) that are equipped with the latest safety systems, especially the Active Brake Assist safety system, in order to ensure the safety of its truck fleet on the roads. The test was held directly in front of the audience to demonstrate the safety levels in its trucks, especially the fuel tankers.

Before giving the audience a truck driving experience, a simplified explanation of the principles of driving and road safety was presented, and the characteristics and modern specifications of the Mercedes-Benz heavy trucks were demonstrated. The participants were then taken for a tour inside the cabin to learn about its features. After that, they had the opportunity to drive and test its real capabilities and abilities within Kuwait Motor Town circuit.

On this event, Ralph Gayer, General Manager of Commercial Vehicles at Al Mulla Automobiles Company, said: "Today we give our customers the opportunity to enjoy a unique experience to explore the latest technologies and capabilities of Mercedes-Benz trucks in Kuwait. These trucks have all the elements of strength and durability while adhering to the highest safety standards and



comfort, along with its dependability and tremendous reli-

ability, which has proven its legend for twenty years in Kuwait and the region."

Gayer also extended special thanks to Oula Fuel Marketing Company for its unrivaled support and contribution to the success of the event and the distinguished rtnership between the two companies and its great confidence in Mercedes-Benz trucks.

Newly launched during the event, the new Mercedes-Benz Actros mp5 trucks, that features the Active Brake Assist 5, which is the new generation of emergency braking assistance that supports the dynamic brake assistance system in the event of a possible rear collision or collision with a person crossing in front or towards the vehicle or to stay on the same track.

The Active Brake Assist 5 technology operates with an

advanced system that combines radar and cameras, which enables the system to better monitor the area in front of the vehicle and respond effectively; this has been tested in front of the audience and proved its efficiency. The mp5 truck equipped also with the state-of-art feature which is the MirrorCam, in which the exterior side mirrors have been replaced by wide-angle mirrors on the new Actros model by MirrorCam, to increase safety and security. MirrorCam represents an enormous improvement in aerodynamics, safety and handling of vehicles. This system provides a greatly improved comprehensive vision and consists of two cameras installed on the outside of the vehicle and two 15 inch screens on the A columns inside the cabin.

These trucks also provide intuitive connectivity and operation thanks to the fully updated Multimedia Cockpit feature for the driver, to provide the driver with a unique level of operational comfort.

Actros has two interactive screens that are the central source of information in the cockpit, where assistance systems and all relevant essential information are displayed to the driver. Communication has become now a reality in Actros, as smartphones can be connected via Apple CarPlayTM or Android Auto. While the applications help the driver to carry out his transportation tasks.

Monitoring is carried out directly and continuously while driving the truck using Fleetboard and Mercedes-Benz Uptime systems to give the employer added value. It is also possible to operate the truck remotely, so that the driver, thanks to the control switch, has more flexibility to operate. The trucks are distinguished by their front end, which is made of high quality materials and advanced specifications that contribute to the comfort of drivers, and they come equipped with an automatic transmission from Mercedes Power Shift 3 to achieve the highest levels of fuel efficiency, making it the perfect choice for fleet operators who are looking for strong and economical trucks at

New Actros and Arocs trucks come equipped with the best safety and security equipment to ensure the highest levels of driver protection. One of the safety features is the optional available active brake assistant 5, as this system for emergency braking works using radar technology and activates the maximum level of braking when necessary for a complete stop before colliding with moving or fixed objects in front it. The system also warns the driver of any imminent collision with pedestrians, while partially activating the braking. Participants praised the quality of the organization of the event and their welcoming by Al Mulla Automobiles Company.

Al Mulla Automobiles Company is always keen to organize such events in order to provide an opportunity for its customers and the largest number of audiences to get first-hand knowledge of the true specifications of the commercial vehicles and trucks it provides. Also, to provide them with an opportunity to get to know the fundamental differences that distinguish it from the rest of the other models, to always remain at the forefront of the leading brands in the world of cars. The event also included a marketplace area, in which more than one Mercedes-Benz department participated: such as Mercedes-Benz Genuine parts, Mercedes-Benz Service Solutions, Daimler FLEET-BOARD and Mercedes-Benz vans. The marketplace also included a distinguished participation from Al Mulla International Finance Company, the Araba Rental and Leasing Company and Al Mulla Industries Company. Also, a special thanks to KGL for supporting the event with one of its trailers, as they are all partners in the success.

NBK to hold GAC car draw by end of January 2020

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is committed to rewarding its customers by outstanding draws and exclusive promotions, while encouraging them to manage their accounts seamlessly via the NBK Mobile Banking App. NBK, via its campaign in partnership with Mutawa Alkazi, the sole dealer of GAC Motor in Kuwait, offers its customers the opportunity to join a car draw and win a GS3 car when using the NBK Mobile Banking App.

The campaign, which was launched several months ago, gave the customers the opportunity to win a GAC GA4, as the winner was announced in NBK's September Mega Day. The winner of the second draw will be announced in January 2020.

Salaried customers get two chances to enter the draw, for every financial transaction made using the NBK Mobile Banking App or when updating the mobile number or email address through the app. While customers with an account balance of KWD 5,000 minimum are entitled to join the draw only once when making a bank transaction via the NBK Mobile Banking App or when updating their mobile or email data.

Speaking about the campaign Amal Al-Duwaisan, Senior Manager Consumer Banking Group, said, "We are continuously committed to offer our customers outstanding rewards; our campaign in partnership with Mutawa Alkazi, the sole dealer of GAC Motor in Kuwait, represents one of our exclusive promotions, where customers can join a car draw to win a GS3 or GA4 by the end of the month."

Al-Duwaisan added: "This campaign



Amal Al-Duwaisan

encourages our customers to conclude their transactions via the NBK Mobile Banking App, in line with the bank's digital transformation strategy, and its commitment to update clients with the latest

offers and most enhanced solutions." "Developing this seamless digital solution is a top priority for the bank, as it guarantees an easy and fast banking solution while out and about. The NBK Mobile Banking App ensures NBK's thrive to introduce its customers with a top-notch banking experience, where they can manage their payments effortlessly on the go," Al-Duwaisan affirmed.

The Bank constantly updates the NBK Mobile Banking App to offer a safe and secure way for customers to conduct transactions such as opening accounts, applying for loans, cards and credit card limit increase, advanced payment features like e-Payments to enable online payment for purchases and NBK Quick Pay for fast and easy transfers, managing the accounts and credit cards while travelling, checking their NBK Miles and NBK Rewards Points. activating dormant accounts, establishing standing orders, finding the nearest NBK Branch, ATM or CDM in Kuwait, requesting an account statement or new checkbook, and many more services that make using NBK Mobile Banking App the perfect companion in Kuwait and when travelling. It is worth mentioning that NBK recently was awarded "Best Consumer Digital Bank" and the "Best in Mobile Banking" in Kuwait by Global Finance magazine for 2019.

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 22nd December 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 15 - 19 December 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are: Hanan Saleh Abdullah Alkouh Masouma Garak Darwish Nasser Warda Nabeel Yousef Al-Kandari Shadi Abdullah Khaireyah Habar Saket Al-Shammari

Gulf Bank's final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al-Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al-Danah customers in 2018, have been added to their 2019 chances, and the same process will take place in 2020, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days.



CBK bonds and related Tawarruq

CBK bonds and related Tawarruq at a percent.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) total value of KD 200 million for three announced the most recent issues of months with rate of return at 2.750



Business
Tuesday, December 24, 2019

NBK increases its human capital investment in 2019

Bank holds training programs in cooperation with prestigious international universities and institutions



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) conducted various training programs during 2019 as part of the Bank's strategy to develop its human cadres, in cooperation with the most prestigious universities and educational institutions around the world. The Bank pays paramount attention to uplifting the capabilities of its human cadres by providing a unique environment in training and development area, which contributes to enhancing their skills to help build a professional career that ultimately serve to upgrade the quality of the Bank's various banking services across the

The Bank's strategy for developing human cadres is based on a professional plan for career path development for the Bank's cadres, through training programs organized by the Bank for its employees to contribute to uplifting their capabilities and knowledge acquisition as well as developing innovation skills to help achieve the Bank's goals on one hand, and realize employees' aspirations, on the other hand.

different markets in which it operates.

NBK training initiatives reflect its insight into investing in human resources. To this end, the Bank engages a group of elite banking experts who provide their expertise to these promising cadres, and these initiatives continue out of the belief in the effective impact of these programs aimed at serving the community and youth, as well as reflecting the leading role NBK has been playing in this field for long decades.

Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Group Human Resources said that NBK believes in the importance of training and development being key investments that reflect on providing the best products and services and increasing customer satisfaction.

"Human Resources Group at NBK takes pride in the professional development efforts it provides to employees at all levels. It provides specialized professional training programs for management leaders which are designed to reduce the exhaustion of distinguished cadres, and at the same time, enhance cohesion of middle management. Furthermore, efforts are made to set professional development programs for executive managers with the aim of contributing to creating better coherence and cooperation between different departments", added Al-Ablani.

Al-Ablani stated that the Bank provides the best training programs in cooperation with the best educational institutions around the world, in order to qualify the banking leaders and give them adequate experience to face various the challenges in banking business, adding that the Bank now has over 6949 employees in four continents; all of whom have the chance to join professional development training programs, which undergo annual expansion and development, with educational opportunities ranging from leadership and technical training to anti-money laundering courses.

"During the year, the Bank launched the program "Employee Value Proposition Project" which is the first of its kind on the regional level, and includes all what the Bank offers with the aim of attracting and soliciting the best cadres, and in return, what it requires from its employees to be ambassadors for its trade mark, and role models embodying the Bank's key behaviors and values," Al-Ablani highlighted.

"Any institution can achieve growth and development only with the development of the skills of its human cadres. Therefore, we encourage our employees to uplift their capabilities and contribute to their career development by providing professional training programs," Al-Ablani pointed out.

"NBK constantly focuses on improving work environment and evaluating employee retention strategies on annual basis. It also sets career development plan and paths, in an effort to create a distinguished work environment," he added.

Al-Ablani stressed that attracting national labor is one of the key strategies pursued by NBK, as national labor ratio in the Bank has now increased to reach 70.6 percent, which is above regulatory requirements, indicating that there are other plans to increase it even more during the coming period.

Yalla Watani

During the year 2019, the Group Human Resources graduated about 16 batches of trainees of the Yalla National program for qualifying new employees, to work in the bank's various branches as well as in the contact center (call center) and direct sales.

The concentrated and NBK-specific program focuses on training employees on the various aspects of banking. The program comprises of the main banking principles, credit cards, loans, accounts, insurance, fraud risks, money laundering, in addition to the core banking system.

Throughout the program, unique sets of skills will be enhanced in order to improve performance, increase self-confidence, adapt to change and promote innovation. The program also caters for soft skills, work ethics, professional behavior and teamwork training.



Moody's Credit Curriculum Program

The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated the graduation of 5 Cohorts of the "Moody's Credit Curriculum Program", which was designed and organized in partnership with the international credit rating agency, Moody's Applytics

The Moody's Credit Curriculum program extended over a year and a half, and introduced an array of topics including banking services, financial analysis, risk management, structure risk, credit challenges, financing, and problem credits.

Harvard Business School

The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated the graduation of participants in its "Leading the Execution of a Strategy in Financial Services" program that was held in partnership with the Harvard Business School and the Institute of Banking Studies, the program was attended by 12 managers of various departments in NBK.

The program was designed specifically for executive managers of divisions at NBK, and adopts the high educational standards of the Harvard Business School and is based on practical case studies that the School is renowned for.

The program is also one of the development initiatives organized by the Institute of Banking Studies. The principal objective of these initiatives is to develop professionals and executive manager in Kuwaiti banks. The first of these programs was held in 2010 and participation was limited to the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwaiti banks that are members of the Institute. The success of these programs

expanded the reach in 2011 to include the GCC countries. NBK has the largest participation in the program this year. The program is held annually, each year in a GCC country, with Kuwait the most recent one which was attended by manager at the Central Bank of Kuwait, Kuwaiti banks, and other Gulf banks and financial institutions.

NBK Academy

During the year 2019, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated the graduation of 26 trainees newly hired employees from "NBK Academy" program. NBK Academy aims to train and develop young graduates through providing professional skills of as part of NBK's strategy to develop the national human resources and attract them to work in the banking industry.

Graduates concluded NBK Academy program in four months (the duration of the program) covering various banking aspects including: banking principles, risk management, teamwork, financial accounting, marketing, negotiation, and consumer and commercial lending, in addition to providing hands-on-training to all program participants at various departments in the bank through engaging international accredited trainers to enable trainees to gain top banking skills.

NBK Academy program is designed in accordance with the highest international training techniques with the aim to provide participants with both theoretical and technical skills that cover key areas of the banking sector. Participants also receive a wealth of knowledge about NBK work structure and culture in order to further enhance their career development opportunities in the future.

In 2008, NBK launched "NBK Academy", the first initiative of its kind in the private sector in Kuwait aimed at developing highly qualified national banking leaders with the highest international skill set and experience level in all banking disciplines. The initiative aims at fulfilling the bank's aspirations to continuously improve its services and expand its activities and growth plans, both locally and regionally.

Trade Finance

The year 2019 hosted a ceremony to honor employees who have completed the specialized "Trade Finance" training program which is designed and organized in cooperation with Euromoney Learning for banking and financial training.

Extending over six months, the 32 employees enrolled had to pass several professional examinations to complete the requirements of the intensive training program. These requirements covered the basics of trade finance, collections, letters of guarantee, letters of credit, trade products structure, compliance in letters of credit and guarantees, as well as other operational aspects of trade finance.

NBK launched the "Trade Finance" program as the first of its kind program in the banking sector in Kuwait that aims to develop the skills of its employees working in the Trade Finance Department. It is accredited by the London Institute of Banking and Finance, which is one of the oldest international institutions specialized in vocational education, banking and financial services.

INSEAD

The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) partnered with one of the leading international business schools, INSEAD, in an intensive training program specifically designed for the Bank's executive management team.

Since the banking industry worldwide is facing significant challenges. Digital disruption and FinTechs challenge existing banking models. Digital has fundamentally changed our lives. Adapting to the ongoing digitization of the economy, and of society in general, is arguably the most challenging transformation every business is currently facing. Due to competition from local and regional players, strategies are reassessed in various parts of the world

(GCC, ASEAN, LATAM, EU).

National Bank of Kuwait - INSEAD program - Creating Value in a Fast Changing Banking World has two main objectives. First, a discussion of the fast changing banking world, including digital disruption with identification by NBK senior executives of key-strategic actions to undertake. Second, the further development of senior NBK executives to lead the strategy execution and changes, both in terms of personal and organizational skills.

Design thinking

The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized the 3rd module of the Collective Executive Development Program, titled "Design Thinking for Executives" as an intensive and full-fledged workshop.

The overall objective of this two days' workshop is to on-board NBK executives on a new approach to product and service experience design.

The workshop, conducted in coordination with "Frog Design", addressed a number of significantly important perspectives including: How to change the way you gather insights on your customers; discover new ways of uncovering product/service opportunities; learn to prototype your product / service to test your assumptions and embrace new processes for a human-centered approach to innovation.

High Fliers Program

During the year National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), in cooperation with IE Business School, Madrid, launched its sixth edition of the Leadership Development Program, The "High Fliers Program", targeting high potential employees with a proven record of high performance and leadership potential

The training program extends over a period of 6 months and covers various modules including among others: developing new and unconventional thinking, building a culture of excellence, managing change and innovation, measuring and managing performance, effective communication, high performance teamwork, customer centricity, design thinking and effective guidance and training.

The program is primarily designed to enable trainees to unlock their full potential, encouraging them to combine technical and leadership skills to attain strategic leadership thinking qualities upon successful completion.

KPC training program

Human Resources, in cooperation with Foreign Corporate, Oil and Trade Finance Group, has launched the second phase of the training program held for employees of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries.

The training program, which was launched last year, comprises two phases of both practical and theoretical training and will extend for four weeks.

The program is aimed at developing the technical skills of KPC employees. It covered several business divisions including Treasury, Finance and Accounting.





45 nationalities

Seminar

As part of its ongoing support to programs that aim to introduce knowledge and experience among professionals and the society as a whole, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsored "The Dynamics of Disruption in Digital Business Transformation" forum that was organized by the Institute of Banking Studies and presented by IMD

Professor of Innovation and Strategy, Michael Wade.
Also (NBK) is the main sponsor for the upcoming seminar "Digital Leader" by the international speaker, Erik Qualman. The seminar focuses on Digital Leadership and how to focus in a Digitally Unfocused World.

Summer Internship

For more than 18 years in a row, NBK organized its Summer Internship Program for school and college students. "This program is the beginning if a long road ahead to empower youth and provide them with valuable insight into real business scenarios. A total of 124 students between the ages 14 and 21 years participated in the 2019 program.

Career Fair

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsored many of Careers Fair in an aim to provide young Kuwaiti talents with recruitment opportunities in the private sector by creating a direct exchange platform between companies from the sector and those looking for employment.

The career fair seeks to open channels of direct communication between private sector companies and job seekers and to provide suitable job opportunities for students and fresh graduates. NBK human resources personnel were available at its booths and provided their advice and guidance to students seeking assistance with future career choices, in addition to educating them on the nature of joining the banking industry and guiding them through the required procedure to join NBK.

