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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

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's PR department said 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 Khaled Al-Fadhel ordered setting up 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 Ghaadeer 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-Aqeel 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 Riyadh.

"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-turned-critic, 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

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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 oil-fields 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 giving 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 military-dominated 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 powerful men.

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



Gaid Salah

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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Local

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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with former ministers.

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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with former ministers.

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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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 Army Lt Gen Staff Mohammad Al-Khudher and senior ministry officials. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday, with the presence of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah, well-wishers for taking over the Foreign Ministry portfolio. —KUNA

Local

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

Finance minister briefs Cabinet about contracts' hurdles



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

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 form-

ing 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, Aqeel 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 awqaf 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 Jabra 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

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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The late Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's rest house in Failaka Island. — Photo by Ahmad Al-Shawaf (KUNA)

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

KUWAIT: Newly-elected United Nations General Assembly President Tijani Muhammad-Bande said 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-Bande'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.

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. 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

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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 Boutiqaat, Abdulwahab Alesha. 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 busi-

nesses 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 pride 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 KIPCO 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 supported by Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, OSN, United Real Estate, KAMCO Investment Company, Quraing Petrochemical Industries, United Networks, United Education Company and Marina FM.

Local

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

Three churches celebrate 'Simbang Gabi' which ends today



KUWAIT: Members of the Filipino community attend a dawn mass at a church in Kuwait. — Photos by Ben Garcia



By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: One of the best known Filipino traditions during Christmas is Simbang Gabi (dawn mass), a nine-day 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 supermarkets 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 supermarket 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 of trees that customers can choose from.



KUWAIT: Christmas trees displayed at a toy store in Kuwait. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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

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



Fatma Al-Qadiri

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 Alabdell-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



KUWAIT: Abdulaziz Sadeq, the guest of honor at the event. —KUNA photos



Indian states propose land rights amid citizenship fears

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

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Israeli troops are pictured in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights on the border with Syria yesterday. 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. —AFP

Israeli strike on Syria kills 3 regime men

Syria forces advance in Idlib, nine civilians killed

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.

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 monitor said Sunday.

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 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.

"This push is an attempt to get closer to 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.

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 bombardment 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-escalation" 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 loyalists, 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 world. 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 control 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 tweeted.

"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

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

abandon their lives and livelihoods near the coast.

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," Tummala said.



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

Business

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



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



14 NBK increases its human capital investment in 2019



PARIS: Riot mobile gendarmes escort holiday goers as railway workers demonstrate yesterday outside the Gare de Lyon train station in Paris on the 19th day of a nationwide multi-sector strike against French government's pensions overhaul. —AFP

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 early-

retirement 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 sense to triumph".

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, shutting 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 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 1TB. 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

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 Geyer, 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



Khaldoon Al-Adawi and Ralph Geyer at Actros mp5

comfort, along with its dependability and tremendous reliability, which has proven its legend for twenty years in Kuwait and the region."

Geyer also extended special thanks to Oula Fuel Marketing Company for its unrivaled support and contribution to the success of the event and the distinguished partnership 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 CarPlay™ 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 the same time.

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 of 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 check-book, 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 Alkhouh 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

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK bonds and related Tawarruq at a

total value of KD 200 million for three months with rate of return at 2.750 percent.

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What's On



KIB sponsors 6th Kuwait Industries Union EXPO

As part of its commitment to supporting and developing local industries, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored the 6th Kuwait 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



The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) and "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

Creative Bits Solutions.

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 Mechatron 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

projects in various fields and developing models of 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.

Exclusive offer from Ooredoo Kuwait on Samsung Galaxy Note 10+ 5G

Ooredoo Kuwait, the first to launch innovated digital services in Kuwait offered customers an exclusive one day offer from Shamel 5G on the 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 products and services that truly fit with the lifestyle of customers, enrich their digital experience and fuel their passion to enhance the way they connect and optimize their digital lives.

A dedicated Ooredoo booth was present at the 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 expandable up to 1TB microSD, and an S Pen with remote and air actions.



Christmastide program 2019-2020 Holy Family Cathedral

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



Health & Science

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

WASHINGTON: Ram Dass, who in the 1960s joined 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 years old.

"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-

ther with psilocybin, the compound that gives certain 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 their experiences.

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

hours. "What happened in those three weeks in that 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 took part.

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 discernible 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

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 the world.

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

CLINIC PAGE advertisement featuring a doctor and a nurse, with the Kuwait Times logo and phone number 248 33 199.

