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Assembly approves mandatory health insurance for all visitors

MP: Expats give meds as gifts • Iqama issuance to go online • 2 MPs file to grill Roudhan



By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday overwhelmingly approved in two rounds of voting a draft law requiring foreigners visiting Kuwait to obtain a health insurance policy for the duration of the visit. The law, passed by 47 MPs against four with one abstention, also forbids the interior ministry from issuing visit visas for foreigners without seeing the health insurance policy.

The law stipulates no specific amounts to be paid by the visitors, but this is expected to be defined when the ministry prepares the bylaws for the application of the law following its publication in the official gazette within one month of reaching the government. Accordingly, the law's implementation is unlikely to happen before two to three months or even longer.

The legislation's main aim is to prevent foreign visitors from undergoing medical treatment at the country's public health facilities, although existing laws already ban them as the health service is provided through a civil ID which is granted only to those who have legal residence permits. The law is the latest in a raft of measures that authorities have taken to tax expatriates following a plunge in oil prices in mid-2014. The measures have largely spared citizens.

These measures include sharply increasing health charges, raising electricity tariffs by 150 percent and raising fuel prices, as the government prepares to

increase a series of other charges including residency fees. During the debate, the majority of MPs gave unlimited support for the government to impose such charges on expatriates, with some alleging that expats in the country take government medicines to their home countries.

MP Safa Al-Hashem said that in 2018, as many as 621,000 foreigners came to Kuwait as visitors, who "underwent medical treatment and left" without paying charges. She opposed any exemptions in the law. MP Yousef Al-Fadhlah said expatriates take government medicines as gifts for their relatives in their home countries and some are sold in pharmacies there. MP Khalil Al-Saleh said the measure will provide a new financial resource for the budget, but MP Adnan Abdulsamad said this is untrue because the ministry has failed to collect its insurance money from private insurance companies.

MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain said the number of beds at public hospitals is not sufficient for Kuwaitis and expatriates, while MP Adel Al-Damkhi said visit visas had been misused by expats to come to Kuwait for free medical treatment. Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah said the insurance will cover emergency and necessary surgeries only. He added that to resolve the problem of payment of health insurance by expatriates, the ministry has begun receiving payments online, saying that in the last month, the ministry received KD 3.9 million.

Continued on Page 24

Number of people taking HIV tests rising in Kuwait

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The health ministry's assistant undersecretary for general health and the head of the national committee to fight AIDS Dr Majeda Al-Qattan said the number of people checking with the experimental AIDS clinic to be tested for HIV and seek advice is growing. Qattan said the clinic's policy is that on detecting an HIV positive case, and if their spouse gives consent, they are both subjected to totally confidential tests that respect their privacy and the needed treatment is provided to them.

"The rise in tests reflects the public's growing awareness, the accuracy of the tests conducted and the availability of effective treatment in Kuwait," Qattan underlined. She said according to recent WHO statistics, most newly-detected HIV cases in the MENA region were diagnosed through voluntary tests, which helps change patients' conduct and attitudes positively. Qattan added that the committee's services will soon be expanded to focus on the most vulnerable people such as drug addicts using syringes, to protect them and the entire society from both HIV and hepatitis.

HIV remission patient rekindles AIDS cure hope

PARIS: For just the second time ever an HIV patient is in sustained remission from the virus in what was hailed by experts yesterday as proof that the AIDS-causing condition could one day be curable. Ten years almost to the day since the first confirmed case of an HIV-infected person being rid of the deadly disease, a man known only as the "London patient" has shown no sign of the virus for nearly 19 months, doctors reported in the journal Nature.

Both patients underwent bone marrow transplants to treat blood cancers, receiving stem cells from donors with a genetic mutation present in less than one percent of Europeans that prevents HIV from taking hold. "It is a landmark. After 10 years of not being able to replicate (the first case), people were wondering if this was a fluke," said lead author Ravindra Gupta, a professor at the University of Cambridge. "I think it is important to reaffirm that this is real and it can be done," Gupta told AFP.

Continued on Page 24

Algeria students say 'No' to fifth Bouteflika term

ALGIERS: Thousands of Algerian students marched yesterday in protest at ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's determination to stand for re-election, brushing aside his pledge not to serve a full fifth term. Following mass demonstrations, the veteran leader promised that if he wins the April poll he will organize a "national conference" to set a date for further elections which he would not contest. But his pledge, made in a letter read out late Sunday on state television, has been angrily dismissed as an insult by Algerians

wary of his two-decade-old rule.

Bouteflika suffered a stroke in 2013 and is rarely seen in public. Rallies demanding the 82-year-old resign have rocked Algeria since Feb 22, with protesters mobilized by calls on social media, in a country where half the population is under 30 and many young people struggle to find jobs. Yesterday, thousands of university students from campuses across Algiers marched in the capital, many carrying their country's flag. Abderahman, a 21-year-old student, said Bouteflika "wants an extra year" in power. "We don't want him to stay even an extra second. He should leave now," he said.

Police deployed across the center of the capital where protests have been banned since 2001. "Hey Bouteflika, there won't be a fifth term," the students chanted.

Continued on Page 24

Bezos, Gates and Buffett still top world's ultra-rich

NEW YORK: Jeff Bezos remains the world's richest person, ahead of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, according to the latest Forbes list of the ultra-wealthy, while far behind President Donald Trump jumped 51 spots in the ranking. While things are largely stable up on top of the list, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg dropped three spots and former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg rose by two.

According to the list announced yesterday by Forbes, the riches of Bezos, 55, have

swelled by \$19 billion in one year and he is now worth \$131 billion. Bezos, who holds 16 percent of Amazon and whose wealth now makes him a target of the left wing of the US Democratic Party, has widened the money gap between himself and Gates, the philanthropist and co-founder of Microsoft. Gates, 63, has seen his wealth grow to \$96.5 billion, up from 90 billion last year, said Forbes.

Third place is held by Buffett, 88 and long considered an investment guru, although he did get stung in late February by a deep plunge in shares of US processed food maker Kraft Heinz, in which he had a large stake. Buffett's fortune slipped by \$1.5 billion to \$82.5 billion, the magazine estimated.

It is more or less after this trio that things start to get shaken up on the Forbes



ALGIERS: Algerian students demonstrate in the capital yesterday against ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid for a fifth term. — AFP



Jeff Bezos

Continued on Page 24

Clinton rules out another presidential run

WASHINGTON: Hillary Clinton has for the first time ruled out running for president in 2020. "I'm not running, but I'm going to keep on working and speaking and standing up for what I believe," Clinton said Monday in an interview with News 12, a local TV channel in New York. Clinton was the frontrunner in 2016 but ended up losing to Donald Trump. "I want to be sure that people understand I'm going to keep speaking out," Clinton said. "I'm not going anywhere. What's at stake in our country, the kinds of things

that are happening right now, are deeply troubling to me."

Clinton has held meetings with some of the Democrats who are now vying for the party nomination or considering a run. CNN has reported that they include former vice president Joe Biden, who has not yet said if he is running. "I've told every one of them, don't take anything for granted, even though we have a long list of real problems and broken promises from this administration that need to be highlighted," Clinton said.

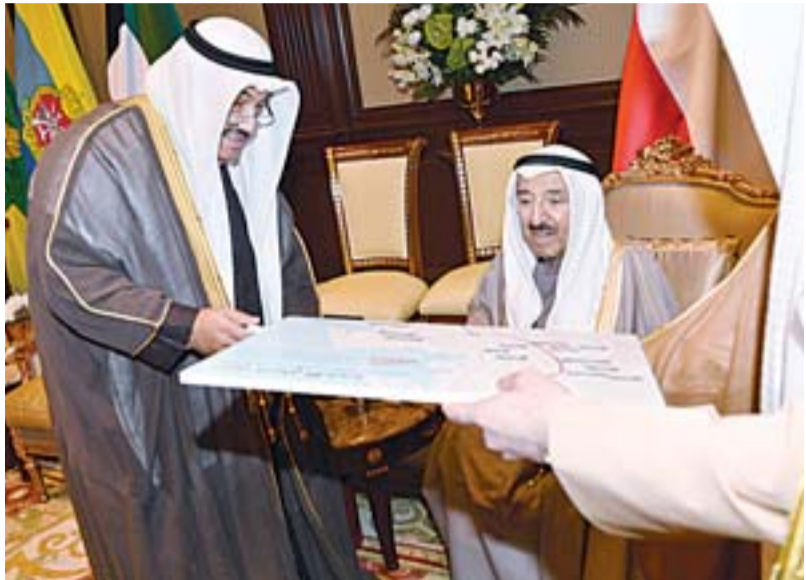
Asked if she would run again for some kind of public office, she seemed to avoid ruling that out. "I don't think so, but I love living in New York and I'm so grateful that I had the chance to be a senator for eight years and to work with people across our state," said the former secretary of state and senator for New York state. — AFP



Hillary Clinton

Amir hosts envoys, thanks Qatar for kind gesture

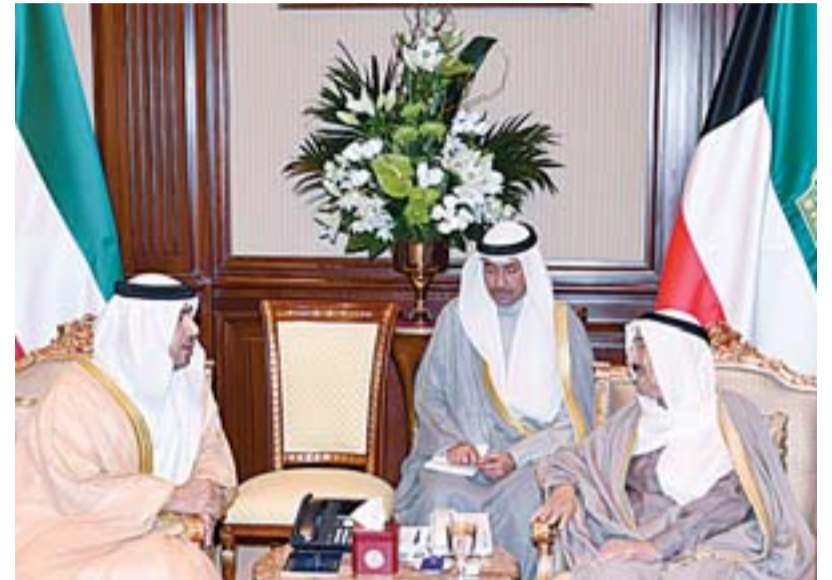
Amir patronizes 22nd Quran Grand Prize ceremony today



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



His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah briefs His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the Sabah Al-Ahmad network of roads which was recently inaugurated in Qatar.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Saqr Nasser Al-Raisi, the new ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Kuwait.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Claudia Zampieri, the new ambassador of Argentina to Kuwait.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new ambassador of Somalia to Kuwait Abdullah Mohamed Al-Duwa.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new ambassador of Malawi to Kuwait Jaffali Mussa.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a number of newly assigned foreign ambassadors who handed him their credentials. The envoys hosted by His Highness the Amir were Saqr Nasser Al-Raisi of the United Arab Emirates, Claudia Zampieri of Argentina, Abdullah Mohamed Al-Duwa of Somalia and Jaffali Mussa of Malawi. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Amiri Diwan Undersecretary and Director of His Highness the Amir Bureau Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad. Also attending were Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Abdullah Abul-Hassan, Head of Amiri Protocol Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs Ambassador Dhari Ajran Al-Ajran and Chief of the Amiri Guard Brigadier Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Zaid.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir

hosted His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who has recently represented His Highness the Amir at inauguration of the Sabah Al-Ahmad network of roads in Qatar. His Highness Sheikh Nasser briefed His Highness the Amir about the venture. His Highness the Amir expressed profound gratitude to the sisterly State of Qatar for this kind gesture that depicted the warm and historic relations between the two countries and peoples. Moreover in this respect, His Highness the Amir expressed good wishes to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, as well as to the kind Qatari people. Separately, His Highness the Amir received Dr Thomas A Kennedy, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Raytheon Company, the international CEO of the same company John Harris and its International Chairman Chris Davis.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, as well as the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

other news, the ceremony to honor winners of Kuwait's 22nd Quran Recitation and Memorization Grand Prize

Competition is set to be held today at 10:30 am in Bayan Palace. The ceremony will be held under the patronage of His

Highness the Amir; who had deputized His Highness the Crown Prince to attend the event. —KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Prime Minister receives letter from Egyptian counterpart



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tarek Al-Koni. —KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tarek Al-Koni. During the meeting, Koni handed His Highness Sheikh Jaber a letter from his Egyptian counterpart Mostafa Madbouly inviting him to visit the country. —KUNA

Deputy FM receives New Zealand counterpart

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday New Zealand's visiting Under-Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Fletcher Tabuteau and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and the latest regional and international developments of common concerns. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Deputy Foreign Minister's office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, Minister Plenipotentiary and Assistant Foreign Minister Reem Al-Khaled and the guest's delegation. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah and other ministry officials meet with New Zealand's Under-Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Fletcher Tabuteau and his accompanying delegation. —KUNA

Bahraini King's media advisor commends ties with Kuwait

MANAMA: The King of Bahrain's Advisor for Media Affairs Nabeel Al-Hamer lauded the strong and historical Kuwaiti-Bahraini relations yesterday. Hamer's remarks were made during a meeting with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah, who contributed to boosting bilateral ties especially in the media field, Bahrain News Agency (BNA) reported. Meanwhile, Sheikh Azzam stressed the deep Kuwaiti-Bahraini relations and cooperation on all levels. —KUNA



MANAMA: The King of Bahrain's Advisor for Media Affairs Nabeel Al-Hamer meets with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah. —KUNA

Schools' final exams to coincide with holy month of Ramadan

Ministry sets start dates at May 7 for grades 5 to 11; May 19 for grade 12

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Ministry of Education's (MoE) educational zone directors' council have approved this school year's final exam timetable for all stages, said informed sources, noting that exams of grades 5 to 11 will start on May 7, while grade 12 exams will be held in the period of May 19-30. This means that the tests will coincide with this year's holy month of Ramadan, which is slated to extend from early May to early June. Meanwhile, the finals' results will be announced before Eid Al-Fitr. The sources added that the council's meeting headed by

MoE Undersecretary Saud Al-Harbi also set the beginning of the next school year for Sept 1 for administration and teaching staff, Sept 8 for kindergarten and grade 1 pupils, Sept 9 for grades 2 to 9 and Sept 10 for secondary stage students.

License fees

Commenting on the Ministry of Health's (MoH) new medical license fees, official health sources stressed that the new fees had been set following ample and comprehensive studies and comparison with GCC and international prices. Further, the sources noted that

decision on the new fees was made upon Cabinet resolution number 220/2018 pertaining authorizing each minister to take proper needed measures to cut expenses and increase revenues within their respective jurisdiction as well as the finance minister's instructions to re-price MoH services.

Merchant sentenced

The court of misdemeanors yesterday sentenced a well-known merchant - a former lawmaker - to one year in prison with labor over charges of real estate fraud, said informed sources, noting that the suspect

had been previously indicted and banned from traveling, and that he is currently detained over charges related to another case.

Required procedures

Public Authority for Manpower's Director Ahmad Al-Moussa said in implementation of Cabinet resolution number 875/2017 pertaining subjecting the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program to the manpower authority, the latter only conducted the required procedures after the National Assembly's official approval.

Foreign Ministry denies 'reshuffle' reports

KUWAIT: The Foreign Ministry has categorically dismissed reports alleging that it ordered a reshuffling of heads of the Kuwaiti diplomatic missions abroad, described a circulated list new heads as groundless. "This alleged list is totally untrue," Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah stated in a press statement on Monday. He regretted the circulation, by some social media users, of the alleged list, noting that circulation of such a kind of fabricated lists had been repeated in the past years and

at the same time, Jarallah lamented that such an act was doing considerable harm. "It causes severe embarrassment (for us) at the listed world capitals," he clarified. "It violates relevant norms and principles and jeopardizes the ministry's plans and arrangements in this regard." Jarallah urged the public not to heed such untrue information and asked those who circulate it to pursue accuracy or otherwise the ministry would take legal actions against them. — KUNA

Parliament Speaker lauds visit to Iraq

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem said yesterday the recent visit by a parliamentary delegation to neighboring Iraq was very positive. "We have stressed during the various meetings on the cause of the Kuwaiti martyrs' corpses," Ghanem said in a statement to journalists at the parliament building. He reaffirmed that the mission in Iraq was carried out in line with guidelines by His Highness the Amir "who has a significant vision for the country welfare."

Ghanem added that the dialogue with the Iraqi officials dealt with the Iraqi parliament reluctance to ink some agreements with Kuwait, adding that His Highness the Amir was briefed about the parliamentary delegation activities in Iraq. Following the visit to the neighboring country, the delegation proceeded to Jordan "to fulfill a humanitarian mission, visiting the Palestinian and Syrian refugee camps," he continued. Officials of the Jordanian Red Crescent, the refugee camps and schools expressed deep gratitude to the leading Kuwaiti aid for the refugees.

Ghanem revealed that Kuwait, at the forthcoming Inter-Parliamentary Union due in Doha, would campaign for an "emergency topic" regarding the Palestinian cause. It would be also presented at a



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem gestures during yesterday's parliament session. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, scheduled next week. In addition to the call for setting up a panel to reconcile the Palestinians, the Kuwaiti delegation at the Arab Parliamentary Union meeting called for rejecting normalization of relations with "the usurping Zionist entity." Ghanem, accompanied by MPs, paid a visit to Baghdad last week in response to an invitation by his Iraqi counterpart. The delegation later visited the refugee camps in Jordan and took part in the Arab parliamentary meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Firefighters are seen helping free a kid's hand which became stuck in the escalator inside a Salmiya mall yesterday.



A fireman battles a blaze which engulfed a car in Khaitan.

Policeman charged with money forgery

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Al-Rai

KUWAIT: Criminal detectives arrested a policeman who used his patrol car to store forged currency and dispense it. The policeman was sent for a court martial before being sent to the prosecution, accused of forging and dispensing currency. He was also ordered to remove his uniform.

Child saved

Firemen saved a child who had his hand stuck in the escalator inside a mall in Salmiya yesterday. Firefighters arrived to the scene shortly after the incident was reported, and they managed to free the boy before he was examined by paramedics who determined that his injuries were minor.

Car fire

Farwaniya fire department led by Lt Col Khalid Kanaan responded to a call about a fire in a vehicle in Khaitan. The fire was put out without injuries. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

Wives fight

Police intervened to break up a domestic fight when

a Kuwaiti's second wife attacked the house of the first following some problems. Interior ministry operations received a call about a fight between a citizen and his wife in front of his house. Police patrols responded and broke up the fight. A security source said the citizen accused his second wife of attacking his first, despite buying her a house and warning her not to approach his first wife's house. Legal action is being taken.

Jewelry theft

Hawally detectives are looking for an Asian domestic helper accused of stealing jewelry and KD 500 from her sponsor before escaping. The citizen told a Hawally governorate police station her helper stole gold and cash.

Harassment

A nurse told police that while she was on duty, she was surprised by an obstetrician/gynecologist who was alone with her in a room. He started flirting with her and started to mention parts of her body, then asked her for "more" as no one could see them. A complaint was lodged for incitement of immorality, and detectives are investigating.

Crash

A citizen accused a driver of a defense ministry vehicle of deliberately crashing into his vehicle. The interior ministry received a call from a citizen saying he was involved in a deliberate collision on Arabian Gulf Road. A traffic patrol went to the scene, and the citizen accused the driver of a defense ministry vehicle of deliberately colliding with him following a dispute over the right of way.



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry's Director General of Residency Affairs Department Brig Abdelqader Al-Shaaban and other ministry officials meet with the Lebanese Charge d'affaires Nisreen Bu Karam.

Traffic departments open in evenings

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said all traffic departments will operate during evenings starting from Sunday, March 10, 2019, from 2 pm until 6 pm so that work will be continuous from 7:30 am until 6 pm.

Separately, Director General of Residency Affairs Department Brig Abdelqader Al-Shaaban met the Lebanese Charge d'affaires Nisreen Bu Karam. Both

sides discussed Lebanese community affairs. Shaaban said the Lebanese community enjoys the care of interior ministry leaders who work hard to ease matters related to residency affairs. In other news, Assistant Director General of the Traffic Department for traffic organization and licenses affairs Col Yousuf Al-Khaddah honored non-commissioned officer Mohammad Safar and policeman Saud Al-Otaibi from Hawally traffic department in appreciation of their efforts during the celebrations of the national days.

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A blue-cheeked bee-eater spotted in Al-Jahra Nature Reserve. —Photo by Ghazy Qafaf (KUNA)

Young Kuwaitis surge summer visits to Brussels: Belgian diplomat

Mutual trade volume increased to around \$259 million in 2017

KUWAIT: Economic and Commercial Councilor at the Embassy of Belgium in Kuwait Sam Servaes said yesterday that over the last two years, there was a growth in trade volume and a snowballing number of young Kuwaitis visiting Belgium for tourism. The trade volume between both countries went up from EUR 194 million (approximately \$220 million) in 2016 to EUR 229 million (around \$259 million) in 2017, he said on the sidelines of an event organized by the Belgian embassy for Kuwaiti and Belgian businessmen.

On the volume of bilateral trade between both countries, it has exponentially grown over the years, pointing out that there is a new phenomenon in the field of tourism in Belgium, which is since most of the former Kuwaiti tourists were older, currently there is an increase of young Kuwaitis, especially in the summer. Belgium's embassy is empowering tourism, whether by organizing delegation visits or through marketing campaigns, indicating that next week there will be

a promotion campaign for tourism in Belgium to inform Kuwaitis of the similarities between them, he said.

Regarding the entry of Belgian companies into Kuwait's developmental projects, Servaes explained that the number of Belgian companies was limited. Belgian companies are currently investigating new laws and regulations in Kuwait, especially allowing the foreign investor to own 100 percent of the company's capital, explaining that this law will drive many of these companies to enter the Kuwaiti market, he underlined.

Kuwaiti investments in Belgium indicate that there are investments in all of Belgium's cities from Kuwait Petroleum International, since most gas stations belong to this company, pointing out that his country depends on Kuwaiti oil as well as investments for Kuwaiti businessmen in the real estate sector, he said. The Belgian economic delegation, which is visiting the country for two days, includes 20 companies working in various fields. —KUNA

Belgian companies examine new laws in Kuwait



KUWAIT: A picture taken from the Kuwaiti and Belgian businessmen's meeting event in the Belgian embassy yesterday. —KUNA

KIB sponsors Society of Petroleum Engineers' open day

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing efforts to support youth events and student initiatives, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored the open day organized by the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) - Student Chapter at Kuwait University. Held under the theme 'route 66', the event took place at the College of Engineering and Petroleum (CEP).

A student-led initiative, the open day was organized to coincide with the celebration of National and Liberation Days. As part of its participation in the event, KIB organized a number of fun, engaging activities for both students and visitors. A team from the bank was also on hand, distributing gifts to the audience at the end of the day.

On this occasion, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "KIB strongly believes in the importance of supporting the youth population in all possible ways, as they are truly the leaders of tomorrow. As a bank, we are keen on adopting and sponsoring various youth programs and initiatives as part of our dedicated social responsibility program. We actively seek to engage with this very important segment of the population, encouraging their innovative and visionary ideas and supporting their various projects, to enable them to play an active role in building their society's future."

It serves to note that KIB's social responsibility program dedicates a big portion of its resources towards supporting youth and youth-focused initiatives. The bank's program includes number of



initiatives that target the younger generations throughout various stages of their student lives, as well as initiatives that focus on engaging with them at the start of their careers, including: sponsoring

student graduation projects, activities and events; participating in various career fairs, entrepreneurial fairs and workshops; as well as supporting SMEs owned by young local talents.

CBK opens 'Tijari Neighborhood' at Grand Avenues

KUWAIT: Within the activities of the recently launched 8th 'Ya Zeen Turathna' campaign designed to promote Kuwait's traditional heritage, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) will today open its two-day 'Tijari Neighborhood' at the Grand Avenues, said CBK's deputy director for corporate communication Amani Al-Wer'a. She added that CBK would receive the public and Grand Avenues visitors at the booth from 10 am to 10 pm, where live displays of traditional Kuwaiti crafts would be shown in addition to having a number of boys and girls in traditional costumes present some traditional recreational activities. "In addition, a traditional competition will be held for visitors, and the winners will receive several prizes," she concluded.



Local

KIPCO, KFAS announce sixth annual Sharakah Forum and Workshops

Bringing together key stakeholders involved in social responsibility

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: After the success of the Sharakah Forum in the past five years, the Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO Holding) is holding the Sharakah Forum and Workshops for the sixth year. It will be held from March 10 to 13, 2019 under the patronage of the Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan.

KIPCO held a joint press conference yesterday to announce the partnership with Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) to promote social responsibility in Kuwait, with an emphasis on cross-sector collaborations for social impact. The partnership will focus on the implementation of this year's Sharakah Forum and Workshops.

The Sharakah Forum is a yearly platform developed by KIPCO to bring together key stakeholders involved in the field of social responsibility in Kuwait, with an aim to foster the creation of shared value through collaboration and capacity building. This year's forum will include a main discussion panel about sustainability in the digital transformation era with leading executives from the public, private and non-profit sectors such as Faisal Hamad Al Ayyar, Vice-Chairman (Executive) of KIPCO, Dr Salem Al-Hajraf, Deputy Director General of KFAS, and Amal Al-Mannai the CEO of Qatar Foundation for Social Work.



Creating shared value through collaboration

'Mix and Mingle'
The forum will also include a networking opportunity titled 'Mix and Mingle' allowing NGOs to have the opportunity to communicate directly with representatives from the private sector. "This platform creates opportunities for NGO representatives to meet new companies and provides them with an opportunity to explain their strategy as a non-governmental organization," said Abeer Al-Omar, Group CSR Director at KIPCO, during the conference. "Private sector representatives will be able to share their platform and aspirations as a company and have direct access to different NGOs making connections for future collaborations in the CSR department," she added.

"This event builds on the efforts already undertaken

by the KIPCO group, as for example in last year's CSR Forum, to bring together key players involved in social responsibility in Kuwait in order to take our work in this field to the next level and increase our impact and efficiency through greater coordination and collaboration. We are proud to be leading the way in this arena, and hope to be able to contribute effectively to His Highness the Amir's New Kuwait vision for 2035, which emphasizes the role of partnerships in the road to development," explained Omar.