485 fresh graduates are welcomed to join NBK Family in 2019

(NBK) welcomed more than 485 fresh university graduates to join the NBK family and start their career on one of the top recruiters in the private sector.

NBK is amongst the top job providers in Kuwait, thanks to having a specialized talent-management department tailored to recruit, hire, retain, train and develop the most talented and superior employees.

NBK provides his staff with various training courses in several business segments including products, systems, personal skills, and leadership capabilities in a bid to boost the bank's products and offer the highest and best-inclass services to its clientele.

What's On



KIB sponsors 6th Kuwait Industries Union EXPO

s part of its commitment to supporting and developing local industries, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored the 6th Kuwaiti Industries Union (KIU) Expo 2019. Organized by the Union in partnership with FourFest and Four Films Printing Group, the event was held under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad and took place at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait.

The exhibition was attended by a number of companies, industrial institutions and public entities, as well as investors in the sector, and SME entrepreneurs. In its

latest edition, the exhibition aimed at shedding light on the most important developments witnessed by the local industry during recent years, in addition to the government's commitment to promoting growth and development of this vital sector.

On this occasion, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia said: "KIB's sponsorship of this event came as part of its dedication to supporting local industries and SMEs. As a national financial institution, we always strive to contribute to reviving the industrial sector and creating an attractive

investment environment for both local and international industries by meeting the needs of this sector through delivering innovative banking services and products."

Najia added that, as part of its youth empowerment pillar, KIB has always sought to participate in activities and events that positively affect the local community, bringing it one step closer to diverse segments and youth. He also pointed out that this exhibition served as an excellent opportunity for all relevant parties to meet, those currently employed within the sector as well as others that are interested in the sector. Moreover, the

exhibition enabled the exchange of expertise and the latest developments in a friendly, positive environment.

Since its beginnings, KIB has served as a key driver in national economic development. The Bank has established specialized departments to support and finance various economic sectors, such as the contracting sector, industrial projects and commercial activities. Additionally, KIB has established a unit focused on financing SMEs, as it believes they contribute to developing the local labor market and encouraging young local talents to innovate.

ACK and Creative Bits Solutions sign agreement



"Creative Bits Solutions" signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate and cooperate on nurturing talents from ACK.

As part of the MOU, Creative Bits and ACK will jointly develop training programs and facilitate the participation of ACK students to national and international competitions, workshops and similar activities aimed at providing them with advanced technical and soft skills that are needed for the job market. The agreement will promote the mutual exchange of personnel, facilities and equipment, and relevant information.

Dean of the School of Engineering at ACK, Dr. Mohammad Abdul Niby expressed his appreciation for this move and said that this MOU defines the guidelines for a strong cooperation with Creative Bits which will come with benefits for both parties in several aspects such as exchange of expertise, consultations and the promotion of talents. He added that several collaboration plans are already in mind and the near future will witness the effectiveness of this relationship.

The MOU was signed by the Assistant to the President for Support Services, Mr. Sager Al Sharhan at ACK and Eng. Ahmad Al Saleh, Chairman of

Kuwait on Samsung

Galaxy Note 10+5G

all new Samsung Galaxy Note 10+ 5G in collaboration

with Al Babtain Turnkey Solutions during an event held last Saturday at the Samsung Store- Avenues Phase 4.

The offer included 100GB 5G internet and unlimited

local minutes with a 24 month commitment period. This

is consistent with Ooredoo's unremitting endeavors to

provide customers with the best and most innovative

oredoo Kuwait, the first to launch innovated

digital services in Kuwait offered customers an

Exclusive offer

from Ooredoo

air actions.

Creative Bits is a leading company in the field of technology and parallel education technology supporting formal education, which promotes the use of modern technology, innovation and digital manufacturing through product development, exhibitions, activities, events, digital manufacturing centers, Maker Spaces and university and community competitions at the level of Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf, including but not limited to Maker Faire Kuwait, Maker Faire Saudi Arabia, Maker Faire Dubai and the Mechaton competition between universities in the State of Kuwait and the Gulf Countries. Also, it works on the manufacture and supply of tools and provides training programs and materials, builds and develops educational curricula and means of progress of technology for the sake of knowledge dissemination through the support of the educational system and the enrichment of the existing scientific and technological innovations and contents.

It refines and develops students' skills and community renaissance through the Educational Portal Makers Academy as well as providing technical and engineering support for technical and engineering

inventions and turning them into products for the local or global market as well as carrying out a set of community activities that concern Kuwaiti youth through carrying out a series of visits to technology-producing countries such as China and Turkey to help young people implement their ideas, develop their capabilities and give them a model for entrepreneurship in the different technical fields.

On the other hand, ACK is one of the first private universities in Kuwait - established in 2004. The College offers world-class higher education on home ground through international learning partnerships. Courses of study are available at diploma and bachelor degree levels and in specializations within Engineering, Business, Aviation and Maritime studies.

ACK offers a personalized approach to learning where each student has an academic advisor who is available for scholastic and career guidance. At the same time, ACK places importance on the overall College experience and accordingly a wide range of sporting and club activities are available so that students can pursue their hobbies and interests with others and establish lifelong friendships.

Christmastide program 2019-2020 Holy **Family Cathederal**

ecember 24th 2019 Tuesday (Morning) -**Normal Masses**

06.30 a.m. Holy Mass in English (Cathedral) 07.00 a.m. Holy Mass in English (Cathedral)

December 24th 2019 Tuesday Christmas Eve

-Masses 05.30 p.m. Malayalam (Latin) Holy Mass 06.00 p.m. French Holy Mass 06.30 p.m. Spanish Holy Mass 07.00 p.m. Tagalog Holy Mass 07.30 p.m. Korean Holy Mass 08.30 p.m. Solemn Pontifical Holy Mass 10.30 p.m. Arabic Mass (Latin) Holy Mass 10.30 p.m. Konkani Holy Mass

10.30 p.m. Coptic Holy Mass 12.00 Midnight Maronite Holy Mass 12.00 Midnight Syro Malabar Holy Mass

December 25th 2019 Wednesday -Christmas Day - Masses Holy Day of Obligation

03.00 a.m. Malankara Holy Mass 07.00 a.m. English Holy Mass 08.30 a.m. English Holy Mass 10.00 a.m. Syro-Malabar Holy Mass 10.00 a.m. English Holy Mass 10.00 a.m. Korean Holy Mass 12.00 Noon Maronite Holy Mass 02.00 p.m. Tagalog Holy Mass 02.30 p.m. Konkani Holy Mass

December 31st 2019 Tuesday (Morning) -**Normal Masses**

06.30 a.m. Holy Mass in English (Cathedral) 07.00 a.m. Holy Mass in English (Cathedral)

December 31st 2019 Tuesday New Year's **Eve - Masses**

05.30 p.m. Malayalam (Latin) Holy Mass 06.00 p.m. French Holy Mass 06.30 p.m. Malankara Holy Mass 07.00 p.m. Tagalog Holy Mass 08.00 p.m. Korean Holy Mass 08.30 p.m. Solemn Pontifical Holy Mass 10.30 p.m. Konkani Holy Mass 10.30 p.m. New Catechumenal Holy Mass 10.30 p.m. Coptic Arabic Holy Mass 11.45 p.m. Syro-Malabar Holy Mass

January 1st 2020 Wednesday New Year's

Day Holy Masses 07.00 a.m. English Holy Mass 08.30 a.m. English Holy Mass 10.30 a.m. English Holy Mass 12.00 Noon Maronite Holy Mass 02.00 p.m. Tagalog Holy Mass 03.15 p.m. Konkani Holy Mass 04.00 p.m. Tamil Holy Mass 04.30 p.m. Konkani Holy Mass 04.30 p.m. Bengali Holy Mass 05.30 p.m. English Holy Mass 05.45 p.m. Sinhala Holy Mass 06.30 p.m. English Holy Mass 07.45 p.m. Malayalam (Latin) Holy Mass

10.00 p.m. Maronite Holy Mass

06.00 p.m. Spanish Holy Mass Salmiya Basement 08.00 p.m. Arabic Latin Holy Mass Salmiya Basement.





Samsung store where Ooredoo offered the all new Samsung Galaxy Note 10+ 5G smartphone in Aura Blue, Aura Black, Aura Glow, and Aura White colours. The new Samsung Galaxy Note 10+ 5G which is by all means an ultra-powerful and intelligent phone, has an array of new and exciting features that include a 6.8" Quad HD+ dynamic amoled display, rear camera that is 16MP ultra wide, 12MP wide, 12MP telephoto, and depth vision lens, a 10MP front camera with UHD video, a 4,300maH battery with super fast charging, 12GB RAM plus 256GB and storage expandible

Health & Science

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

Ram Dass, psychedelic drug pioneer, dies at home aged 88

WASHINGTON: Ram Dass, who in the 1960s joined ther with psilocybin, the compound that gives certain Timothy Leary in promoting psychedelic drugs as the path to inner enlightenment before undergoing a spiritual rebirth he spelled out in the influential book "Be Here Now," died at home on Sunday. He was 88

"With tender hearts we share that Ram Dass (born Richard Alpert) died peacefully at home in Maui on December 22, 2019 surrounded by loved ones," according to his official Instagram account. "He was a guide for thousands seeking to discover or reclaim their spiritual identity beyond or within institutional religion."

The man who would become a serene, smiling forerunner of the New Age movement and play a leading role in bringing Eastern spirituality to the West grew up as Richard Alpert in a Jewish family in Newton, Massachusetts.

He considered himself an atheist, and after graduating from Tufts University and earning a PhD from Stanford University, was an up-and-coming psychology professor and researcher at Harvard University in the early 1960s.

Ram Dass would later describe himself at the time as a driven "anxiety-neurotic" who had an abundance of knowledge but lacked wisdom. Things began to change when Leary joined the Harvard faculty and the two became close friends.

He had been introduced to marijuana in 1955 by his first patient while working as a health services counselor at Stanford University but Leary took him far-

TRIBAHOSPITAL

mushrooms hallucinogenic qualities. In his first psychedelic experience, "the rug crawled and the picture smiled, all of which delighted me," Ram Dass wrote in "Be Here Now."

Ram Dass and Leary wanted to open the mind to a deeper consciousness and conducted experiments that included giving the drug to "jazz musicians and physicists and philosophers and ministers and junkies and graduate students and social scientists." Afterward, they had them fill out questionnaires about

Ram Dass said the subjects found bliss, heightened physical senses, accelerated thought processes, a relaxing of biases and hallucinatory experiences, such as seeing God. Ram Dass and Leary began including the hallucinogenic drug LSD, which like psilocybin was legal at the time, in their experiments but Harvard was upset that they were using students as subjects and fired them in 1963.

The two former professors later moved to a mansion in Millbrook, New York, made available to them by heirs to the fortune of industrialist Andrew Mellon, and continued their experimentation there. Anti-war protest leader Abbie Hoffman and Beat Generation writers Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac were among those who dropped in.

In an effort to avoid the disappointment of "coming down" from a drug experience, Ram Dass said he and five others locked themselves in a building at the estate for three weeks and took LSD every four

house no one would ever believe, including us," he wrote in "Be Here Now," but they were not able to avoid the inevitable return to reality.

As the hippie movement grew, Ram Dass and Leary were among the counterculture luminaries at the Human Be-in, a 1967 gathering of some 25,000 people in San Francisco where Leary spread his 'turn on, tune in, drop out" credo. Poets such as Ginsberg and Michael McClure, anti-war activists Dick Gregory and Jerry Rubin and rock acts Janis Joplin, the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane also

Enlightenment in India

In search for a more permanent enlightenment, later that year Ram Dass went to India, as members of the Beatles would in 1968. He found what he was looking for in the form of Hindu mystic Neem Karoli Baba, also known as Maharaj-ji. Alpert said that through Maharaj-ji he found a spiritual love deeper than anything he had experienced.

Ram Dass had taken a batch of LSD with him to India to share with holy men in order to get their opinion of it. At Maharaj-ji's request, Ram Dass gave him a super-sized dose of LSD but said there was no discernable effect on him, nor was there three years later when they repeated the experiment.

The guru gave him the name Ram Dass, which means servant of God, and he returned to the United States with long hair, a beard and instructions from

hours. "What happened in those three weeks in that Maharaj-ji to "love everyone and tell the truth." Drugs would no longer be a major factor in Ram Dass' life.

> He wrote about his conversion in "Be Here Now," which became popular in the 1960s and provided a road map for the burgeoning New Age movement of spirituality. Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, who used LSD in his younger years, said the book "transformed me and many of my friends" and George Harrison used the title and general philosophy for one of his post-Beatles songs. "I was a sort of spiritual uncle to a movement - to a consciousness movement bringing the East and West together," Ram Dass told the San Francisco Chronicle in 2004.

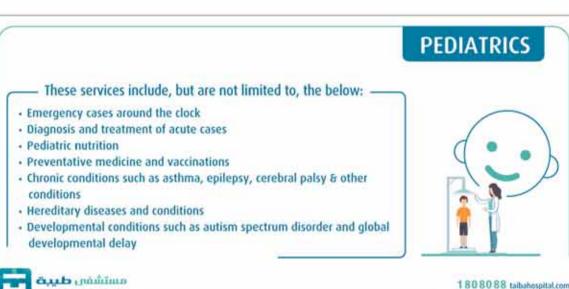
> Ram Dass spread his interpretation of Eastern philosophy as an author and lecturer, advising acolytes to be loving ("we're all just walking each other home") and to sublimate the ego for the sake of the soul ("the quieter you become, the more you can hear"). In 1978 Ram Dass co-founded the Seva Foundation, a charity to fight blindness and other health problems around

> Ram Dass suffered a near-fatal stroke in 1997 that partially paralyzed him and hampered his speaking ability but left him feeling more compassionate and humble. In 2007 he moved to Hawaii and used the internet to deliver lectures. In his later years he focused on aging and dying without fear. '(I'm) an uncle to the Baby Boomers, teaching them about illness and aging," he told the San Francisco Chronicle in 2004. "Not to be frightened of aging. That it's OK." — Reuters



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Kuwait 🥧 Times 248 33 199









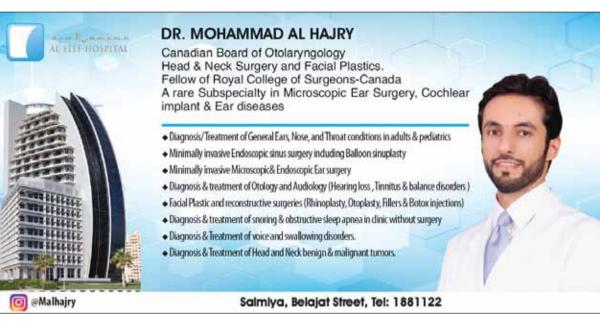
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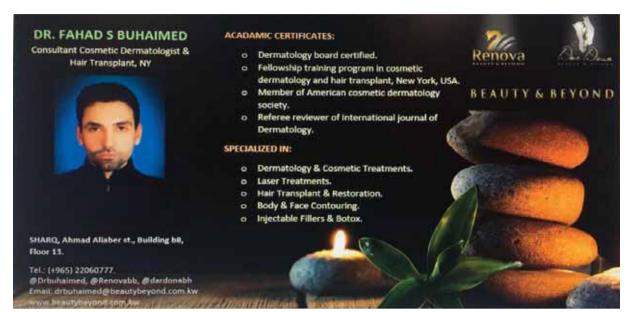




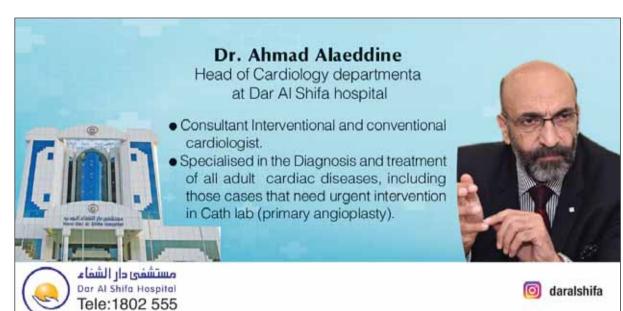


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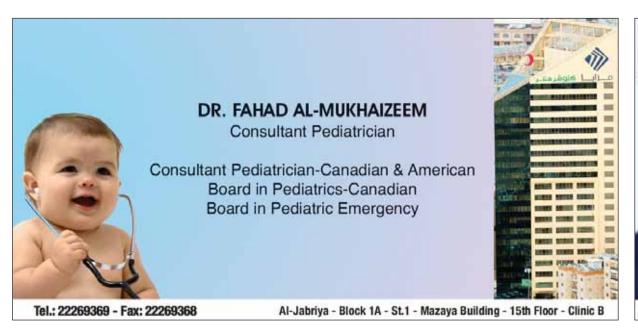
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2393

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13	14
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76				77					78				79		
80				81									82		

ACROSS

- 1. An international organization based in Geneva that monitors and enforces rules governing global
- 4. The region of northwestern Italy.
- 12. Standard temperature and pressure. 15. An accidental happening.
- 16. Relating to or having the nature of illation or inference.
- 17. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
- 18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 19. A B vitamin essential for the normal function of the nervous system and the gastrointestinal tract. 20. A telegram sent abroad.
- 22. Edible mushroom.
- 24. Being one more than one hundred. 25. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and
- mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- 26. Unable to relax or be still.
- 29. Little known Kamarupan languages.
- 32. (Akkadian) God of wisdom. 33. English prelate noted for his pessimistic ser-
- mons and articles (1860-1954).
- 35. A landlocked republic in central Africa. 37. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affect-
- ing connective tissue (skin or joints). 38. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- 42. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 43. A French abbot.
- 47. (informal) Exceptionally good. 49. A white metallic element that burns with a bril-
- liant light.
- 51. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
- 52. (computer science) The code that identifies
- where a piece of information is stored 54. United under a central government.
- 56. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 57. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
- 59. English essayist (1775-1834). 60. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone
- 63. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor
- of a person or cause). 66. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a
- skewer usually with vegetables. 68. 1 species.
- 72. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology. 75. The cardinal number that is the sum of eight
- and one. 76. Wild and domestic cattle.
- 79. A unit of length of thread or varn.
- 80. (informal) Of the highest quality.
- 81.4-wheeled motor vehicle. 82. An informal term for a father

DOWN

- 1. Hit hard.
- 2. A sock with a separation for the big toe. 3. A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated sili-
- ca of variable color.
- 4. Pearl oysters.
- 7. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubber-

- 5. (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
- 6. North American rat snakes.
- ized fabric.