PEDIATRICS advertisement listing services such as emergency cases, diagnosis, nutrition, and vaccinations, with contact information for Taiba Hospital.

PEDIATRICS advertisement listing six pediatric specialists: Dr. Mohamed Gharib, Dr. Meshal Al Kandari, Dr. Molsin Alajmi, Dr. Bassel Abshenmeri, Dr. Ali Al-Nashar, and Dr. Abdulhamid Tharwat.

Ophthalmology Services advertisement for HADI CLINIC, listing Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally and Dr. Abeer Khattab, and listing services like cataract surgery, glaucoma, and retina treatments.

To advertise on this Page advertisement featuring a doctor and a hand holding a tablet, with contact information: Call: 24833199 ext:101,102.

To advertise on this Page advertisement with contact information: Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617 or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com.

WELCOME advertisement for Dr. Tammam Abu Ali, Consultant ENT, Head & Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon, listing various surgical services like sinus surgery and rhinoplasty.

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family advertisement for EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER, listing five doctors: Dr. Kiran Turaka, Dr. Zareena Zahir, Dr. Hasan Khan, and Dr. P. Seshendra Nath.

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
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- Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the British Laryngological Association
- Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the Eurpean Laryngological Society

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- Treatment of snoring.
- Treatment of vertigo.

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- Breast surgeries
- Hernia repair
- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- Surgery for reflux disease
- Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant

http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677**

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- Single-Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

• Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
• Laparoscopic mini bypass
• Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

مسشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555

daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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

Stars

CROSSWORD 2393

Grid for Crossword 2393 with numbers 1-82 indicating starting positions.

ACROSS

- 1. An international organization based in Geneva that monitors and enforces rules governing global trade.
4. The region of northwestern Italy.
12. Standard temperature and pressure.
15. An accidental happening.
16. Relating to or having the nature of illusion 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 sermons and articles (1860-1954).
35. A landlocked republic in central Africa.
37. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting 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 brilliant 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 else.
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 yarn.
80. (informal) Of the highest quality.
81. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
82. An informal term for a father.

DOWN

- 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 members.
12. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
13. Deciduous trees with smooth usually silvery-gray 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 attended to.
46. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
48. United States evangelical preacher famous as a mass evangelist (born in 1918).
50. (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great distance.
53. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
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 jokers.
70. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
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.

DOWN

- 1. Hit hard.
2. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
3. A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
4. Pearl oysters.
5. (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
6. North American rat snakes.
7. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.

Yesterday's Solution

Sudoku solution grid for the previous day.

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.



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.

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.

Wordsearch grid containing hidden song titles from 2003.

- ALL I HAVE
ANGEL
BABY BOY
BEAUTIFUL
CLOCKS
COME OVER
DRIFT AWAY
FIGHTER
FRONTIN'
GET BUSY
GET LOW
GOSSIP FOLKS
HEADSTRONG
I CAN
I WANT YOU
I'M WITH YOU
IGNITION
IN DA CLUB
INTUITION
LANDSLIDE
LIKE A STONE
LIKE GLUE
MESMERIZE
MISS YOU
PICTURE
RAIN ON ME
RIGHT THURR
SAY YES
SENORITA
SO GONE
SOMEDAY
STAND UP
STUCK
SUGA SUGA
SUNRISE
SUPERMAN
TROUBLE
UNWELL

Yesterday's Solution

Songs From the Year 2002

Wordsearch grid containing hidden song titles from 2002.

- ADDICTIVE
AERIALS
ALL MY LIFE
BABY
BLURRY
BY THE WAY
COMPLICATED
DAYS GO BY
DILEMMA
DISEASE
ESCAPE
EVERYDAY
FOOLISH
FOR YOU
FULL MOON
GIRL TALK
GIRLFRIEND
HALFCRAZY
HANDS CLEAN
HAPPY
HEAVEN
HELLA GOOD
HERE I AM
HERO
HEY MA
IN MY PLACE
LOSE YOURSELF
MOTIVATION
MY LIST
MY SACRIFICE
NOTHIN'
OH BOY
RAINY DAYZ
SPIN
STILL FLY
THE MIDDLE
TOXICITY
UH HUH
WITHOUT ME
WORK IT

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

Daily SuDoku

Daily Sudoku puzzle grid.

hard

Yesterday's Solution

Sudoku solution grid for the previous day.

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.



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

Less 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.