Eighteen companies from the private sector will be participating in this year's forum. "We are delighted that such significant private and public sectors representatives have agreed to join this initiative. Their participation shows that the biggest companies in Kuwait are aware and responsive to the needs of local NGOs. KIPCO group and its operating companies look forward to a successful and productive forum," she added.

Standard of living

Dr Bassam Al-Feeli, Director Innovation and Enterprise at

KFAS, noted the Sharakah Forum aims to develop activities in Kuwait and to improve the standard of living. "Our partnership with Sharakah meets the vision of KFAS. This year we will discuss digital transformation, which is one of our goals, which we aim to spread in the community and help other sectors reach it. Some institutions face difficulties in applying this due to various factors. So we believe that this forum is very important to resolve this issue," he pointed out. Fawzi Al-Musallam, Chief Executive Officer, Kuwait Hotels Company (KHC), noted that KHC has been an important and active member of the community, and as a member of KIPCO group, they believe that hosting such an event is the least they can offer to help Kuwait's leading NGOs with their efforts and initiatives for the benefit of the society. "Over 300 representatives of Kuwait's leading non-governmental organizations and private and public sectors have confirmed their attendance at the event so far," he added.

The one-day forum will be followed by three days of workshops offered by KIPCO and KFAS to non-profit organizations and social entrepreneurs interested in increasing their financial sustainability. The workshops



KUWAIT: (From left) Fawzi Al-Musallam, CEO of Kuwait Hotels Company, Abeer Al-Omar, Group CSR Director at KIPCO and Dr Bassam Al-Feeli, Director Innovation and Enterprise at KFAS attend the press conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

will be delivered by local, regional and international trainers, and will cover the following topics: Towards Digital Transformation: Tactical Technology Planning; User Centered Design for Social Impact; Bridging the Gap between Strategy and Operations; Digital Responsibility and Security, The Data Informed Organization, and

Speed Networking for Digitalization. The aim of these workshops is to contribute to strengthening the role of local non-profits and increasing their ability to acquire resources to promote their causes. The Sharakah Forum and Workshops are free of charge to all participating organizations. Attendance is by invitation only.

ABK sponsor Psychological Association Conference

KUWAIT: In alignment with its commitment to improve the communities it operates in, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is sponsoring the 3rd Middle East Psychological Association (MEPA) Conference and Expo. The event aims to raise awareness on mental health issues, bring attention to the nature of the psychology practice and destigmatize psychology patients. The conference will be held from March 14 to March

16, at the Radisson Blu Hotel Kuwait. Being hosted for the third consecutive year, this Conference and Expo will bring together regional and international experts to discuss the latest developments in the field. In addition, it will give exhibitors and participants a chance to collaborate and exchange theories, techniques, products and research findings. Since its establishment in 2010, MEPA is on a mission to alter the perception of the psychology practice in the Middle East, so as to generate more acceptance towards mental health issues. By being a gold sponsor, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait will be able to support the conference organizers in creating the necessary awareness around mental health and psychology. In the past, ABK has participated in numerous initiatives that were designed to improve the overall social well-being of the Kuwaiti population and the Bank is continuously identifying domains that need support to bring about a change.



KUWAIT: The Embassy of the Russian Federation hosted a reception on the occasion of the Defender of the Fatherland Day at the embassy. Higher officials, diplomats, cross section of the Russian community and media personnel attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra




Kuwait heads Near East, North Africa group at FAO

ROME: In a testament to its vital role, the State of Kuwait has been chosen on Monday for the sixth time in five years to preside over the Near East and North Africa group at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The group, which gathers Arab countries inside FAO, including the Arab League, Palestine, Iran, and Afghanistan, chose Kuwait to lead the group during its first regular meeting of the year. Kuwait's Permanent Representative at FAO Yusef Juhail said he began leading the group from the beginning of March as supervisor. Juhail officially received leadership from Afghanistan Representative after election during their first meeting of 2019. Juhail noted that Sudan has been chosen as Deputy President of the group. The Kuwaiti representative expressed gratitude towards the trust given to his country, vowing that Kuwait will relay the voice of the group during participations in the organization's various activities. Juhail also vowed to exert all efforts to boost cooperation among countries of the region, and



ROME: Kuwait's Permanent Representative at FAO Yusef Juhail receives leadership from Afghanistan Representative after election during their first meeting of 2019. — KUNA

to emphasize the role of the group in forming FAO policies and guidance to best serve countries of the group. Last June, FAO council elected Kuwait to be Deputy President of FAO independent council, which includes 49 countries. — KUNA



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International

Wednesday, March 6, 2019



Britain opposition party torn apart by 'anti-Semitism' row

Hair of the dogfighter: Indian pilot's moustache all the fashion

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KASHMIR: Kashmiri villagers look on as fire razes a house following a deadly gun battle between militants and Indian government forces in Tral area of Pulwama district, south of Srinagar yesterday. — AFP

Fasten your seatbelts - and Hail India!

Biggest military standoff with Pakistan triggers a rise in patriotism

NEW DELHI: Air India has reminded cabin crews to follow all announcements with a rousing cry of "Hail India!" as nationalistic fervor grips the nation in its latest military standoff with Pakistan. "With immediate effect, all are required to announce 'Jai Hind' at the end of every announcement after a slight pause and with much fervor," the national carrier's head of operations said in a circular.

A spokesman said the order was first issued in 2017 but that a reminder was required because new staff had joined. It comes as India's biggest military standoff with Pakistan in years triggers a rise in patriotism, stoked by

Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of looming elections. India's excitable news channels have gone into overdrive and people have been flocking to a rip-roaring film about an Indian special forces incursion into Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

Its catchphrase "How's the josh?"—meaning "How's the fervor?"—has been widely quoted on and offline, with government ministers employing it at political rallies. An Indian fighter pilot who was shot down, captured and then released by Pakistan has become a national hero, with some copying his handlebar moustache and even one baby named after him. The latest

crisis between the nuclear-armed Asian foes was sparked by a suicide bombing in Indian Kashmir that left 40 Indian paramilitaries dead on February 14.

India launched air strikes inside Pakistan 12 days later, and an aerial dogfight between the two countries' air forces over Kashmir broke out the next day. Tens of thousands attended funerals and solidarity marches around India for the 40 men, with some setting fire to Pakistani flags. The group that claimed credit for the attack is based in Pakistan. Islamabad's release of the pilot last Friday eased international alarm although tensions remain high, with both sides firing shells and mor-

tars over their de-facto border in Kashmir.

Indian media reports said that a Pakistani military drone was shot down over northern India on Monday, while Islamabad said yesterday it prevented an Indian submarine from entering its waters. Air India's announcement yesterday also attracted mockery on social media in view of the stricken airline's crippling debts. "Much welcome but before starting this Air India should improve the service. Make the airline profitable. Keep up to schedule. Stop wasting taxpayer money. Be customer friendly," quipped Dinesh Joshi, one Twitter user. — AFP

What are tornadoes and why are they so deadly?



ALABAMA: Residents look for belongings at a home after it was destroyed in a tornado in Beauregard, Alabama. — AFP

ALABAMA: A succession of tornadoes ripped through Alabama's Lee County on Sunday with winds of 150 miles per hour (241 kph), killing at least 23 people including children in the deadliest such storms to strike the United States in almost six years.

What Is A Tornado?

Tornadoes, described as a violently rotating column of air touching the ground, are nature's most violent storms, capable of killing people and wiping out neighborhoods in a matter of seconds, according to the US National Weather Service. Tornadoes occur when dry cold air moving south from Canada meets warm moist air traveling north from the Gulf of Mexico, according to the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. They can strike with little warning, developing and dissipating quickly, the weather service said. Most tornadoes are on the ground for less than 15 minutes.

Can tornadoes be predicted?

Meteorologists at the weather service's Storm Prediction Center can forecast general conditions that are favorable for tornadoes

and will issue a severe thunderstorm or tornado watch that lasts four to six hours. But a tornado warning is not issued until a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar, the prediction center says.

Where, when do tornadoes form?

Most tornadoes are found in the Great Plains of the central United States, also known as Tornado Alley, according to the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. Tornadoes can form at any time of year, but most occur in the spring and summer months along with thunderstorms. May and June are usually the peak months for tornadoes.

Do tornadoes occur outside US?

Tornadoes occur most frequently in the United States, where there is an average of more than 1,000 recorded each year, and Canada is a distant second with around 100 per year, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information. But tornadoes can occur anywhere and have been documented on every continent except Antarctica and in all 50 states.

How are tornadoes measured?

The National Weather Service measures tornadoes on the Enhanced Fujita (EF) Scale ranging from 0 to 5. At the low end, an EF rating of 0 measures three-second gusts of wind from 65 to 85 mph (105 to 138 kph). At the high end, an EF rating of 5 measures gusts over 200 mph (322 kph). The Alabama tornadoes reached 150 mph (241 kph) for an EF rating of 3.

Climate change

Warmer oceans can create the conditions for more tornadoes, climate scientist Kevin Trenberth told Scientific American, and may have been responsible an increase in tornado damage. But the link between tornadoes and climate change is unclear, according to the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. US tornado records only date back to 1950, and much of Tornado Alley was so sparsely populated before then that tornadoes may have occurred without anyone seeing them. Improved technology enables scientists to detect tornadoes now that may not have been noticed decades ago. — Reuters

In impoverished Venezuela, the dollar is king

CARACAS: Whether paying for a manicure, an evening gown or a liter of milk, in Venezuela the dollar can buy anything, so long as you're discreet. "Of course we take dollars, we can even try your credit card, if it works there's no problem," said a restaurant owner in Caracas, keen to be both welcoming and pragmatic, and to remain anonymous. Given the South American country's economic crisis there's no question about turning away a customer.

Venezuela's own currency, the bolivar, has been crippled by hyperinflation. Back in August, President Nicolas Maduro devalued the bolivar by 96 percent as one of a raft of economic reforms he hoped would boost an economy in meltdown. But the bolivar has lost 98 percent of its value since. A dollar is now worth around 3,000 bolivars and the rate is changing every day.

It has left the salaries and savings of millions practically worthless. The International Monetary Fund says inflation will hit a mind-boggling 10 million percent this year—it ended 2018 at 1.3 million percent. Since 2003, the government has tried to enforce a monopoly on foreign currency reserves. Its detractors have accused top officials of exploiting the misery of the wider population by acquiring foreign currencies at official rates and then selling them for a huge profit on the black market at a wildly inflated exchange.

"We started doing it under the table," said the restaurant owner. "We started taking dollars two or three months ago, but if it was known it could hurt our business because we're supposed to declare everything in bolivars." Asked if it was illegal, he added with a smile: "I don't know, but it's not authorized." Madeleine runs a small clothing shop with shiny dresses and sparkling shoes aimed at the middle classes that have some money to burn.

All prices are listed in dollars. "Of course! And if anyone asks, I calculate (the price) in bolivars at the day's rate," she said. "Otherwise I lose too much money. I import

everything from Los Angeles. I've got to keep the business going." She knows it's illegal but says she has little choice. With the bolivar losing value every day, it's not possible to set prices in the local currency. "To buy a liter of milk you need this," she laughed, imitating an eight-inch high stack with her hands.

Like the restaurant owner, Madeleine doesn't want to give her true name, nor that of her shop, nor be pictured or filmed. "I could have done like countless others and left the country, but I preferred to stay and work here," she said. "But at any moment, the government could come and close my business," which only opened in mid-December. It's not even a luxury store but the dresses she sells cost around \$50, eight times the minimum monthly wage of 18,000 bolivars—around \$6. Those who earn that much can just about buy two kilograms of rice and as much flour.

A manicure in an elegant Caracas shopping mall costs \$4 - the owner asks only that customers avoid paying with large bills as she wouldn't be able to find enough change. Even shops selling Venezuela's prime local produce—cocoa and coffee—accept the greenback. A small bar of chili chocolate costs \$3. While supermarkets in Caracas display aisles of empty shelves, there are no such shortages at the covered market in the middle-class Chacao neighborhood. The stalls offer fruit, meat, fish, fresh produce and a delicatessen—for those that can afford it. A liter of long-life milk costs 8,000 bolivars: half the monthly minimum wage. Not everyone is struggling to make ends meet, though.

Venezuela may be facing a humanitarian crisis and rising poverty due to the lack of basic necessities such as food and medicine—meaning people need dollars to survive—but there's another side to the country. "There's a lot of money in Venezuela," said one person who wished to remain anonymous. "I went to a VIP restaurant on Saturday lunchtime, it was full and it cost \$150 for two," she said. She says there's a nouveau riche in Venezuela, the "Chavista elite" who prospered under president Hugo Chavez, who died in 2013, and "who continue to make money" under his successor Maduro.

While they prosper, others have had to resort to desperate measures. The United Nations estimates that 2.7 million Venezuelans have left the country since 2015 and support their families back home with remittances. — AFP

International

In jab at Maduro, Guaido makes triumphant return to Venezuela

Venezuelan opposition leader flouts a court-imposed travel ban

CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido returned to his country on Monday after flouting a court-imposed travel ban by touring Latin American countries to boost support for his campaign to tighten regional pressure on President Nicolas Maduro. A crowd of cheering supporters greeted Guaido and his wife as they stepped into the Maiquetia airport's arrivals hall, and then sped to an opposition rally in eastern Caracas where thousands had gathered to welcome him.

The return of Guaido, recognized by most Western nations as Venezuela's legitimate head of state, signals that Maduro's adversaries have at least temporarily avoided the arrest of a leader who has united the traditionally fractured opposition. But it will also lift pressure on Maduro to act against Guaido as his authority continues to wane and the country's economic meltdown fuels malnutrition and hunger. "Hope has been born and it will not die - things are going well," Guaido told the crowd at a plaza in the Las Mercedes district. "We are going to celebrate this small victory today."

He announced plans to meet with public employees, who have been historically pressured by the ruling Socialist Party to join pro-government rallies, as well as for a major march on Saturday. Guaido secretly left Venezuela for Colombia, in violation of a Supreme Court order, to coordinate efforts there on Feb 23 to send humanitarian aid into Venezuela to alleviate widespread shortages of food and medicine. But troops blocked convoys of aid trucks sent from Colombia and Brazil, leading to clashes that killed at least six people along the Brazilian border, rights groups say.

From Colombia, he traveled to Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay to shore up Latin American support for a transition government that would precede free and fair elections. On Sunday, he departed by plane from the Ecuadorean coastal town of Salinas but had not appeared publicly since. Venezuelan media outlets reported that he flew from Panama City to Caracas. He had kept details of his trip under wraps and he arrived without prior notice, meeting ambassadors for European countries at the airport.

Guaido calls Maduro a usurper and says his presidency is illegitimate after he secured re-election last year in a vote widely considered a sham. Maduro retains control of state institutions and the apparent loyalty of senior figures in the armed forces. Asked by a reporter how he was received at the airport by immigration authorities, who could have prevented his entry for violating the travel ban, Guaido said they addressed him as president - a swipe at Maduro, who calls him a US puppet. "Here's my passport, safe and sound," Guaido said, showing it to the crowd. The Information Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



Maduro calls Guaido a US puppet

'Face justice'

Maduro, who denies there is a humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, has said Guaido's arrest depends on the justice system. "He can't just come and go. He will have to face justice, and justice prohibited him from leaving the country," he told ABC News last week. Protesters in Caracas on Monday, wearing dressed in white and chanting "Freedom," said arresting Guaido would spark



CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition leader and self-proclaimed acting president Juan Guaido waves to the crowd during a rally upon his arrival in Caracas. —AFP

new demonstrations. "If the regime has even a little bit of conscience, they should not arrest Guaido because people truly would not put up with it," said Franklin Lopez, a 60-year-old administrator. The United States has warned Maduro of the consequences of arresting Guaido and the US Treasury imposed new sanctions on Friday targeting Venezuelan military officials.

After the military blocked the aid convoys, Guaido pro-

posed that "all options be kept open" to topple Maduro, but foreign military intervention is seen as unlikely and his international backers are instead using a mix of sanctions and diplomacy. "President Guaido safely returned to Venezuela today," US National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Twitter. "The United States fully supports Guaido and the National Assembly. His safety must be guaranteed. The world is watching." — Reuters

Iran paper calls for expulsion of French diplomats

TEHRAN: An ultraconservative Iranian newspaper called yesterday for the expulsion of French diplomats from the country, accusing France of expelling an Iranian diplomat on the basis of a "ludicrous accusation". The Kayhan daily demanded that the Iranian foreign ministry reciprocate "the insolent and vile behavior of France in accusing and expelling our diplomat from its soil."

The newspaper, considered to be the mouthpiece of ultraconservatives in Iran, reported in October that an Iranian diplomat had been expelled by France without saying why. Neither the Iranian nor the French foreign ministries have denied or confirmed the report. Yesterday the paper reported in a front-page article that the diplomat had been expelled on the basis of the "ludicrous accusation of attempting to attack a meeting of the terrorist cult of

hypocrites in Paris."

It was referring to the People's Mujahedin Organization, an opposition group in exile that aims to overthrow the Islamic republic in Iran. Kayhan also blamed France for the arrest of another Iranian diplomat by Germany in July 2018 on suspicion of involvement in the alleged plot to bomb an Iranian opposition rally outside Paris the previous month. The diplomat, normally based in Vienna, was extradited to Belgium for prosecution.

Kayhan, Iran's second-oldest daily in circulation, is state owned and its managing director and editor in chief Hossein Shariatmadari was personally appointed by Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in 1993. Its demand came a day after Iran expelled two Dutch diplomats in retaliation for the Netherlands' expulsion of two Iranian embassy staff in June 2018. According to the Dutch foreign minister Stef Blok, the Iranian diplomats had been expelled "due to strong indications from (Dutch intelligence) that Iran has been involved in the liquidations on Dutch territory of two Dutch people of Iranian origin."

Kayhan has consistently been opposed to the policy of detente with Western powers pursued by moderate



TEHRAN: In this file photo, placards with slogans against the British media are held up during a rally held in Tehran. Farsi slogans reads: "Closing the British Embassy and BBC" (right) and "Persian BBC against the Iranian government." Threats, interrogations, asset-freezing: the BBC detailed the latest "escalation" in the "systematic targeting" by Iranian authorities of its Persian Service journalists and their relatives. —AFP

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. It has ceaselessly attacked the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and

world powers and cited US President Donald Trump's decision to quit the accord as an example of the futility of dealing with Western powers. — AFP

New Delhi is world's most polluted capital, China's capital eighth

NEW DELHI: New Delhi was the world's most polluted capital city in 2018, two groups monitoring air pollution said yesterday in a study of the amount of fine particulate matter known as PM2.5 in 61 capital cities around the world. The Indian capital, home to more than 20 million people, was followed by the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka and Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, according to the study by IQ AirVisual, a Swiss-based group that gathers air-quality data globally, and Greenpeace.

New Delhi's toxic air is caused by vehicle and industrial emissions, dust from building sites, smoke from the burning of rubbish and crop residue in nearby fields.

The city's average annual concentration of PM2.5 in a cubic meter of air was 113.5 in 2018, the groups said in their report, more than double the level of Beijing, which averaged 50.9 during the year, making it the eighth most polluted in the world.

PM2.5, or particles of 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter, is so dangerous because it lodges deep in the lungs. The World Health Organization sets a daily mean air quality guideline of 25 micrograms of PM2.5 per cubic meter of air. China struggled for years to enforce environment rules and crack down on polluting industries, but it has benefited in recent years from vastly improved legislation and greater political will to combat poor air quality.

"In mainland China, in particular, this has led to significant improvements in year-on-year reductions in PM2.5 levels," the groups said in their joint study. India is home to 15 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world, they said. "The question which remains to be answered is whether there is enough political will to aggressively fight the health emergency India faces today and move away from polluting fuels and practices," said Pujarini Sen, spokeswoman for Greenpeace India. — Reuters



NEW DELHI: A dog stands at the top of a mountain of garbage as birds fly overhead at the Ghazipur landfill site in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

In rural Nepal, solar irrigation helps keep families together

JUMLA: Bhadri Sarki used to walk for more than an hour to fetch enough water to irrigate just one apple tree. But since a solar-powered water pump was installed in her village, about 350 km (217 miles) northwest of Nepal's capital Kathmandu, she can hydrate her whole orchard in a few hours. "We have a sufficient amount of water available in the field, and the only work left is to nurture the plants," Sarki told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

A local official and farmers said improved access to water was helping apple growers in the mountainous region sell surplus produce to boost incomes, reducing pressure on men to migrate in search of work. With an intellectually disabled daughter at home, and her house-builder husband frequently in India, Sarki had found it difficult to find time for daily chores before the pump arrived. The mother-of-three suffered a uterine prolapse and heart-related problems due to her workload and had to visit hospital often, she said.

But with water now available on their doorstep, the family's land is producing more, and there is less financial pressure for Sarki's husband to go and work across the border. For Sarki and other women in Jumla district in Karnali province - the poorest in Nepal, and with less than a quarter of its land irrigated - the new solar water pump is helping make a tough life easier. Installed about a year ago by development agency Practical Action, the pump was funded by the European Union and Jersey Overseas Aid, a state development agency, at an initial cost of 1.3 million rupees (\$11,465).

About 14 solar panels produce enough power to pump 20,000 litres of water per day up from the Tila River, which is collected in storage tanks and distributed to fields as needed. Menila Kharel, knowledge management coordinator at Practical Action, said the pump lifted water 90 meters (295 ft), and served 70 households in Dhaulapani village, which has no electric power connection. The UK-based charity has installed six solar pumps in different parts of Jumla - famous for its apples, walnuts and a rare local rice - as well as in neighboring Mugu district.

Erratic snow

The local government has decided to replicate the scheme on a larger scale in other parts of Jumla district after its success in Dhaulapani. Gangadevi Upadhyay, deputy head of Tatopani rural municipality, said the local authority had started putting in a solar pump in Dagivada village, with an estimated budget of 10 million rupees, which would benefit almost 300 households. "This technology is especially beneficial to women in Jumla where they carry out most of the work in the fields," she added.

Tika Ram Sharma, a senior officer for the Prime Minister's Agriculture Modernization Project, a 10-year government effort, said Jumla had plenty of sunshine nearly all year round, while the Tila is a perennial river. Both renewable resources had gone untapped, but the solar-powered pump meant they were now being fully utilized, he added. —Reuters

Saudi Arabia welcomes Britain's Hezbollah ban

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday welcomed Britain's decision to outlaw the political wing of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, describing it as an "important and constructive" step. Britain announced on February 25 it would seek to make membership of the Shiite movement or inviting support for it a crime. The decision followed outrage over the display of the Hezbollah flag, which features a Kalashnikov assault rifle, at pro-Palestinian demonstrations in London.

"Categorizing the (Hezbollah) militia, which is backed by Iran, as a terrorist organization is an important and constructive step in combating terrorism around the world," said a foreign ministry source, according to the official Saudi Press Agency. "Britain's decision is in line with the decision Saudi Arabia has taken towards the terrorist party, both politically and militarily."

London's move was welcomed by other foes of Iran, Hezbollah's key supporter, including the United States and Israel. Hezbollah meanwhile said Britain had "insulted the sentiments and the will of the Lebanese". In 2016, the Gulf Cooperation Council - which includes regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates - designated Hezbollah a "terrorist" organization. Hezbollah was established in 1982 during Lebanon's civil war and is now a major political party in the country, holding three cabinet posts. Britain blacklisted Hezbollah's military wing in 2008 but had until now made no move against its political wing. However, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said last Monday that any distinction between its military and political wings "does not exist". The US designated Hezbollah a foreign terrorist organization in 1997. — AFP

International

Britain opposition party torn apart by 'anti-Semitism' row

The row exposes deep divisions in Labor Party

LONDON: Britain's main opposition Labor party is in turmoil over mounting allegations of anti-Semitism on leftist leader Jeremy Corbyn's watch - and the party's way of dealing with the issue. The row has exposed deep divisions between Labor members denouncing Corbyn's complicity, and his hard left supporters defending him to the hilt.

Nine MPs have quit the party in recent weeks to sit as independents, with many citing alleged anti-Jewish racism seeping through Labor's ranks as a primary reason. One of them, the Jewish lawmaker Luciana Berger, received death threats amid a slew of abuse. She concluded that the party has become institutionally anti-Semitic since Corbyn took over in 2015. Adam Langleben, 32, who is Jewish, joined Labor in 2006 but quit in February. "I decided to leave because the party is no longer the party I decided to join 13 years ago," Langleben said.

He was elected to the local authority in Barnet, north London, a borough with a significant Jewish community. Losing his seat in last May's local elections, he said the backlash at the polls was because "Jewish voters did not want to vote for the Labor Party". He said he received death threats and a "torrent of abuse" from Labor members who claimed that he was working for the Israeli government, while hate mail was sent to his home address.

Langleben submitted a dozen complaints to the party which went nowhere. Eventually, he threw in the towel. The polemic has been running since veteran socialist Corbyn came to power in the party, bringing an influx of new members with him. Corbyn, 69, has spent his political life backing pro-Palestinian causes. He insists he is not anti-Semitic and has pledged to "root out" the problem which he recognizes has "occurred in pockets" within the party.



Nine lawmakers quit Labor party

from its centrism under former prime ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown

'Witch-hunt'

Matters first came to a head in March last year when a series of incidents and events led to the rare step of British Jewish leaders writing a joint letter claiming "enough is enough". Protests were held outside parliament. The letter claimed a "repeated institutional failure" within Labor to tackle the problem and accused Corbyn of siding with anti-Semites "again and again". In July, the party drew up a new code of conduct on anti-Semitism — but it stopped short of signing up in full to the definition drawn up by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Peter Mason, national secretary of the Jewish Labor Movement, told AFP that the relationship between the party and the community was now "fundamentally fractured". However, Jenny Manson has a different point of view. Co-chair of the pro-Corbyn Jewish Voice for Labor group, she told AFP that she had "never experienced anti-Semitism in the Labor Party". She said the allegations had "a quality of a witch-hunt, McCarthyism" about them, and were aimed at destabilizing Corbyn's leadership, which has veered away

Conspiracy theories

How did a party, whose last leader Ed Miliband was Jewish, find itself in such a situation? Professor David Feldman, director of the Pears Institute for the Study of Anti-Semitism at the University of London, said surveys suggested anti-Semitic attitudes were no more widespread within Labor than other parties. However, two subjects get the Labor left "to talk about Jews": one is the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and "the other is the left populist critique of corrupt elites", he said.