- 8. Of or relating to near the ear.
- 9. Grandson of Amaterasu and first ruler of Japan. 10. Broadcasting visual images of stationary or moving objects.
- $11.\,An\,international\,organization\,of\,European$ countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its mem-
- 12. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo. 13. Deciduous trees with smooth usually silvergray bark of North America and Europe and Asia. 14. Any of various types of fold formed by doubling fabric back upon itself and then pressing or
- stitching into shape. 21. United by being of the same opinion.
- 23. A large oven for firing or burning or drying such things as porcelain or bricks.
- 27. A university in Connecticut.
- 28. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- 30. A grant made by a law court.
- 31. The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
- 34. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
- 36. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- 39. A design fixed to some surface or a paper bearing the design to be transferred to the surface. 40. Italian violin maker in Cremona.
- 41. (Greek mythology) A princess of Colchis who aided Jason in taking the Golden Fleece from her father.
- 44. Serving as or forming a base.
- 45. A temporally organized plan for matters to be
- 46. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square
- 48. United States evangelical preacher famous as a
- mass evangelist (born in 1918). 50. (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great dis-
- tance. 53. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade
- barriers and increase cooperation among its mem-
- 55. A program that is broadcast again. 58. The fine downy hair covering a human fetus.
- 61. Red Bordeaux wine from the Medoc district of southwestern France.
- 62. Lower in esteem.
- 64. A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
- 65. Relating to or near the ulna. 67. United States playwright who collaborated
- with George S. Kaufman (1904-1961).
- 69. A form of rummy using two decks and four jok-
- 70. The United Nations agency concerned with
- 71. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- 73. 10 hao equal 1 dong.
- 74. (Irish) The sea personified. 77. A metric unit of length equal to 100 meters.
- 78. Being nine more than ninety.

Yesterday's Solution

N	R	C		С	Α	N	F	Ι	Е	L	D		U	R	D
Α	Α	R		О	V	Е	R	D	R	Α	W		S	Е	Α
P	I	Е	R	R	О	T		L		N	Е	С	K	A	R
Α	U	D	I	О		S	A	Е	K		Е	L	U	D	Е
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Α	T		О			A	L	D	Е	R		S		N	P
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S	Α	N	Е		P		P	R	Α	T		P	Н	I	Z
Е	L	K		В	U	D			P	Н	D		I	G	A
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Е	L	A	N	D			L	Е	S	S		A	D	A	R
N	U	N	G		Н	A	Ι	F	Α		В	L	Α	D	Е
S	L	U	Е		О	R	G	Α	N	S		Ι	R	A	N
Е	A	S	Y		В	A	О	В	A	В		Е	D	D	О

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You've made it over the hump. You've moved beyond the problems of the recent past and you're entering a more peaceful phase. You'll soon complete your projects at work. Your domestic life will be the picture of bliss and harmony. Enjoy this period of rest and relaxation because it will be followed by a period of intense longing that requires your total attention.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

The outlook for today is excellent. The somewhat oppressive atmosphere of the past few days inspires you to change your surroundings and visit new places. Why not plan a little trip? All signs indicate that this is the best time to plan such an adventure. If you delay, you'll be stuck in the same old routine again.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This will be a day rich in reflection. You're able to observe what's going around you while still retaining some distance. Other people's ambitions will amuse you as they play their parts more like caricatures than real people. Stepping back like this benefits you greatly. You should do it more often.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Here's a day when some long-awaited attention or recognition comes your way. You're finished with the hassles you experienced during the past month and have entered a calmer period. Those who could recently only criticize can't find enough words to praise you. Take the compliments at face value. There's nothing wrong with being happy with yourself.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This will be a day of reflection. While you may be tempted to look back and think about how far you've come, your time would be better spent thinking about what the future has in store. You've entered a period of rethinking both your identity and objectives. These aren't small matters. You'll need every ounce of energy at your disposal to make it through this time of transition.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This would be an ideal day to take extra care of your body. Don't kid yourself that those back problems will go away. Ditto that pain in your knee. Make an appointment with a doctor or physical therapist. It won't hurt you to set aside your responsibilities for one day. This is important.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Songs From the Year 2003 Find and circle all of the songs from 2003 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 22 letters spell an additional song title from 2003.

L	U	F	Ι	Т	U	Α	E	В	U	L	С	Α	D	Ν	Ι	U	F
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Υ	G	Ν	1	Т	Ν	0	R	F	Α	S	E	Υ	Υ	Α	S	Υ	G
s	Ν	1	Ν	Т	0	Υ	0	U	М	Ι	s	S	Υ	0	U	Т	Н
U	0	Ρ	U	D	Ν	Α	Т	s	Н	U	Ν	W	Ε	L	L	Ν	Т
В	R	Α	Т	I	R	0	Ν	Е	S	Т	0	0	s	W	Е	Α	Е
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Е	S	K	L	0	F	Р	Ι	S	S	0	G	Н	0	М	М	1	Α
G	D	U	Ι	L	1	G	Υ	0	Ν	0	S	Т	G	E	E	G	Ν
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L	Н	Α	Ι	E	М	K	Т	U	Е	Α	E	٧	Α	R	ı	L	0
В	Α	Н	Т	G	Е	С	С	K	1	R	Т	G	0	Т	Ι	ı	L
U	Ν	1	Н	L	D	0	I	U	1	Т	U	F	ı	Ε	С	S	Т
0	G	L	Υ	U	Α	L	ı	Z	Т	s	- 1	Ν	ı	Α	М	K	Ε
R	E	L	0	E	Y	С	E	E	Т	S	G	0	Ν	R	Н	0	G

LAULANDSL ALL I HAVE ANGEL BABY BOY **BEAUTIFUL** CLOCKS COME OVER DRIFT AWAY

FRONTIN'

GET BUSY

GOSSIP FOLKS HEADSTRONG I CAN I WANT YOU I'M WITH YOU IGNITION IN DA CLUB INTO YOU INTUITION

GET LOW

LANDSLIDE LIKE A STONE LIKE GLUE MESMERIZE MISS YOU RAIN ON ME RIGHT THURR SENORITA

SO GONE SOMEDAY STAND UP STUCK SUGA SUGA SUNRISE SUPERMAN **TROUBLE** UNWELL

IDENADTC

Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may have recently modified the material aspects of your life. Was it sufficient to stop there? More profound changes might be in order. Take a look at what motivated you to create the life you're living now. Pay special attention to the choices you've made in your profession. Are you sure you're doing what you were meant to do? Are you using your talents to the fullest?



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This will be a great day to meditate. You may be dissatisfied because your various projects have yet to take form. You're impatient, but who wouldn't be? This waiting period has lasted for about two months but will soon end. The planetary energy asks you to consider only what is essential for you. Don't start new projects based on anything superfluous.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today promises to be excellent, but don't go overboard. You might be tempted to think that your minor financial difficulties are already behind you. Alas, they are not. What you do today provides the blueprint for your future. Continued efforts to stabilize your behavior will provide the security you desire for the future.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This will be a great day to meditate. You may be dissatisfied because your various projects have yet to take form. You're impatient, but who wouldn't be? This waiting period has lasted for about two months but will soon end. The planetary energy asks you to consider only what is essential for you. Don't start new projects based on anything superfluous.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

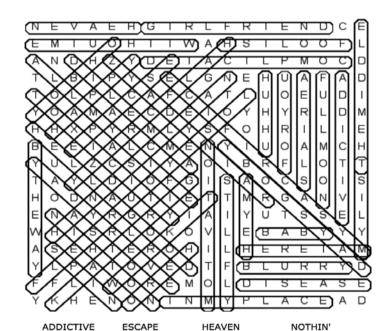
Your life seems to revolve around human contact. You're an outgoing, cheerful, engaging conversationalist who enjoys bringing people together, but lately you've been yearning to be alone. Today don't ignore any urge you feel for solitude. Even though it's an unusual need for you, it's still valid and you should honor it.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Sometimes friends become your real family. Your friendships are deeper and more enduring than you realize. Many people are eager to give their help, so why are you reluctant to receive it? Haven't you been the one promoting the benefits of warm, sincere friendships? Today makes you aware of your talents and reinforces how important friendships are.

Yesterday's Solution Songs From the Year 2002



ADDICTIVE AERIALS ALL MY LIFE **BLURRY** BY THE WAY COMPLICATED DAYS GO BY DILEMMA

DISEASE

ESCAPE EVERYDAY FOOLISH FOR YOU **FULL MOON** GIRL TALK **GIRLFRIEND** HALFCRAZY HANDS CLEAN

HELLA GOOD HERE I AM HEY MA IN MY PLACE LOSE YOURSELF MOTIVATION MY LIST MY SACRIFICE

NOTHIN OH BOY RAINY DAYZ STILL FLY THE MIDDLE TOXICITY UH HUH WITHOUT ME WORK IT

The hidden song title is: CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY HEAD

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				any out	ORG			
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5					3			1
				8				
3			7					8
		7			1		9	
	3		4	6				
4			2			8		6

Yesterday's Solution

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

hard

medium

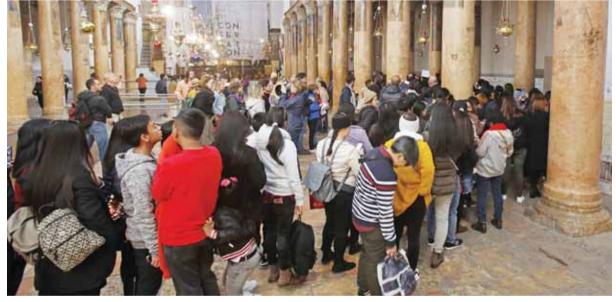
Lifestyle

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019



Palestinians walk along Israel's controversial barrier in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem on Dec 21, 2019. — AFP photos

At Christmas, Bethlehem denied full gifts of tourism



Christian tourists visit the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

ess than an hour after a group of Indian tourists arrive at Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, they exit smiling, directly board their bus and head back to Jerusalem. The city where Christians believe Jesus was born is teeming with tourists - but the Christmas spirit is dampened by complaints that Israeli tour operators don't allow the city to truly benefit from the influx. While Bethlehem's 50-odd hotels are fully booked during the peak season around Christmas Day, December 25, they struggle to ensure occupancy rates throughout the year.

Less than a third of the three million tourists who visit Bethlehem every year spend at least one night there, according to the Palestinian Hotel Association. Most head straight back through the Israeli checkpoint and out of the occupied West Bank. Palestinians accuse Israeli tour companies of seeking to undermine their business by organizing only fleeting visits.

In the search for more regular business, the small city, located between Jerusalem and Hebron in the southern West Bank, is looking to expand non-religious tourism. Ironically, a major draw now is the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict itself, and the political street art it has spawned. Especially the works of Banksy, the British spray-can maestro whose true identity remains a secret, have drawn many visitors and spawned a graffiti-themed tourism cottage industry.

'Trips controlled'

In the square in front of the church that remains the main draw in Bethlehem, a Brazilian couple and their daughter were delighted to have visited the site as part of a three-week tour including Jerusalem and other cities. "It was very fast, but it was enough," said the mother before heading back to Jerusalem where they would stay the night. A nearby trader lamented the fact tourists don't bother to explore the city's streets and markets. "It is not that far away, they just have to cross the square," he said.

Samir Hazboun, head of the Bethlehem chamber of commerce, said the city was trying to diversify its offerings. Tourists "can visit many other cultural and historical places," he said, pointing to the site of one of King Herod's former palaces and the UNESCO-listed village of Battir. Hazboun said many tourists did not stay longer because they visit with Israel-based travel agents that "control" the length of visits in the West Bank, a Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967. Elias Al-Arja, president of the Palestinian Hotel Association,

pointed out that while the number of hotels had increased fivefold in 20 years, infrastructure, in particular for water and power, still lags behind.

'Non-classical tourism'

Beyond those looking for religion, Bethlehem is increasingly drawing tourists attracted to the street art. Many come to admire the graffiti and stencil pictures on the separation barrier Israel began erecting in 2002 during the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising. Israel says the barrier, which near Bethlehem is a five-metre (16 foot) concrete wall, is needed to protect itself, while Palestinians label it an apartheid wall.

When AFP visited, a young European was rolling white paint onto the wall, giving him a clean surface to graffiti. A few steps away, a shop sold spray cans and stencils for tourists wanting to leave a trace of their passage. The store is owned by the adjoining "Walled-Off Hotel" which was opened in 2017 by Banksy. All rooms in the hotel overlook the wall and are decorated with works about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is also the theme of a ground floor museum.



Guests eat in the dining hall of Banksy's Walled-Off hotel in Bethlehem.

Wissam Salsaa, the hotel's manager, said many guests had never dreamed of visiting Bethlehem or the West Bank until the hotel was established. "Banksy has contributed a lot to non-classical tourism in Bethlehem," he said, estimating that 250,000 people had visited the hotel in the two years since it opened. These mostly young tourists normally come in small groups, not competing with the buses of often older tourists visiting the church. Some don't even visit the religious sites.

Yet even these tourists often don't stay. Simon and Jan, two young Germans seated on the hotel's terrace, said the museum was "very interesting" and allowed the uninitiated to familiarize themselves with the conflict. They said they were only stopping by, though, and would spend the night in Tel Aviv. — AFP



A Christian tourist prays inside the Grotto, believed to be the exact spot where Jesus Christ was born, at the Church of the Nativity.



A tourist walks past illustrations by street artist Banksy displayed on Israel's controversial barrier in front of his Walled-Off hotel.



A tourist poses for a picture in front of Israel's controversial separation barrier.

Lifestyle | Features

Elephants in Thailand 'broken' for lucrative animal tourism



This photo taken on Nov 17, 2019 shows baby elephant Ploy training to perform tricks at the Ban Ta Klang elephant village in the northeastern Thai province of Surin. — AFP photos



This photo taken on Nov 8, 2019 shows elephants being forced to perform for tourists at the commercial Maetaeng

eparated from their mothers, jabbed with metal hooks, and sometimes deprived of food - many Thai elephants are tamed by force before being sold to lucrative tourism sites increasingly advertised as 'sanctuaries' to cruelty-conscious travellers. Balanced precariously on hind legs, two-year-old Ploy holds a ball in her trunk and flings it towards a hoop, one of many tricks she is learning in Ban Ta Klang, a traditional training village in the east.

Here young elephants are "broken" to interact with tens of millions of tourists who visit Thailand every year, many eager to capture social media-worthy encounters of the kingdom's national animal playing sports, dancing and even painting. Villagers in Ban Ta Klang who have been working with the large, gentle animals for generations say taming is necessary for safety reasons and that the force is not excessive.

"We do not raise them to hurt them... if they are not stubborn, we do nothing to them," said mahout Charin, as he stroked Ploy's head affectionately and spoke of her as part of his family. Charin makes about \$350 a month in a profession that was handed down from his father and grandfather. "I have always lived with them," he added. But animal welfare advocates argue the taming technique - where babies are removed from the care of fiercely devoted mothers at the age of two - is cruel and outdated. It is also little-known, one of many murky aspects of an evolving elephant tourism trade often kept from view of tour operators and travellers.

Big business

Elephants were phased out of the logging industry



A chained elephant is seen at Maetaeng Elephant Park.

about 30 years ago, leaving their mahouts unemployed. So they turned to Thailand's flourishing tourism industry, a burgeoning sector of amusement parks offering elephant rides and performances. A tamed elephant can now fetch up to \$80,000, a colossal investment that then requires gruelling hours of work and increasingly bizarre stunts to be recouped.

Mae Taeng park in the northern city of Chiang Mai receives up to 5,000 visitors per day and charges an entrance fee of about \$50. Many come to see Suda, who holds a brush in her trunk and paints Japanese-style land-scapes for visitors who can later buy the prints for up to



This photo taken on Nov 6, 2019 shows tourists taking pictures with elephants at the ChangChill elephant sanctuary in Chiang Mai.

\$150 before taking an elephant ride through the hills. As tourists become more aware of the potential cruelty of such activities, a growing number of places have opted to use the term 'sanctuary' or 'refuge'.