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.

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 Elephant Park.

Separated 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 cruelly-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 landscapes 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

At 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 gravely 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 Democratic-leaning 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, Iowa.

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



Members of the veterinary staff treat a female pitbull suffering from a herniated disk at "Pet Zone".



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

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

Just a few years ago it would have been unthinkable to see owners walking their dogs around the streets of Amman. Now pet 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 Kalemah.

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 has 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



A picture taken on Oct 1, 2019 shows a cat recovering in an intensive care unit.

\$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".



A picture taken on Oct 1, 2019 shows the entrance of "Pet Zone".

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

As 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, California-based 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



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 collection in Paris. — AFP photos



Ungaro poses on July 31, 1980 in Paris.

'Sensual obsessive' fashion designer Emanuel Ungaro dies

French 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-Provence 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.

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 designer glasses. His label was bought in 1996 by the Ferragamo family. Married and father to a daughter, Ungaro



In this file photo taken on Jan 18, 1999 Ungaro checks a dress on a model before his 1999 Spring/Summer Haute Couture collection in Paris.



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.



Ungaro poses in July 1981 after he was awarded with the De d'Or (Golden Thimble) in Paris.

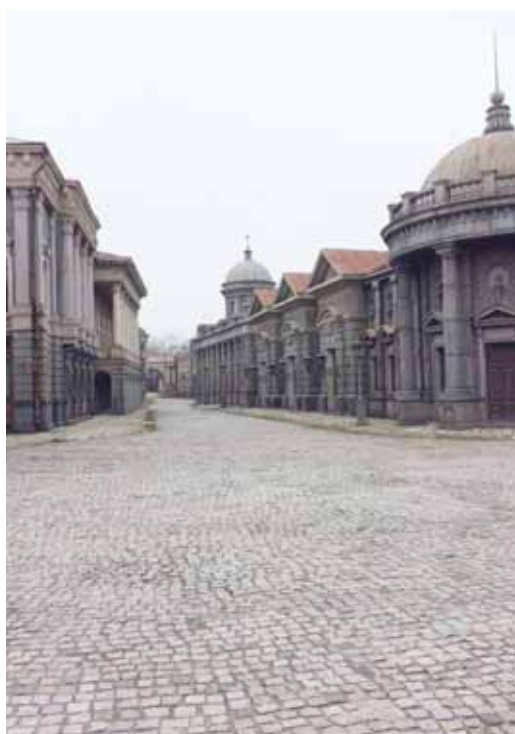
Mosfilm Studio: One of Russia's most prestigious film establishments



Costume store at Mosfilm Studios. — KUNA photos



A Russian vehicle from the early 20th century.



The film production city of Mosfilm.

The 1920s-established and Moscow-based Mosfilm Studio is one of Russia's most prestigious film establishments since the Soviet era. Since 2005, the studio includes 13 sound stages over an area of 13,000 sq m. During the Soviet era, the studio put out some 3,000 films many considered as classics of Russian cinema. Speaking on the current status of Russian films, head of Mosfilm Studio Karen Shakhnazarov said that nowadays, the studio releases around 100 films annually compared to 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

Netflix 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 additional 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



Demonstrators gather at the Qaddus Saheb Eidgah grounds to take part in a rally against India's new citizenship law in Bangalore yesterday. — AFP

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 their homes.

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 citi-

zenship. 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 pow-

er 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," H A 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 sentenced to death.

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 "ring-leader" 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

Algeria's National Liberation Army in its gruelling eight-year 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

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 prime minister.

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

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

Sports

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

Nuggets hand LeBron-less Lakers 3rd straight loss

TORONTO: Kyle Lowry scored 20 of his 32 points in 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

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 the event.

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 Qatar'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 Iyad 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 yesterday 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 comeback. — AFP



Kim Clijsters

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 of 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 Rochelle.

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 eighth straight win.

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 shortly after.

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 for 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 Francais. "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 penalties.

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

DTEROT: 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 Coyotes 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 all-time 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

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



26 Pakistan seal triumphant Test cricket return with S Lanka win



27 Football racism inquiry call after Spurs-Chelsea clash halted



Eagles win to regain division control



PHILADELPHIA: Josh Sweat #94 of the Philadelphia Eagles sacks Dak Prescott #4 of the Dallas Cowboys during the fourth quarter at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Eagles defeated the Dallas Cowboys 17-9. — AFP

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 yards 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 quarterback 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 touchdown 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