LONDON: Opposition Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn holds a rose as he arrives at Finsbury Park mosque to mark national 'Visit my Mosque Day' in London. Now in its fourth year, Visit My Mosque Day is a national event, with other 250 mosques taking part, opening their doors and welcoming non-Muslim guests and visitors. — AFP

Discussion of stereotypes and conspiracy theories associated with Jews has flourished online. "They draw on the idea that Jews are exerting a malign conspiratorial power through their supposed control of international finance, sometimes of the media," said Feldman. Jon Lansman, who founded the pro-Corbyn grassroots Momentum movement, said on Twitter last month: "Of Labor's 500,000 members, perhaps a few hundred are hardcore anti-Semites. If we improve our processes, we can make sure they are kicked out." In August, Corbyn admitted that Labor had a "real problem" with

anti-Semitism. However, the party's handling of the issue continues to provoke turmoil. Last Wednesday, Labor MP Chris Williamson was suspended following claims that the party has been "too apologetic" about anti-Semitism. At the weekend, general secretary Jennie Formby and deputy leader Tom Watson engaged in a heated war of words about how complaints should be dealt with. Some have given up trying to fix the problem, like Langleben, who now supports the fledgling Independent Group created by Berger and others who fled the Labor ranks. — AFP

News in brief

French prison attack

CAEN: A prison inmate in northwestern France seriously wounded two guards yesterday in a knife attack that justice officials said was being investigated as a terror incident. The 27-year-old inmate, considered a "radicalized" Islamist, attacked prison staff while shouting "Allahu Akhbar" (God is Greatest), prison staff representative Alassane Sall said. He then retreated into a room with his wife who was visiting him at the high-security facility in Conde-sur-Sarthe in Normandy, the justice ministry said in a statement. "It was truly a murder attempt. There was blood everywhere. The family-visiting unit was a battle scene," said Sall, from the Force Ouvriere trade union. — AFP

Pakistan detains 'militants'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has detained dozens of alleged militants after a suicide attack in Indian-held Kashmir last month which sent tensions between the nuclear-armed foes soaring, its interior minister said yesterday. Among those detained in Islamabad's latest crackdown on banned groups was Abdul Rauf - who a security source told AFP is a younger brother of Masood Azhar - the leader of Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) that claimed responsibility for the February 14 attack. Rauf had been named in a dossier of evidence in that attack given to Pakistan by India, the interior ministry said. "We have launched a crackdown against proscribed organizations and have taken 44 individuals into custody, including Mufti Abdul Rauf and Hammad Azhar," state minister for the interior Shehryar Afridi told reporters in Islamabad. — AFP

Child marriage in Lebanon

BEIRUT: Hundreds protested in Lebanon against child marriage, demanding lawmakers forbid unions below the age of 18, in a country where some faiths allow girls to be wed at 14. Organized by civil society groups, the rally attracted women of all ages and some lawmakers-who marched on parliament in the capital Beirut, an AFP photographer said. Some carried placards with slogans reading "Not before 18" and "Stop early marriage". Abir Abdel Razeq, a 22-year-old who carried her young daughter in her arms, said that she married at 14. "I hope that my daughter does not get married early, and that she finishes school-I hope that she will not marry before she is 22", Razeq said. — AFP

Liberia bank scandal

MONROVIA: Five once senior figures at the Liberian Central Bank, including the son of long-serving former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, were charged Monday with criminal conspiracy and "economic sabotage" following a probe into a banknote printing scandal. A Monrovia court ordered former deputy governor Charles Sirleaf, ex-bank head Milton Weeks and bank official Dorbor Hagba to be held in jail pending the scheduling of their trial. Another two suspects still being sought face similar charges over their handling of billions of Liberian dollars. The crowded court heard that between 2016 and 2018, Sirleaf "purposely with wicked and criminal intent connived and conspired with other officials" to print local currency but also pocket some of the proceeds. — AFP

US Democrats' goal in Trump probe: Proving obstruction, collusion

WASHINGTON: US Democrats' sweeping demands for documents from 81 individuals, companies and organizations linked to President Donald Trump show they are pursuing several possibly impeachable offenses. The massive document requests, the result of the Democrats gaining power in the House of Representatives in January, focus on four areas:

Obstruction

Democrats want to know whether Trump sought to illegally obstruct the Justice Department's investigation into possible collusion with Russia. Their requests hone in on a number of actions by the president that might support this conclusion: the dismissal of Trump's national security aide Michael Flynn, the firing of FBI director James Comey, and Trump's alleged pressure on attorney general Jeff Sessions and several senior Justice Department and FBI officials seen as not loyal or hostile.

Brexit talks resume; divorce day looms

BRUSSELS: The EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier meets Britain's negotiating team yesterday as both sides seek a breakthrough with just weeks to go before this month's ominous divorce deadline. The sitdown comes after Barnier said on Saturday that the European Union was ready to give London further guarantees to help push a troubled divorce deal through the British parliament. Barnier also suggested European leaders would be amenable to a short "technical" delay in Britain's departure from the EU, scheduled for March 29, to give parliament time to formally ratify a final divorce deal.

His small overture to Britain has raised hopes that both sides can find a solution, including to the so-called "backstop" plan for the Irish border, a major sticking point for pro-Brexit MPs. Barnier, a former French foreign minister, will meet in Brussels with Britain's attorney general Geoffrey Cox and

They are also pinpointing alleged attempts to cover up a June 2016 campaign meeting in Trump Tower with a Russian lawyer, and to hide former negotiations for a Trump real estate project in Moscow during the 2016 campaign. And they are pursuing documents and information that might show whether Trump illegally dangled pardons to former aides to discourage them from implicating him in any crimes.

Collusion

The second focus of the requests is possible collusion with Russia, and a concern that Moscow might have leverage over the US leader. Democrats want documents on whether Russians lent to or invested money in Trump companies, and whether the Trump Organization helped Russian real estate customers launder money.

They also want to know about any discussions that a dozen Trump aides or associates may have had with Russians on the Trump administration lifting US sanctions on Moscow. The requests also target the Republican decision in July 2016 to moderate the official party stance against Russian interference in Ukraine, and seek information on Trump campaign contacts with WikiLeaks and any sharing of data, like polling data, between the campaign and Russia. Democrats are also demanding documents on the content of Trump's three meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which the White House has refused to divulge.

Brexit minister Stephen Barclay for talks that start at 1700 (1600 GMT). "We're now at a particularly critical stage in these negotiations," said a spokesman for British Prime Minister Theresa May on Monday.

'Running the show'

Cox's presence is seen as central to the meeting, as he will ultimately offer a legal opinion on the Brexit deal and the Irish backstop that could determine whether key MPs in the British parliament will approve the accord. Earlier disfavorable advice by Cox was viewed as a contributing factor in the defeat of May's deal by MPs in January.

"Cox is running the show," a senior EU source said. "We are trying to find a junction between our positions and we are not there yet," the source added. But despite that defeat, EU leaders insist that the withdrawal agreement will not be reopened, and talks in Brussels are focused on drafting a separate document to placate doubters in London. Also raising hopes are the softening positions of several headline Brexit supporters in May's Conservative party who have dropped their demand that changes to the backstop be made to the withdrawal treaty itself.

But most of them continue to press for a time limit or exit clause to the



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump addresses the National Association of Attorneys General in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

Hush payments

Democrats want more information on what Trump's former lawyer described as "catch and kill" operations to silence people or news stories that could damage Trump's image. That includes Trump's years of cooperation with the National Tabloid Enquirer. Trump's ex-lawyer Michael Cohen has already implicated Trump in the illegal use of campaign funds to pay off one woman who had claimed an affair with the president.

Profiting from office

Democrats want documents relating

to the patronage of Trump businesses, like the Trump International Hotel in Washington, by US and foreign officials and dignitaries seeking to curry favor with the president. If the Trump Organization has knowingly profited handsomely by this business, it could violate the US constitution's "emoluments" rules which seek to prevent a president from making a business out of his White House tenure. They also appear to be examining whether the Trump campaign received illegal donations or benefits from Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Brexit Minister) Stephen Barclay (right) and Britain's Attorney General Geoffrey Cox leave after the weekly cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street yesterday. — AFP

backstop. They have also set up a team of lawyers to scrutinize anything that Cox brings back from Brussels. "Many Tories who dislike May's deal are reluctantly coming round to the idea of voting for it," said Eurasia Group analyst Mujtaba Rahman, a former UK official. "Regardless of what he gets" from Barnier, "Cox will reverse his previous legal advice that the UK could be trapped 'indefinitely' in the backstop," Rahman predicted.

In 2017, Britain invoked Article 50

of EU law, triggering a two-year countdown to Brexit that ends at 11pm (2300 GMT) on March 29. Both sides are furiously trying to steer away from a dreaded "no-deal" divorce with the EU that could wreak havoc on global markets and create border chaos. British MPs last week agreed to give May more time to get her changes from Brussels, but if she cannot get her deal passed by March 12, she has agreed to let parliament vote for a possible Brexit deal. —AFP

International

India, Pakistan resume barter trade amid tension in contested Kashmir

More than two dozen killed since Feb 14 suicide attack

SRINAGAR: India and Pakistan resumed barter trade at a border crossing in Kashmir yesterday, an Indian official said, but tension in the contested region continued with a general strike and more fighting between Indian security forces and separatists. Hostilities between the nuclear-armed neighbors escalated dramatically late last month, after an Indian air strike on what it said was a militant group that carried out a suicide attack in the Pulwama district of Indian-controlled Kashmir on Feb 14.

Both sides, which claim Kashmir in full but rule in part, said they downed enemy jets for the first time in decades, and firing along the border became a common sight, disrupting trade and travel. Trade across the border, known as the Line of Control (LoC), was part-suspended after repeated mortar and small arms fire at Uri, a border town where the exchange of goods takes place.

But yesterday the route re-opened after firing in the region eased, said Riyaz Ahmad Malik, an official in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir. Thirty-five trucks left for Chakothi on the Pakistani side of the border with a similar number moving in the opposite direction, he said. Trade across the LoC operates on a barter system, where no money is exchanged. "This trade is heavily dependent on the trust factor," said Pawan Anand, president of a local

trading association in Indian-administered Kashmir. "We neither meet traders of Pakistan nor can check the quality of the imported goods until they reach us."

Ashfaq Ahmad, a trader in Srinagar, the capital of Indian-administered Kashmir, said that he quotes rates on WhatsApp with his Pakistani counterpart. "I send cumin and chilli seeds to Pakistan and in return order prayer



Strike in Srinagar over Jamaat-e-Islami ban

mats and cloth," he said. "If there is any difference, it is adjusted in the next consignment. It is all trust-based trade but it is working." Indian traders export cumin, chilli pepper, cloth, cardamom, bananas, pomegranate, grapes and almonds. Prayer mats, carpets, cloth, oranges, mangos and herbs return from the Pakistani side.

Toll rises

Indian security forces continued a campaign against militants fighting for independence from India, in the wake of the Feb 14 attack that killed at least 40 paramilitary police. Two militants of the separatist Hizbul Mujahideen were killed in a gun battle with Indian troops in South Kashmir's Pulwama district yesterday. Both militants were locals, said Tahir Saleem Khan, a police official.

Since the Pulwama attack, 15 militants have been killed in six separate gun battles in Kashmir. Twelve Indian security personnel were killed during the operations, while two civilians also lost their lives. Cross-border shelling between India and Pakistan has killed four civilians, with 18 injured including seven Indian troops.

Several trading groups called a strike yesterday to protest a ban on the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) political movement that wants independence. Indian police have arrested more than 300 leaders and activists belonging to JeI, alleging it has links with the militants. The group denies this. Shops and businesses were closed in many areas of Srinagar, and traffic was thin on the roads. Police and paramilitary troops were heavily deployed in sensitive areas of the city and other major towns. —Reuters



KARACHI: Supporters of the All Pakistan Muslim League Quid (APMLQ) hold national flags beside a replica of a missile during an anti-India protest in Karachi yesterday. Tensions between India and Pakistan raged on March 2 as heavy firing by their armies killed at least seven people on either side of their fiercely disputed Kashmir border. —AFP

Hair of the dogfighter: India pilot's moustache all the fashion

AHMEDABAD: Men across India, stirred into patriotic passion by an air force pilot shot down in a dogfight with arch-rival Pakistan, are copying the facial hair of their new hero. Tension between the nuclear-armed neighbors escalated late last month when both countries claimed they downed enemy jets, with Pakistan capturing a pilot, in an ongoing dispute over the Kashmir region.

The pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, crash-landed in Pakistan-controlled territory on Wednesday. After attempting to flee on foot, firing his pistol in the air to deter stone-throwing locals, he became the human face of the crisis. He was released by Pakistan on Friday. Barbers in several cities in India said they had received requests to copy Abhinandan's facial hair, a distinctive hybrid of a horseshoe moustache and mutton chop sideburns.

"Everybody follows Bollywood and celebrities' style but he is the real hero of our country," said Dhiren Makvana, 30, the manager of a fitness club, as he had his beard sculpted at a barber shop in the western Indian city of Ahmedabad. Makvana's barber, Rajesh Nai, said that three people had come into his shop in the last day alone requesting the style, that India's newspapers are calling "the gunslinger". Another man copying Abhinandan, Mohammed Chand, told Reuters partner ANI in the southern city of Bangalore: "I'm his fan, we follow him. I like his style: he is the real hero." —Reuters

Trudeau 'concerned' as Chinese suspects Canadian of spying

MONTREAL: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has voiced strong concern that China suspects a detained former Canadian diplomat of spying and stealing state secrets. The allegations against Michael Kovrig mark a new escalation in the diplomatic row between Beijing and Ottawa stemming from Canada's arrest of Meng Wanzhou, an executive from Chinese telecoms giant Huawei.

"We are obviously very concerned with the position that China has taken," Trudeau told reporters. China's official news agency Xinhua had earlier reported the allegations against Kovrig and said that businessman Michael Spavor, another Canadian in Chinese detention, was one of Kovrig's main intelligence sources. The pair were detained in December in what observers see as retaliation just days after Canada arrested Meng, the chief financial officer of Huawei, at the request of the United States.

Chinese authorities had previously said the two Canadian men were under investigation on suspicion of endangering national security, and spying charges could expose them to tough prison sentences. Trudeau

reiterated that Canada considers China to have arbitrarily detained both Kovrig and Spavor. "The safety and security of Canadians is always first order for this government, and that's why we've been engaging and standing up for the two Canadians who've been arbitrarily detained by China from the very beginning," Trudeau said.

Kovrig, who now works for the International Crisis Group think tank, had often entered China using a non-diplomatic passport and business visas and has been gathering intelligence since 2017, Xinhua said. The new allegations come three days after Canada launched the extradition process against Meng, angering Beijing, which called the action a "severe political incident." Meng is set to appear in court in Vancouver on Wednesday to schedule a date for her extradition hearing. The United States wants to put her on trial on fraud charges for allegedly violating Iran sanctions and lying about it to US banks.

Meng files lawsuit

Ottawa has said interrogations of Kovrig breached the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations—allegations Beijing flatly rejected. A group of Canadian parliamentarians had earlier complained to Chinese authorities that Kovrig and Spavor have been denied access to lawyers and remain in "completely unacceptable" detention conditions.

"China's approach is no different from the rest of

world in dealing with such cases involving national security cases," foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said at a regular briefing Monday. China will handle their case in "strict accordance with the law, guarantee the legitimate rights of Kovrig and Spavor," and arrange for consular visits, a Communist Party organ overseeing state and public security said on a news website it operates.

Meanwhile, Meng, 47, has filed suit against Canadian authorities for violating her constitutional rights when she was detained at Vancouver International Airport. Her lawyers charge impropriety in the conditions under which Meng was interrogated for three hours by the customs officers, officially as part of a routine inspection, before being served with her arrest. During those three hours, the customs officers searched her phones and computers as well as her luggage in violation of her rights, the lawyers said.

The US Justice Department accuses Huawei and its chief financial officer of circumventing US sanctions against Iran, but also, via two affiliates, stealing trade secrets from US telecommunications group T-Mobile. The daughter of Huawei's founder, Meng was released on parole in mid-December in Vancouver, where she owns two residences, on a bond deposit of C\$10 million (\$6.6 million), wearing an electronic bracelet and handing over her passports. The extradition procedure can take months or even years because of the many appeal possibilities. —AFP

Burundi forces UN to shut its human rights office

GENEVA: Burundi has forced the United Nations to shut its local human rights office after 23 years, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said yesterday. Hundreds of Burundians have

been killed in clashes with security forces and half a million have fled abroad since President Pierre Nkurunziza announced in 2015 he would run for a third term in what many saw as a breach of the constitution.

He won re-election and in 2016 Burundi suspended all cooperation with the UN human rights office in Burundi after a UN-commissioned report accused the Bujumbura government and its supporters of being responsible for crimes against humanity. Yesterday Bachelet said the Burundian government had declared it had made sufficient progress in human rights so the UN rights office in Bujumbura was no longer justified. "It is with deep regret that we have had to close our

office in Burundi after a 23-year presence in the country," Bachelet, a former Chilean president, said in a statement.

She said advancements in human rights in Burundi had been jeopardized since 2015 when Nkurunziza announced his re-election bid, which sparked major protests and a security crackdown. Burundi rejected the 2016 UN report as "lies" and when the UN Human Rights Council considered renewing the investigation in 2017, Burundi offered to accept UN rights experts instead. But the rights council voted both to renew the investigation and to send the experts, infuriating the Bujumbura government. —Reuters

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Mexico's Indians fight to stop mining on ancestral land

After nearly 20 years of wrangling, a group of Nahua Indian villagers could make legal history in Mexico this month when a court rules on a land dispute involving a Canadian miner. A lawyer for villagers of Tecoltemi in the central Mexican state of Puebla said it was the first time a court would rule on whether the country's mining law - which gives priority to mining activities over other land use - was constitutional. Previous cases had only recognized indigenous people's right to prior consultation, said Itzel Silva of the Fundar Centre for Analysis and Research, a non-profit in Mexico. "That's why this case is so important," said Silva.

For a century Mexico has granted indigenous people legal title to ancestral lands, but many have seen mining firms given rights to that land after the government prioritized mining over other land use in the 1990s, lawyers said. The case, to be heard in a federal court in Puebla, concerns two concessions awarded to Minera Gorrión, a local subsidiary of Canada's Almaden Minerals, which has caused divisions among villagers while pitting some against the company.

It was filed against the economy ministry - which is responsible for mining - on behalf of some villagers, who say exploration activity on gold and silver deposits has contaminated local water sources. The ministry did not respond to several requests for comment. A spokesman for Minera Gorrión said in an email the company has abided by rules set by environmental regulators, who had found no irregularities.

Almaden Minerals did not respond to repeated requests for comment. Minera Gorrión said the Canadian company would only comment on the project through its Mexican subsidiary. Silva said a ruling for the villagers - who live high in the Sierra Norte mountains - could set a precedent for other claims to try to overturn the law that prioritises mining over other land use. Mexico is the world's top silver producer and one of the largest producers of copper and gold. The mining sector contributes about 4 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product.

Long history

The case dates back to 2003 when Almaden Minerals' local arm, Minera Gavilan, was awarded a 27,000-acre tract in Puebla state. In 2009 it received a second site of about 7,400 acres. Both were later transferred to Minera Gorrión, another local subsidiary, Silva said, citing court documents. Boundaries of both concessions overlapped land claimed by residents of Tecoltemi near the town of Ixtacamaxtitlan, which lies about 140 km east of Mexico City.

Indigenous leader Victor Martínez Lobato said villagers were not consulted on the two concessions and their impact. "The effects (of mining) on the air, on the water, worry us," said Lobato, pointing to a map showing the concessions. In 2015, the Fundar center sued the economy ministry on behalf of the Tecoltemi villagers. The court in that case ordered that any changes to the concession boundaries be suspended until the federal court issued its ruling.

The following year, Minera Gorrión decided it would hand back to the government about 17,000 acres around Tecoltemi, it told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by email, on the grounds that it had not conducted any mining activity there. Minera Gorrión said it had acted "in good faith" and responded to the community's request by relinquishing land. It added that the Ixtaca mine would bring "economic benefits to the community, Puebla state, and the country" and that it expected to invest over \$1.5 billion in running the mine and hire more than 1,000 local workers.

Divided village

Silva said many mining concessions in Mexico are unconstitutional because the government fails to consult over ancestral land with indigenous people - who make up nearly one-quarter of the population of 120 million, according to government data. In Ixtacamaxtitlan in Puebla state, official data shows about one quarter of 25,000 inhabitants are indigenous, but campaigners said mining concessions have been issued over about 90 percent of its 150,000-acre territory.

The most controversial project in Ixtacamaxtitlan involves the Santa María Zolotepec indigenous village, 10 km from Tecoltemi, where Minera Gorrión wants to mine gold and silver. Some villagers work for Minera Gorrión, causing divisions, said Francis Zamora Morales, who sells beauty products. But she "never agreed with it", she added, as she wrote "No to the mine" on a poster to display at an upcoming meeting between the company and local people.

Diana Pérez, a lawyer at the Mexican Institute for Community Development who acts on behalf of the villagers, acknowledged the community was split over mining in the area. "Employment ... dictates who is in favour or against the mine," she said. Minera Gorrión said it is "understandable that a project like this can generate doubts but we did not perceive a mood of disagreement or against (the mine)".

A 2016 report by PODER, a local non-profit, found that exploration activity in Ixtacamaxtitlan had contaminated water sources, threatening the community's supply. "The company carried out water monitoring without due authorizations and made drill holes deeper than allowed, affecting the water table," said Isabel Clavijo, a researcher at PODER. Minera Gorrión denied that and said it was committed to protecting the environment. Morales said she was worried about water and the region's other natural resources if mining activities were not stopped. "We have been here for centuries, since before the passage of (the Spanish conquistador) Hernan Cortes in 1519 ... This project is temporary. Once it is over, what comes next?" —Reuters



A picture taken on Oct 31, 2018 shows polar bears feeding at a garbage dump near the village of Belushya Guba, on the remote Russian northern Novaya Zemlya archipelago, a tightly-controlled military area where a village declared a state of emergency in February after dozens of bears were seen entering homes and public buildings. —AFP

Russia Arctic plans add to polar bears' woes

Last month's visit by roaming polar bears that put a Russian village on lockdown may be just the beginning. For as Moscow steps up its activity in the warming Arctic, conflict with the rare species is likely to increase. More than 50 bears approached Belyushya Guba, a village on the far northern Novaya Zemlya archipelago, in February. As many as 10 of them explored the streets and entered buildings. Local authorities declared a state of emergency for a week and appealed for help from Moscow.

Photos of the incident went viral, with some observers blaming officials for ignoring a sprawling garbage dump nearby where the animals feasted on food waste. But polar bear experts say the main reason the Arctic predators came so close to humans was the late freezing of the sea. It was this that kept them from hunting seals and sent them looking for alternate food sources.

And as Russia increases its footprint in the Arctic, pursuing energy projects, Northern Passage navigation and strategic military interests, experts expect more clashes between humans and bears. "Development in the Arctic will definitely increase conflict with humans, especially now that the polar bear is losing its life platform in several regions and coming ashore," said biologist Anatoly Kochnev, who has studied polar bears in the eastern Arctic since the 1980s.

World's fastest-melting ice

Novaya Zemlya, an archipelago of two islands between the Kara and Barents seas, is a good example of Moscow's new frontier that falls inside the polar bear habitat. Bears in the Barents Sea are seeing the fastest ice reduction of the species' range,

having lost 20 weeks of ice a year over the last few decades, according to Polar Bears International. "Ice monitoring shows that previously, ice near Belushya Guba formed in December," said Ilya Mordvintsev from the Severtsov Institute in Moscow, who was in a group of scientists flown out to aid the village.

"For thousands of years, they migrated this time of year to hunt seals. This year they came to the shore and there was no ice." Since the incident, ice has formed and the bears have left land to hunt, he said. "But it's impossible to rule out a repeat of the situation in the coming years."

And as more humans come to Novaya Zemlya, the likelihood of human-bear conflict increases. A Soviet-era nuclear weapons testing site, Novaya Zemlya remains a restricted territory. But following a post-Soviet hiatus, the military has put up new buildings and an aerodrome. A new port is under construction, in tandem with imminent plans to mine the giant Pavlovskoye lead and zinc deposit. New contingents of military police were deployed to Belushya Guba in 2018. The community, which has schools and a large sports complex for military families, numbers over 2,000 people.

Soldiers vs bears

Kochnev remembers the damage caused by Soviet missile defense personnel previously stationed on the east Arctic's Wrangel Island. In 1991, soldiers drove an axe into the head of a polar bear after it had got used to feeding on discarded scraps and become aggressive. Biologists from the island's nature reserve never found the injured animal, he said. "When they left a year later, we were relieved. Only reserve staff remained, who knew how to behave around

bears," he said. "But now it's all starting again."

Moscow announced in 2014 that the Arctic was a strategic priority for its military. Kochnev in 2015 wrote an emotional blog post after a bear near a military construction site on Wrangel island swallowed an explosive flare. He criticised the new base, and was fired from his job in a national park as a result. Current instructions regarding polar bears focus on how to ward them off, he said. But the priority should be fortifying facilities to prevent any contact. "Put yourself inside a cage and let the bears roam around," he said in advice to Arctic developers.

Mordvintsev, however, said this would not work on Novaya Zemlya, where winds would turn any fence into a giant snowdrift for bears to walk over. Belushya Guba is planning to install cameras and address its waste problem, he said. Already all arrivals to the local airport listen to a mandatory lecture on polar bear behavior. Moscow's plans to develop the Northern Passage also pose a problem for polar bears in the region, he said. "Constant use of icebreakers through ice where seals give birth affects populations of seals" which bears feed on.

Putin last year ordered an increase in the capacity of the Northern Passage, touted as an alternate trade route to Asia, from the current 18 million tonnes to 80 million tonnes by 2024. Kochnev said bears have been able to adapt so far to unfavorable trends, learning to feed in groups rather than hunt in solitude. But if warming continues, "polar bears will simply leave Russia". "If the ice-free period increases by another two-three weeks, they will likely migrate to northern Canada, where changes have been less noticeable," he said. The ones that stay behind on Russian soil, meanwhile, will eventually get killed off in conflicts with humans. —AFP

Barr faces daunting decision on release of Russia report

Newly installed US Attorney General William Barr must walk a political and legal tightrope in deciding how much of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russia's role in the 2016 election to disclose, balancing competing demands from President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats, legal experts said. The decision presents Barr, a veteran Washington insider, with his first major test since becoming the top US law enforcement official last month, a position fraught with peril. Trump fired Barr's predecessor Jeff Sessions in November after complaining for months over the decision by Sessions to recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation.