Many do not permit rides or animal performances. Instead tourists are encouraged to feed, groom and care for elephants, gaining an unforgettable experience with one of nature's most majestic creatures. But charities warn that even seemingly benign options, like bathing them, could still be problematic. "Bathing with elephants...is often stressful



This photo taken on Nov 17, 2019 shows elephants and mahouts waiting to perform during the annual Surin Elephant Round-up festival in the northeastern Thai province of Surin.

for elephants and mahouts especially when dealing with groups of excited young people," Jan Schmidt-Burbach of World Animal Protection told AFP. "The best option is to leave it to the elephant to decide if and how to bath and ask tourists to stand back to observe and enjoy this moment without interference."

But even this may not be enough. Some animal rights experts warn it can be hard to discern the treatment of the animals after the crowds have gone home. Some reported cases of elephants at so-called sanctuaries being chained for long hours, forced to sleep on concrete, and malnourished.

Ethical tourism?

Of the 220 elephant parks identified across the country, even if many promise ethical tourism, "only a dozen ensure truly satisfactory living conditions", according to WAP. It is working with ChangChill, a small organization near Chiang Mai, bordered by a river in the middle of rice terraces. In a few months, it changed its methods to give elephants more space, fewer interactions, and an environment resembling life in the wild. "We don't force them to do what they wouldn't instinctively do," says director Supakorn Thanaseth. As a result, they are "less sick, calmer". The risk of accidents with tourists has decreased as the animals are less stressed, though mahouts still have a hook in a bag for emergencies. ChangChill hopes to become profitable in the current high season, but it will only be able to receive around 40 tourists a day to visit its six elephants as part of its aim to put the creatures first. That is a drop in the bucket when Thailand has nearly 4,000 "domesticated" elephants. — AFP



A mahout trains his elephant dressed in a Santa Claus costume before a gift presentation to schoolchildren during Christmas celebrations in Ayutthaya yesterday.



This photo taken on Nov 8, 2019 shows tourists riding elephants at the commercial Maetaeng Elephant Park in the northern Thai province of Chiang Mai.

From Biden to Trump, music choices help rally supporters

t every campaign rally, Elizabeth Warren, Democratic candidate for the US presidency, waits to hear the first notes of Dolly Parton's popular country tune "9 to 5" before striding energetically onto the stage to greet wildly enthusiastic supporters. The musical backdrop to this age-old campaign ritual describes the daily grind of American workers: "Workin' 9 to 5, what a way to make a livin' / Barely gettin' by, it's all takin' and no givin'."

The senator's song choice - others on her list include "Everyday People" and "Respect" - is anything but accidental, aimed at giving supporters an emotional lift while evoking her own working-class roots. The 70-year-old Massachusetts progressive is competing against a field of 14 others - all of them deploying playlists at well-choreographed rallies - as they seek voters' backing in a race to take on President Donald Trump in elections next November. "The music employed by candidates is chosen with great care in order to appeal to certain audiences or craft an image of the candidate that resonates with the electorate," Jacob Neiheisel, a political scientist with the University at Buffalo (New York), told AFP.

Senator Bernie Sanders, the feisty, self-declared democratic socialist who is the oldest candidate in the race, opens rallies to the militant tones of John Lennon's "Power to the People," an ode to protest and resistance from the 1970s. He also favors "Takin' It to the Streets." And the centrist Joe Biden, who embraces the nickname "Middle-Class Joe," regularly ends his rallies with gravelly voiced



In this file photo taken on Nov 1, 1992, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton plays the saxophone during a rally at the Garden State Race Track. — AFP photos

country singer Kenny Chesney ("For the teacher in the classroom, kid kickin' cans in the street / ... We say we can when they say we can't").

Country music may not export well but it is extremely popular in the American heartland, particularly among more conservative voters. Biden served eight years as Barack Obama's vice president and never misses a chance to highlight his association with the country's first black president. He includes nearly equal numbers of black and white artists on his

playlist. And Democrat Julian Castro, the only Hispanic candidate in the primary field, strongly favors Latin music - notably by the late Mexican-American star Selena - as he reaches out to this important demographic ahead of the 2020 elections.

Bernie and Cardi B

Music also allows candidates to create memorable moments - a time-tested approach. Former president Bill Clinton, a Democrat and avid jazz fan, played this card successfully: When he performed Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel" on the saxophone in a TV talk show appearance during the 1992 campaign, voters were surprised but largely enthusiastic at this departure from the traditional gray-suited formality of presidential candidates.

Democrats generally do better among young people than their Republican opponents, and music helps them break through to the 18-to-25 crowd, a key demographic if it can be mobilized to turn out and vote. The team of Pete Buttigieg, who at 37 is the youngest candidate in the field, created buzz with a campy video of campaign aides dancing to "High Hopes" by the group Panic! at the Disco. (An earlier version of "High Hopes," by Frank Sinatra, was the 1960 theme song of John F Kennedy - the nation's youngest president.) The Buttigieg video - with aides dancing side-to-side, performing handrolls and claps - has since been imitated many times on social media and is now seen at the Indiana mayor's rallies. Sanders is quick to highlight supporters from the traditionally Democraticleaning entertainment world as he works to again mobilize young voters, as he did in 2016. Having recently had his praises sung by Cardi B - the former striptease dancer turned rap star - the 78-year-old with unruly white hair was recently seen on Instagram, arm-in-arm with pop princess Ariana Grande, who has an impressive 168 million followers. — AFP



In this photo taken on Dec 10, 2019, US President Donald Trump leaves after speaking at a Keep America Great rally at the Giant Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania.



In this file photo taken on Aug 9, 2019, 2020 Democratic presidential hopeful Senator Elizabeth Warren greets supporters as she arrives at a rally outside the building where the Wing Ding Dinner will take place in Clear Lake, lowa.

Lifestyle | Features



A member of the veterinary staff cares for a cat at "Pet Zone", a pet health center in the Jordanian capital Amman on Oct 1, 2019. — AFP photos



Not so much a dog's life for Jordan's pampered pets

A picture taken on Oct 1, 2019 shows a husky in a kennel,

ust a few years ago it would have been unthinkable to see owners walking their dogs around the streets of Amman. Now bet hotels are sprouting up across Jordan. Where strays were once mostly left to scavenge for food, Jordanians in a new trend in the Arab kingdom are increasingly willing to foot steep bills to care for beloved dogs and cats. Despite the squeeze on their wallets in a country where the average monthly wage is just \$600, Jordanians are forking out to pamper their pooches with accessories and top-notch care.

There has been a "remarkable" rise in the number of pet owners, said Marwan Al-Haj Ali, who opened the first hotel and training centre for dogs in Jordan in 2018 called The Pet Zone. "We came up with the idea after noticing the need," he said. Apart from play and training areas, owners can indulge their favorite furballs with dog nail trimming for 10 Jordanian dinars (\$14), hair clipping and bathing as well as a hair-dry to keep those pelts looking purr-fect. Room and board costs three Jordanian dinars (\$4) a day, with anxious owners able to keep an eye on their pets via online cameras.

'Part of the family'

"Twenty years ago if you had told anyone that you were leaving your dog in a hotel, he or she would have definitely laughed at you," said Haj Ali, smiling as a worker behind him dried off a huge black German shepherd. More and more Jordanians are also breeding dogs and cats, and owners now proudly stroll through the capital with their pets on a leash. It's "not like before, it used to be embarrassing," said owner Alaa Kalemat.

The 29-year-old medical centre worker



Veterinarian Dr Alaa Shehadeh works at the laboratory at "Pet Zone".

considers her small, white chihuahua terrier mix, Lucy, a member of the family, and price is no object when it comes to her care. "I don't feel that the costs are important, compared to Lucy's importance," she said, during a routine check-up at the Vetzone pet health centre. But looking after their pets is a struggle for many people. Unemployment in the resource-poor kingdom is at 19 percent and the poverty rate hovers at more than 15 percent, according to official figures.

"It is a burden on the monthly budget," acknowledged Sami George, a director at one of Amman's top hotels and owner of a grey French terrier. "Everything is expensive

in Jordan and that applies of course to pet food, accessories and health care," he said. In recent years, anger at the rising costs of living and price hikes have spilled over into street protests. The cash-strapped country is highly dependent on foreign aid and has grappled with trying to curb its debt that has risen to more than 96 percent of GDP.

Costly, new treatments

Despite taking a bite out of their wallets, Jordanians appear to prefer larger breeds, such as German shepherds, rottweilers and huskies. And the puppies don't come cheap, with prices for the bigger breeds starting from around \$140 and soaring to as much as \$1,700 - not to mention the costs of routine medical care such as vaccines and neutering.

Alaa Shehadeh, director of Vetzone, checked his monitors as he and his colleagues examined Navy, a pitbull partially paralyzed due to a spinal disc problem. "Medical care is very expensive because of the cost of the equipment used and it is still a new sector," he said. His clinic has an intensive care unit and offers radiography, lung diagnostics, incubators and blood-testing in its laboratories. X-rays for example cost between \$20 and \$50. One recent client from Salt, 35 km northwest of Amman, "clearly had only a modest income, yet she chose to carry her pet...

here for x-ray", Shehadeh said.

Pensioner Rima Abu Zahra said she would do everything for her pets. "It is like having an extra child, whatever the cost is, he or she is my responsibility," she said. Facebook groups are springing up where owners share tips about adoptions and how to help strays. And dog license regulations were amended in 2016 to take account of the new trend. "More people are having pets, especially dogs, in recent years and so we need to regulate the issue to make sure that most pets are well taken care of," said Mervat Mhairat, from the Amman municipality. — AFP



A handler (right) instructs a royal black German shepherd during attack training at "Pet Zone".



Should pet owners wish a merry vegan Xmas to their animals?

s pet owners from New York to London sit down to Christmas lunch this year, the family dog might be in for a surprise - a vegan meal. As more people cut meat from their diets, one third of US pet owners said they would be interested in feeding their animal a plant-based diet, according to a 2019 study by researchers at the University of Guelph in Canada.

With this rising interest, major brands like Mars Petcare as well as smaller, independent companies are developing meat-free pet food that is high in protein but plant based in response to growing concerns over the environmental impact of farming. Cats and dogs account for up to 30 percent of the environmental impact of meat consumption in the United States, according to a 2017 study by University of California Los Angeles - and if they had their own country would rank fifth globally on meat consumption.

But the jury is divided on whether a vegan diet is the best option for cats and dogs, with many veterinarians and pet nutritionists recommending against the practice. "Get yourself a rabbit or a guinea pig if you're worried about that," said British Veterinary Association's President Daniella Santos, referring to climate change. Cats, which are obligate carnivores meaning they require certain nutrients only found in meat - should not be on an exclusively plant-based diet, vets say, while dogs, which are omnivores, could cut out meat but experts advise against it.

Nonetheless, more pet owners are opting for vegan diets. Daniela Withaar, 22, a vegan college student, from Denver, Colorado, as been feeding her cat, Zola, vegan cat food for three years. She said her cat has adjusted quite well to the plant-based diet but had suffered two urinary tract infections.

Insect pellets

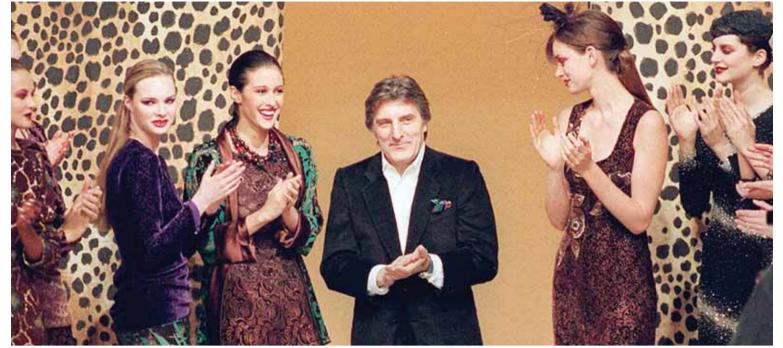
"She was uncomfortable with the UTIs for about five days, but she wasn't in extreme pain or suffering a whole lot," Withaar told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, adding that she had no plans to go back to a meaty diet for Zola. The concept has attracted big name investors like PayPal founder Peter Thiel, who last year invested \$450,000 into Wild Earth, a biotech startup developing vegan pet foods. Mars Petcare, one of the world's largest pet food manufacturers, has also invested in the Berkeley, Californiabased startup. Wild Earth uses a Japanese fungus called koji in its food, saying it has the 10 essential amino acids dogs require.

Some companies, such as British brand Yora, are also promoting insects as an alternative protein source for pets, saying pellets made out of grubs will reduce your "global pawprint". The United Nations has repeatedly urged that global meat consumption must be reduced to lessen the burden on overused land and improve food security. A drop in reliance on livestock would free up several million square kilometers of land by 2050 and cut 0.7-8.0 gigatonnes a year of carbon dioxide equivalent produced by livestock, the U.N. estimated in August.

As society grapples with how to help, some are pointing to meat-loving pets as part of the potential solution. "If we consider that the only way to combat climate change is to mitigate livestock agriculture then we certainly need to do it," said Professor Mick Bailey from the School of Veterinary Science at Britain's University of Bristol.

But some scientists disputed the theory that pets' contribution to climate change was noteworthy. "The environmental impact of the consumption of traditional dog and cat foods is not as bad as one might think because they use byproducts," said Professor Tilly Collins from the Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London. Collins, who has researched the environmental impacts of meat consumption by pets, said the undesirable parts of calves, the hide, bones, digestive system and brain, were commonly found in pet food, much of which would have been waste anyway. Bailey said like humans, cats and dogs required essential amino acids, nutrients that must be supplied through diet. "What I recommend is exactly what I'd recommend to human, which is to reduce their dependence on meat, but not totally. Everything in moderation," said Bailey. — Reuters

Lifestyle | Features



In this file photo taken on March 16, 1997, French designer Emanuel Ungaro is applauded by models at the end of his 1997/98 Fall/Winter ready-to-wear Ungaro poses on July 31, 1980 in Paris. collection in Paris. — AFP photos



'Sensual obsessive' fashion designer Emanuel Ungaro dies

rench fashion designer Emanuel Ungaro, who described → himself as a "sensual obsessive", has died in Paris at the age of 86, his family told AFP on Sunday. Ungaro, who retired from fashion in 2004, died on Saturday after two years in a "weakened" state of health, a family member said. He was born in Aix-en-Province in southern France in 1933 to a family of Italian immigrants, and moved at the tender age of 22 to Paris, where he was trained by Spanish couturier Cristobal Balenciaga before launching his own label nine years later.



dress on a model before his 1999 Spring/Summer Haute designer glasses. His label was bought in 1996 by the Couture collection in Paris.

He quickly imposed his own colorful style on the world of fashion. "One should not wear a dress, one should live in it," said the man who regarded his life's work as a craft. Ungaro was the second of six children, his father a tailor. Ungaro would later say he had learned the basics from his father and from Balenciaga. In 1965, with a handful of female workers, he opened his own fashion house on Avenue Mac-Mahon in the 17th arrondissement of Paris.

At Ungaro, "sensuality is everywhere," his friend, the writer Christine Orban, observed in a biography. "A simple sweater, by the softness of its material, calls for a caress; a dress is cut to move, accompany the body in its movements, show and conceal: because it loves women, Emanuel knows the limits of male tolerance - he will create a garment too beautiful to be torn off, but clever enough to suggest to take it off with tenderness".

'Dared to be different'

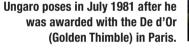
Throughout his long career, Ungaro dressed a host of film stars including Gena Rowlands, Catherine Deneuve and Isabelle Adjani - as well as his friend, actress Anouk Aimee. On its website, the House Emanuel Ungaro describes its founder as someone who "dared to be different, combining unexpected yet sensual clashes of bright colors and prints with beautiful draping". He made a name, it said, by "anticipating trends and reminding women of their power of seduction via his richly embellished designs".

In 1968, in parallel with his haute couture range, Ungaro entered the ready-to-wear market with a woman's line, followed a few years later by one for men. Over the years, he built an empire that also extends into perfumes, shoes, and Ferragamo family. Married and father to a daughter, Ungaro



Ungaro poses on Oct 17, 1980 backstage with his models after his Spring-Summer Ready-to-Wear collection presentation in Paris.

started to distance himself from fashion in 2001, leaving the artistic direction of his ready-to-wear and accessories businesses to his main collaborator, Giambattista Valli. He continued designing collections for a few more years, but officially retired in 2004 stating the world of haute couture no longer matched "the expectations of today's women". — AFP





Ungaro smokes a cigarette in this undated photo.



Mosfilm Studio: One of Russia's most prestigious film establishments



Costume store at Mosfilm Studios. — KUNA photos



the previous output of 350. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Mosfilm began to self-finance its movies, a stark contrast from days when the state was in charge of funding projects. Shakhnazarov added while it was nice to create ideas away from the authority and meddling of the Soviet system, the current iteration of the studio seems to lack a proper strategy to compete in the international film market.

Back in the Soviet era, Russian films were on equal ground compared to other global cinema studios, but the current situation is different considering the whole notion of supply and demand. Mosfilm had produced movies directed by Sergei Eisenstein, Andrei Tarkovsky, and even international directors like Japan's Akira Kurosawa. — KUNA



Armored vehicles at Mosfilm Studios.