"I think Barr is in a terrible position from the standpoint of having two masters to please, each of which has a very different desire," said Michael Zeldin, a former federal prosecutor. "He has a political nightmare on his hands." Mueller, who has headed the investigation since May 2017, is due to submit to Barr his confidential report on whether Trump's campaign conspired with Russia and whether the Republican president has unlawfully sought to obstruct the probe.

Democrats, who have expressed concern Barr will try to shield Trump and bury parts of the report, already have threatened subpoena it and go to court if necessary to force its release. Trump may pressure Barr to conceal damaging parts of Mueller's report and release any findings that may exonerate him. The Democrats took control of the House of Representatives in January and now wield subpoena power, with multiple committees investigating Trump's actions. Republicans control the Senate. Mueller's findings could be instrumental in any move in Congress to try to impeach Trump and remove him from office.

If the report includes "evidence of misconduct by the sitting president of the United States," then "I think you have to believe the public interest is so extreme that there will be a mechanism for release, and I think Barr's easy way out is to say, 'It's up to Congress,'" said Matthew Jacobs, a former federal prosecutor now with the law firm Vinson & Elkins. Barr, 68, served as attorney general once before, from 1991 to 1993 under Republican President George H W Bush. He has embraced an expansive view of presidential powers. Last year, while Sessions was still attorney general, Barr sent an unsolicited memo to the Justice Department disputing Mueller's authority to investigate Trump for obstruction of justice.

A road map

From a legal standpoint, Barr has a road map in the form of the Justice Department's regulations on the appointment of special counsels. Those rules require him to notify the top Democrats and Republicans on the House and Senate judiciary committees after Mueller completes his probe. The rules do not require release of the entire report, but they do not explicitly prevent Barr from giving it to Congress. The rules also give Barr latitude to disclose parts of the report if it is in the public interest.



US Attorney General William Barr addresses the National Association of Attorneys General in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington on Monday. —AFP

In deciding what to release, Barr may face thorny legal issues involving secrecy of grand jury testimony, protecting classified information, communications with the White House possibly subject to the principle of executive privilege shielding certain information from disclosure, and safeguarding confidential reasons for why some individuals were not charged.

Several Trump campaign figures already have pleaded guilty or been convicted in Mueller's investigation, while others have not been charged. If the report provides evidence that Trump committed obstruction of justice or other crimes, Barr must decide how much should be revealed. The Justice Department has a decades-old policy that a sitting president cannot face criminal charges, though some lawyers take issue with that conclusion. As a matter of policy, the Justice Department also does not give a public explanation for why any individual has not been charged.

"I don't know that the department has ever encountered this situation where the reason a person isn't being charged with a crime is that the person is immune by virtue of his office and is subject to impeachment as a result," said Robert Litt, a former general counsel for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence who is now with the firm Morrison & Foerster. "The more damaging the report is to the president, the greater the pressure is on Barr to release it, and paradoxically of course, if the report completely exonerates the president, then the president should want it released," Litt added.

Barr appears to have support among rank-and-file Justice Department employees relieved to have an attorney general who understands the institution, after serving under former senator Sessions and then an acting attorney general, Matthew Whitaker, who was a Trump political loyalist. At a recent reception for employees, Barr bought the food and drinks and was greeted by people who told him they were happy he was there.

Barr "is an experienced lawyer and manager, and he has served in the position of attorney general, so he has great respect for that office," said Mark Tuohy, a lawyer with the firm Baker & Hostetler who once served as deputy to former independent counsel Ken Starr on the Whitewater investigation involving Democratic President Bill Clinton's business dealings. "I don't see this as a loyalty litmus test," Tuohy added. —Reuters

Teeny handbag a fashion sensation

It's so small wags joke that it can only hold a Tic Tac. But French brand Jacquemus' teeny weeny bag, "Le Mini Chiquito", is arguably the biggest thing at Paris fashion week. Never has something so tiny excited so much fashion passion - and hilarity - on social media. The handbag - or should we say fingerbag - made its debut last week on the opening night of the Paris shows. A shrunken version of the miniature and already cult \$500 "Le Chiquito" bag - which the likes of Rihanna and Kim Kardashian have been spotted clutching between their thumb and forefingers - it is a mere 5.2 cm long. Jacquemus has sold "tens of thousands" of Le Chiquito bags in the last year, according to Cosmopolitan magazine, with fashionistas so desperate to get their fingers on them that there are lengthy waiting lists for some colors. Although the brand told AFP that they have yet to set a price for Le Mini Chiquito, if the reaction on Instagram and Twitter is anything to go by, demand could be equally brisk. Fashion insiders have been laughing at themselves as they lap up the latest Lilliputian trend.

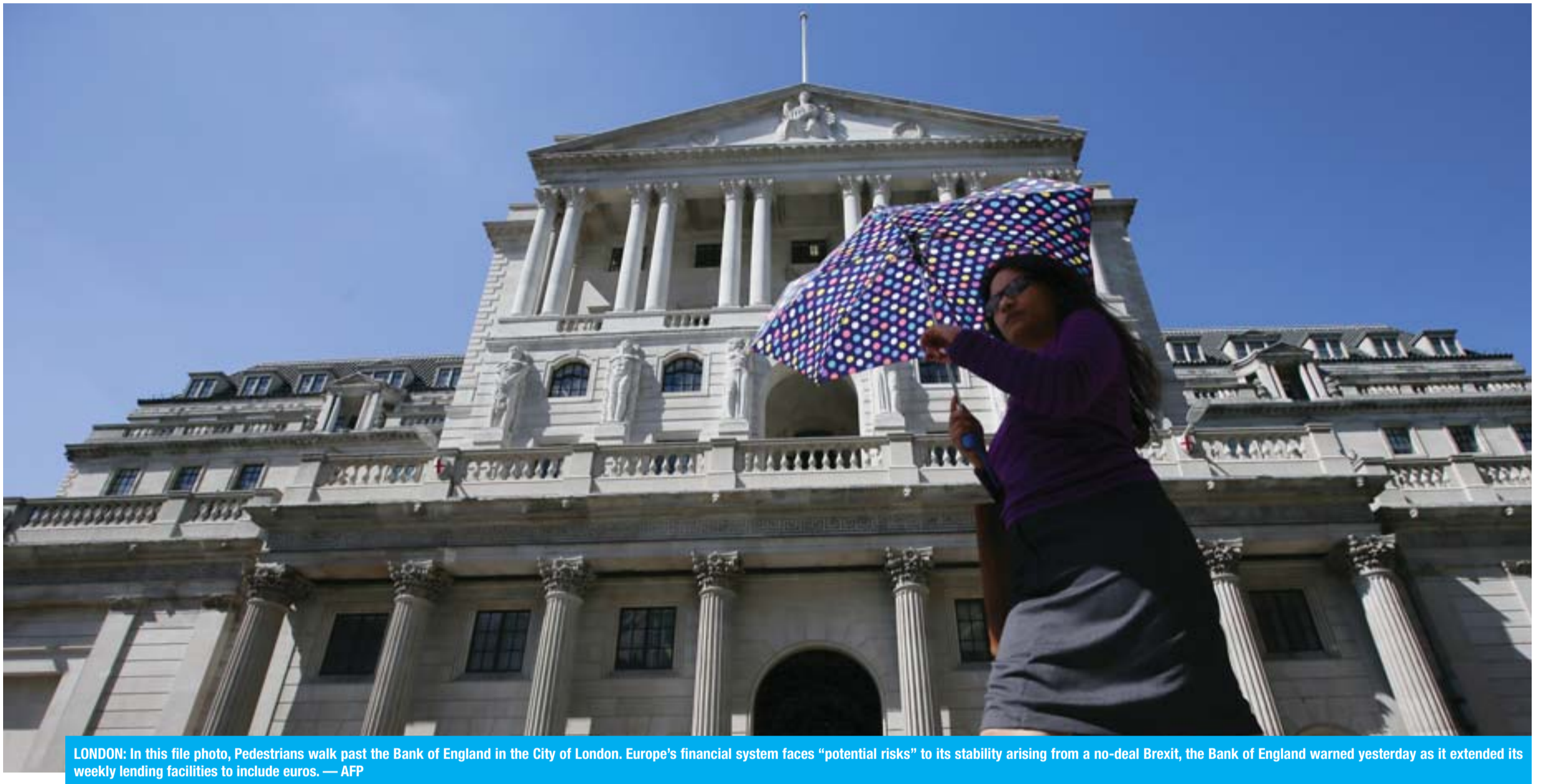
The hip style magazine Dazed declared "Jacquemus, your tiny bags are getting kind of ridiculous but we love them!" Elle magazine headlined it as the "New It Bag" before quickly admitting that it can only hold an AirPods earphone. One fashion editor tweeted five uses for the bag including carrying "loose floss, a spare acrylic nail or a singular clump of curled hair retrieved from the head of Jude Law" circa 1999. Another said it was "the perfect size to put probiotics and digestive enzymes", while a third thought it would be a snug fit for "Donald Trump's conscience". The bag has unleashed the imagination of Twitter and Instagram users. Some saw hidden depths in its tiny interior, saying it was a dreamcatcher into which you have to "whisper a secret" while another said it "represents the compartmentalized trauma we carry with us each day". Jacquemus' 29-year-old founder, Simon Porte, has quickly made a name for himself on the Paris catwalk with clothes summoning up the sensuality of his Provençal home in the South of France, putting women in huge straw hats and tiny dresses that show lots of thigh.

His personal charm, and his label's relatively affordable prices, has quickly won him a following. He made breakfast for critics at his menswear show in January, and gifted some fashion critics one of his new micro bags with their invitation for his latest show. Porte, who loves playing with proportions, first made a splash with his huge tote and shoulder bags, some of which also featured alongside his Le Mini Chiquito in his Paris show. —AFP



Business

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019

12 Warba Bank exclusively sponsors 'Auto Show' for 2nd year in a row**13** BMW could shift some UK engine, Mini output if no orderly Brexit**14** Zain offers all-new Galaxy S10 and Galaxy S10+ smartphones

LONDON: In this file photo, Pedestrians walk past the Bank of England in the City of London. Europe's financial system faces "potential risks" to its stability arising from a no-deal Brexit, the Bank of England warned yesterday as it extended its weekly lending facilities to include euros. — AFP

Europe faces potential financial risks: BoE

Businesses and households across Britain and EU vulnerable to no-deal Brexit

LONDON: Europe's financial system faces "potential risks" to its stability arising from a no-deal Brexit, the Bank of England warned yesterday, as it extended its weekly lending facilities to include euros. With just 24 days to go until Britain is set to leave the European Union, the BoE said businesses and households across Britain and the EU were vulnerable.

The BoE said it had activated a swap line with the European Central Bank, which will provide euros in exchange for British pounds.

Brussels and London are furiously trying to steer away from a dreaded "no-deal" divorce that could wreak havoc on global markets.

The BoE said it had activated a swap line with the European Central Bank, which will provide euros in exchange for British pounds.

Although these would primarily affect EU households and businesses, they could also be expected to

spill back to the UK in ways that cannot be fully anticipated and mitigated," it added in a statement.

The British central bank made the remarks in minutes from its Financial Policy Committee (FPC) meeting that was held on February 26. The BoE also said it was further stepping up its lending facilities for commercial banks over the next few months.

A week after the bank said it would increase the frequency of existing market-wide sterling cash loans from monthly to weekly, the BoE yesterday added that this would be extended to euros. "The FPC welcomes the recent Bank decision to increase the frequency of the Bank's sterling liquidity operations and to initiate a new weekly Liquidity Facility in Euros (LiFE), alongside the existing weekly dollar lending facility," it said. The European Central Bank said in a separate statement that the BoE's euro facility was a "prudent and precautionary step" aimed at supporting the smooth functioning of markets that serve households and businesses.

Eurozone central banks would also be ready to lend British pounds to commercial lenders in the single currency zone, the ECB said.

'Normal contingency planning'

Bank of England governor Mark Carney last week said that such liquidity measures were "part of normal contingency planning" and that commercial banks were functioning well.

The central bank carried out the same measure ahead of and following Britain's referendum on leaving the EU in June 2016. This helps banks and the wider financial industry keep ticking over during periods of market turbulence.

Similar lending was also carried out in 2008 during the global financial crisis.

Britain is on course to leave the EU on March 29, although there has been increasing talk of a possible delay. Ahead of Brexit, authorities in Britain, including

the Bank of England, have also agreed with the United States to maintain how multi-trillion-dollar financial transactions are carried out between the two countries.

The agreement concerns trades of derivatives-securities whose value is based on an asset such as currencies, stocks and commodities. The EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier meets Britain's negotiating team on Tuesday as both sides seek a breakthrough.

The sitdown comes after Barnier said on Saturday that the EU was ready to give London further guarantees to help push a troubled divorce deal through British parliament. Barnier also suggested European leaders would be amenable to a short "technical" delay in Britain's departure from the EU, in order to give parliament time to formally ratify a final divorce deal. His small overture to Britain has raised hopes that both sides can find a solution, including to the so-called "backstop" plan for the Irish border, a major sticking point for pro-Brexit MPs. — AFP

Belgian trade delegation woos Kuwaiti investors

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A Belgian trade delegation is currently visiting Kuwait to promote investment and trade. A trade exhibition was held in connection with the visit of the delegation at the Four Points Hotel in Kuwait City yesterday in which around 28 companies participated.

The delegation is mostly banking on the advantage of the advanced Belgian technology and innovation especially in the fields of sports and entertainment. Piet Heirbaut, Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait officially graced and inaugurated the trade mission in the presence of many potential investors.

"I am happy to inaugurate this event today. This is a very focused event to help people in Kuwait decide on venturing into new businesses in collaboration with Belgian commerce and industry. Our business interests in



Piet Heirbaut

Kuwait are growing and we have seen the interest of Kuwaiti business community as well. It's a good sign and Kuwait is a country that has a very bright vision about its future. And I believe that this is a very exciting time for all of us. We are in full support of the business people who are here today and we hope for a very fruitful business venture with you all. Thank you for supporting Belgian companies," he said.

One of the companies present during



KUWAIT: Piet Heirbaut, Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait, addresses the delegates during the trade exhibition.

the event was Grassmaster, a pioneer in hybrid pitches, whose ultimate goal is to develop and reinforce the durability of natural grass pitches for sports such as football, rugby and American football. "Our technology is now being used in Kuwait as we are the company chosen to reinforce Sheikh Jaber Stadium," said Yves De Cooker, Grassmaster Tarket Sports. The grass company is proud of its optimal playing characteristics during intense and heavy use.

Another company, Dirty Monitor

also wants to share their expertise in the world of digital art, as they gained international recognition when they collaborated in various international events and festivities. They offer the audience a unique visual and immersive experience as they were tasked to light up the stage at the opening of Opera House, Sheikh Jaber Stadium and the Al-Shaheed Park in Kuwait City. They were contracted to showcase their digital art prowess in the major cities of the world such as Paris, London and Hong Kong.

Third time lucky: Ex-Nissan chief Ghosn wins bail

TOKYO: Former auto industry titan Carlos Ghosn moved a step closer to freedom yesterday as a Tokyo court unexpectedly granted him bail after more than three months in a detention cell. It was the latest twist in a case that has gripped Japan and the business world since the tycoon's shock arrest on November 19 over suspicions of financial misconduct.

But it was not clear how soon he could be free. Prosecutors were appealing the decision, and with bail set at one billion yen (\$9 million), Ghosn's lead lawyer acknowledged it would take time to raise the money. "Even if his bail is confirmed on appeal, we won't be able to gather the bail amount today," Junichiro Hironaka told local media, suggesting a today release was more likely. Prosecutors could also rearrest Ghosn on fresh allegations to keep the 64-year-old in custody.

"The facts of this case are such... that it would be quite normal to release him," the former CEO's French lawyer Jean-Yves Le Borgne told RTL radio. Under his bail terms, Ghosn is banned from leaving Japan and must adhere to conditions aimed at preventing him from fleeing or destroying evidence. — AFP

Business



KUWAIT: Warba Bank officials address a press conference yesterday. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Warba Bank exclusively sponsors 'Auto Show' for 2nd year in a row

Show offers a wide range of flexible auto-finance solutions

KUWAIT: For the second year in a row, Warba Bank exclusively sponsors the "Auto-Show" exhibition providing auto-finance solutions on a wide array of international car brands. Over the course of the three days of the show from 7 to 9 March, the visitors to the Marina Crescent will have the opportunity to get updated with the latest financing offers provided by Warba Bank in cooperation with its partners of leading international car agencies displaying the latest and most luxurious car models.

Warba Bank's sponsorship of the Auto Show's second edition, is the outcome of the positive results the exhibition achieved last year and the high demand on its flexible auto finance solution. The bank also caters to the needs of the customers and non-customers to

own a car of their choice on flexible and smooth installment terms that do not add up to their financial burdens.

Musaed Al-Mazyad, Deputy Chief Retail Banking Officer at Warba Bank, said: "Recently, Warba Bank has been working on designing a comprehensive range of financing solutions covering various requirements, notably the auto finance solutions which have become indispensable. In this regard, the Bank has formed partnerships with the leading automotive dealers in Kuwait offering attractive cars for customers according to custom-made financing solutions, specifically designed to maximize benefits".

"At the Auto Show, together with our partners of renowned international auto dealers, we will be able

to guide customers through the purchasing process and answer all their inquiries."

Along with Warba Bank, the exhibition gathers leading names of international auto agencies including: Honda, Dumi, Jaguar, Maserati, Acura, Austin Martin, Mazda, Peugeot, GMC, Subaru, Levan, Hyundai and Burjard Zayani.

During the exhibition, potential buyers can see and examine the vehicles as well as inquire about all necessary purchasing details, terms and conditions by visiting the Bank's booth where our professional team will be available to provide adequate explanations and answer all their queries.

It is noteworthy that the Bank's auto finance solutions are embedded under "Installment at Cash Price"

campaign, with zero profit and installment period up to five years. This has helped Warba Bank as the bank to position itself as the bank of choice for customers aspiring to have unprecedented auto finance solutions.

Moreover, the Bank also provides unique and exclusive service in the market: the "Auto Cash", by which Warba Bank purchases the required car on behalf of the customer while offering him/her the opportunity to keep and invest the car amount in the bank in the form of deposit ensuring rewarding annual profit and a chance to enter Al-Sunbula account's draws amounting to KD 1 million. For those aspiring to own their dream car, pass by Warba Bank booth at the Auto Show where we work to turn your dream into reality.

Global Markets Commentary

NBK Capital: Gulf markets mixed in February; Kuwait fourth

KUWAIT: The performance of the GCC markets was mixed. The S&P GCC Composite Index retreated by around 0.74 percent in February after a stellar performance the previous month. The UAE markets were the best performers with the Dubai's DFM Index and Abu Dhabi's ADX advancing by 2.65 percent and 1.83 percent respectively.

They were followed by Bahrain with a gain of 1.53 percent and Kuwait at 0.49 percent. The Qatar Exchange Index lost the most among its peers with a decline of 5.68 percent taking its performance for 2019 to a negative 1.82 percent. Oman remained weak as the MSM 30 Index retreated by 0.53 percent for a year-to-date loss of 4.15 percent. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia, the largest GCC market, saw a marginal decline of 0.79 percent for the month on profit taking but is still up 8.51 percent for the year. The broader S&P Pan Arab index was pressured by the GCC performance as it declined marginally by 0.69 percent despite the strong 4.79 percent advance of the EGX 30 in February.

Global markets continued their steady rise during February supported by encouraging signs from the trade negotiations between the US and China and an increasing conviction that the Fed will not raise rates during 2019. Recent comments by Chairman Powell and Vice Chairman Clarida suggest that the economy is in a good place and that further rate increases will be contingent on economic data. Within this context

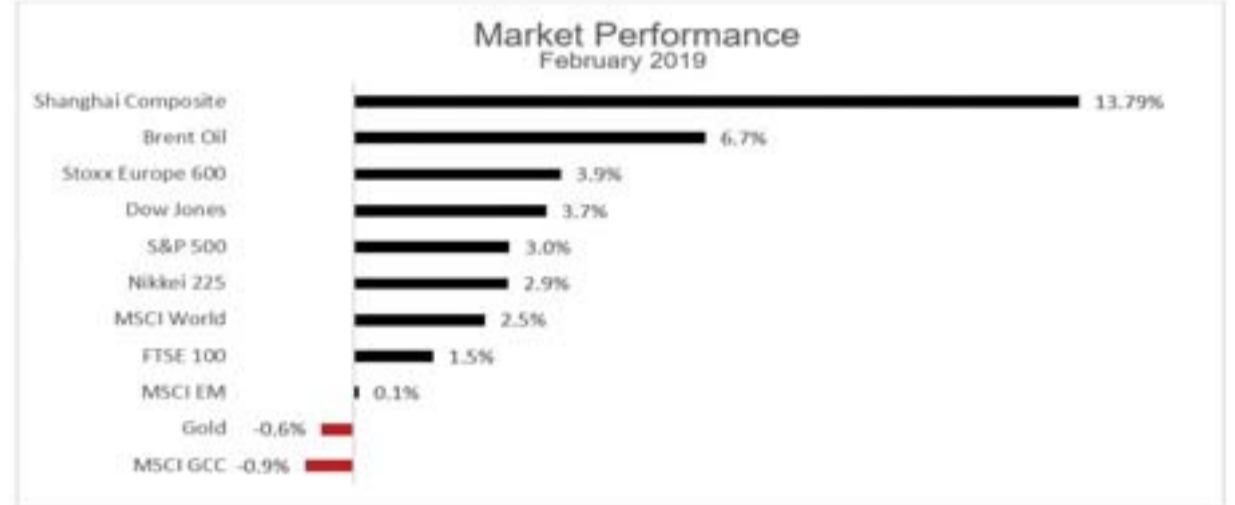


market watchers are expecting a further downgrade to the US outlook to be issued by the Fed at the March FOMC meeting.

The MSCI All Countries World Index ended February up 2.50 percent, bringing its year-to-date gains to 10.5 percent driven mainly by the robust performance of the US and European markets. Major US Indices continued their drive upwards for the second month of the year to reach double-digit returns. The Dow Jones Industrial Average led the pack with a gain of 4.24 percent for February, followed by the Nasdaq and the S&P 500 with gains of 3.44 percent and 2.97 percent respectively. The tech-heavy Nasdaq is now up 13.5 percent for 2019. Treasuries remained stable with the 10-year trading in a narrow range between 2.6 and 2.7 percent during most of February. It edged up to 2.75 percent after the release of the US GDP data and the Dollar strengthened.

GDP figures which were delayed by almost a month because of the partial US government shutdown, showed that the US economy cooled less than expected during the fourth quarter of 2018. US GDP grew by an annualized 2.6 percent during the last 3 months of 2018 compared to an estimate of 2.2-2.3 percent and a third quarter growth of 3.4 percent, which brings the full year figure to around 3.1 percent. Manufacturing activity decelerated in February as the ISM manufacturing PMI recorded 54.2 down from 56.6 in January and compared to estimates of 55.5. Inflation, on the other hand, remained well contained as core personal consumption expenditures rose by an annualized 1.7 percent during the fourth quarter.

Markets in developed Europe followed suit with major European indices ending the month in the green.



The Stoxx Europe 600 Index added 3.94 percent in February for a 10.4 percent gain for 2019. The German Dax and French CAC40 added 3.07 percent and 4.96 percent respectively bringing their year-to-date gains to 9.1 percent and 10.8 percent. Industrial activity remained weak, however, as the Markit Manufacturing PMI declined below the 50.0 mark in February recording 49.3 compared to 50.5 in January. The preliminary numbers of the Markit Services PMI, on the other hand, showed a marked improvement at 52.3 up from 50.8 last month.

In the UK, the FTSE 100 underperformed its peers adding 1.52 percent during February to bring its total return this year to 5.15 percent. Industrial activity retreated marginally as the Markit Manufacturing PMI declined to 52.0 meeting expectations and compared to revised reading of 52.6 for January. Consumer confidence edged up to -13 compared to -14 for the previous month.

Japanese equities continued their recovery that started with the new year as the Nikkei 225 Index added 2.94 percent in February and is now up 6.85 percent for the year. The Nikkei Manufacturing PMI came in at 48.9 in February slightly above expectations of 48.5 but lower than the 50.3 recorded for

January, while the unemployment rate edged up to 2.5 percent in February from 2.4 percent the previous month.

After a strong start of the year, emerging markets seem to have taken a breather during February as the MSCI EM index advanced marginally by 0.10 percent during February. Geopolitical tensions in Venezuela and the threat of war took a toll on Central and South American markets. Equity markets in Brazil and Mexico declined by 1.86 percent and 2.65 percent respectively. Other notable decliners included the Russian Stock exchange which lost 1.42 percent during February. Emerging Asia, on the other hand, had a nice run during the month as the MSCI Asia ex-Japan advanced by 2.21 percent bringing its year-to-date gains to 9.65 percent.

The OPEC+ agreement to curb oil production in a bid to stabilize oil markets seems to be working as oil prices continued to trend higher for most of February. Brent gained almost 6.6 percent for the month, while WTI gained around 6.4 percent during February which brings their total gain for 2019 to 22.7 percent and 26.0 percent respectively. Oil price recovery, however, was abruptly interrupted by comments by president Trump warning OPEC to "take it easy" in their supply cuts.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

| EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| US Dollar/Transfer | 304.450 |
| Euro | 346.770 |
| Sterling Pound | 404.460 |
| Canadian dollar | 230.300 |
| Turkish lira | 57.770 |
| Swiss Franc | 306.290 |
| US Dollar Buying | 303.250 |

ASIAN COUNTRIES

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Japanese Yen | 2.772 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.309 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.222 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.696 |
| Nepali Rupees | 2.683 |
| Singapore Dollar | 225.600 |
| Hongkong Dollar | 38.788 |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.610 |
| Philippine Peso | 5.865 |
| Thai Baht | 9.614 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 77.864 |

GCC COUNTRIES

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Saudi Riyal | 81.241 |
| Qatari Riyal | 83.675 |
| Omani Riyal | 791.293 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 808.950 |
| UAE Dirham | 82.945 |

ARAB COUNTRIES

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Egyptian Pound - Cash | 19.650 |
|-----------------------|--------|

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 17.350 |
| Yemen Riyal/for 1000 | 1.223 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 103.200 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 430.010 |
| Lebanese Lira/for 1000 | 2.030 |
| Syrian Lira | 0.000 |
| Morocco Dirham | 32.423 |

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

| Rate for Transfer | Selling Rate |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| US Dollar | 303.990 |
| Canadian Dollar | 229.335 |
| Sterling Pound | 403.950 |
| Euro | 348.045 |
| Swiss Franc | 306.250 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 808.290 |
| UAE Dirhams | 83.155 |
| Qatari Riyals | 84.390 |
| Saudi Riyals | 81.945 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 429.975 |
| Egyptian Pound | 17.345 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.693 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.289 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.192 |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.612 |
| Philippines Peso | 5.868 |
| Cyprus pound | 18.085 |
| Japanese Yen | 3.715 |
| Syrian Pound | 1.590 |
| Nepalese Rupees | 2.685 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 75.580 |
| Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 45.740 |

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Thai Bhat | 10.555 |
| Turkish Lira | 57.025 |
| Singapore dollars | 224.844 |

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

| CURRENCY | BUY | SELL |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| Europe | | |
| British Pound | 0.393205 | 0.407105 |
| Czech Korune | 0.005423 | 0.014723 |
| Danish Krone | 0.042115 | 0.047115 |
| Euro | 0.337088 | 0.350788 |
| Georgian Lari | 0.112918 | 0.112918 |
| Hungarian O.001000 | 0.001190 | |
| Norwegian Krone | 0.031076 | 0.036276 |
| Romanian Leu | 0.055631 | 0.072481 |
| Russian ruble | 0.004624 | 0.004624 |
| Slovakia | 0.009102 | 0.019102 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.028469 | 0.033469 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.297887 | 0.0308887 |
| Australasia | | |
| Australian Dollar | 0.206842 | 0.218842 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 0.200368 | 0.209868 |
| America | | |
| Canadian Dollar | 0.222938 | 0.231938 |
| US Dollars | 0.300350 | 0.305650 |
| US Dollars Mint | 0.300850 | 0.305650 |
| Asia | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 0.003053 | 0.003854 |
| Chinese Yuan | 0.043972 | 0.047472 |

| | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Hong Kong Dollar | 0.036696 | 0.039446 |
| Indian Rupee | 0.003645 | 0.004417 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000017 | 0.000023 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.002634 | 0.002814 |
| Korean Won | 0.000260 | 0.000275 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 0.070908 | 0.076908 |
| Nepalese Rupee | 0.002610 | 0.002950 |
| Pakistan Rupee | 0.001538 | 0.002308 |
| Philippine Peso | 0.005799 | 0.006099 |
| Singapore Dollar | 0.219128 | 0.229128 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 0.001364 | 0.001944 |
| Taiwan | 0.009747 | 0.009927 |
| Thai Baht | 0.009259 | 0.009809 |
| Vietnamese Dong | 0.00013 | 0.00013 |
| Arab | | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 0.792989 | 0.809480 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.017121 | 0.019721 |
| Iranian Riyal | 0.000084 | 0.000086 |
| Iraqi Dinar | 0.000211 | 0.000271 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 0.424503 | 0.433503 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound | 0.000151 | 0.000251 |
| Moroccan Dirhams | 0.022129 | 0.046129 |
| Omani Riyal | 0.784461 | 0.790141 |
| Qatar Riyal | 0.079335 | 0.084275 |
| audi Riyal | 0.080100 | 0.081400 |
| Syrian Pound | 0.001291 | 0.001511 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 0.096334 | 0.104334 |
| Turkish Lira | 0.050420 | 0.063920 |
| UAE Dirhams | 0.081466 | 0.083166 |
| Yemeni Riyal | 0.000990 | 0.001070 |

Business

BMW could shift some UK engine, Mini output if no orderly Brexit

Daimler's Zetsche optimistic UK will avoid no-deal Brexit



GENEVA: New BMW electrified cars are displayed during a press day ahead of the Geneva International Motor Show in Geneva yesterday. —AFP



GENEVA: The new Ferrari F8 Tributo is displayed at the booth of Italian carmaker yesterday during a press day ahead of the Geneva International Motor Show in Geneva. The 2019 edition of the Geneva International Motor Show will be held from March 7 to March 17, 2019. —AFP

GENEVA: BMW could move some production of engines and its Mini model out of Britain if the country does not secure an orderly departure from the European Union, the German carmaker said on Tuesday, in the latest Brexit warning from the auto industry.

Britain, the world's fifth-largest economy, is due to leave the EU on March 29 but an agreement between London and Brussels has been rejected by British lawmakers leaving open the possibility of a chaotic exit that could hit trade. One risk of a no-deal Brexit is that British-made engines will no longer be counted as EU content, pushing the total level in some cars below the threshold of around 55 to 60 percent required in many international trade agreements.

"We have some flexibility on the engine side with Steyr in Austria," Peter Schwarzenbauer, the head of BMW's Mini brand, told Reuters at the Geneva car show, referring to another BMW plant. "We would need to make some adjustments towards Steyr."

"We are preparing to be able to do it. Like we are preparing warehouses in the UK to produce cars," Schwarzenbauer said. A final decision on whether to transfer some production of engines from Hams Hall in central England, where BMW built over 375,000 engines last year, to Austria has not yet been taken, Schwarzenbauer added.

Asked by Sky News if BMW could move Mini production out of its Oxford plant in southern England in the event of a chaotic Brexit, Schwarzenbauer said: "We at least have to consider it."

Britain's car industry, which employs around 850,000 people and is largely owned by foreign manufacturers, has been rushing through plans to cope with a potential no-deal Brexit, such as building up inventories and in some cases organizing plant closures around Brexit day.

'Future in doubt'

However, Prime Minister Theresa May said last week

that if UK lawmakers again rejected her Brexit deal, she would offer them a series of votes that could lead her to ask Brussels for a delay. BMW said in September it was moving the annual maintenance shutdown for its Oxford Mini plant to April in case of Brexit disruption.

"We have made preparations. If Brexit is delayed we can postpone some measures, but the early summer break remains scheduled for April," CEO Harald Krueger said at the car show.

Shutdowns and stockpiles take time and money to arrange, as for example employee holidays and suppliers are affected, making them hard to change. And so while carmakers are keen to avoid a no-deal Brexit, they also do not want the process to drag on.

BMW made 234,183 cars in Britain last year, out of the country's total production of about 1.5 million.

Japanese carmaker Toyota also called for clarity on Brexit. "Frankly speaking, we would just like to get certainty as quickly as possible," Johan van Zyl, president and CEO of Toyota Europe said at an event late

Monday, echoing recent comments from UK luxury sports car maker Aston Martin.

Zyl said Brexit planning had come at a "huge cost" and warned Britain needed to secure a frictionless trade deal with the EU. "If anything happens between the EU and UK that will have a negative impact on competitiveness of the UK operations, it will put the future in doubt," he said, referring to the entire UK car industry.

Toyota made 129,070 cars at its Burnaston plant in central England in 2018 and is currently ramping up production of its new Corolla model. Carlos Tavares, CEO of Peugeot and Citroen maker PSA Group, was more relaxed about a potential Brexit delay, saying he was in favor if the time was used to find a deal.

Daimler boss Dieter Zetsche, meanwhile, was hopeful a deal could be reached.

"It's a game of poker. I am an optimistic person, and I hope that a no-deal Brexit is not realistic," he said. —Reuters

Huawei Mate 20 Pro wins its first 'Best Smartphone' at MWC Barcelona 2019

KUWAIT: Huawei Consumer Business Group (BG) received an award from the event organizer at MWC Barcelona 2019. The HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro was named the "Best Smartphone" in recognition of its powerful performance, outstanding camera system, long battery life, innovative charging solutions and striking design. This coveted accolade serves as a testament to Huawei's leading technologies and its commitment to delivering the best products and user experiences to consumers around the world.

Kevin Ho, President of Handset Business, Huawei Consumer BG, said, "We would like to thank GSMA for its recognition of the HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro. The HUAWEI Mate 20 Series inherits the company's innovative DNA and most importantly, groundbreaking technologies that bring consumers the ultimate user experience. The strong sales figures tell us that the HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro has also won the love and trust from global consumers. Through our groundbreaking technology, we are committed to bringing consumers the best products and experiences."

First nominated and then named the "Best Smartphone" by GSMA, HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro is Huawei's latest flagship smartphone. Representing the best of Huawei's breakthrough technologies, HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro is powered by the world's first 7nm mobile AI chipset Kirin 980, enabling top-class performance and battery life. It supports 40W HUAWEI SuperCharge, one of the fastest smartphone charging solutions on the market, 15W HUAWEI Wireless Quick Charge and the innovative Reverse Wireless Charging



that lets its users charge other devices and electronic gadgets wirelessly. At the back of the device is the Matrix Camera System, which incorporates the Leica Ultra Wide Angle Lens to enable wide-angle photography and capturing at macro distances. HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro comes with EMUI 9.0, Huawei's nature-inspired Android-based custom operating system, which introduces gesture navigation and a host of other new features that help users get the most out of their devices.

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting more than 750 operators with over 350 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem. The GSMA also produces the industry-leading MWC

events held annually in Barcelona, Los Angeles and Shanghai, as well as the Mobile 360 Series of regional conferences.

Driven by a "consumer-first" ethos, Huawei is committed to enabling all people to enjoy the benefits of the digital lifestyle. At the advent of 5G technology, Huawei is one of the few manufacturers that has the capability to develop the full breadth of 5G products and deliver a fully synergized user experience. At MWC Barcelona 2019, Huawei unveiled HUAWEI Mate X, the company's first 5G foldable phone; the HUAWEI MateBook X Pro, HUAWEI MateBook 14 and HUAWEI MateBook 13; as well as HUAWEI 5G CPE Pro.

India's February jobless rate climbed to 7.2%

NEW DELHI: The unemployment rate in India rose to 7.2 percent in February 2019, the highest since September 2016, and up from 5.9 percent in February 2018, according to data compiled by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) that was released yesterday.

The unemployment rate has climbed despite a fall in the number of job seekers, Mahesh Vyas, head of the Mumbai-based think tank told Reuters, citing an estimated fall in the labour force participation rate. The number of employed persons in India was estimated at 400 million in February compared with 406 million a year ago, he said. The CMIE numbers are based on a survey of tens of thousands of households across India. The figures are regarded by many economists as more credible than the jobless data pro-

duced by the government.

The figures will be unwelcome news for Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of a general election due to be held by early May. Concerns about weak farm prices and low jobs growth are often brought up as election issues by opposition parties. When the government has released official data for the jobless rate in the past it has tended to be out-of-date. But recently it withheld a batch of data because officials said they needed to check its veracity.

The figures that were withheld in December were leaked to a local newspaper a few weeks ago, and showed that India's unemployment rate rose to its highest level in at least 45 years in 2017/18.

A CMIE report released in January said nearly 11 million people lost jobs in 2018 after the demonetization of high value notes in late 2016 and the chaotic launch of a new goods and services tax in 2017, hit millions of small businesses.

The government told Parliament last month that it did not have data on the impact of demonetisation on jobs in small businesses. —Reuters

US and China inch towards limited trade deal

LONDON: China and the United States appear to be inching towards a trade deal, with leaders in both countries anxious to avoid a further, politically unpopular slowdown in their economies.

China has reportedly offered to boost its purchases of farm and energy products substantially while making more modest concessions on technology transfer, intellectual property, market access, industrial policy and subsidies.

China is already the world's largest net importer of oil and is set to become the largest importer of liquefied natural gas within the next few years, so the purchases allow the country to source sup-

plies it will need anyway. By agreeing to buy LNG and crude from the United States, China is not making much of a concession; the only losers are rival suppliers such as Australia, Canada, Russia and around the Middle East Gulf.

Similar logic applies to farm products, where China is a major net importer; any bilateral trade deal will come mostly at the expense of third-country exporters such as Russia, Argentina and Brazil.

China's import requirements could also be used to justify including major capital equipment purchases in any eventual deal, including aircraft and semiconductor manufacturing kit. Major purchases of farm and energy products would give a boost to the White House, shoring up support in farm and energy-producing states critical to President Donald Trump's re-election campaign in 2020. —Reuters

China cuts taxes, sees 'tough struggle' as growth slows

BEIJING: China's premier warned yesterday that the country faces a "tough struggle" as he unveiled tax cuts to prop up a stuttering economy while increasing military spending to nearly \$180 billion.

The slowdown and US trade war have become major challenges for President Xi Jinping, a year after becoming the country's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong with the abolition of term limits and etching of his name into the constitution. Premier Li Keqiang told the opening session of China's annual National People's Congress that the government is targeting growth of 6.0-6.5 percent this year for the world's second-largest economy, lowering its range from 2018. Nearly 3,000 delegates from across the country gathered under tight security, with legislation aimed at improving conditions for foreign investors topping the agenda of the two-week session.

"In pursuing development this year, we will face a graver and more complicated environment as well as risks and challenges ... that are greater in number and size," Li said in his speech. "We must be fully prepared for a tough struggle," he said. The government had set a target of around 6.5 percent in 2018 and eventually recorded official growth of 6.6 percent—the slowest pace in nearly three decades. Three-quarters of provinces have already lowered their annual growth targets this year.

Taxes cut, spending boosted

"We have made a moderate adjustment to our projection on the basis of a thorough assessment of destabilizing factors and uncertainties affecting the economic performance," Li said. To combat slowing growth, policymakers have said they will lower taxes, reduce fees and streamline red tape.

China will cut company taxes and employer social insurance contributions paid on behalf of workers by nearly 2 trillion yuan (\$298 billion), Li said. The value-added tax for manufacturers will be lowered to 13 percent from 16 percent and drop one percent for transportation and construction industries.

Beijing will also lift spending, with China's targeted fiscal deficit set to increase to 2.8 percent of GDP, from 2.6 percent last year. "They need to strike a balance between boosting economic activity and not restarting another debt-fueled boom," said Tai Hui of JP Morgan Asset Management.

Fiscal policy will be "proactive", while monetary policy will remain "prudent", Li said, outlining cuts to the reserve ratios at medium and small banks to unleash more funds into the economy.

Beijing is determined to achieve above six percent growth for the next two years to "meet its promise" of doubling GDP for the decade ending 2020, said Lu Ting, an analyst at Nomura bank. —AFP

Zain offers all-new Galaxy S10 and Galaxy S10+ smartphones

Samsung's latest flagship devices after 10 years of pioneering mobile firsts

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the offering of Galaxy S10 and Galaxy S10+, Samsung's latest flagship devices that are the result of 10 years of pioneering mobile firsts and introduce the next generation of mobile innovation.

Zain offers the new generation of Samsung's flagship devices knowing the passion customers have for the latest and most advanced products in the world of technology. The all-new Galaxy devices feature precise laser cutting, on-screen security, and a Dynamic AMOLED that's easy on the eyes and makes the Infinity-O Display the most innovative Galaxy screen yet.

Zain's postpaid customers can now get the new Galaxy S10+ device with a variety of new plans starting at KD 38 monthly, including 100 GBs of 4G LTE Internet and 2500 local minutes. The company is keen on offering the most flexible and competi-

tive plans to suit customers' unique personal and professional needs.

The latest addition to Samsung's Galaxy smartphone lineup is built on the best-in-class Galaxy Foundation of design innovation and cutting-edge technology. Security was moved from the back of the phone to the front, fusing the Ultrasonic Fingerprint directly into the screen. The Ultra Wide Camera allows taking stunning, cinematic photos with a 123 degree field of vision, and the intelligent camera helps users shoot stunning photos by suggesting image compositions and automatically optimizing camera settings to the scene. The new Galaxy lineup also features Dolby Atmos enhanced sound with stereo speakers tuned by AKG.

The all-new Galaxy S10 and Galaxy S10+ feature a 24-Hour Intelligent Battery to power the devices all day long by learning the user's daily routine and usage pat-

terns, powering down apps they don't need. Also, Adaptive Power Saving Mode manages the user's battery life based on the prediction of their day. In addition, wireless PowerShare gives users the ability to share their power with other devices, while fast Wireless Charging 2.0 gets the phone back to 100%, faster.

This offering comes in line with Zain's aim to provide its customers with a superior telecommunications 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.



KAMCO successfully concludes role in Boursa privatization

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company ("KAMCO"), a leading investment firm with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced the successful completion of its advisory role in the bidding process organized by the Capital Markets Authority ("CMA") of Kuwait for an equity stake in Boursa Kuwait. In February 2018, the consortium led by Tri-International Consulting Group ("TICG"), KAMCO and Oliver Wyman was appointed by the CMA, along with ASAR - Al-Ruwayeh & Partners and Al-Hossam Legal - Al-Turqi & Partners, to lead the privatization process and played a pivotal role in managing the overall transaction, liaising closely with prospective investors and overseeing the preparation of all documentation and communication throughout the 12-month period.



Khaled Fouad

20 years of expertise

Khaled Fouad, Chief Investment Officer of KAMCO, said, "KAMCO's 20 years' worth of experience in the investment field furthers our ability to succeed in such complex transactions. The Firm's wide network base, which consists of local and international players, attracted local companies to participate in the bidding process."

Fouad added, "I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the CMA for leading and organizing this initiative. We are humbled by the trust and confidence they placed in our team to complete this critical stage in the privatization process and deliver optimum results. This phase represents the government's support on financial and structural reforms in Kuwait, marking a historic moment for the country's financial sector and economy. I would also like to thank the Ministry of Finance, the General Organization for Social Insurance, and Boursa Kuwait's management for their support in the successful outcome of this landmark transaction. We are also grateful for the cooperation and dedication placed forth by our partners in this success; namely, Tri International Consulting Group ("TICG"), Oliver Wyman and the legal advisors appointed for this complex transaction, ASAR - Al Ruwayeh & Partners and Al-Hossam Legal - Al-Turqi & Partners."

He also said, "We will continue to strengthen our leadership role in the regional investment banking scene, further enhancing the role of the private sector through economic developments, attracting regional and international investors, and boosting investor confidence in local capital markets."

The advisory group's efforts were primarily focused on highlighting and positioning Boursa Kuwait as a leading regional stock exchange, while working with the CMA and Boursa Kuwait management team to develop the equity story and liaise with prospective investors on the transaction. The marketing efforts prior and during the process attracted the attention of 5 qualified international operators, in addition to 15 local companies who expressed their interest to bid on the 44 percent stake, the maximum equity allocation authorized by the CMA for investors. The advisory group was able to close the transaction successfully in record time, after attaining all approvals from the CMA on 14 February 2019, in which the highest bidder was selected. The consortium offered 237 fils per share, amounting to KD 19.94 million for the 44 percent equity stake. A 6 percent stake is allocated to the Public Institution for Social Security ("PISS") with a total amount of KD 1.25 million. This concludes the first phase which is equivalent to 50 percent of the privatization process.

NBK wins two new awards for 2019 from Global Finance

KUWAIT: In its annual survey which gathers the opinion of hundreds of established financial experts, analysts, senior consultancy and executives from around the world, Global Finance Magazine awarded the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) two new awards for the year 2019, the first is the "Best Bank for Liquidity Management Middle East and North Africa" and the second is "Best Treasury and Cash Management in Kuwait".

Global Finance Magazine rates the best providers in treasury and cash management based on a variety of criteria that comprise profitability, market share, customer service, competitive pricing, innovative products and the level to which these institutions exceed their

competitors in terms of providing treasury and cash management services.

The Magazine then announces the winners in the four sub-categories in 65 countries and seven geographic regions across the world, covering Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, the North Region, North America and Western Europe.

The awards ceremony will be held on the sidelines of the International Banking Operations Seminar, SIBOS 2019, which will be hosted in London in September.

Headquartered in New York, Global Finance was founded in 1987 and has over 50,000 readers from 188 countries. Global Finance's audience includes Chairmen, Presidents, CEOs, CFOs, Treasurers and other senior financial officers responsible for making investment and strategic business decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions.

Each year, Global Finance selects the best financial institutions in a thorough survey around the world. These awards have become a recognized and trusted standard of excellence, regionally and internationally. NBK maintains the high-



est credit ratings among banks in the Middle East, receiving leading ratings from leading agencies such as Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's. NBK has a strong capitalization and prudent lending policies, a systematic approach to asset

management, and a stable management. NBK is also ranked among the 50 safest banks in the world for the 13th consecutive year, and has been awarded the "Best Bank in Kuwait" by The Banker, Euromoney and Global Finance in 2018.

Kuwait branch of Al-Rajhi Bank signs JV agreement with Gulf Bank

KUWAIT: Al-Rajhi Bank has become the first non-Kuwaiti bank to sign a joint venture agreement with Gulf Bank, to provide banking services within Kuwait. The agreement allows Al-Rajhi Bank - Kuwait Branch customers to withdraw and deposit money, in addition to checking their bank balance and transferring money through Gulf Bank's ATMs, located across the country. Customers will be able to use the same standard screens used by Gulf Bank customers with ease.

Fahad Al-Oumi, Head of Retail Banking, Al-Rajhi Bank - Kuwait Branch, commented on the partnership: "We are delighted to partner with Gulf Bank, one of the leading banks in Kuwait, to provide the best banking services to our customers. The agreement comes as a part of our Kuwait expansion strategy, enabling us in providing customers with a seamless experience, meeting their financial needs regardless of their location. In addition, Al-Rajhi Bank continues to support customers located in Kuwait through our dedicated call center at 1812333," he said.

Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for



External Communications at Gulf Bank, added: "As a leading Kuwaiti bank, we believe that we need to work alongside other regional banking leaders to facilitate the provision of banking services to their customers in Kuwait. We are proud to be working alongside Al-Rajhi Bank, whereby their customers can use Gulf Bank's ATMs, and we hope that this agreement will result in

the enhancement of their local presence and wish them success and prosperity."

Gulf Bank is one of the leading banks in Kuwait and offers a wide range of personal and corporate banking services as well as treasury and other financial services through a large network of 58 branches and more than 300 ATMs distributed throughout Kuwait.

KFH concludes comprehensive training program for KPC employees

KUWAIT: As part of supporting the community and developing national competencies, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) concluded a comprehensive training program especially designed for Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) employees. This aims to introduce the expertise and mechanisms of "KFH", the world leading Islamic financial institution.

The one-month program covered different areas in some key sectors at KFH through workshops and case studies on the functions and importance of risk management, treasury, strategy departments, as well as commercial finance products and corporate banking, in supporting the development process.

Focusing on KFH Sharia-compliant products and methods, the program covered areas in project management, operations, financial control, time management, and the importance of creative cooperation and workshops in information security, offering solutions to



KFH's staff with trainees

overcome obstacles.

AbdulWahab Al-Roshood, Group Chief Treasury Officer at KFH said: "Through this program, KFH was keen to provide a comprehensive overview of all departments and sectors of KFH, and to acquaint KPC employees with KFH's business model, products and services, showing our interest in offering innovative products and services."

"This program is part of KFH's efforts to strengthen the Islamic banking industry, which confirmed its status in the global markets," he added.

Al-Roshood stressed KFH's continued efforts to provide such training programs that reflect its vision of transferring its expertise to various public and private institutions. KFH attaches great importance to the development of national talents, cadres and competencies. By harnessing all potentials, KFH becomes a strategic partner in serving youth and society to achieve comprehensive development and growth, he said. For their part, KPC employees hailed KFH's initiative and the benefits they have gained on both educational and occupational levels.

Technology



Ooredoo the first to launch Galaxy S10 devices in collaboration with Al Babtain Turnkey Solutions

Special draw on Infinity car for all customers on the day of the launch



Ohoud Al-Enezi takes a look at the device

KUWAIT: Committing to its position as the leader of telecommunication in Kuwait, and continuing its promise to deliver products and services that enrich the lives of its customers, Ooredoo Kuwait collaborated with Al Babtain Turnkey Solutions for the second consecutive year to launch the new Samsung flagship smartphone devices, the Galaxy S10, Galaxy S10+ and the Galaxy S10e.

Customers and technology enthusiasts attended the event on Monday at Ooredoo's head office, which was launched with exclusive Shamel plans for the attendees of the event. Ooredoo's head office received customers from 4 p.m. until midnight, who attended to benefit from an exclusive one-day offer. The event was attended by several social media influencers such as Ahoud Al Anezi, Slorks, iTunes Q8, and Mahmoud Bushehri. Some of the influencers launched a social media campaign ahead of the event.

The event was also attended by representatives of Al Babtain Turnkey Solutions, the official distributor of Samsung in Kuwait, and representatives of the international brand Samsung, who lauded Ooredoo's efforts in organizing a big event to launch the new flagship devices. The representatives commended the organization and collaboration between different volunteer groups from across Ooredoo's different departments, who participated in organizing the event and helping customers with their queries.

The new devices boast a number of key specifications, such as the Infinity-O Display, multi-camera with ultra wide camera, ultrasonic fingerprint scanner, wireless power share, 24-hour intelligent battery, and game optimization. The Galaxy S10 screen sizes range from 6.4" on the Galaxy S10+, 6.1" on the Galaxy S10, and 5.8" on the Galaxy S10e with external memory of up to 512GB. A number of restaurants and coffee shops were present at the event to serve refreshments, food and snacks to the attendees of the event while they await



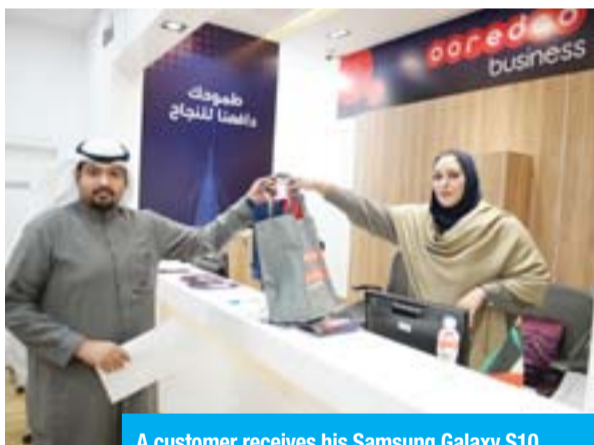
Nazem Al-Ghubra, Yusuf Al-Shallal and Mijbil Alalyoub

their devices. They include Costa, Johnny Rockets, Overly, and Hive.