Netflix courts controversy with Mideast thriller

etflix could scarcely have picked a more controversial plot for its latest thriller, about a mysterious religious leader who emerges in the Middle East and is pursued across the globe by the CIA. "Yes it's provocative - the show is provocative," creator Michael Petroni told AFP. "But provocative isn't offensive." "Messiah", out Jan 1, imagines how modern society would react if such a figure appeared, spreading his message rapidly via social media in a world grappling with "fake news" and breathless 24-hour bulletins.

The question of whether the character - played by Belgian actor Mehdi Dehbi - is the genuine Messiah, a nefarious political agent or simply a trickster is at the heart of the show's premise. Petroni admits Netflix were "nervous" when he came to them with his idea. "It was such an audacious concept, you know?" he said. "You read the pilot, this guy is going to march 2,000 Palestinian Syrians across the border of Israel."

That concept included building, at considerable expense, a scale replica of part of Temple Mount including the sacred Dome of the Rock, from where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ascended to heaven. Filming at the iconic site was never a remote possibility - particularly given the violent nature of the scene in the show's second episode. But Petroni insists the show "doesn't set out to offend anyone". "It's not like I'm welcoming backlash," he added. "We expect that there's going to be a lot of noise around the show, and a lot of debate. I'm hoping for debate.'

A Change.org petition has already been launched calling for a boycott of the show, describing it as "evil and anti-Islamic propaganda". In "Messiah" it is not specified to which faith the enigmatic leader - referred to by some characters as "Al-Masih" - subscribes. Petroni refuses to be drawn on his own religion. But two of the show's producers, husband-and-wife Mark Burnett

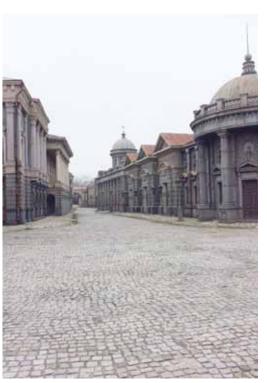
and Roma Downey, have a background in Christian faith-based programming.

'Super careful'

Setting the action at such a sacred location as Temple Mount was necessary because it is a nexus of religion where Christianity, Islam and Judaism all converge, said Petroni. "Obviously historically they don't meet up happily. But that is where they all meet up. And so to me as a location to a story that's about politics and religion, it was so symbolic." Filming took place in Jordan as well as the US, with action switching between the Middle East, Texas and Washington DC - providing an addi-

tional set of challenges. Characters, including the dogged CIA agent played by Michelle Monaghan (the "Mission: Impossible" series), flit between English, Hebrew and Arabic - often mid-conversation. Other US shows such as "Homeland", which drew criticism over its portrayal of the Middle East and Muslims, have been embarrassed by cultural and linguistic pitfalls. That show saw a Hezbollah commander escort its heroine through a Berlin set doubling as a Syrian refugee camp, on which someone had graffitied in Arabic the words:

"Homeland is racist." The first trailer for "Messiah," released earlier this month, drew ridicule from some Muslim viewers, who noted that the name "Al-Masih" is used in Islamic theology by Dajjal, a false prophet comparable to the Antichrist. Netflix quickly moved to quash claims this was a spoiler - its Twitter account accurately noted "That's not actually the character's name" - and plot details remain strictly embargoed. Petroni, an Australian whose father grew up in Egypt, does not speak Arabic, and neither did the directors - meaning the show had to hire an experienced and reliable team of translators and dialect coaches. "We were super careful," said Petroni. — AFP



The film production city of Mosfilm.

Classifieds







Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 66819 - 66817 Fax: (+965) 24348714 www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

No Current Warnings

BY NIGHT: Cold with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 20 km/h with a chance for mist forming over some

WEATHER WARNING		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	11 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	21 °C	06 °C
ABDALY	21 °C	05 °C
BUBYAN	18 °C	08 °C
JAHRA	21 °C	08 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	19 °C	14 °C
AHMADI	19 °C	14 °C
NUWAISIB	22 °C	08 °C
WAFRA	23 °C	05 °C
SALMY	19 °C	06 °C

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			Tempe	ratures		2 42	
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	MAX.	MIN.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed	
Tuesday	12/24	Fair	21 °C	06 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h	
Wednesday	12/25	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for fog forming at night	21 0	08 °C	SE-S	12 - 40 km/h	
Thursday	12/26	Fair and Partly cloudy with a chance for drizzle	22 °C	11 °C	S-SE	15 - 42 km/h	
Friday	12/27	Fair and and some scattered clnwitcouds will appear h a chaear for scattered rain over	23 °C	07 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h	
		PRAYER TIMES RI	CORDE	D VESTI	ERDAY AT KUWA	IT AIRPORT	

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Fajr	05:14
Sunrise	06:39
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	14:37
Sunset	16:55
Isha	18:17

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPOR	
MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	06 °C
MAX. RH	93 %
MIN. RH	29 %
MAX. Wind	W 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Fernandes Joseph Lawrence, holder of Indian Passport No J4441403, having permanent address at Janata Colony, House No. GSG 58, Worli Village, Mumbai 400-030, Maharashtra, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Given name: Joseph Lawrence and Surname: Fernandes. (C 5697)

I, Abdul Majeed Abdul Sattar, holder of Indian Passport No. S4690318 do hereby change my name to given name: Abdul Sattar, Surname: Abdul Majeed for all purpose. I also undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents. (C 5696)

I, Thodeentavida Aslam Edam, with given name as Thodeentavida and Surname as Aslam Edam, son of Moidu, holder of Indian Passport No. P0723755, issued at Kuwait on 19/07/2016, Civil ID No. 269020301865, permanent resident of AT House, Panoor P.O, Via Telichery, Dt. Kannur, Kerala, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Given name: Aslam, Surname: Edam Thodeentavida. (C 5482) 24-12-2019

I Abdul Jabbar father of Aasiyah Zareen holder of Indian Passport No. S9728352, issued at Kuwait on 16/08/2018, permanent resident of 116/38C Sabeena street New Ellis Nagar, Madurai - 625010, India and presently residing at Kuwait, Building no. 35 Salmiya block 10, Dohak bin Quais street do hereby change my daughter name from Aasiyah Zareen To Aasiyah Zareen Abdul Jabbar with immediate effect. (C 5481) 20-12-2019

I KURUVILLA KOSHY holder of

For Rent

Adailiya area

Ground floor, Basement duplex

 Parkings Garden

9964891

Indian Passport No. M1040099 issued in Kuwait on 09.09.2014. Do hereby declare that my given name is KURUVILLA and surname is KOSHY.

I NEVIN KOSHY KURUVILLA holder of Indian Passport No. N9726736 issued in Kuwait on 30.05.2016. Do hereby declare that my given name is NEVIN KOSHY and surname is KURUVILLA.

LOST

It is notified for the information that my Original Examination Certificate of Senior Secondary Examination of Year 2016 and Roll No. 9104559 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate: Micah Michael Azavedo. Address/Phone Number: Block 9, Street 22, Building 22, Abraq Khaitan, Kuwait / +-965-60423355. (C 5479)c **(C 5479) 18-12-2019**

SHARING ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation for Filipino ONLY Farwaniya block 4, near Big Jamiya, available on December 25, Contact 55571873. **17-12-2019**



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Flight Schedule



Muslims wave national flag to show protest is not anti-India

NEW DELHI/BANGALORE: Indian Muslims protesting against a citizenship law which they say is discriminatory are carrying national flags and copies of the constitution, aiming to prevent supporters of the Hindu nationalist government from painting them as anti-India. The protesters wear Muslim caps and many of the women wear the hijab headscarves, but they also sing national songs, read out sections of the constitution and carry pictures of independence hero Mahatma Gandhi and B R Ambedkar, who led the drafting of the constitution.

"This tricolor is our symbol against fascism," Asaduddin Owaisi, an MP who heads a Muslim party, said of India's saffron, white and green flag during a rally in the southern city of Hyderabad at the weekend. He also asked the crowd to recite the preamble of the constitution in both English and in the Urdu language spoken by many Muslims, and urged them to fly the Indian flag at

In a column on Saturday, prominent editor and political commentator Shekhar Gupta said the protests had led to what he called the "rise of a new Indian Muslim... Not afraid to look Muslim, and not shy of flaunting her nationalism". At least 21 people have died in the protests against the new citizenship law and a planned national register of citizens, which protesters say contravene the secular constitution and discriminate against Muslims. The law gives non-Muslim minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who fled to India before 2015 a pathway to citizenship. It does not apply to Muslims.

India's Muslims, who form about 14 percent of the Hindu-majority country's 1.3 billion people, say they are often called anti-national and Pakistani. Muslim Pakistan was carved out of British colonial India when the countries gained independence in their bloody 1947 partition and have since fought three wars. Protesters say displays of patriotism help dispel the notion that protests are a Muslim issue. Tens of thousands of Hindus have also joined.

"Making this a Muslim protest just gives another stick to the government to delegitimize the movement," said law student and protest organizer Hamza Tariq, 22, in the city of Bengaluru. The demonstrations across India are the biggest challenge to Modi since he first came to power in 2014. Modi himself appeared to make a veiled allusion to Muslims resorting to violence during the protests. "You can tell who these arsonists are by their clothes," he said in an address last week, in comments condemned by Muslim leaders.

Muslim protesters at the Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi said that police who stormed the campus on Dec 15 with tear gas and batons called them "Pakistani citizens" and "Islamic militants". Prabhat Kumar, a Hindu student at Jamia, said: "This law is differentiating between communities which is against the constitution. When will Muslims speak if not now? This is the right time to speak and we will stand with them till the end." — Reuters

Secondary circuit of Iran's Arak reactor goes online

TEHRAN: A secondary circuit for Iran's Arak heavy water reactor has become operational as part of its redesign under the 2015 nuclear deal, the country's atomic energy chief said yesterday. "Today a significant part of the reactor becomes operational," Ali Akbar Salehi told reporters at Arak. The secondary circuit "transfers the heat generated in the reactor's heart to cooling towers" and is now complete, he added, in remarks aired on state television.

Salehi noted the reactor's primary circuit, which contains the core, was still being built. "Fifty-two systems have to be built so that the reactor can become operational... we have completed 20 so far," he said. Yesterday's announcement is part of Iran's pledge under the nuclear deal to "redesign and rebuild" a

modernized reactor so that it cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium and only support "peaceful nuclear research and radioisotope production for medical and industrial purposes".

The deal known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was meant to give Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear program. But the JCPOA has been hanging by a thread since May last year when US President Donald Trump pulled out of it and began reimposing sanctions on the Islamic republic. The remaining parties to the deal include Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

The Europeans have repeatedly said they are committed to saving the accord, but their efforts have so far borne little fruit. Tehran has already hit back four times with countermeasures in response to the US withdrawal. It stopped respecting the 300-kg limit the deal imposed on its stocks of enriched uranium and abandoned the cap on enriching uranium above 3.67 percent. Tehran started producing enriched uranium at its plant in Natanz using advanced centrifuges banned by the accord and testing new models. Uranium enrichment was also restarted at its underground Fordow facility in central Iran, which the deal banned. — AFP



ARAK, Iran: A handout picture released yesterday shows the nuclear water reactor of Arak. — AFP

Saudi sentences five to death over...

Continued from Page 1

execution" of the operation that led to the murder. Qahtani was investigated but not indicted "due to insufficient evidence" and Assiri was charged but eventually acquitted on the same grounds, Shalaan added. Both aides were part of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed's tight-knit inner circle and were formally sacked over the killing, but only Assiri appeared in the court hearings, according to Western sources.

Turkey's foreign ministry said the judgement was "far from meeting... expectations" on delivering justice. "The fact that important issues like the location of the late Khashoggi's body, the identification of the instigators and, if there are any, the local co-operators, are still in the dark is a fundamental shortcoming to justice being served and accountability," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said.

Agnes Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, said "Bottom line: The hit-men are guilty, sentenced to death. "The masterminds not only walk free. They have barely been touched by the investigation and the trial," she added on Twitter. "That is the antithesis of justice. It is a mockery." Amnesty International condemned it as a "whitewash which brings neither justice nor the truth". "If the court ruling is meant to put the Khashoggi affair to rest, it is unlikely to succeed," HA Hellyer, senior associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, told AFP.

In a statement on a Washington Post Twitter account, the paper's publisher Fred Ryan said a "complete lack of transparency and the Saudi government's refusal to cooperate with independent investigators"

pointed to a "sham trial". "Those ultimately responsible, at the highest level of the Saudi government, continue to escape responsibility" for the murder, he added.

Qahtani, who led fiery social media campaigns against critics of the kingdom, has not appeared publicly since the murder and his whereabouts are a subject of fevered speculation. Maher Mutreb, an intelligence operative who frequently travelled with the crown prince on foreign tours, forensic expert Salah Al-Tubaigy and Fahd Al-Balawi, a member of the Saudi royal guard, were among the 11 on trial, sources have told AFP. It was unclear if they were among those sen-

The sources said that many of those accused defended themselves in court by saying they were carrying out Assiri's orders, describing him as the "ringleader" of the operation. The Riyadh court hearing the case held a total of nine sessions attended by representatives of the international community as well as Khashoggi's family, Shalaan added.

One of Khashoggi's sons - who weeks after the murder appealed publicly for the return of his father's body said the verdicts had been fair to his children. "We affirm our confidence in the Saudi judiciary at all levels, that it has been fair to us and that justice has been achieved," Salah Khashoggi said on Twitter.

Shalaan also said the Saudi consul-general to Turkey at the time, Mohammed Al-Otaibi, had been freed after Turkish witnesses said Otaibi had been with them on the day of the crime. Two weeks ago, the United States barred Otaibi from entering the country. Shalaan said that when the Saudi team that entered the consulate saw that it would not be possible to transfer Khashoggi to a safe place to continue negotiating, they decided to kill him. "It was agreed, in consultation between the head of the negotiating team and the culprits, to kill Jamal Khashoggi inside the consulate," Shalaan said in response to questions from journalists. He added the investigations proved there was no "prior enmity" between those convicted and Khashoggi. — Agencies

Army chief's death caps turbulent...

Continued from Page 1

Moussaab Hammoudi of the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris said weeks before Gaid Salah's death that he was "not a great strategist". "He acts like a brutal soldier," he said. "For him, Algeria is a huge barracks, and making a concession is a weakness." His death comes as huge numbers of Algerians have continued protesting after Tebboune's appointment as president, rejecting his call to engage in dialogue.

Gaid Salah was born in 1940 in Batna region, some 300 km southwest of Algiers, and spent more than six decades in the armed forces. At the age of 17, he joined

Modi party loses state election

Continued from Page 1

And in a show of strength yesterday, the BJP staged a protest, attended by several hundred people, in Kolkata in support of the CAA. "Today, we have seen that Bengal stands with Modi ji and it welcomes the Citizenship Amendment Act," said Jagat Prakash Nadda, the BJP's national working president, using an honorific for the

But groups opposed to the law gathered in the southern cities of Bangalore and Chennai, the capital New Delhi and north eastern Assam state, in the latest demonstrations against the CAA and the Modi government's proposal to conduct a nationwide National Register of

Algeria's National Liberation Army in its gruelling eightyear war against French colonial forces. When the country won independence in 1962 after 132 years as a French colony, he joined the army, attended a Soviet military academy and rose through the ranks.

Gaining a reputation for a hot temper, he commanded several regions before becoming chief of Algeria's land forces at the height of a decade-long civil war pitting the regime against Islamist insurgents. In 2004, as he hit retirement age, he was picked by Bouteflika to replace overall chief of staff Mohamed Lamari, who had opposed the president's quest for a second mandate. Tebboune yesterday appointed land forces commander General Said Chengriha as interim military chief of staff, Algeria 3 reported. He also declared three days of national mourning. The funeral is expected to take place on today, a day on which students in the large North African country have been staging weekly protests for much of the year. — Agencies

Citizens. In Assam, protests have been held since Dec 10, initially turning violent but largely peaceful over the past week. Assam's finance minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, told reporters that since Dec 10, 393 people have been arrested for arson, violence and looting and 10 for "inflammatory" social media posts.

Meanwhile, the BJP launched a video with animated Muslim characters on social media yesterday in a publicity blitz to try to bust "myths" around the citizenship law. The short video clip shows two bearded men in traditional Muslim clothing discussing the legislation before concluding that the country can only progress if there is "peace and brotherhood". Twenty-five people have died in protests so far.

The video was released by the BJP on its Twitter handle. On Sunday Modi said Muslims "don't need to worry" about the new law. The ruling right-wing government also carried an advertisement across all national dailies with a "myths vs facts" explainer saying the law was not against India's 200 million Muslims. — AFP

Tuesday, December 24, 2019 Sports

Kyle, Raptors stun Mavericks with 30-point third-quarter comeback

Nuggets hand LeBron-less Lakers 3rd straight loss

the fourth quarter and added 10 assists and eight rebounds as the Toronto Raptors overcame a 30-point third-quarter deficit to post a 110-107 victory over the visiting Dallas Mavericks on Sunday. The 30-point deficit was the largest the Raptors have overcome to win a game in franchise history. The previous high was 27. Toronto extended its winning streak to five games and handed Dallas its first road loss since a 106-103 setback to New York on Nov. 14. Chris Boucher added a career-best 21 points for the injury-depleted Raptors, Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had 18 points and Fred VanVleet had 10.