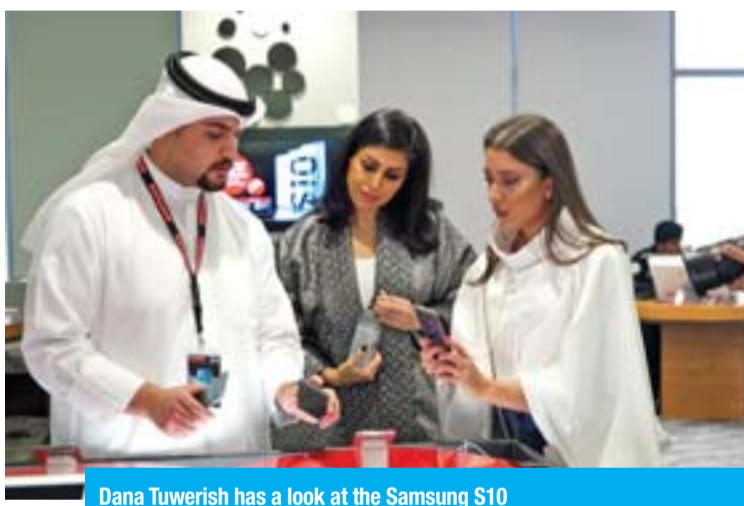
Commenting on the launch event, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alalyoub said that the event reiterates Ooredoo's commitment to providing customers with the best services and the latest devices to enrich their experiences and fulfill their needs. He added: "Ooredoo extends its deepest gratitude to Al Babtain Turnkey Solutions for their contribution to this event for the second consecutive year, launching the latest Samsung flagship devices which is prominent among all smartphones worldwide.

We look forward to delivering more products for our esteemed customers."

Alalyoub also expressed his gratitude towards the team of volunteers from across the company's different departments and Project Leaders Group who participated in organizing the events and controlling the flow of customers in and out of the head office, to ensure that everything works smoothly during the event. Samsung's latest Galaxy S10, Galaxy S10+ and Galaxy S10e devices are available to customers in Ooredoo's branches around Kuwait and its official distributors, in addition to its online shop.



A customer receives his Samsung Galaxy S10



Dana Tuwerish has a look at the Samsung S10



Abdul Razaq Al Mutawa takes a look at the new device



Group pictures



Mijbil Alalyoub with the group "Leaders of Tomorrow"

Health

India to showcase its best medical capabilities in Kuwait

Indian Healthcare expo on March 17 & 18

KUWAIT: The Embassy of India in Kuwait, in association with the Indian Doctors Forum (IDF), Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), is organizing a high-profile Indian medical tourism exhibition titled 'Best of Indian Healthcare Expo 2019' at the Radisson Blu Hotel on 17 and 18 of March 2019, which will witness the participation of leading Indian hospitals, top-notch healthcare providers and wellness centers from several cities in India, along with major medical tourism planners.

The medical expo will provide an excellent opportunity for citizens and residents in Kuwait to interact with some of the top Indian Physicians/medical experts in all critical departments and also with world-renowned healthcare providers. A direct firsthand familiarization with world class advanced healthcare facilities provided by the finest of the Indian medical industry, at the best economic value, awaits them. The exhibition will also facilitate networking and information exchange opportunities between healthcare professionals from India and their counterparts in Kuwait.

The Indian medical expo serves as an invaluable introduction for people seeking high-quality cost-effective healthcare services, as well as recuperative and rejuvenating treatments in India. Specialist physicians and hospital management

professionals, hospital and nursing home representatives will be on hand during the expo period to offer professional advice on medical services and the best facilities available in India for a wide range of ailments.

Among the leading hospitals and healthcare centers that are expected to participate in this Expo are - Apollo Hospital, Max Super Specialty Hospital, Aster DM Healthcare, Artemis Health Sciences, Kerala Institute of Medical Sciences, Saifee Hospital, Meitra Hospital, Unity Care and Health Services, Iqraa Hospitals, AJ Hospital, Children's Hospital, Manipal Health Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Aryavaidyasala Kottakal, Somatheeram Ayurveda Village, Ayur Green and a whole host of other healthcare providers from India.

High-tech solutions

Recent advances in medical, scientific and technological fields have impacted the healthcare industry and resulted in cutting-edge solutions to treat and manage life threatening communicable and non-communicable diseases. Providing high quality medical care, using the latest equipment and treatment modalities, along with rapid advances in communication, transport and information technologies, has catapulted India into a major medical tourism destination among the global healthcare community.



An exceptionally talented pool of medical specialists and a large cadre of professional healthcare personnel have also placed India among a handful of nations that can deliver high-tech solutions to healthcare problems in a cost-effective and efficient manner. It is no wonder then that India is the destination of choice for international patients seeking high-quality medical care that has otherwise become either too expensive, or is not available in a timely manner in their own countries.

Each year millions of people travel overseas looking for best quality affordable medical treatments for themselves or their loved ones, and

Kuwaiti citizens are no exception. It is estimated that the country spends in excess of a billion dollars annually to treat citizens abroad, while hundreds more seek overseas medical care at their own expense. In addition to the close geographical proximity and ease of travel, the centuries-old interactions between people of India and Kuwait have led to mutual respect for their cultures and customs.

The spirit of warm hospitality towards foreigners that India is well-known for, combined with the experienced, compassionate and dedicated nursing care available in the country, makes India an

ideal medical-tourism destination for Kuwaiti friends. The 'Best of Indian Healthcare Expo 2019' is a welcome opportunity for patients and their caregivers in Kuwait to make timely choices regarding the best and most cost-effective treatments that are readily available in Indian hospitals and healthcare centers. The exhibition will also feature tourism opportunities from renowned travel companies that will help facilitate complete packages for patients and visitors. The 2-day exhibition will be open to the public free of any entry cost from 1000 hrs to 2000 hrs on 17-18 March 2019 at Radisson Blu hotel, Kuwait.

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- ◆ 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.

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Stars

CROSSWORD 2150



ACROSS

1. Cloak that is folded or wrapped around a person.
5. Explore natural caves.
12. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
15. A German man.
16. Subdivision not used in some classifications.
17. (Irish) The sea personified.
18. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
19. Old or New World straight-billed game bird of the sandpiper family.
20. A vacuum tube in which a hot cathode emits a beam of electrons that pass through a high voltage anode and are focused or deflected before hitting a phosphorescent screen.
21. (Linguistics) The form of a word after all affixes are removed.
22. A conspicuous disparity or difference as between two figures.
24. A shoe covering the ankle.
26. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
28. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.
30. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
31. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
32. A short introductory essay preceding the text of a book.
34. Report or maintain.
38. Make believe.
42. The cry made by sheep.
43. United States labor organizer who ran for President as a socialist (1855-1926).
48. (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
50. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
52. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
53. 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.
54. Type genus of the Amidae.
56. Marked by good order and cleanliness in appearance or habits.
60. A member of the Algonquian people living in Wisconsin the Fox River valley and the shores of Green Bay.
63. The United Nations agency concerned with the international organization of food and agriculture.
66. (biology) Having an ornamental plume or feathery tuft.
70. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
74. Being eight more than sixty.
75. Scale-like structure between the base of the wing and the halter of a two-winged fly.
77. An associate degree in applied science.
78. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
79. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
81. A United Nations agency that invest directly in companies and guarantees loans to private investors.
82. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity equal to 10 decibels.
83. A large estate in Spanish-speaking countries.
84. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series.

DOWN

1. A mixer incorporating a coil of wires.
2. Income from capital investment paid in a series of regular payments.
3. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
4. A senior clergyman.
5. Air pollution by a mixture of smoke and fog.
6. The 17th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
7. Antineoplastic drug (trade name Elspar) sometimes used to treat lymphoblastic leukemia.
8. United States sculptor and architect whose public works include the memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War in Washington (born in 1959).
9. An agency of the United Nations responsible for programs to aid education and the health of children and mothers in developing countries.
10. 1 species.
11. The median ridge on the breastbone of birds that fly.
12. Genus of erect herbs of the Middle East having showy flowers.
13. A program that is broadcast again.
14. An honorary arts degree.
23. Alsatian artist and poet who was cofounder of Dadaism in Zurich.
25. Toward the inside of the cheek.
27. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
29. God of the earth.
33. A fluorocarbon with chlorine.
35. An island of central Hawaii.
36. (Scotland) A landowner.
37. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
39. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
40. A republic in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.
41. Australian clover fern.
44. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
45. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
46. Scottish philosopher of common sense who opposed the ideas of David Hume (1710-1796).
47. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
49. United States baseball player (born in 1931).
51. A metric unit of length equal to one-billionth of a meter.
55. A small cake leavened with yeast.
57. Eurasian perennial bulbous herbs.
58. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
59. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
61. Being or given to servile imitation.
62. Any of various lithe-bodied round-headed fissiped mammals many with retractile claws.
64. A shaft on which a wheel rotates.
65. Rounded like an egg.
67. A member of a rural Finnish people living in eastern Russia.
68. On or toward the lee.
69. A circular segment of a curve.
71. A quantity that is added.
72. The handle of a weapon or tool.
73. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
76. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
80. A radioactive element of the actinide series.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your psychic side is showing but not everyone appreciates it. Keep it to yourself but act upon those good ideas you have now. Quietly go about putting them into action at work today. When the fruit becomes ripened coworkers will realize the value of your gut instinct. Get out of work as quickly as you can today and do something that engages your soul such as walking through a city garden or geocaching which puts your mind into gear without really engaging the stress cycle. Take your lover and enjoy a good dinner out tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Most people see you as being organized because you're so patient, supposedly. Today is one that allows you the freedom and the intelligence to organize your life both at work and at home in a manner you consider extraordinary and you're proud. Practical issues such as this make you happy but it's extra today. You can also access your more spiritual side as well. Perhaps there's a religious or spiritual class close so that you can learn through the teachings of others. Take what you need from the class and lose the rest because you already have pretty good knowledge on how you believe. Use your gut. Enjoy this great day.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You'll find yourself dreaming of last night's romantic interlude with your lover. You can't wait for a repeat tonight but, alas, you have to work. Things you may have dreamed of while sleeping last night raise their great head this morning so that you have an excitement to experiment at work. Guess what? You're right. Anything you touch now, Gemini, will work to your advantage. That means more money too. Use your gut to help you achieve your greatest desires. You've got the opportunity and the manpower to assist you now. Don't put it off until tomorrow. The timing is great now. This evening will be a great repeat of last night. Enjoy this day.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This isn't going to be your best day but thank goodness it won't last long. Though you're in a crowd you feel as if you're unseen. That's a bad position to be in and not one you're used to for very long. If you can get others attention today you can tell them about your dreams and how you plan to achieve them with their help. Keep your chin up and keep on marching. Cancer. Do what you know needs to be done to make your life run better. Take some time for you tonight even if that means bringing home pizza for dinner.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your emotions are getting the best of you now. You know that's not the best time to take action but you really want to change everything right now, from work to home life. The only thing that really keeps you in check is your family. You know they love you and that alone keeps you from wandering to a new territory or the ends of the earth. You're frustrated, Leo, and that's a challenge that's very hard for you. Outside influences tend to irritate you. Try to stay calm, think and then make your moves. It'll get better soon.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

After a few conversations at work you may be asked if you're psychic. Even though you may believe you're not, you certainly see a number of items today that make you wonder. You're good at deciding what should be done for future revenue or at just how to do a certain job. Logical Virgo that you are will have reason to take notice of today's events. This is also a time for making good money. See how your projects work toward creating more in your checking account. Perhaps your boss may offer you a raise or promote you to a better paying position.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Intuition helps you make good decisions today at work and at home. Communication gifts with others is at the top of your list now and helps you to get your point across in just the right manner. You really care for your coworkers and it shows. Your interest in their lives make them want to help with yours. Some may even become close friends. You talk about yourself in order to show those you care for what not to do in the same situation. Your gift of gab keeps all around you enthralled. Libra, and ready to listen to anything you speak.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Right now is a time for self-analysis. What you're good at and what you should be doing with your life are part of the items you're examining. Something just doesn't seem right and you can't stand the idea that you're wasting an item of which you should be able to make good use. You're a little tense meaning no one needs to confront you. There's always that one person though who must try you just once Scorpio before they find out what your Zodiac Sign Symbol means with that fierce tail placed protectively over her back. One time from that sting leaves a lasting impression. Scorpio only you use your mouth in the same manner. Try to look at the good in your life now instead of only seeing the bad. Be optimistic.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a repeat of yesterday's work debacle. Trudge through it today as well without losing your cool. It will get better. There is concern too around your home life and family. Someone is causing problems that you can't overlook. At a place that should be your haven, you're upset and looking for answers to help put all the pieces back into place. Sometimes this is bigger than you. Think of the problem. Don't judge but get the assistance that's needed and let it go. You know this in your heart of hearts, Sagittarius. And you also know intimately that your life is getting better by the day.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be hard to get along with now both at home and at work. Others don't know what to say or do to pacify you. Be aware of this and try not to blow up without getting down to the nitty-gritty of the situation. You need respect now but you seem to be off a little in your work ethic. Give respect in order to get respect, Capricorn. Day dreaming isn't going to help your cause either. You're unhappy with what life's giving you now so try to build better in your mind. That will help but use it in a practical sense.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Work mates see you as commanding and energetic because you are. What's more, your coworkers are willing to follow your suggestions because they see the value in them. They feel a sense about you that creates a willingness to see where your ideas lead. It's almost as if you've been given psychic talents and you have. The universe is answering your call now and giving you better ideas only because you requested it, Aquarius. Take time to enjoy family and friends later but don't be demanding of them. It only works at work.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Forgiveness is the name of the game today. Someone at work or in a friend's position might have offended you in the past. You've come to realize that when you hang on to past hurts, you're the one suffering. Thinking last night before sleep about this made you come to the decision that it's time to turn that loose. It doesn't mean you have to socialize outside work but it does mean you are free of the burden now. Friends want to be close to you now and you're thoroughly enjoying the comradery. Meet them for dinner and play some. Life isn't just about work.

Wordsearch Puzzle

70's Songs 2 - Word Search



- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| AMERICAN PIE | IMAGINE | PIANO MAN |
| BAD GIRLS | LAST DANCE | REUNITED |
| BROWN SUGAR | LOLA | SIGNS |
| DREAM ON | LOVE HURTS | SUNDOWN |
| DREAMS | LOW RIDER | SUPERSTAR |
| DRIFT AWAY | MAGIC MAN | THE GAMBLER |
| EBONY EYES | MY LOVE | WITHOUT YOU |
| FEELINGS | NIGHT FEVER | WOODSTOCK |

Yesterday's Solution

70's Songs 1 - Solution



- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| ANGIE | ISLAND GIRL | OHIO |
| BETH | LAST DANCE | RHIANNON |
| CONVOY | LAYLA | ROXANNE |
| DELTA DAWN | LE FREAK | SUMMER NIGHTS |
| DREAM WEAVER | LOWDOWN | SUPERSTITION |
| FIRE AND RAIN | MIRACLES | THE JOKER |
| FREE BIRD | MISS YOU | WATERLOO |
| HELP ME | NIGHT MOVES | |

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019



People dressed as clowns take part in the annual clown parade in Sesimbra. — AFP

Once-bustling Baghdad boulevard dallies in disrepair

Behind the dilapidated storefronts and collapsing colonnades of Rasheed Street lie the treasures of the Iraqi capital's cultural boom years: old cinemas, artisan shops and smoky cafes playing classic ballads. But with young Iraqis listening to modern music and spending hours in hipster-style coffee shops, the boulevard that bustled non-stop in the 1970s is at risk of being passed over. Authorities have tried to revive the street in recent weeks by removing the security checkpoints and concrete blast walls that lined Rasheed for years.

“After all these years, this coffee shop is the only place we can go to remember”

Announcing the move, Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi extolled: “Rasheed Street is the memory of Baghdad.” Despite his government's best efforts though, it may be reduced to only that. Decades ago, the street's Umm Kulthum Cafe was packed with wistful young men listening to the sultry voice of its namesake, the Egyptian “queen” of Arabic music. “Coming here was a daily tradition for us. We used to have a lovely time,” reminisced Abu Haidar, a

retired army serviceman in his seventies.

It was so busy that customers—writers, men on their way to or from work, and those seeking solace in the music—struggled to call over harried waiters to order muddy coffee and sweet Iraqi tea. Now, it only fills up on Saturdays, the traditional day for meeting up with friends in cafes, when older men chain-smoke and sip hot drinks on wooden benches under framed portraits of Iraq's unseated king, Faisal II.

‘Escape extinction’

“After all these years, this coffee shop is the only place we can go to remember,” said Abu Haidar. “We hope it can escape extinction.” Some date the street's deterioration back to the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein. “I started coming here in 1971, but after 2003, it was ignored,” said Tareq Jamila, 70, another cafe customer. “You wouldn't find the old pioneers, who used to sit in the coffee shop and actually understand Umm Kulthum's songs.” The invasion and sectarian violence that followed saw several bombs planted near Rasheed Street, with the last explosion in 2016 killing more than two dozen people.

Other historic areas of the capital similarly fell into disrepair during the years of bloodshed, with Baghdadis often filled with nostalgia for the past. The floor of the abandoned Mekki Awad theatre, further south in the capital along the winding Tigris River, is blanketed in dust and litter. It once hosted boisterous nighttime shows, but the rows of numbered seats have not been occupied in years. Art galleries dotting the

neighborhoods between the theatre and Rasheed Street have shuttered their doors one after the other. As one of Baghdad's first cinemas, Al-Zawra had long been a legendary stop along Rasheed—but it too lies unused now.

Falling into ruin

Last year, young Iraqi artists organized a walking tour through their capital in an effort to revive some of its historic districts with their own art installations. Along the tired two-storey buildings of Rasheed Street, one photographer hung new versions of decades-old pictures of Baghdad's heralded past. But instead of looking up at the photographs, most shoppers were more interested in the tables selling watches, shimmering carp and fake Adidas. Another Umm Kulthum-themed cafe has opened on Rasheed, choosing one of the singer's nicknames—Al-Ustura, or The Legend—as its name.

Although its traditional yellow-brick walls and stained glass windows are “falling into ruin”, the original Umm Kulthum is soldiering on, said Said Al-Qaissi, 65. “No one has considered renovating or preserving this place which celebrates art,” said Qaissi. While the cafe's elusive owner rarely makes a public appearance, young waiters dish out tea to older gentlemen in sweaters and berets, lost in awe of Umm Kulthum's voice and their own distant memories. — AFP



Iraqi men gather and socialize at Umm Kulthum Cafe on Rasheed street, the oldest street in the capital Baghdad. — AFP photos

UK museum to return emperor's hair locks to Ethiopia



Tewodros II chose to kill himself rather than give himself up to the British after the capture of his mountain capital, Maqdala, in 1868. — Universal History Archive/UiG via Getty Images

A London museum said Monday it will return to Ethiopia locks of hair allegedly taken by British troops from an emperor who committed suicide rather than be captured over 150 years ago. The National Army Museum will repatriate the hair, cut from the head of emperor Tewodros II, following a formal request from Ethiopia last year. “We believe the Ethiopian government claim to repatriate is reasonable and we are pleased to be able to assist,” said Terri Dendy, the museum's head of collections standards and care. She added it had reached the decision after spending “considerable time researching the provenance and cultural sensitivities around this matter”.

“(It) is very much based on the desire to inter the hair within the tomb alongside the emperor,” Dendy said, adding that Tewodros was entombed in Trinity Monastery in northern Ethiopia. The museum noted it was returning the items on the basis they are “human remains”. It acquired the two locks in 1959 — one of which was framed with a letter and the emperor's seal—from the family of an artist who had painted the emperor before his death in 1868, as British soldiers closed in.

The Ethiopian embassy in London hailed the move a “commendable deed”. “This exemplary gesture of goodwill... signifies the dawn of a new level of shared understanding in our complex history,” it said in a statement. The embassy predicted “jubilant

euphoria... is to be expected when it is returned to its rightful home in Ethiopia”. It added officials will hold talks with museum staff on Thursday about repatriating the hair later this month. Ethiopia believes British soldiers removed the locks from Tewodros—a Coptic Christian who had ruled the country then known as Abyssinia since 1855 — after discovering his body inside his fortress at Magdala.

As they closed in, the emperor committed suicide with a pistol that had been a gift from queen Victoria, according to historical accounts. The troops were on an expedition to free European hostages, including British consul Charles Cameron, taken by Tewodros in anger at London's refusal to help in wars with his mostly Muslim neighbors.

The soldiers also looted an 18-carat gold crown, more than 500 ancient manuscripts and a painting. Ethiopia has demanded the return of the most significant of these “treasures of Magdala”, which are housed in British institutions, including London's Victoria and Albert Museum. The requests mirror those of numerous African countries who want art and treasures taken during their colonization by European powers to be repatriated. — AFP

Lifestyle | Fashion



In this photo a salesperson displays sarees bearing the image of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a shop in Mumbai. — AFP photos



A saleswoman (left) tries on a saree bearing the image of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to show it to customer at a shop in Mumbai.

‘Modi sari’ flies off shelves as India poll fever grows

D Gokal is buying a sari for his wife that may not be to everyone’s taste—a huge image of Indian leader Narendra Modi’s face is printed on it. “It’s a beautiful sari, enhanced by Prime Minister Modi. My wife likes it,” Gokal tells AFP at the Paaneri clothing store in central Mumbai. The shop is doing a roaring trade in Modi-themed saris—a traditional women’s garment—as Indians gear up for a general election due by May. Modi, of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), will be seeking a second term in office when the world’s largest democracy heads to the polls.

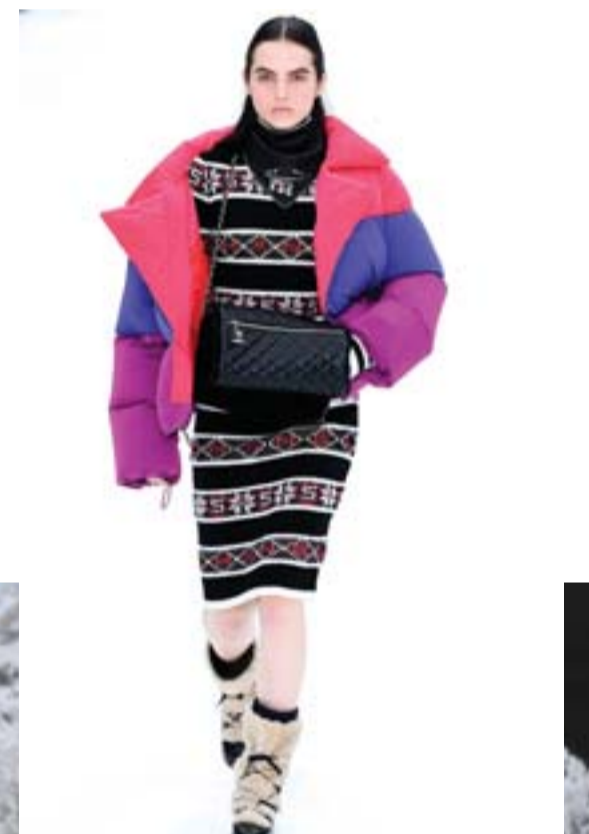
Rahul Gandhi of the main opposition Congress party

will be up against him in the vote, the dates of which are expected to be announced this week. Entrepreneurial garment manufacturers tapped into a groundswell of support for Modi when he successfully bid to become prime minister for the first time in 2014, winning by a landslide. Saris boasting digitally printed images of the white-haired, white-bearded, stocky 68-year-old have become a common sight at BJP rallies across India while supporters were also often seen wearing Modi masks. The barrel-chested Modi famously takes great pride in his appearance, making a break with his more staidly outfitted predecessors with colorful dapper outfits often

topped off with outlandish headgear.

However, a year after being elected he was pilloried when he wore a pinstriped jacket that had his name embroidered in it dozens of times in gold thread during a meeting with then US President Barack Obama. “In 2014 I wasn’t sure if people would wear Modi saris but women were bold enough to try them,” Vinod Gada, the owner of Paaneri, told AFP. “We have sold over 2,200 this year and expect to see a surge in the run up to the election,” he added. The saris—which are printed in factories in India’s financial capital Mumbai and Surat in Gujarat state—cost 1,750 rupees (\$25).

As well as Modi’s face they sport colourful floral patterns and images of tanks and fighter aircraft. They also depict Indian soldiers in battle, including some parachuting to the ground, tapping into jingoistic fervor in India amid heightened tensions with arch-rival Pakistan. For now, Gada has no plans to sell Congress-supporting saris but Indian media reports have said that at least one factory owner has started to make them with the images of Rahul and his sister Priyanka Gandhi on them. — AFP



Models applaud in tribute to late German fashion designer for Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld, at the end of the Chanel Women’s Fall-Winter 2019/2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Grand Palais turned into a wintry village in Paris, yesterday. — AFP photos





A customer stands in front of a shelf full of Nollywood movies in a shop at Idumota market in Lagos. — AFP photos



A man passes by Nigerian movie billboards at a cinema in Lagos.

With cash, crime and drama, Nigeria politics inspire movie makers

With its alliances and betrayals, crimes and cash, and even a dash of witchcraft, the theatrical twists of Nigeria's politics are inspiring directors from the country's Nollywood movie industry. The saga surrounding Nigeria's recent election, delayed for a week just hours before voting started, has film-makers convinced they may have hit movie gold. Nigerians watched as their election delivered all the ingredients of a thriller, including charges of vote card fiddling, armored cars filled with cash delivered to politicians' homes, and even arrests of opponents by the secret police—all in the space of one week.

"I can do 100 movies based on Nigeria politics," said local director Ike Nnaebue. "There is too much drama going on (...) and I believe that, as story tellers, it's our responsibility to start the conversation and begin to start changes." With 190 million people in Nigeria and a growing wider audience on the African continent and among Nigeria's diaspora, Nollywood has become the world's second-largest cinema business after India's Bollywood in terms of the number of films the industry pumps out.

And juicy local politics is increasingly a theme. In "Dr Mekan", a satire released in 2018, Nnaebue tells the tale of the rise of a "repat", a Nigerian who grew up or lived abroad for a long time and who returned to live in Nigeria, often disconnected from reality. "As soon as he comes back from the States, he has fantastic ideas of how to run his state, and wants to become governor of Anambra. He has good intentions, but he doesn't understand how things are being done in Nigeria," the director said.

In one key scene the candidate makes an ambitious election promise to improve agriculture and develop local

rice cultivation. The crowd applaud but a rumor runs through the crowd that his rival is offering food handouts at his rally and the spectators run off to get their free bags of rice-imported from China. In another scene, the candidate's campaign team is busy handing out cash to the crowd, while Mekan himself shouts at young people "Money will destroy you!"

"In this movie, we laugh at us. It's a critic of the foolishness of the politicians and of the people," the director said. "We need to start asking ourselves what is wrong in our country and change it. Cinema is a tool for it." President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected last month after the delayed poll that angered voters. It was the second ballot box victory for Buhari, a one-time military ruler who was first elected in 2015 to lead Africa's top oil producer.

The Godfathers

A sense for change also motivated Mike-Steve Adeleye to write the screenplay of his latest film, "Code Wilo", previewed in Lagos early March. Adeleye did not choose humor, but action to criticize what Nigerian politics has become, and especially the idea of political "Godfathers" who bless or destroy aspiring candidates. In his new film, a Nigerian ruling party's sponsor announces that his daughter will be the candidate for the next state governor, without even consulting his political base or the voters. "Citizens are spectators. They are just watching politics, and they have no word to say on the scenario. It's already written. We are just here to see who will be elected," Adeleye said.

In "Code Wilo", the young candidate and adored daughter of the "godfather" is kidnapped for ransom. "I'm



A street clothing seller passes by two movie vendor stands at Idumota market in Lagos.

hoping that when politicians see the end of the film, they will get scared. I hope it will haunt them and then they will start thinking about what they are doing to us," the director said. Nigeria is a cultural heavyweight in Africa, leading in film and music. But it has long been confined mostly to just entertainment.

But recently, artists such as rappers M.I. or Falz are touring the country to educate young people to vote and to hold their leaders accountable. That message is far from the usual music video clips of champagne, pools or luxury

cars. Ideas may be starting to change little by little on the music scene, but in the cinema "Nollywood is still mainly focused on business. It's all about bling bling and plastic life," Adeleye said. "But we can't keep going like this. Elections after elections, it's getting worse, and it's more depressing. As Africans we have stories to tell, stories that can have an impact and make our society better." — AFP



A worker checks materials in a former cinema in Tulkarm, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. — Reuters photos



Palestinian wedding hall preserves treasures of its cinematic past

Posters of classic movies are scattered on the upper floor of Abdel-Rahim Hanoun's wedding hall, signs of the building's past life as one of the few cinemas in the West Bank. Hanoun's father built the movie house in 1965 in the Palestinian city of Tulkarm, two years before the West Bank was captured by Israel in a Middle East war. It closed down after a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation erupted in 1987 and reopened temporarily in 1994 with the signing of an interim peace accord. Hanoun, 60, then turned the movie theatre into Al-Andalus Cinema and Wedding Hall, keeping now-disused projectors and rolls of film on the top floor,

which wedding guests often ask to see.

Posters on the floor are printed with the Hebrew names of Indian and Chinese movies. Hanoun used to buy foreign films from Israel and Arabic movies from Jordan. "Just as the cinema was one of the first in the West Bank, I was the first to have a wedding hall where people hold their parties," said Hanoun. "There are many people who never watched a movie inside a cinema and some who yearn for the old days." There are currently four cinemas in the West Bank. "I hope I can operate the cinema again, but I can't afford it financially now," Hanoun said. —Reuters



Outcry over Saudi funding plan for Milan's La Scala

A proposal to use 15 million euros in Saudi Arabian government funds for Milan's La Scala opera house came under fire yesterday because of anger over the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The October killing of the Washington Post contributor in Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul sparked international outrage. Riyadh denies any involvement and says the killing was carried out by rogue agents. In an interview yesterday in La Repubblica newspaper, La Scala director Alexander Pereira confirmed the historic theatre has negotiated a financing deal with the Saudi culture ministry.

Pereira said the proposal was for a partnership of at least five years to raise three million euros a year. He said talks with Saudi officials were suggested by people close to regional Lombardy region president Attilio Fontana, a member of Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini's nationalist League party.

In December, at the start of the new La Scala season, Italian Culture Minister Alberto Bonisoli met with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Badr bin Abdullah.

The Saudi minister might join the prestigious opera house's board, according to widespread Italian media reports. The talks came under fire from opposition leaders. "The idea that the Saudis will come into La Scala is a slap in the face for Milan over human rights," said Antonio Panzeri, a European lawmaker from the main opposition Democratic Party.

"I understand the need to find funds, but we absolutely cannot allow one of the most prestigious symbols of Milan to collaborate with those who trample on rights and freedom every day in their own country," Forza Italia party lawmaker Maurizio Gasparri said the government has a duty to defend the "history and identity of La Scala", asking Bonisoli to clarify the government's position. Theater director Pereira said he had followed the Khashoggi case "with dread" and was aware of the "despotic" nature of the Saudi regime. But he said he was convinced of the "positive force of music". "Prince Badr is very determined," he said. "He could finance the Scala privately or redirect his proposal elsewhere." — AFP

Nude 'Mona Lisa' may be by Leonardo, say experts

A nude drawing that bears a striking resemblance to the "Mona Lisa" was done in Leonardo da Vinci's studio and may be the work of the master himself, a French museum said Monday. Experts at the Louvre in Paris, where the world's biggest collection of Leonardo's work is held, have been examining a charcoal drawing known as the "Monna Vanna" which has long been attributed to the Renaissance painter's studio. But the charcoal preparatory work for a painting of a semi-nude woman, held at the Conde Museum at Chantilly north of Paris, may now have to be reclassified.

"There is a very strong possibility that Leonardo did most of the drawing," Mathieu Deldicque, a curator at the Paris museum, told AFP. "It is a work of very great quality done by a great artist," added Deldicque, who initiated an investigation over several months by historians and scientific specialists at the renowned C2RMF laboratory under the Louvre. The large drawing has been held since 1862 in the huge collection of Renaissance art at the Conde Museum, once the home of one of France's oldest noble families.

"It is almost certainly a preparatory work for an oil painting," Deldicque said, with the

hands and body almost identical to the "Mona Lisa", Leonardo's inscrutable masterpiece which hangs in the Louvre.

Exceptional artist

Microscopic examinations have shown that it was drawn from the top left towards the bottom right, the curator said—which points to a left-handed artist. Leonardo, who died in France in 1519, is the most famous left-handed painter in history. The drawing will be shown at a special exhibition at Chantilly later this year to mark the 500th anniversary of the death of the artistic genius, who was born in the Medici-ruled Republic of Florence in 1452. Louvre conservation expert Bruno Mottin had earlier confirmed that the work dated from Leonardo's lifetime.

But he was thrown by "hatching on the top of the drawing near the head done by a right-handed person". Since then "we have discovered lots of new elements", Deldicque said, most notably "left-handed charcoal marks pretty much everywhere". Tests had already revealed that the drawing on paper, using Leonardo's beloved "sfumato" technique, was not a mere copy of a lost original. —AFP

Sports

Players voice concerns over proposed Welsh rugby shake-up

Australia rugby league player charged over sex tape scandal

CARDIFF: Wales hooker Ken Owens has expressed his concerns about a potential merger between the Ospreys and Scarlets as part of radical proposals for the future of the Welsh game. The merger is a focal point of talks to be held by the Professional Game Board yesterday, coming just four days before Warren Gatland's national team attempt to take another step towards claiming a Six Nations Grand Slam in Scotland.

It is a group that comprises representatives from the Welsh Rugby Union, Scarlets, Ospreys, Dragons and Cardiff Blues. Establishing a new professional team in north Wales is also high on the agenda in what would be Welsh rugby's biggest domestic shake-up since regional teams were established 16 years ago.

It is understood that the favoured plan under "Project Reset" is to retain four regional teams, but they would comprise north Wales, an Ospreys-Scarlets merger, Blues and Dragons. Scarlets player Owens, speaking in his role as chairman of the Welsh Rugby Players Association, said: "I am deeply concerned about the situation that the players across the four regions face.

"I recognise that this is the most challenging situation that I or arguably any player has faced during our rugby careers. I appeal to all stakeholders to have the concerns and welfare needs of all those that stand to be affected by the proposed changes at the forefront of their minds.

"It's also clear players need to be represented on the PRB because they can and must be part of the solution. Without them there is no Welsh rugby." The Scarlets currently play in Llanelly while the Ospreys use Swansea City's Liberty Stadium for their home games.

Any merger would need to establish a home ground, in addition to issues such as the new team's name and kit. Around half of Wales's match-day 23 for the Scotland clash is likely to feature Ospreys and Scarlets players.

And if a merger goes ahead, players such as Wales captain Alun Wyn Jones, Jonathan Davies, George North, Owens and Leigh Halfpenny would be part of the same regional squad. The WRU has not commented on Tuesday's planned discussions. Senior Wales players did meet with the governing body last week, though, to discuss a number of issues on the future of regional rugby.

Speaking last week, Wales assistant coach Rob Howley said: "It's uncertain times, which is disappointing. There is a lot of frustration, not only for the best players in Wales, but for their mates in the regions.

"There is an uncertainty about Project Reset, and they would like to know where they are going to be playing next year or in two years' time."

Meanwhile, an Australian rugby league player was charged Tuesday for his part in a sex tape saga engulfing the scandal-plagued competition barely a week before the new season kicks off.

Penrith's Tyrone May was charged by police for allegedly filming and sharing images of sexual acts with two separate women on different occasions without their knowledge. The first incident was alleged to have occurred in February 2018 and the second in May of the same year.

"Police have been told that while the sexual acts were consensual, the women were unaware they were being filmed," New South Wales police said in a statement. "These recordings were also allegedly disseminated without their consent."

The Penrith Panthers on Monday were forced to "unreservedly apologise" to fans and sponsors following the emergence on social media of a sex tape allegedly involving players. It came after two similar videos began to appear on Saturday and just days after the sport's bosses toughened rules after a spate of off-field incidents.

The National Rugby League's official news site said



Wales hooker Ken Owens

Penrith had advised the league's integrity unit that a player from a rival club had released the video of May. "We are aware of the charges," Penrith chief executive Brian Fletcher told nrl.com.

"I've spoken to Tyrone May and he will vigorously deny the charges." The charges are the latest in a string of scandals engulfing the troubled league, which has prompted officials to warn of a crack down before the new season starts on March 14.

Canterbury Bulldogs star Dylan Napa was fined 10 percent of his 2019 salary for appearing in several sex

tapes. Two players were suspended indefinitely last week under a stringent new regime against NRL stars accused of serious crimes.

Under updated rules, players charged with serious criminal offences are now automatically suspended. Previously, they could continue playing while they awaited the outcome of their court cases.

St George Illawarra's Jack de Belin, who is facing sexual assault allegations, and Manly Sea Eagles' Dylan Walker, who is accused of domestic violence, were the first to be suspended under the new rules. — AFP

Tiger withdraws from Palmer Invitational with neck strain

ORLANDO: Eight-times champion Tiger Woods has withdrawn from this week's Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill in Orlando due to a neck strain, the former world number one said on Monday.

Woods, who returned to competition last season after a lengthy recovery from spinal fusion surgery, said he had been dealing with the strain for a few weeks and that he hoped to play in The Players Championship next week.

"I've been receiving treatment, but it hasn't improved enough to play," Woods said in a post on Twitter. "My lower back is fine, and I have no long-term concerns, and I hope to be ready for The Players."

Woods did not say how he suffered the neck strain but there was nothing about his play at the WGC-Mexico Championship, where he tied for 10th eight days ago, to suggest he was not healthy.

In his only other starts this year, Woods finished in a share of 20th place at the Farmers Insurance Open in late January followed by a T15 at the Genesis Open in mid-February. The injury is the first setback for Woods since he returned to regularly competing on the PGA Tour in January 2018, which marked the start of a remarkable comeback campaign he capped with a win in the Tour Championship season finale.

While the injury does appear to be anything serious it could garner more attention if he finds himself unable



Tiger Woods

to tee it up at TPC Sawgrass next week for the PGA Tour's flagship event, which is widely regarded as the unofficial fifth major.

Woods, who last won the Arnold Palmer Invitational in 2013, made a run at Bay Hill last year but finished five shots behind winner Rory McIlroy in a share of fifth

place after his late charge fizzled with a pair of bogeys at the 16th and 17th holes.

"I'd like to send my regrets to the Palmer family and the Orlando fans," wrote Woods. "Its connection to Arnold makes it one of my favorite tournaments and I'm disappointed to miss it." — Reuters

Kenny warns against complacency after Brits outpaced

LONDON: Britain's track cyclists were still digesting a disappointing world championships medal haul on Monday but four-time Olympic champion Laura Kenny believes there is no need to panic. The 26-year-old queen of the boards did warn, however, against assuming everything will be alright on the night when the Tokyo Olympics roll around next year.

When Elinor Barker won the opening race last week in Pruszkow a British gold-rush might have been expected but her scratch race victory was the only one. Kenny, who married Britain's six-time Olympic sprint champion Jason Kenny shortly after the 2016 Rio Olympics, was part of the team pursuit quartet beaten to gold by Australia and then withdrew before the omnium because of illness.

The sprinters also failed to fire and only once in the last eight world championships have Britain claimed fewer than the four medals they managed in Poland. "I don't think there is anything dramatic that we should be worrying about, or changing now, it's just about moving forward as a team," Kenny told Reuters in an interview on Monday.

"Having said that we can't be complacent. We can't be like, 'Oh well every time we go to the Olympics it comes together' because it's not as simple as that.

"The team has changed massively this time, not just with the riders but with the whole set-up, and there are lots of different people in different roles." Men's endurance coach German Heiko Salzwedel, who plotted the team pursuiter's path to Rio gold, left in 2018 and there have been other disruptions in British Cycling.

"Everyone has to come together, that's what has always happened," Kenny said. "If we can do that the results will start coming again. In 2015 the worlds weren't great but we were back on top in Rio. So let's not throw everything out of the window."

Kenny, formerly Trott, gave birth to son Albie in 2017 and admits she struggled for pace on her return to the velodrome before claiming two golds at last year's European championships. She was especially looking forward to laying down a marker in the omnium in Pruszkow last week before illness struck.

However, being a mum helped keep things in perspective. "I was so gutted, it was so disappointing," she said. "I'd never pulled out of a championships before. Training had gone really well and I really wanted to do well in the omnium and compete against (eventual winner) Kirsten Wild.

"I was sad but Albie is my world now whereas pre-2017 I would say cycling was everything. I cycle now for Albie and want him to have the experiences of going around the world watching me, but I don't get completely wrapped up in it the same way."

Kenny will target team pursuit, omnium and Madison at the Tokyo Games but said competition for places was fierce, with Katie Archibald and Barker eyeing multiple gold. She has the chance to test herself against both of them at the Manchester Six Day extravaganza <https://sixday.com> at the end of March-when all three will contest the omnium along with Dutch world champion Wild.

"We were all told to take a week off after the worlds so hopefully we will all be on the same kind of level I guess," Kenny said. "Unless they are training secretly!"

"I can't wait for the Manchester Six Day. I watched the London one on TV when I was pregnant and it sounded like riding in a nightclub. It was spectacular." Since Kenny retained her Olympic omnium crown in Rio, the event has been reduced to four events and one day, rather than seven over two, with the timed events removed.

Kenny is a fan of the new format. "You don't have to



Laura Kenny

dwelling on it overnight," she said. "I love racing. People say I'm good against the clock, and I was, but it's not a bike race for me. I like the tactics of bunch races."

She also thinks Britain's team pursuit world record of 4:10.236 set at the Rio Olympics will have to come down to retain the title. "The Aussies did a 4:13 last week so you would imagine three seconds would come off that before Tokyo," she said. — Reuters

Yates targets 2019 Tour de France podium

PARIS: Englishman Adam Yates, described as one of the best climbers in the world, will target a top three spot on the 2019 Tour de France, his Mitchelton Scott team said yesterday. Team boss Matthew White confirmed that Adam would lead the team on the Tour whilst his twin brother Simon, who won the Vuelta a Espana last season, will target victory at the Giro d'Italia.

"Adam showed in 2016 that he can mix it with the big boys at the Tour de France," the Australian said of Yates' breakout performance winning the White jersey for best young rider that year.

"We are heading back this year with ambitions of Adam challenging for a spot on the podium come July," he said. "Adam will have a great team supporting him and I really believe he is going to show what he is capable of." "He is one of the best climbers in the world and helping him to put it all together for three weeks on the biggest stage is an exciting challenge," White said. The 26-year-old rider said he was already mentally preparing for an assault on the mountainous 2019 Tour.

"I'm super excited to go back to the Tour this year," he said. "Last year we made some mistakes that cost us and it was a big disappointment, so it'll be good to go back and rectify that," he said in reference to his costly stage 16 crash. "Even though the Tour is a long way away at this moment in time... in the back of my mind everything I'm doing is build up for the Tour," Yates said. White said the 2019 route would suit Adam over the three weeks. — AFP

PGA Tour renames Rookie of the Year award after Arnold Palmer

NEW YORK: The PGA Tour's Rookie of the Year honor has been renamed after the late Arnold Palmer, one of golf's greatest players whose immense popularity drew a legion of fans to the game.

The Arnold Palmer Award will be presented to the circuit's most outstanding rookie, as voted on by the Tour's membership. "Arnold Palmer was golf's greatest ambassador with his go-for-broke style of play, his charitable endeavors and his true passion and respect for the game and its fans," PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan said in a statement on Monday. "A thumbs up, a wink, a carefully signed autograph, a thank you - simple gestures like these passed on by Mr Palmer to countless young players helped shape their character, on and off the golf course.

"The Arnold Palmer Award will now reflect those contributions in honoring the Tour's most outstanding rookie," Palmer, whose immense popularity drew a legion of fans to the game at the dawn of the age of televised sport, died in September 2016 of heart complications aged 87.

He still ranks fifth on the PGA Tour list of all-time tournament wins with 62, including seven major championships. — Reuters

Sports

Marlins' Brinson hits two more HRs to earn 9-8 victory over Nationals

Machado's double for the first hit of spring

FLORIDA: Miami outfielder Lewis Brinson continued his home run tear Monday, going deep twice as the Marlins earned a 9-8 victory over the Washington Nationals in Jupiter, Fla. It was the second multi-homer game of the spring for Brinson, who has five long balls in Grapefruit League play. Brinson, 24, hit 11 major league home runs last season after hitting two in 21 games in 2017. The Marlins won the game on Isaac Galloway's game-ending RBI single in the ninth inning. Jacob Wilson hit a home run for the Nationals.

RED SOX 9, METS (SS) 3

Gorkys Hernandez hit a three-run home run as Boston rolled to victory at Port St. Lucie, Fla. New York starter Steven Matz was roughed up for four runs on five hits over 2 2/3 innings. Former Heisman Trophy winner and NFL quarterback Tim Tebow had two hits while starting in left field for the Mets.

ORIOLES 9, TWINS 4

C.J. Cron hit two home runs and Jordany Valdespin hit another, but Minnesota lost to Baltimore at Fort Myers, Fla. Renato Nunez and Martin Cervena came off the bench to hit home runs for the Orioles.

METS (SS) 7, ASTROS (SS) 4

Pete Alonso and David Thompson each hit a home run as New York won at West Palm Beach, Fla. Houston starter Rogelio Armenteros pitched three scoreless innings, and George Springer and Alex Bregman went deep for the Astros.

ASTROS (SS) 4, BRAVES 3

Derek Fisher and Nick Tanielu each hit home runs as Houston grabbed an early lead and held on at Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Sean Kazmar Jr. and Ronald Acuna Jr.

each went deep for Atlanta

TIGERS 9, CARDINALS 5

Detroit showed its power potential as Mikie Mahtook hit two home runs, while Kade Scivicque, Jeimer Candelario and Jordy Mercer each added one in a victory at Lakeland, Fla. Kolten Wong and Rangel Ravelo homered for St. Louis.

REDS (SS) 3, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Matt Kemp hit his second home run of the spring for Cincinnati, and his replacement in left field, Courtney Hawkins, also went deep at Scottsdale, Ariz. David Peralta had a pair of hits for Arizona.

PADRES 8, INDIANS 0

Manny Machado doubled for his first hit of the spring, and left-hander Joey Lucchesi fired three scoreless innings as San Diego won easily at Peoria, Ariz. Greg Allen had two hits for Cleveland.

ROCKIES 4, RANGERS 4

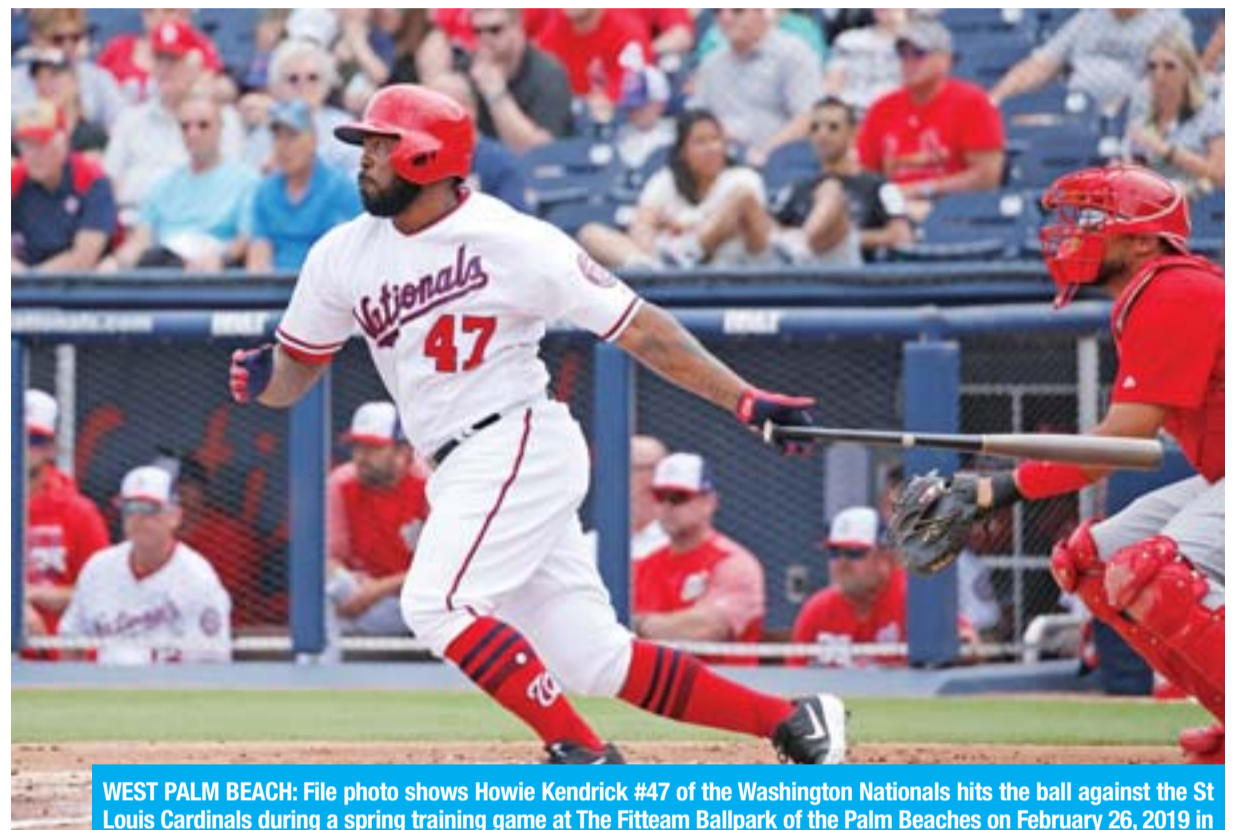
Colton Welker hit a two-run single in the eighth inning to help Colorado to a tie at Surprise, Ariz. Rougned Odor and Bubba Thompson each hit home runs for Texas.

DODGERS 8, GIANTS 2

Edwin Rios hit a home run and Julio Urias struck out three over two innings as Los Angeles won at Scottsdale, Ariz. Jeff Samardzija pitched three scoreless innings for San Francisco.

CUBS 9, REDS (SS) 1

Albert Almora Jr. hit his first home run of the spring, and Alec Mills pitched two scoreless innings in a start



WEST PALM BEACH: File photo shows Howie Kendrick #47 of the Washington Nationals hits the ball against the St. Louis Cardinals during a spring training game at The Fitteam Ballpark of the Palm Beaches on February 26, 2019 in West Palm Beach, Florida. — AFP

as Chicago won at Goodyear, Ariz. Aristides Aquino hit a home run for Cincinnati's only score.

WHITE SOX 6, ANGELS 6

Laz Rivera came off the bench to hit a home run as Chicago rallied for the tie at Glendale, Ariz. Jarrett Parker and Kaleb Cowart each hit home runs for Los Angeles. — Reuters

Another skier arrested in doping scandal

VIENNA: Austrian authorities yesterday arrested a cross-country skier already suspended over doping at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, according to media reports, in a widening scandal following several arrests last week. Five other skiers and two cyclists are under investigation as part of a probe into an alleged doping ring based in Germany and led by a 40-year-old sports doctor named as "Mark S". Prosecutors in the city of Innsbruck said they have arrested another Nordic skier. They did not name him or give details of why he was arrested.

But the Kronen newspaper named the man as Johannes Duerr, who was thrown out of the Sochi Olympics in 2014 after testing positive for blood booster EPO. In a German TV programme broadcast in January, Duerr set out detailed claims of how he went about doping, as well as alleging the complicity of some employees of the Austrian Ski Association (OSV).

Prosecutors say last week's police crackdown on the alleged doping ring based in Erfurt in Germany was sparked by Duerr's revelations. Austrian police say the ring has been active for at least five years.

"Mark S" is thought by police to have been a central figure in the doping ring and was arrested along with an alleged accomplice. Five skiers have been arrested: two Austrians, Dominik Baldauf and Max Hauke,



SEEFELD: Picture taken on February 21, 2019 shows Austrian cross-country skier Dominik Baldauf competing in the Men's (skating) cross-country event at the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Seefeld, Austria. — AFP

Estonians Karel Tammjaerv and Andreas Veerpalu, and Kazakh athlete Alexei Poltoranin.

Austrian cyclists Georg Preidler and Stefan Denifl

were suspended by the International Cycling Union yesterday after being caught up in the same probe last week. — AFP

India's Dravid, a gift that keeps on giving

NEW DELHI: Seven years into his retirement and former test stalwart Rahul Dravid is still making silent and important contribution for India, shaping the next generation of cricketers who will form the core of the team.

For a significant part of his 16-year Test career, Dravid was the bulwark in India's star-studded batting lineup that also included Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and V.V.S Laxman.