THUNDER 118, CLIPPERS 112

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander matched his career high of 32 points set in his previous game to lift host Oklahoma City past Los Angeles, which played without Kawhi Leonard. Gilgeous-Alexander was part of the trade that sent six-time NBA All-Star Paul George to the Clippers last July. George, who received a warm reception from the crowd in his first return to Oklahoma City, finished with 18 points. Steven Adams had 20 points and a season-high 17 rebounds as the Thunder won a season-high fourth straight to move over .500 for the first time (15-14). The Clippers rested Leonard after he played 27 minutes on Saturday night in a 134-109 win at the San Antonio Spurs. Leonard has not played in back-to-back games this season because of lingering knee issues.

NUGGETS 128, LAKERS 104

Paul Millsap scored 21 points and Gary Harris added 19 as Denver used a second-half burst to defeat host

TORONTO: Kyle Lowry scored 20 of his 32 points in Los Angeles, which played without the injured LeBron James. Nikola Jokic had 18 points and six rebounds, while Will Barton finished with 14 points and 13 rebounds for the Nuggets, who won their sixth straight. Malik Beasley chipped in 16 points off the bench. Anthony Davis led the Lakers with 32 points, 11 rebounds and four blocks, but he sustained a knee injury. Kyle Kuzma, who returned after missing the previous five games with an ankle sprain, had 16 points off the bench for the Lakers, who dropped their third in a row. No other Laker scored in double figures.

BUCKS 117, PACERS 89

Wesley Matthews scored 19 points in his return from a one-game absence due to a right thigh contusion as host Milwaukee recorded a victory over Indiana. Giannis Antetokounmpo collected 18 points, 19 rebounds and nine assists for the Bucks, who outscored the Pacers 58-34 in the second half to improve to 21-1 in their last 22 games. George Hill and Brook Lopez each made three 3-pointers en route to 17-point performances as the Bucks improved to 9-0 against Central Division rivals. Domantas Sabonis recorded 19 points and 18 rebounds, and Doug McDermott added 15 points for the Pacers, who saw their five-game winning streak come to a halt as they fell 6 1/2 games in back of first-place Milwaukee in the Central Division.

CELTICS 119, HORNETS 93

Jayson Tatum scored a career-high 39 points and Kemba Walker added 23 against his former team as Boston hammered visiting Charlotte. Jaylen Brown had 16 points, Grant Williams chipped in 12 and Enes Kanter contributed 13 rebounds as the Celtics won their third



TORONTO: Chris Boucher #25 of the Toronto Raptors drives to the basket against the Dallas Mavericks at the Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

straight. Tatum, who also had 12 rebounds, scored 22 points in the fourth quarter alone to eclipse his previous career best of 34 set in January. Devonte' Graham scored

23 points and Bismack Biyombo had 18 for the Hornets, who have lost four of their last five. Charlotte was playing the second night of a back-to-back. —Reuters

Kuwait dominates in fencing championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait continued its outstanding performance in the Arab Fencing Championship for men and women as its fencers dominated the individual Sabre competition as Yousuf Al-Shamlan won gold on the second day of the championship during

Al-Shamlan beat Ammar Al-Ammari 15-14 in the final match which remained exciting until the final moments while the bronze medal went to Mohammad Al-Fadhly and Iraq's Hamza Mohsen.

UAE's Noura Al-Buraiki won the women's individual foil event gold medal by beating Lebanon's Rita Abu Judeh, while UAE's Latifa Al-Housani and Oatar's Lina Al-Buainain shared the bronze medal.

Kuwait tops the medals table with two gold, one silver and one bronze, followed by UAE one gold and two bronze, Syria one gold, Lebanon two silver, Saudi Arabia one silver and Iraq, four bronze.

Head of the referees committee at Kuwait Fencing Federation Rashid Al-Shamali praised the technical level of the tournament, and the good number of countries participating, adding that this is something



encouraging. He said what makes the level high is the number of countries that won medals as six out of ten countries won medals. He said there are no objections so far against

officiating, adding that there are six neutral referees leading competitions under the supervision of head of referees committee who were appointed by AFF, Jordan's Ivad Maghaira.

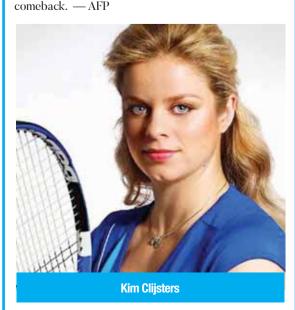
Clijsters announces plan to make tour comeback in March

BRUSSELS: Kim Clijsters, who retired for a second time in 2011, confirmed yesterday that she was making a comeback starting in Mexico in March.

A few more weeks of patience and I'll be ready to go," the Belgian four-time major winner said in a video posted on social media. "The absence has been long enough." Clijsters first retired in May 2007, before returning in August 2009 after giving birth to her first child. The 36-year-old originally planned to return to competition in time to play in January at the Australian Open, a Grand Slam she won in 2011. But she was held up by a knee injury.

She said yestrday that the problem "wasn't fully healed yet" but in "a few more weeks... I'll be ready to go". Clijsters indicated that she planned to return in Monterrey (March 2-8) and then play Indian Wells (March 11-22) and Charleston (April 4-12).

Clijsters has twice won the Indian Wells tournament (2003 and 2005). She has 41 career titles, including three US Open (2005, 2009 and 2010) and one Australian Open. She turned professional in 1997 and reached the world No.1 ranking the first time in 2003 and most recently in February 2011 during her first



Bordeaux go top, **Etzebeth shines** on Top 14 debut

PARIS: Bordeaux-Begles made history by becoming the new leaders of the Top 14 on Sunday while All Black winger Ben Smith was sent off on his Pau debut, but Springbok lock Eben Etzebeth was a star performer for Toulon. Bordeaux beat the Victor Vito-led La Rochelle 20-15 in a derby match, scoring the decisive, and only, try of the game through Fijian Peni Ravai — thought to be the only prop to have played international sevens eight minutes from time.

In front a crowd of more than 38,000 at Bordeaux's Matmut Atlantique stadium in wet, greasy conditions, Matthieu Jalibert kicked five penalties for the home side, while Jules Plisson booted five of his own for La

The result, allied with previous leader Lyon's 29-12 defeat by Castres on Saturday, saw Bordeaux move to the league's number one spot for the first time in the club's history. "You could call that a perfect afternoon," waxed Bordeaux coach Christophe Urios.

"Last year, Bordeaux handed me the worst Christmas of my life by winning at Castres (where he was then coach). Now I'm going to have a very happy Christmas thanks to Bordeaux!" South Africa's World Cup-winning lock Etzebeth marked his Top 14 debut with a fourth-minute intercept try that saw him charge home from 40 metres for the opening score in a comprehensive 41-19 victory over Clermont, the club's

Etzebeth was omnipresent throughout and received a standing ovation when he was subbed off with 10 minutes to play. A pinpoint Louis Carbonel kick-pass saw winger Bryce Heem cross for Toulon's second try, while Georgian prop Beka Gigashvili burrowed over

Clermont saw prop Rabah Slimani yellow carded but responded with a try from Sipili Falatea before Toulon closed the first-half with a bonus-point fourth try from Raphael Lakafia. Clermont's France winger Damien Penaud was first over the whitewash in the second period, before Toulon hit back through centre Julien Heriteau and a penalty try, the visitors having the final word with a third try through George Merrick.

The game kicked off with an announcement from controversial Toulon president Mourad Boudjellal that



TOULON: Toulon's South African lock Eben Etzebeth (L) fights or the ball with Clermont's French lock Paul Jedrasiak (R during the French Top 14 rugby union match between RC Toulonnais (RCT) and ASM Clermont Auvergne (ASMCA) at the Stade Mayol in Toulon, southern France. —AFP

he would step down at the end of the season, bringing a close to a star-spangled period for the Mediterranean club. "I've tried to change the destiny of this club and I hope something of that will remain," said Boudjellal, who financed a raft of high-profile signings including Jonny Wilkinson, Matt Giteau, Bryan Habana, Bakkies Botha and Carl Hayman as the team powered to three European titles.

In the day's early game, Pau winger Smith, capped 84 times by New Zealand, was shown a red card by international referee Alexandre Ruiz in the 51st minute for an elbow-led fend that left Stade Francais hooker Lucas Da Silva prone.

"We're a little sad for him," Pau coach Frederic Manca said of Smith, with the side eventually going down 21-18 to Top 14 strugglers Stade Français. "There was no intent to lift the elbow or plant it in the throat."

Pau took an early lead, Antoine Hastoy hitting two penalties either side of a Siegfried Fisi'ihoi try. But the Parisians hit back with tries either side of half-time from Arthur Colville and Quentin Bethune, Joris Segonds converting one and adding three further

There was drama until the end, however, as Pau captain Lucas Rey crossed for a 72nd minute try, converted by Tom Taylor. But bottom-placed Stade held on for just their third victory of the season, while Pau return home with the consolation of having picked up a losing bonus point. — AFP

Hall scores first goal with Coyotes in rout of Wings

DTEROIT: Clayton Keller scored two goals and an assisted on another, and Oliver Ekman-Larsson had three assists as the Arizona Coyotes rolled past the host Detroit Red Wings 5-2 on Sunday. Carl Soderberg, Christian Dvorak, and Taylor Hall also scored for Arizona, which has alternated losses and wins for nine straight games. It was Hall's first goal for the Covotes after being traded from the New Jersey Devils on Dec. 16

Antti Raanta made 28 saves for the Coyotes, including six against the power play. Rookie Filip Zadina and Tyler Bertuzzi scored for Detroit, which sunk further into the NHL basement with the worst record in the league at 9-26-3 (21 points) and has lost four straight.

RANGERS 5, DUCKS 1

Henrik Lundqvist won a battle of former Vezina Trophy winners, Chris Kreider scored twice and host New York skated past Anaheim on the finale of the Ducks' trek through the Tri-State area. The 2012 Vezina winner as the NHL's top goaltender, Lundqvist notched his 457th career win by stopping 19 of 20 shots as the Ducks generated very little pressure on the Swedish netminder. The Ducks' Ryan Miller, who won the Vezina in 2010 while playing with Buffalo, stopped 36 shots and slid to 15-9-6 alltime against the Rangers. Kreider scored in each of the first two periods to bring his goal total to 10, and Filip Chytil and Brett Howden also scored for New York, which split the season series with Anaheim. Sam Steel produced a goal for Anaheim, which ended its four-game road swing with a 1-3-0 mark.

FLAMES 5, STARS 1

Matthew Tkachuk had a goal and two assists as Calgary scored three power-play goals and a short-hander in defeating host Dallas to end a three-game winless streak. Sean Monahan had a goal and an assist and Andrew Mangiapane, Mikael Backlund and Derek Ryan also scored for Calgary, which improved to 8-2-1 under interim coach Geoff Ward. Elias Lindholm added three assists, and goaltender David Rittich made 26 saves while also being credited with his first assist of the season. Denis Gurianov scored for Dallas and goalie Ben Bishop stopped 25 of 29 shots. The Stars are to 14-5-3 in their past 22 games against the Flames.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, SHARKS 1

Malcolm Subban finished with 37 saves and Shea Theodore scored what proved to be the game-winning goal midway through the third period as Vegas got by host San Jose. Jonathan Marchessault and Paul Stastny also scored goals for Vegas, which extended its point streak to five games while also improving to 9-2-2 over its last 13. William Karlsson added two assists for the Golden Knights, who are tied with Arizona for first place in the Pacific Division. Logan Couture scored for San Jose, which lost for the ninth time in its last 10 games (1-8-1). Aaron Dell finished with 34 saves for the Sharks. — Reuters

Tuesday, December 24, 2019 Sports

Pakistan seal triumphant Test cricket return with S Lanka win

Pakistan thank S Lanka for bringing Test cricket home

taking the series 1-0.

KARACHI: Pakistan celebrated the return of Test cricket

for the first time in over 10 years with a convincing 263-run win over Sri Lanka in the second Test in Karachi yesterday,

It took just 14 minutes and 16 ball for Pakistan to wrap up the win on the fifth morning as they took Sri Lanka's last

three wickets without any addition to their overnight 212.

Pakistan had set a daunting 476-run target on Sunday and

307 days became the second youngest bowler to take five

wickets in a Test innings as he bowled an express spell to

finish with 5-31. Fellow Pakistani and left-arm spinner Nasim-ul-Ghani holds the record and was just four days younger when he completed the feat against the West

Naseem was aged six when international cricket was suspended in Pakistan following an attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in 2009. Pakistan were forced to play all their home matches at the neutral venues of United Arab Emirates, before improved security allowed them to begin hosting limited-over series over the past four years

The first Test of the series in Rawalpindi marked the return of Test cricket in Pakistan, but it ended in a draw after being spoiled by bad weather. Pakistan skipper Azhar Ali thanked Sri Lanka for their part in allowing Test cricket to return. "Special thanks to Sri Lanka from the bottom of

our hearts," said Azhar. "They have given us immense happiness by playing in Pakistan, it was pretty emotional.

Naseem is a special talent and we can build on our bowl-

Sri Lankan skipper Dimuth Karunaratne praised

Pakistan. "We dominated the first two days and then they

batted very well and put pressure back on us and out-

played us. We couldn't build pressure with the ball despite

ond innings 555-3 declared on Sunday, with 174 from man-

of-the match and man-of-the series Abid Ali, 135 from Shan

Pakistan turned the match on its head with a huge sec-

Teenage quick bowler Naseem Shah at 16 years and

reduced the tourists to 212-7 at the close.

Indies at Georgetown in a 1957-58 series.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday:

Pakistan 1st innings 191 (A. Shafiq 63, B. Azam 60; L. Kumara 4-49, L. Embuldeniva 4-71)

Sri Lanka 1st innings 271 (D. Chandimal 74, D. Perera 48; S. Afridi 5-77, M. Abbas 4-55)

Pakistan 2nd innings 555-3 dec (Abid Ali 174, S. Masood 135,

Azhar Ali 118, B. Azam 100 not out)

Sri Lanka 2nd innings	
D. Karunaratne c Rizwan b Abbas	16
O. Fernando c Shafiq b Shah	102
K. Mendis c Azam b Naseem	0
A. Mathews c Rizwan b Afridi	19
D. Chandimal lbw Naseem	2
D. de Silva b Yasir	0
N. Dickwella b Sohail	65
D. Perera c Rizwan b Naseem	5
L. Embuldeniya c Rizwan b Naseem	0
V. Fernando lbw b Naseem	0
L. Kumara not out	0
Extras: (lb 3)	3
Total: (all out; 62.5 overs)	212
Fall of wielrote, 1 20 (Vammanatna)	2 40 (M 1:)

Fall of wickets: 1-39 (Karunaratne), 2-40 (Mendis), 3-70 (Mathews), 4-96 (Chandimal), 5-97 (De Silva), 6-201 (Dickwella), 7-212 (Perera), 8-212 (Embuldeniya), 9-212 (O. Fernando), 10-212 (V. Fernando)

Bowling: Afridi 14-3-51-1, Abbas 12-2-33-1, Naseem 12.5-4-31-

5, Shah 20-3-84-2, Sohail 4-0-10-1

Kohli eyes ICC

'beautiful' year

MUMBAI: India will keep pursuing success

on cricket's global stage, captain Virat Kohli

has said after his team capped "a beautiful

year" with a one-day international series win

against the West Indies at Cuttack on Sunday.

the International Cricket Council's rankings

for test cricket while they finished second

behind World Champions England in the 50-

over format. But India have not tasted tri-

umph in a global tournament since lifting the

2013 Champions Trophy under Mahendra

Singh Dhoni and exited this year's 50-overs

World Cup with a semi-final defeat to New

Indian cricket, to be honest, apart from play-

ing the cricket that we played for half an hour

"Well, it's been one of the best years for

Zealand despite topping the group stage.

India retained their position at the top of

trophy after

Result: Pakistan won by 263 runs Series: Pakistan win 1-0.

ing attack in the years to come."

taking a lead of 80," said Karunaratne.

year for us. We'll keep chasing that ICC trophy, it's something that this team deserves, it's something that I feel should be an accumulation of all the hard work we've done in the last few years, and we'll keep chasing it.

"We'll have that vision in place, but I think apart from that, the way we've played, the brand of cricket, it's been wonderful to be a part of it." After taking over as the chief of the country's cricket board in October, former captain Sourav Ganguly also underlined the need for India to stamp their authority on

in the World Cup," Kohli said at the presentation ceremony on Sunday after India's series win against West Indies. "I think apart from that it's been a beautiful

global tournaments.

India will get their next opportunity to end the wait at the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia next year. Kohli's limited-overs deputy, Rohit Sharma, will be a vital cog in the wheel for that campaign after finishing 2019 with 2,442 runs across formats, the most by an opening batsman in a calendar year.

The right-handed batsman, who scored seven ODI centuries in 2019 including five during the World Cup in England, was West Indies. "I should be grateful of the year I've had. A World Cup victory there would've been nice," Rohit said. "But as a team, we played some good cricket throughout the year whether in red-ball cricket or white ball

S Africa's Philander to retire after **England Test series**

PRETORIA: South Africa seamer Vernon Philander has announced he will retire from all forms of international cricket after the four-match test series against England starting on Thursday. Philander, 34, was part of the South African side who reached the number one position in all three formats in 2012 and has been the mainstay of the Test attack since he burst onto the scene in 2011.