A classical batsman who built his game around a near-impregnable defence and an over-my-dead-body attitude, 'The Wall' was a purist's delight even though team mates often eclipsed his best efforts.

His 95 in his very first Test innings was overshadowed by fellow debutant Ganguly's century in the 1996 match at Lord's. Three years later, Dravid hit 145 in a World Cup match against Sri Lanka but once again Ganguly's 183 was the talking point.

Dravid's 180 in the 2001 Kolkata Test was crucial to India's stunning victory against Australia but still ended up being second fiddle to Laxman's epic 281.

Having quit international cricket with more than 24,000 runs against his name, Dravid has since taken charge of India's under-19 and A teams, overseeing the seamless transition of youngsters into the senior side.

Among his wards, Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shah and Hanuma Vihari have taken to Test cricket like duck to water, all-rounder Vijay Shankar is staking World Cup claims, while Shubman Gill broke into the ODI team in New Zealand. "He's been a great mentor for us," Agarwal, who impressed on his maiden tour in Australia, told Reuters. "We can always walk up to him, speak to him about our batting, about our thought process, the way we approach an innings or if there's any technical difficulty." Shoehorned into the Indian side midway through the Test series following an opening crisis, Agarwal impressed immediately with two 75-



Rahul Dravid

plus knocks in three innings. The 28-year-old said Dravid helped him understand how to manage mental energy in the long format. "We had a few chats about my game and he figured that part out," Agarwal added.

"He said 'to do well in test cricket, you need to manage your mental energy because you are up and about for all five days'. That's something we spoke about."

"Also we figured out things we can control in the middle and focus on doing them." Lokesh Rahul is another beneficiary of Dravid's deep understanding of the game - accumulated over 164 tests and 344 ODIs - and batsmanship in particular.

Rahul, 26, was in crisis after a slump in form was followed by a brief suspension for inappropriate comments on a television chat show.

Sent home midway through the test series in Australia, Rahul joined the A team under Dravid and found his mojo back in the five matches against England Lions. He has since looked his free-flowing self in the two Twenty20 matches against Australia, scoring 50 and 47, a turnaround he credited to the time he spent with Dravid. "Fortunately, I got to play some India A games and some games where the pressure was a little less, so that I can focus on my skill and my technique," Rahul said last week. — Reuters

Indonesian fans rejoice over plans for MotoGP

JAKARTA: MotoGP's return to Indonesia after more than two decades has been met with jubilation on the island of Lombok where sports fans hope it will revive their earthquake-ravaged economy. MotoGP promoter Dorna Sports announced in February it had signed a five-year deal with the Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) to hold an event on the island in 2021.

The premier motorbike race will be hosted on a new street circuit that will reportedly be 4.32-kilometres (2.68-miles) long with 18 corners. News of the event has thrilled motorsports fans in Indonesia, where MotoGP has a significant following but has not seen a major race since 1997.

"If this plan materialises of course we would be very happy," Chandra Gunawan, vice president of the Indonesian fan club of Valentino Rossi, told AFP. "It's been over 20 years since we hosted MotoGP in the country."

Indonesia last hosted MotoGP at Sentul International Circuit, a permanent racing track in West Java. However, the Lombok race will be held on a custom-built street circuit-reputedly a world first. French company Vinci Construction will build the track as part of the \$1 billion Mandalika coastal development project in the south of Lombok.

Lombok, to the east of holiday hotspot Bali, was rocked by a series of quakes in summer killed more than 500 people and sparked a mass exodus of foreigners from the tropical paradise.

Official figures showed tourist numbers plunged nearly 70 percent in the months following, ripping vital tourism dollars away from the local economy. Many residents now hope the arrival of a world-class sporting event will safeguard livelihoods for years to come. "This is very cool, I can watch MotoGP directly-I can see Valentino Rossi!" Lulu Zulman Hakim, from the town of Kuta, told AFP. "But we don't want to be mere spectators, we hope we can be involved," he added.

Another Kuta resident Nasib Gunawan said he hoped the "MotoGP circuit would create more jobs." Tourism officials are confident the event will boost visitor numbers to Indonesia and help Lombok recover from last year's earthquakes.

"MotoGP brings a lot of potential for the economy," ITDC director Abdulbar Mansoer told AFP. Construction of the Mandalika complex will include at least 1,000 hotel rooms and is expected to finish in the second half of 2020.

Still, the project faces a number of challenges-not least Indonesia's exposure to natural disasters. The sprawling archipelago straddles the so-called Pacific 'Ring of Fire', where tectonic plates collide and a large portion of the world's volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur.

Mansoer admitted Indonesia's reputation as one of the most disaster-prone nations could turn off some tourists, but said Lombok was prepared. The local disaster mitigation agency was installing a tsunami warning system on the southern coast of Lombok and evacuation plans were in place, he added. Reopening public transport and extending Lombok airport's runway were also pressing issues. "In two years we have to come up with a circuit and supporting facilities," Mansoer said. "It's going to be a challenge, but we have to be optimistic." — AFP

FIFA approves Rice switch from Ireland to England

LONDON: West Ham midfielder Declan Rice is free to play for England after world governing body FIFA confirmed his switch from Ireland. The highly rated 20-year-old, who was born in London but qualified for Ireland via his paternal grandparents, considers himself "to be of mixed nationality" and played three times for Ireland.

But because they were friendlies it left the door open for him to change allegiance and last month he announced his intention to do so, a move that has now been ratified by FIFA. "FIFA can now confirm that the change of association of Declan Rice from Republic of Ireland to England has been approved," said a spokesman for the world governing body.

After representing Ireland at youth level, Rice went on to make three senior appearances last year, including games against France and the United States ahead of the World Cup. However, speculation over his long-term international future mounted after he became a West Ham regular under Manuel Pellegrini this season.

In completing the switch, Rice follows in the footsteps of Aston Villa midfielder Jack Grealish, who made the same move to England in 2016. "My pride in wearing the Irish shirt was always 100 percent genuine," Rice said in a statement last month. "Ultimately, it is a personal decision that I have made with my heart and my head, based on what I believe is best for my future."

After gaining FIFA approval it now seems likely that Rice, who has started every one of the 26 Premier League matches he has featured in this season, scoring two goals, will be fast-tracked into the England set-up. — AFP

Sports

De Gea's career crossroads a danger to Man Utd's revival

Real have reigned in Europe, United have faded

LONDON: Manchester United's solitary defeat 16 games in to Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's caretaker reign in charge against Paris Saint-Germain exposed the gulf the English giants still have to bridge to become a European powerhouse once more.

But that the Red Devils travel to Paris today trailing only 2-0 from the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie is thanks to David de Gea. The Spanish number one made two brilliant stops from Kylian Mbappe and Juan Bernat three weeks ago as PSG threatened to run riot to again underline his calibre as one of the best goalkeepers in the competition.

With Paul Pogba suspended for the return to his native city, De Gea is the one United player who could walk into a PSG side that has divided goalkeeping duties between 41-year-old Italian legend Gianluigi Buffon and Alphonse Areola this season.

Worryingly for United that prospect is all too real with De Gea so far holding out in contract negotiations to prolong his current deal beyond the summer of 2020. According to reports, De Gea is seeking at least parity with Alexis Sanchez as the club's highest earner.

The Chilean joined United on a contract worth up to £500,000 (\$660,000) a week including bonuses last January, but has not had anywhere near the desired impact, scoring just five goals in 41 appearances.

By contrast, De Gea has won United's player of the year for four of the past five seasons and believes his consistency should be rewarded. But for a matter of minutes on the final day of August in 2015, De Gea's

career could have been very different. A similar contract standoff between the player and club seemed to pave the way for a move to Real Madrid only for the fax confirming the transfer to miss the deadline.

Madrid have since gone on to win the Champions League for the past three seasons with Keylor Navas in goal. The Costa Rican has performed well, but is not seen as being in De Gea's class, as evidenced by the fact Real pounced to sign Thibaut Courtois earlier this season when the Belgian also refused to extend his contract at Chelsea.

PSG, JUVENTUS INTERESTED

As Real have reigned in Europe, United have faded. In the four seasons before De Gea signed, Alex Ferguson's side reached three Champions League finals. In the seven seasons since, United have made the quarter-finals just once and look likely to fall short of the last eight once more.

Courtois's arrival appears to have closed the door to a move to Madrid. However, PSG and Italian champions Juventus are reportedly interested and could offer De Gea the guarantee of Champions League football while United battle just to make the Premier League's top four once more—as well as a better chance to compete in the latter stages unless big changes are made at Old Trafford.

Solskjaer hailed De Gea as "the best goalkeeper in the world" this week as he pleaded with him to commit his future to the club. The Norwegian has lifted the

bankrolled by Sheikh Mansour of the Abu Dhabi royal family, announced they had purchased a stake in Chinese third-tier club Sichuan Jiuniu. That took the number of clubs under the CFG banner to seven, with the group also owning or having stakes in New York City, Melbourne City, Japan's Yokohama F. Marinos, Atletico Torque and Girona, as well as star side Manchester City.

"We have some interest in some markets and countries where there is a genuine football passion and opportunities, like China, but also India," Britain's Press Association quoted Soriano as saying.

"So there might be other opportunities in Asia. With all these developments we have to be patient. We've

a raw 20-year-old at the 2010 World Cup and went on to score 38 goals in 100 appearances.

Hummels and Boateng, Germany's successful centre-back partnership before the disaster at the finals in Russia, have played in 70 and 76 internationals respectively. Others could also find themselves surplus to Loew's requirements in the coming weeks.

Germany captain Manuel Neuer, 32, has a battle to keep his goalkeeping shirt from Barcelona's Marc-Andre ter Stegen, 26. "I said last year that Manuel is number one right now, but this year we have something like a new start and Marc will get his chances too," said Loew before Tuesday's announcement.

With a year to go before the European championships, Loew feels now is the time to remove more of his old guard having already last year dropped Sami Khedira, another 2014 World Cup winner.

Loew was heavily criticised in the wake of last year's debacle in Russia for failing to give chances to the reserves, many of whom had won the 2017 Confederations Cup, when his World Cup plans fell apart. "In the year of qualifying for the European Championship 2020, we are sending out a clear signal: the young national team players will have the space they need to fully develop," said Loew. "They have to take responsibility now."

Loew's boss, German Football Association president Reinhard Grindel, who also took flak last year when Mesut Ozil retired from Germany duty amid claims of racism, welcomed Loew's move.

"I welcome the fact that he is now making decisive progress in transforming our national team and starting the qualification for EURO 2020 is the right time for personnel changes," said Grindel. — AFP



PARIS: Manchester United's Norwegian caretaker manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer attends a press conference at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris yesterday, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match against Paris Saint-Germain. — AFP

been looking at India for nearly two years now. I'd say this year we'll end up doing an investment in India," he added. CFG was established as an umbrella organisation in 2013 when City's initial sister club was launched in New York and Soriano said there was still room for significant investment beyond its existing seven teams.

"As we see it now, there is a natural pace of growth that we will follow that takes us to more than seven teams, but not 100 teams. I cannot see 10 years ahead but the group might have two or three teams more. Is this going to change in five years and we're going to have more? Maybe, (but) I don't know that. "But to complete the vision that we had six years ago, I think we will have maybe two or three clubs more." — AFP



Joachim Loew

Iraqi club were taking part in the tournament since 2008 due to on and off-field issues and they acquitted themselves very well against the vastly experienced Iranians.

The visitors missed a great chance as Jabbar Kareem's header off a Hussein al-Jwayed cross went just wide of the mark in the sixth minute. Their defence also held firm, thwarting a couple of efforts from Zobahan as the match petered out late-on.

In Group B, Lokomotiv of Uzbekistan beat the UAE's Al Wahda 2-0 in Tashkent. Temorkhujja Abdulkholikov put Lokomotiv ahead just five minutes into the match with a header from a rebound, after his earlier header had deflected off the crossbar.

Several Al Wahda efforts at goal were wasted but the hosts put the result beyond doubt in added time, captain Islom Tukhtakhujaev's fine free-kick finding the top corner. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad, sounded an early warning by thrashing Qatar's Al Rayyan 5-1 in Tuesday's second Group B match.

Gonzalo Viera had put Al Rayyan ahead in the 23rd minute but Fahad al-Muwallad equalised in the 45th minute and Abdulaziz al-Aryani netted in first-half stoppage time to put the hosts ahead in Jeddah.

Ziyad al-Sahafi and Abdulrahman al-Ghamdi added two more goals in the second half before Saudi Arabia international al-Muwallad struck his second goal in the 78th minute to complete the rout for the two-time former winners. — AFP

Manchester City owners ponder India purchase

LONDON: The owners of English Premier League champions Manchester City are considering adding a team in India to their global portfolio of clubs, chief executive Ferran Soriano said Monday.

A fortnight ago City Football Group (CFG),

Bayern trio Hummels, Boateng and Mueller out of Germany picture

BERLIN: Germany head coach Joachim Loew dropped a bombshell yesterday by announcing that 2014 World Cup winners Jerome Boateng, Mats Hummels and Thomas Mueller are no longer in his plans.

Loew told the Bayern Munich trio before he names the squad for the friendly against Serbia in Wolfsburg in two weeks and the Euro 2020 qualifier against the Netherlands in Amsterdam on March 24. Between them, Hummels, Boateng, both 30, and Mueller, still only 29, boast 246 appearances for Germany and were at the heart of the team which won the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. However, last year's debacle at the World Cup finals in Russia saw Germany crash out after the group stages due to below-par performances from Loew's trusted stars, including the trio. "2019 is the year of a new start for the German national football team," said Loew.

"It was important to me personally to explain my thoughts and plans to the players and managers of FC Bayern," added Loew, who flew to Munich to speak to the trio. The 59-year-old, who masterminded Germany's World Cup triumph in Brazil, thanked "Mats, Jerome and Thomas" for "many successful, extraordinary and unique years together."

Loew's decision heralds the end of an impressive international career for Mueller, who broke through as

British female Olympians argue against 'unfair' trans women athletes

LONDON: British female Olympians lined up to criticise the inclusion of transgender women in women's sport yesterday, as debate rages over whether male-to-female athletes retain unfair physical advantages after taking cross-sex hormones.

The row over who should compete in women's sport exploded in October when Rachel McKinnon became the first trans woman to win a track cycling world title and was reignited when Martina Navratilova criticised the inclusion of trans women last month.

"I believe it is unfair in the extreme to expect women simply to move over and make way for male-to-female (MtF) transitioning athletes," Sharron Davies, who won a silver medal at the 1980 Olympics, wrote on Twitter yesterday.

"I don't think you can deny that young boys that have gone through puberty have certain advantages that women will not ever get," Paula Radcliffe, who holds the women's world record in the marathon, told the BBC yesterday.

Since 2016 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has allowed male-to-female athletes to compete if their testosterone levels remain below a certain level for a year. The hormone increases muscle mass, strength and the capacity of the blood to carry oxygen.

When trans women take cross-sex hormones their body fat increases and muscle mass decreases, while production of testosterone falls. But some campaigners and athletes have argued that they retain advantages in strength, height, bone structure and red blood cells - the main source of disagreement.—Reuters

De Lima guides Al Wasl past Al Nassr

DOHA: Emirati club Al Wasl recorded their first Asian Champions League win in more than a decade when Fabio de Lima's 62nd minute penalty helped them beat Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr 1-0 in Dubai yesterday.

The hosts were awarded the spot kick when striker Yousef Ahmed was brought down by Abdullah Madu inside the box, and Brazilian de Lima scored the only goal of the Group A match. Al Wasl had nothing to show for their campaign in last year's tournament as they crashed out of the group stage in their first appearance in the competition since 2008.

However, they had the better of the exchanges the Zabeel Stadium and came close to scoring on a few occasions, de Lima himself firing high over the post early in the first half. An attempt by Salem al-Azizi from inside the box was saved by Al Nassr's Australia goalkeeper Brad Jones, before de Lima again missed the target late in the second half.

Elsewhere in the same group, Iraq's Al Zawraa grabbed a valuable away point with a goalless draw against Iran's Zobahan. Al Zawraa's appearance marked the first time an

| Matches on TV | |
|---|-------|
| (Local Timings) | |
| UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE | |
| Paris Saint-Germain v Manchester United | 23:00 |
| beIN SPORTS HD 1 | |
| FC Porto v AS Roma | 23:00 |
| beIN SPORTS HD 2 | |

'I don't have an expiry date': Alves

PARIS: Injury deprived him of what looked like a last chance at World Cup glory last year, but Dani Alves is now spurred on by the dream of lifting the trophy with Brazil in Qatar in 2022. "I don't have an expiry date. My body is my answer—when I see that I can no longer compete, when my head is not in it anymore, it will be the time to stop." Alves said in an exclusive interview with AFP. "What I do know is that I am going to try to get to the World Cup in 2022. My objective is to fight to get there—I don't hold the key, but I will try." Alves suffered a serious knee injury playing for Paris Saint-Germain in last season's French Cup final, barely a month before the World Cup in Russia. He had just turned 35 and it would take him six months to return to action.

Since then, he has become an integral part of Thomas Tuchel's PSG side and has just been recalled to the Brazil squad. He is also set to feature when the French club face Manchester United in their Champions League last 16 return leg on Wednesday leading 2-0 from the first leg.

Last season's French Cup was the 38th trophy won by Alves in a remarkable career that has included being part of three Champions League victories at Barcelona.

The World Cup is the one trophy missing from his CV, so it is little wonder he is driven on by the prospect of finally winning it with Brazil, even if he will be 39 by the time the next tournament comes around.

"That is why the challenge sort of gets me going. It's like saying I've met the girl of my dreams. What do I say to her? I am going to try everything. Imagine ending your career as a world champion." While many players younger than Alves have struggled to recover from serious knee injuries, the Brazilian says he "never doubted" he would be back.

In his second season at PSG, Alves—one of the greatest full-backs the game has seen—has been reinvented by Tuchel as a midfielder. That may partly be down to a lack of alternatives. However, Alves insists it is not about him being unable to get up and down the right flank in the way he used to.

The coach, he says, "uses me for my intelligence in reading games, more than for my physical strengths, because as a midfielder I run more and I put in more effort than as a full-back."

"It is not about anything physical. I can play at full-back, but I can't use my reading of the game as much there. "In the middle I can correct a wrong movement by a teammate, think more quickly than a teammate, and so he gets more out of me there than at full-back, which at the end of the day is more limited—you go a little bit that way and you are off the pitch."

Alves first moved to Europe with Sevilla in 2002 — and while he is a very well paid member of a superstar squad now, he claims sometimes it was "hard" in his early days. After 14 years in Spain he spent a season at Juventus before joining PSG in 2017, just before the arrival of his compatriot Neymar.

His contract expires at the end of this season, but he and his partner, a model, enjoy life in Paris—Alves himself is a fashion lover. So could he stay even longer? "It doesn't depend on me, but if it were down to me then of course," he says.

"People are marked down for their age—once you get past 30, people look at you a bit funny. When you get to 35 the questions are all 'when are you going to stop?' Calm down! I decide when I am going to stop."

"It's the old story, do you want a normal car, or something top of the range? That is how I am—the older I am, the more expensive I am!" —AFP

25 Kenny warns against complacency after Brits outpaced in Poland

26 Marlins' Brinson hits two more HRs to earn 9-8 victory over Nationals

27 Bayern trio Hummels, Boateng and Mueller out of Germany picture



Phoenix Suns stun Milwaukee Bucks

Clippers take care of skidding Lakers



PHOENIX: Giannis Antetokounmpo #34 of the Milwaukee Bucks handles the ball guarded by Kelly Oubre Jr. #3 of the Phoenix Suns during the second half of the NBA game at Talking Stick Resort Arena on Monday in Phoenix, Arizona. The Suns defeated the Bucks 114-105. — AFP

PHOENIX: Kelly Oubre Jr. recorded 27 points, 13 rebounds and three blocked shots, and Devin Booker scored 22 points as the lowly Phoenix Suns pulled off a stunning 114-105 victory over the visiting Milwaukee Bucks on Monday night. Deandre Ayton registered 19 points, 12 rebounds and three blocked shots, and Josh Jackson scored 16 for Phoenix. The Suns have won three of four since enduring a franchise-worst, 17-game losing streak. Tyler Johnson had 13 points and four steals and also knocked down the tiebreaking basket for the Suns, who outscored Milwaukee 38-23 in the fourth quarter. Giannis Antetokounmpo had 21 points, 13 rebounds, six assists and three steals for the NBA-best Bucks, who have lost two straight after winning 19 of the previous 21 games. Malcolm Brogdon scored 19 points.

SPURS 104, NUGGETS 103

DeMar DeRozan scored 24 points, and LaMarcus Aldridge added 22 points as San Antonio outlasted visiting Denver to capture its third straight victory. San Antonio led by 21 points in the second quarter and by 17 with 9:10 to go in the game, but Denver got within

one point when Jamal Murray canned a 3-pointer with 49.6 seconds left. The Nuggets then missed four shots at a win in the remaining time. Murray scored 25 points, and Nikola Jokic had 22 points and 10 rebounds for Denver, which has lost three games in a row.

PELICANS 115, JAZZ 112

Jrue Holiday and Julius Randle each scored 30 points to lead New Orleans to a 115-112 come-from-behind victory over Utah in Salt Lake City. Anthony Davis totaled 15 points and 11 rebounds in only three quarters for the Pelicans, who won their third straight. Davis did not play the entire fourth quarter. The Jazz led by 17 points in the second quarter and by 14 early in the fourth. Jae Crowder and Kyle Korver totaled 20 points apiece off the bench to lead Utah. Rudy Gobert scored 19 points and collected 19 rebounds, and Donovan Mitchell added 19 points with nine assists.

CLIPPERS 113, LAKERS 105

Danilo Gallinari scored 23 points, and the visiting Los Angeles Clippers defeated the Los Angeles Lakers for their third consecutive victory.

Lou Williams scored 21 points off the bench, and Montrezl Harrell added 14 points and 11 rebounds in a reserve role for the Clippers. Rajon Rondo scored a season-high 24 points to go with 10 rebounds and 12 assists for his first triple-double with the Lakers. LeBron James finished with 27 points, eight rebounds and six assists.

KINGS 115, KNICKS 108

Harry Giles III contributed a dunk and a hook shot to an eight-point run that opened the fourth quarter, and Sacramento finally was able to pull away from visiting New York. Buddy Hield had 28 points and Harrison Barnes contributed 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings, who had lost three in a row, including two straight to begin a key four-game homestand. Knicks rookie Allonzo Trier led all scorers with 29 points.

HEAT 114, HAWKS 113

Dwyane Wade scored 14 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter as host Miami won consecutive games for the first time since January, defeating Atlanta. Josh Richardson added 19 points, and Justise Winslow added

18 for Miami, which finally beat Atlanta after losing the first three games of this season's four-game series. The Hawks fell just short of what would have been their first 4-0 sweep of Miami since 1990-91.

Vince Carter, 42, led Atlanta with 21 points and made a season-high seven 3-pointers. Carter surpassed Jamal Crawford for sixth place in NBA history in terms of career 3-pointers, ending the night with 2,199. Crawford has 2,195 treys. Carter also surpassed Reggie Miller (25,279 points) for 20th place in scoring, winding up with 25,292 points.

NETS 127, MAVERICKS 88

DeMarre Carroll matched a season high with 22 points as Brooklyn coasted to a victory over Dallas in New York. Rodions Kurucs added 19 points and became the third rookie in Nets franchise history to hit at least five 3-pointers in a game, going 5 of 7 from long range. D'Angelo Russell collected 13 points and 11 assists as the Nets posted their most lopsided win since moving from New Jersey in 2012. Dwight Powell paced Dallas with 20 points, and rookie Luca Donic added 16. — Reuters

India pull off narrow win in thrilling ODI

NAGPUR: India pulled off an eight-run victory in a low-scoring thriller after all-rounder Vijay Shankar picked two wickets in the final over of the second one-day international against Australia yesterday.

The Australians needed 11 runs from the last over with two wickets in hand but Shankar, playing only his sixth ODI, kept his nerves to pick a wicket off his first and third balls in the day-night game in Nagpur.

Skipper Virat Kohli, who struck 116 in India's modest total of 250, asked Shankar to bowl the final over ahead of the regular Kuldeep Yadav, and he was rewarded amply for his move.

The Aussies were bowled out for 242 off 49.3 overs

with Marcus Stoinis top-scoring with 52. It was the 500th win in one-day internationals for India.

The visitors were off to a steady start with openers Aaron Finch (37) and Usman Khawaja (38) putting on 83 runs before being dismissed in successive overs.

Glenn Maxwell (18) saw his stumps being uprooted after a ball from Kuldeep Yadav sneaked from under his bat. But it was the run-out of Peter Handscomb who looked set for a big score that hurt the visitors hard.

Handscomb, who made 48 off 59 balls, tried to take a risky single but Ravindra Jadeja made no mistake in hitting the stumps.

A double-strike by Jasprit Bumrah (2-29) turned the game around for the Indians who ensured there was no let-up in the pressure on the visitors.

Earlier Kohli smashed his 40th century on a challenging pitch that seemed to aid bowlers.

Kohli hit 10 fours in his 120-ball knock and held anchor after Australian captain Finch had elected to bat. The Indians got off to a rocky start, losing openers Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan (21) early in the innings. Sharma (0) top-edged off Adam Zampa and

Dhawan (21) was given out leg before wicket after Australia's appeal was upheld on review.

India had no such luck as Ambati Rayudu's decision to appeal against the on-field umpire's lbw decision was turned down, the hosts reduced to a shaky 75-3.

Kohli, the world's top-ranked ODI batsman, went for the counter-attack, hitting two fours off the last two balls of the 18th over by Zampa to underline his top form. The 30-year-old skipper timed his innings perfectly, stitching a 81-run partnership with Shankar, who impressed during his 41-ball 46 before being run out by Zampa. Zampa struck again soon after, dismissing Kedar Jadhav (11) and Mahendra Singh Dhoni (0) off successive balls to stun the home crowd into silence.

But Kohli looked unfettered at the other end, reaching his 40th ODI century with a four over backward point. The flamboyant captain removed his helmet and raised his bat to acknowledge the applause from the crowd and the dressing room.

Kohli's innings ended when he holed a simple catch to Stoinis off Pat Cummins who picked up four late wickets. — AFP



NAGPUR: Indian cricketer Kuldeep Singh celebrates after taking the wicket of Australia batsman Glenn Maxwell during the second one-day international (ODI) cricket match between India and Australia at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur yesterday. — AFP