"I feel that it is the appropriate time to conclude what has been an amazing journey," Philander said in a statement yesterday. "It has been a honour and privilege to have played alongside the very best in the game as well as being part of the best test team for a number of years.

'My entire focus and energy at this time is to help the Proteas beat England which I am really looking forward to." Philander made his debut against Australia at Newlands and took 5 for 15 as the tourists were bowled out for 47 in their second

He claimed a record 51 wickets in his first seven Tests, was named South African Cricketer of the Year in 2012 and has taken has given his best in every appearance and I

matches. "Vernon has been an outstanding performer in the time that he has represented his country, especially in the Test format," said his former captain Graeme Smith, who is now South Africa's acting director of

Stadium in Centurion. — AFP

CENTURION: File photo shows, South Africa's head coach Mark Boucher (L) and bowler Vernon

Philander (R) speak together as they attend a team training session at the Supersport Park Cricket

"He has made a huge impact for the Proteas and has been at the frontline with the ball for most of his time in the set-up. He 216 wickets at an average of 22.16 in his 60 think that how he has turned himself into an

all-rounder has been particularly pleasing to watch. "One of the many things that have stood out for me with Vern is his character, his determination and the way that he has always been up for a fight and a challenge has shown the heart of the man."

Philander reached number two in the world test bowling rankings in 2013. He has taken 22 wickets in six Tests against England at an average of 23.54 and averages 36.50 with the bat. — Reuters

Bumrah back for India's limited-overs series

MUMBAI: India fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has recovered from a back injury and has been named in their Twenty20 and one-day international (ODI) squads for series against Sri Lanka and Australia, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said yesterday.

Bumrah, India's leading bowler at this year's 50-over World Cup with 18 wickets, sustained a stress fracture in his lower back which has ruled him out of action since September. India are set to host Sri Lanka in three T20Is followed by three ODIs against

Australia in January.

Medium-pacer Deepak Chahar is set for a spell on the sidelines with a lower back injury which ruled him out of Sunday's third ODI against the West Indies. "Deepak Chahar has been diagnosed of a stress fracture in his lower back," the BCCI said in a statement. "He has started his rehabilitation at the NCA (National Cricket Academy) and is expected to regain match fitness by April 2020.'

India's T20 squad: Virat Kohli, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Sanju Samson, Rishabh Pant (wicketkeeper), Shivam Dube, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Navdeep Saini, Jasprit Bumrah, Washington Sundar.

India's ODI squad: Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Kedar Jadhay, Rishabh Pant (wicketkeeper), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Navdeep Saini, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Shami. — Reuters

Boult says ready for second Test

their first Test series at home.

MELBOURNE: New Zealand received a boost vesterday with Trent Boult appearing to be back to full fitness from a rib injury as he bowled against his own team mates in a warm-up match ahead of the second Test against Australia.

between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the National Cricket Stadium in Karachi yesterday. — AFP

Masood, 118 from Azhar and 100 not out from Babar Azam

as the top four all reached three figures. Abid had also

dismissed Lasit Embuldeniya off the first ball, catching his

Fernando caught in the slip for his overnight score of 102

after a 180-ball knock that contained 13 boundaries.

Naseem wrapped up the match by trapping Vishwa

gloves on the way to wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan.

The final day began in a dramatic manner when Naseem

From the other end leg-spinner Yasir Shah had Oshada

scored hundred in the first Test.

The left-arm pace spearhead missed the 296-run first Test loss to Tim Paine's side in Perth after sustaining the injury in New Zealand's previous series against England. However, the 30-year-old proved in a warm-up game on Sunday that he was ready to take the new ball again on Thursday when his side return to the MCG for their first test since 1987.

Boult turned out for a Victoria XI against his team mates, bowling 11 overs for 23 runs and snaring the wicket of opening batsman Tom Latham. "I was a proud representative of Victoria yesterday. It was good fun and nice to get some overs under my belt, field for a bit, and get some time in my legs," Boult told reporters yes-

"It's all going well, I feel like I've ticked the right boxes in terms of my rehab and preparations, and I'm looking forward to getting out there. "It was more about rhythm and loading

from my point of view." Latham said his team mate was back to his old self, welcome news for New Zealand as they look to level the three-match series. "Boulty is tracking pretty well and he was running in pretty hard," he said.

Fernando with the fifth ball of the next over, triggering jubi-

lation among the Pakistan players who were all playing in

since 1992. The win lifts Pakistan to third in the World Test

Championship table with 80 points. Pakistan got 60 points

second. Nine teams are competing in the Championship,

with the top two contesting the final in June 2021.—AFP

from the win and 20 from the first Test draw.

It is Pakistan's first series win at home against Sri Lanka

India (360) and Australia (216) are currently first and

"He was his usual self in the nets the other day, bouncing around, which is a good sign. It's great to have the quality of Trent come back into the side." New Zealand's preparations for the Test were disrupted due to extreme heat in Melbourne with one day of their warm-up match against the Victoria XI abandoned before play

The MCG pitch will be scrutinised heavily after a first-class game between Western Australia and Victoria was abandoned earlier this month because it was considered dangerous. Groundsman Matt Page, however, told reporters yesterday the wicket for the Boxing Day Test would be a fair contest between bat and ball and Boult said he was looking forward to seeing how it played.

"We're probably expecting something definitely different in terms of the wicket here, from how it's played over the last few years," he said. "From my point of view, I'm going to be looking to pitch the ball up, swing it around and hopefully get some wickets that way." — Reuters

pace in nets

BENONI: England fast bowlers Stuart Broad and Jofra Archer bowled at full pace in the nets yesterday, raising hopes that they would both be fit for the first Test against South Africa, starting at SuperSport

Park on Thursday. "They're exactly where we hoped they would be," said England coach Chris Silverwood, who said both bowlers would be considered for selection if they continued to make progress. Broad, Archer and left-arm spinner Jack Leach have yet to bowl in a match situation on the tour after falling ill and missing both the touring team's warm-up match.

Leach also bowled in the nets but may miss out on selection if England decide to field an all-seam attack on a ground which has not been receptive to spin in recent years. Broad and Archer both bowled five overs at full pace in an optional practice attended by the three recovering bowlers as well as Craig Overton and Dom Bess, who arrived in South Africa on Saturday to be on standby in case the originally-selected players were not fit.

Silverwood said he did not believe it would be a gamble to pick Broad and Archer, provided they came through the next two days in good health. "If Broady tells me he's fit I'll believe him," said Silverwood. "He's got a lot of experience, he knows his body and he knows what he needs to do during the Test match. Jofra, too. He's had two good days and as long as his pace is up and he feels good and gets the practice he needs he'll be a serious contender."

Silverwood confirmed that there was a possibility that England would not pick a spinner. "You look at what is effective on this ground. We're not definitely going all-seam but we'll discuss it over the next few days." The England coach said a drawn three-day match against South Africa A, which ended on Sunday, had been encouraging despite the absence of the three front-line bowlers. "The opposition we faced was a really good side. I think both teams came away with something really positive."

The England coach said the batsmen had applied themselves to ensure the tourists posted a big first innings total. "We're continuing to build those methods and create good habits," he said. "From a bowling perspective, Jimmy (Anderson) and the others got overs in the legs and they all started finding rhythm." — AFP



adjudged the player of the series against

Broad, Archer bowl at full

Tuesday, December 24, 2019 Sports

Football racism inquiry call after Spurs-Chelsea clash halted

'I hate racism in society and in football and I'm disappointed that things like that can happen'

LONDON: The Professional Footballers' Association called for a government inquiry into racism in football after Chelsea's 2-0 Premier League win at Tottenham on Sunday was marred by alleged racist comments from the crowd, the latest in a string of recent incidents.

Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said the problem needed "to be dealt with strongly" and Tottenham promised "a thorough investigation" after referee Anthony Taylor halted play during the second half when Antonio Rudiger complained of hearing monkey noises from spectators.

Moments earlier the Chelsea defender had been involved in a second-half clash with Son Heung-min that saw the South Korean sent off. Shortly after the stoppage, an announcement made over the public address system warned that "racist behaviour among spectators is interfering with the game" and Taylor spoke to both managers, Lampard and

Two further public address announcements followed after play was resumed."It's just such a shame that racism still exists in 2019. When will this nonsense stop?" Rudiger tweeted. "I really hope that the offenders will be found and punished soon, and in such a modern football ground like the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium with dozens of TV and security cameras, it must be possible to find and subsequently punish them. "If not, then there must have been witnesses in the stadium who saw and heard the incident." The PFA said in a statement late Sunday: "We are disgusted and dismayed that once again, a Premier League fixture has been tainted by abuse from the stands towards players.

"It has become clear that football players are on the receiving end of the blatant racism that is currently rife in the UK, but they are not alone. "Racist abuse in football is not just an issue for black and ethnic minority players, it is an issue for everyone who loves the game. "The PFA calls for a government inquiry into racism and the rise in hate crime

within football." Two weeks ago a man was identified and arrested for an alleged racist gesture caught on TV cameras during the Manchester derby between City and United, while an Italy's Serie A apologised last week after an anti-racism campaign featuring posters with images of monkeys was

UEFA chief Aleksander Ceferin earlier this month pledged European football's governing body was working to tackle the rising problem after a spate of incidents across the continent including the hurling of racist abuse at England players during a match in Bulgaria.

But Ceferin accused British Prime Minister Boris Johnson of fuelling the problem. "When a politician that calls women with burgas post boxes or mailboxes then says publicly that he condemns you UEFA (for not tackling racism) — do you reply to that? Do you believe it's honest? Come on," said

Former Manchester United player Gary Neville also accused top UK politicians. "We've just had a general election in this country with both main parties and the leaders of both main parties accused constantly of fuelling racism and accepting racism in their parties," said Neville on Sky Sports.

"If it's accepted in the highest office in the country, we're not talking at a micro-level." "Maybe we have to empower the players to walk off the pitch and stop the entertainment while it is happening," he added.

The ugly scenes overshadowed the Willian double that gave Lampard a memorable triumph at the expense of his former Chelsea manager Mourinho. Lampard insisted there was never any question of his team leaving the pitch in protest. "Of course, we know there is a protocol," he said. "It needs to be dealt with strongly." Tottenham manager Mourinho condemned racism but still took a swipe at Rudiger, accusing him of play-acting by clutching his ribs to



LONDON: Chelsea's French defender Kurt Zouma (R) and Chelsea's German defender Antonio Rudiger (2nd L) reacts during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. — AFP

"I hate racism in society, I hate racism in football. I'm disappointed that things like that can happen. The club is a very proud club in this kind of situation and internally we will try to deal with it," he said. Lampard outwitted his old boss so effectively that Chelsea dominated from start to finish. Willian's superb opener was followed by a clinical penalty from the Brazilian as Chelsea held onto fourth place and moved six points clear of seventh-placed Tottenham. — AFP

Barcelona are best paid sports team in the world: Study

BARCELONA: Barcelona have retained their position as the world's best paid professional sports team while National Basketball Association (NBA) sides took seven out of the top 10 places this year, a study http://www.globalsportssalaries.com/GSSS%202019. pdf by research body Sporting Intelligence has

Data from the annual Global Sports Salary Survey

shows the average basic pay at the Spanish giants this season is 9.8 million pounds (\$12.75 million), dipping slightly from last year's 10.5 million pounds.

Barcelona holding onto top spot is largely down to Argentina forward Lionel Messi's gross basic annual pay of more than 50 million pounds including guaranteed image rights fees.

Real Madrid are second on the list with an average basic pay of around 8.9 million pounds while Serie A champions Juventus — who signed Messi's great rival Cristiano Ronaldo in 2018 — are in third place.

Portland Trailblazers are fourth with an average pay of 8 million pounds, ahead of fellow NBA sides Golden State Warriors, Orlando Magic, Oklahoma City Thunder, Denver Nuggets, Miami Heat and Cleveland Cavaliers. English soccer champions Manchester City are 13th at 6.9 million pounds — below France's Paris

St Germain in 12th (7.1 million pounds) — but ahead of local rivals Manchester United who are 33rd (6.1 million pounds). The average annual salary of a Premier League player climbed over 3 million pounds for the first time - a rise of 6.1% from last year - making the competition the highest paying soccer league, while the NBA was first overall.

Major League Baseball teams experienced mixed fortunes on the list. The New York Yankees, who last week signed pitcher Gerrit Cole to a nine-year deal worth a reported \$324 million, are 32nd while the Toronto Blue Jays, Baltimore Orioles, Kansas City Royals and Arizona Diamondbacks were among the biggest fallers. Data revealed that Spain's La Liga and the Premier League were joint-top in terms of social media popularity, well ahead of the NBA, NFL and Serie A. — Reuters

Atalanta hand 'embarrassing' **AC Milan worst** loss in 21 years

MILAN: Slovenia international Josip Ilicic scored two terrific goals as Atalanta demolished AC Milan 5-0 in Serie A on Sunday to climb up to fifth and hand the fallen Italian giants their heaviest defeat since 1998.

It was an "embarrassing" performance by the seven-time European champions, said club manager Zvonimir Boban. Atalanta fans even taunted Milan with shouts of 'Serie B, Serie B', confidently predicting relegation for their storied rivals this season. Atalanta captain Papu Gomez fired the hosts ahead on 10 minutes when he gathered the ball on the left wing and drifted into the area before blasting beyond Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Mario Pasalic, on loan from Chelsea, added a second on the hour in Bergamo when he flicked in a flashing drive from Robin Gosens. Ilicic made it 3-0 with a clinical finish after a Pasalic assist and the Slovenian attacker struck again on 72 minutes when he curled a majestic strike into the top corner from 20 yards.

Luis Muriel then replaced Ilicic and scored with minutes of his introduction, pouncing on hesitancy from Donnarumma to round out a resounding victory. Atalanta have scored a league-best 43 goals this season and trail Roma by four points in the

race for the final Champions League spot. The Bergamo side are competing in the Champions League for the first time this season and were drawn against Valencia in the last 16 after scraping through the group stage. The defeat was Milan's worst loss since going down 5-0 to

"We have to work and improve. We entered the pitch with too little technical and tactical clarity. It's a terribly insufficient performance," admitted Milan coach Stefano Pioli. Milan club manager Boban, a former midfield great with the club, said it will be a miserable holiday period.

"It was an embarrassing performance. We will have to wake up and react. It will not be a good Christmas," said the Croatian. Napoli needed a goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time from Macedonian midfielder Elif Elmas to secure a comeback 2-1 win at Sassuolo.

It was their first victory in the league since October 19 having gone eight matches without a win. Furthermore, it was a maiden triumph as coach for Gennaro Gattuso who replaced the sacked Carlo Ancelotti but whose first outing had ended in a 2-1 defeat to Parma last weekend.

Sassuolo were ahead after 29 minutes when 19year-old Hamed Junior Traore volleyed home. Brazilian Allan levelled for Napoli just before the hour with Elmas bundling home the winner in injury time. Napoli are now eighth, seven points off the Champions League places. In other matches Sunday, ninth-placed Bologna saw off Lecce 3-2 wile Mario Balotelli came off the bench to score in Brescia's 1-1 draw at Parma.

Inter Milan and reigning champions Juventus are locked on 42 points at the top as the Italian league prepares to head into a two-week winter recess. Romelu Lukaku scored twice as Inter beat Genoa 4-0 on Saturday while teammate Sebastiano Esposito became the club's youngest scorer in more than 60 years.

Juventus had overcame Sampdoria 2-1 on Wednesday before taking on Lazio in the Italian Super Cup in Saudi Arabia on Sunday. —AFP

Five talking points in European football

PARIS: Many of Europe's biggest clubs can go into Christmas with something to cheer. Bayern Munich, who have been sack-happy in recent seasons, seem to be content with their temporary manager, at least for the present. Kylian Mbappe proved to be a notso-secret Santa in France, Atletico Madrid were touched by an Angel, Ajax and Inter Milan can enjoy a merry Christmas on top of the pile. But AC Milan are still not giving their fans what they want. AFP Sport looks at five of the big talking points round Europe this

BAYERN STICK WITH FLICK

Bayern Munich have plenty to be pleased about going into the Bundesliga's four-week winter break with interim boss Hansi Flick having been rewarded for eight wins in 10 games by being kept on until "at least" the end of the season. "Hansi deserves our trust," said sports director Hasan Salihamidzic after Saturday's 2-0 home win over Wolfsburg thanks to late goals by Dutch teenager Joshua Zirkzee and Germany winger Serge Gnabry. The club say "a continuation of Hansi Flick as head coach" beyond next May is "a very conceivable option for FC Bayern" with Paris Saint-Germain coach Thomas Tuchel and Ajax's Erik ten Hag, who have been linked to the role, under contract at their respective clubs until at least 2021.

More good news followed on Sunday as a groin operation on their top-scorer Robert Lewandowski went well and the Poland hotshot is expected back for their winter training camp in Doha from January 4-10. Defending champions Bayern are four points behind leaders RB Leipzig and face Hertha Berlin in their first league game of 2020 on January 19.

TWO TALES, ONE CITY

In Milan, there will be mixed emotions this Christmas for the fans of Inter and AC Milan. While Inter sit top of the table and eve their first Serie A crown in a decade after a 4-0 rout of Genoa on Saturday, for their rivals the new year cannot come soon enough. Milan are down in 11th spot after suffering a 5-0 demolition at the hands of Atalanta on Sunday. It was the first time since 1955 that Atalanta had put four goals past Milan in Serie A while for the fallen giants it was their heaviest defeat in Serie A in 21 years. Milan coach Stefano Pioli, whose team conceded four goals in the last 30 minutes, admitted: "We got everything wrong from the start."

MBAPPE SHINES ON AND OFF PITCH World Cup winner Kylian Mbappe illus-

trated his star quality both on and off the pitch on Saturday as PSG kept up their stroll towards the Ligue 1 title with a 4-1 win over Amiens. A day after his 21st birthday, Mbappe scored either side of Neymar's effort before Mauro Icardi added a late fourth at the Parc de Princes. Mbappe finishes the year with 41 goals and at least one more admirer in his fan club after he consoled a young boy who evaded security to run on the pitch to grab an autograph with the star striker. The youngster was in tears by the time he reached the player after being pursued by security staff. Mbappe then went on to dress up in full Santa Claus regalia at a charity function following the match.

ALL IN THE DETAIL FOR ATLETICO

Liverpool's opponents in the last-16 of the Champions League Atletico Madrid have had a chequered first half of the season but Diego Simeone's well drilled side proved once more this weekend they can be counted on to fight every inch of the pitch. With goals hard to find since Antoine Griezmann left for Barcelona, the feisty Simeone shuffled his pack in the second half at Betis and saw sub Angel Correa score one and create a goal after being dropped from the staring line up.

The demanding trainer's words after the match spoke volumes and Liverpool would be wise to expect a dog-fight if they are to make it to the Champions League quarterfinals. "Small details win games," said Simeone. "Correa showed what he's made of today, we've been training him hard. He put on good pressure to get the first goal and a nice pass for the second. But I was just as pleased to see him fighting for the win right at the end, when the team needed him."

AJAX REBOUND

Ajax can feel a little happier heading into the Christmas break after opening some daylight at the top of the Dutch Eredivise on Sunday. Ajax were knocked out of the Champions League by Valencia on December 10. Five days later they conceded an added time goal to lose to their closest Dutch challengers, AZ Alkmaar. Then, on Saturday, the Amsterdam club announced that veteran international defender Daley Blind had been diagnosed with a heart condition after suffering dizziness in the loss to Valencia. Alkmaar started the weekend level on points with leaders Ajax but helpfully crashed 3-0 away to mid-table Sparta in Rotterdam on Saturday. Ajax seized the opportunity by pulverising struggling ADO Den Haag 6-1 on Sunday. Six different players scored as Ajax hit six in 38 minutes either side of half time. They let up after the 63rd minute even though the visitors played the last 10 minutes with 10 men. They will resume on January 19 with a threepoint lead over AZ.—AFP



MADRID: Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior (R) dives for the ball during the Spanish league football match Real Madrid CF against Athletic Club Bilbao at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. — AFP

Real lose ground in Spanish title race

MADRID: Real Madrid were left to rue a series of near misses Sunday as they stumbled to a 0-0 home draw with Athletic Bilbao, dropping two points adrift of Barcelona in a tight Spanish title race. Real also drew 0-0 in midweek at Barcelona but Sunday's result leaves Madrid on 37 points at the half-way stage of the season, two points off Barcelona who top the table on 39.

Toni Kroos hit the bar, Karim Benzema saw an effort cleared off the line with a backheel and both Rodrygo and Vincius Junior forced snap saves on a frustrating night for Madrid. Real defender Eder Militao was forced off after being poked in the eye and his replacement Nacho Fernandez also hit thje woodwork.

Coach Zinedine Zidane brought on Gareth Bale and Luka Jovic, but Madrid failed to find a winner. "It was neither bad luck nor complacency," Zidane said after the game. "There's no reason to get depressed about this, we need to keep calm and keep our

'We created lots of chances and if we keep going then they'll start going in. "I feel sorry for the players. It would have been nice for them to get more; three points from three games isn't great."

For Bilbao, Kenan Kodro's thunderbolt shot was ruled out for off-side in the first half while the Santiago Bernabeu lived on its nerves when Athletic flooded forward deep into added time with Asier Villalibre almost clinching a winer at the death.

Barcelona go into the brief Spanish winter break on top of La Liga after a glittering show led by Lionel Messi saw the defending champions beat Alaves 4-1 on Saturday. Messi hit his 50th goal of the year with Antoine Griezmann, Luis Suarez and Arturo Vidal also on target.

Sevilla are third on 34 points after their 2-O win at Real Mallorca. Earlier Sunday Angel Correa came off the bench to score one and make another as Atletico Madrid climbed back into the top four with a 2-1 win at Real

The red-and-white half of Madrid were in the doldrums after a home defeat to Barcelona a month ago but have since qualified for the Champions League last-16 where they can savour the chance of measuring themselves against Liverpool.

European champions Liverpool travel to Madrid in February for the Champions League first leg match and will have noted the commitment inspired by Atletico's feisty Argentine coach Diego Simeone.

"Correa showed what he's made of today, we've been training him hard. He put on good pressure to get the first goal and a nice pass for the second," said Simeone. "But I was just as pleased to see him fighting for the win right at the end, when the team needed him."

The goals all came after the break as second-half sub Correa came on for struggling France international Thomas Lemar on 56 minutes and scored with his first touch of the game to set Atletico on the road to a third straight win.

Former Real Madrid, Juventus and Chelsea striker Alvaro Morata gave Atletico a 2-0 lead late on before a stoppage time consolation strike for the home fans came from Marc Bartra.—FP

Sport Times

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019

Kyle, Raptors stun Mavericks with 30-point third-quarter comeback



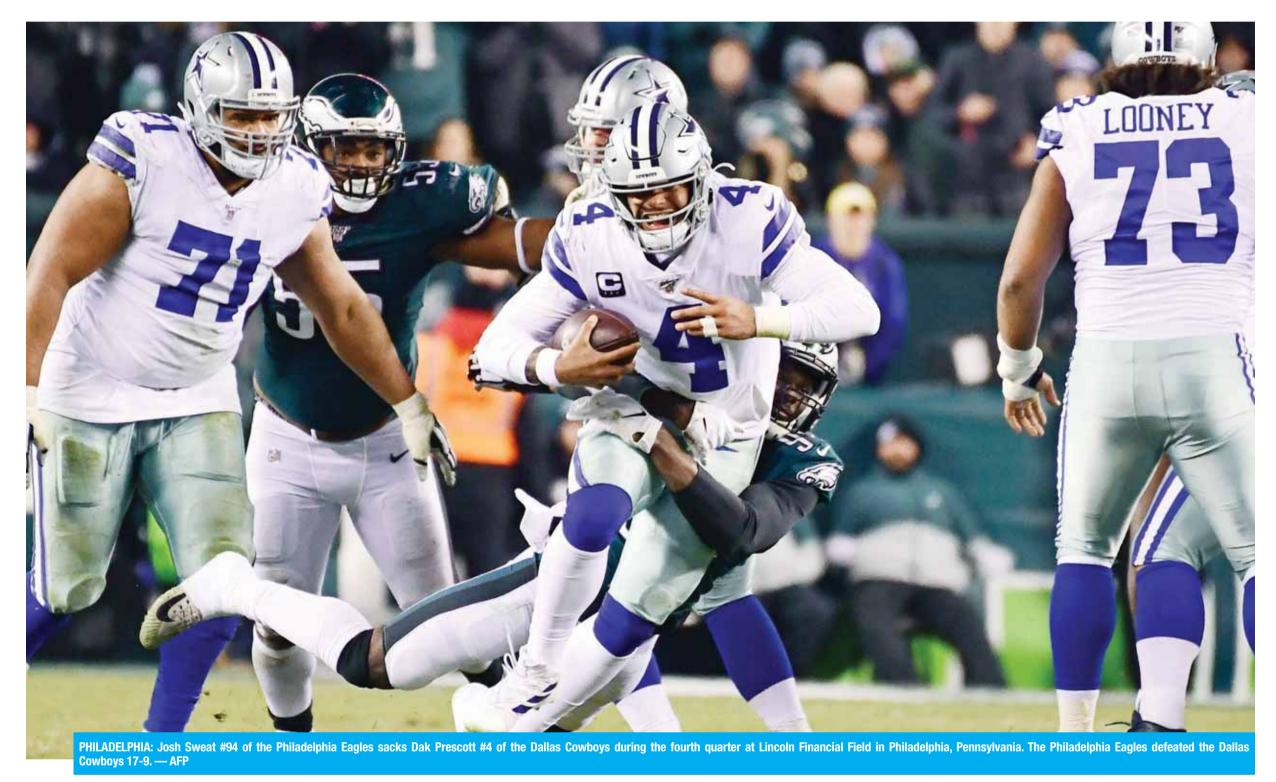
Pakistan seal triumphant Test cricket return with S Lanka win



Football racism inquiry call after Spurs-Chelsea clash halted



Eagles win to regain division control



PHILADELPHIA: Quarterback Carson Wentz threw one touchdown pass, Miles Sanders rushed for another and the host Philadelphia Eagles took control of the NFC East race with a 17-9 victory over the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday. Wentz finished 31 of 40 for 319 yards as he led the Eagles to a third straight win and an 8-7 record. If the Eagles win their finale next Sunday on the road against the New York Giants, they'll win the division and clinch a playoff berth for the third consecutive season. Quarterback Dak Prescott, who had a sore throwing shoulder heading into the game, was 25 of 44 for 265 vards as the Cowboys fell to 7-8. Dallas, which would have clinched the division with a win Sunday, now needs to beat the Washington Redskins at home and hope the Eagles lose to the Giants. The Cowboys had one final drive to potentially tie the game with a touchdown and two-point conversion. On fourth-and-8 from the Philadelphia 23, cornerback Sidney Jones knocked away a pass from Michael Gallup in the end zone.

RAVENS 31, BROWNS 15

Lamar Jackson passed for three touchdowns and rushed for 103 yards, helping Baltimore pull away for a win at Cleveland to secure a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs. Tight end Mark Andrews hauled in two of Jackson's touchdown passes. Running back Mark Ingram II caught the third one before leaving with a calf injury. Justice Hill added a rushing touchdown for Baltimore (13–2), which extended its franchise record with its 11th win in a row. Baker Mayfield tossed one touchdown apiece to tight end Demetrius Harris and wideout Odell Beckham Jr. for Cleveland (6-9), which lost for the third time in its past four games. The Browns guaranteed a sub-.500 season for the 12th year in a row and were officially eliminated from playoff contention.

CARDINALS 27, SEAHAWKS 13

Kenyan Drake rushed for two touchdowns, and Larry Fitzgerald became the second player in NFL history with more than 17,000 receiving yards as Arizona won in Seattle for the fourth time in the past five seasons. Drake rushed for 166 yards on 24 carries, including an 80-yard touchdown run in the first quarter. Fitzgerald eclipsed the plateau, previously reached only by Jerry Rice (22,895 yards), on a 21-yard touchdown pass from Kyler Murray with 4:16 left in the second

quarter as the Cardinals (5-9-1) took a 14-7 lead. Murray completed 11 of 18 passes for 118 yards before leaving in the third quarter with a hamstring injury. Backup Brett Hundley engineered a clinching touchdown drive in the fourth quarter after the Seahawks (11-4) pulled within 20-13. Seattle can still win the NFC West by beating San Francisco at home next week.

SAINTS 38, TITANS 28

Drew Brees threw three touchdown passes, and Michael Thomas set an NFL single-season record for pass receptions as visiting New Orleans overcame a 14-0 deficit and beat Tennessee in Nashville. Thomas caught Brees' third touchdown pass on the day and finished with 12 receptions for 136 yards, giving him 145 catches, two more than Marvin Harrison had in 2002. With the win, the NFC South champion Saints (12-3) remained in contention for a first-round playoff bye and the top overall seed in the NFC. The Titans (8-7), who were eliminated from the AFC South title chase when Houston beat Tampa Bay on Saturday, actually improved their playoff standing despite the loss, as Pittsburgh's loss gave Tennessee the tiebreaker for the final AFC wild-card spot. The Titans are in the postseason if they win at Houston next Sunday.

JETS 16, STEELERS 10

Sam Ficken kicked two of his three field goals in the second half as New York pulled away to upset visiting Pittsburgh, which fell out of wild-card position. Quarterback Sam Darnold passed for 183 yards and a touchdown to Robby Anderson as the Jets (6-9) reached six wins for the first time in four years. Le'Veon Bell rushed for 72 yards on 25 carries against his former team. Pittsburgh (8-7) lost its second consecutive game as its hopes for a playoff spot diminished. The Steelers must beat Baltimore in Week 17 and have Tennessee lose at Houston to make the postseason.

RAIDERS 24, CHARGERS 17

David Carr threw for 291 yards and a touchdown as Oakland stopped Los Angeles in front of a pro-Raiders crowd during the last game in Dignity Health Sports Park, the Chargers' temporary home in Carson, Calif. The Raiders kept their very slim playoff hopes alive after several results went their way earlier Sunday. They still must win at Denver next Sunday while both

Tennessee (at Houston) and Pittsburgh (at Baltimore) lose. Carr, who completed 26 of 30 passes and hit rookie Hunter Renfrow seven times for 107 yards, also scrambled for the go-ahead touchdown. His 3-yard run with eight seconds left in the first half enabled Oakland (7-8) to take a 14-7 advantage into halftime.

DOLPHINS 38, BENGALS 35 (OT)

Jason Sanders kicked a 37-yard field goal as time expired in overtime to lead host Miami to a win over Cincinnati, which clinched the top overall pick in April's draft. The Bengals forced overtime with a wild, 23-point, fourth-quarter rally that included three touchdowns in the final 6:11 and two in the last 29 seconds. Cincinnati also made a pair of two-point conversions after the latter two touchdowns. Dolphins quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick passed for 419 yards and four touchdowns, including two to tight end Mike Gesicki. Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton also tossed four touchdowns.

GIANTS 41, REDSKINS 35 (OT)

Daniel Jones threw five touchdown passes — including the 3-yard game-winner to Kaden Smith in overtime — to lead New York past Washington in Landover, Md. Saquon Barkley accounted for 279 total yards and two touchdowns for the Giants (4-11), who earned the season sweep over the Redskins (3-12) to avoid finishing last in the NFC East. Jones went 28-for-42 passing with 352 yards. Redskins rookie quarter-back Dwayne Haskins was carted off early in the second half with an ankle injury and did not return after a solid first-half showing. Case Keenum replaced Haskins, throwing for 158 yards and a touchdown and rushing for a 1-yard touchdown with 29 seconds remaining in regulation to force overtime.

COLTS 38, PANTHERS 6

Nyheim Hines scored two touchdowns on punt returns as Indianapolis hammered visiting Carolina. Hines returned a first-quarter punt 84 yards for a score as the Colts built a 14-0 lead. In the fourth quarter, he ran back a punt 71 yards for the game's second-to-last touchdown. No Carolina player came close to touching Hines for the final 55 yards of that return. Indianapolis quarterback Jacoby Brissett opened the scoring with a 1-yard run as the Colts (7-8) snapped a four-game losing streak. Brissett completed 14 of 27 passes for 119

yards without an interception.

FALCONS 24, JAGUARS 12

Devonta Freeman scored two touchdowns in the game's first 5:32 to give Atlanta a lead it would never relinquish in a victory over visiting Jacksonville. Matt Ryan completed 32 of 45 passes for 384 yards with a touchdown and two interceptions for Atlanta (6-9), which has won five of its past seven games. The Falcons outgained the Jaguars (5-10) 518 to 288 and got nine tackles from linebacker De'Vondre Campbell. Rookie quarterback Gardner Minshew hit 13 of 31 passes for 181 yards with a touchdown for the Jaguars, who lost for the sixth time in seven games and clinched a last-place finish in the AFC South.

BRONCOS 27, LIONS 17

Phillip Lindsay rushed for 109 yards and a touch-down on 19 carries, and host Denver scored two fourth-quarter touchdowns to hand Detroit its eighth consecutive loss. Both teams started rookie quarterbacks making their fourth career start. Denver's Drew Lock completed 25 of 33 passes for 192 yards and a touchdown. Detroit's David Blough completed half of his 24 passes for 117 yards and a touchdown. Blough, a third-stringer, was thrust into a starting role due to season-ending injuries to Matthew Stafford and Jeff Driskel. DaeSean Hamilton caught six passes for 65 yards and a touchdown for the Broncos (6-9), who have won three of four. Kenny Golladay made six catches for 66 yards and a touchdown for the Lions (3-11-1).

CHIEFS 26, BEARS 3

Patrick Mahomes passed for 251 yards and the Kansas City defense continued its late-season surge as the Chiefs won their fifth straight by stifling host Chicago. After previously clinching the AFC West title, the Chiefs (11-4) still have an outside shot at a first-round bye in the playoffs. However, they will need to beat the Los Angeles Chargers in Kansas City and also have Miami upset New England in Foxborough, Mass., on the last day of the regular season next Sunday to overtake the Patriots for the No. 2 seed. Tight end Travis Kelce led the Chiefs receivers with eight catches for 74 yards. Mahomes went 23 of 33 passing with two touchdowns, including a 14-yarder to running back Damien Williams with 10:05 remaining. Harrison Butker added two field goals. —Reuters