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Saudi oil giant Aramco heads for record-setting market debut

Foreign float on hold • IPO plans to create world's most valuable listed company



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Singaporean President Halimah Yacob at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 2)

DHAHRAN: Saudi Arabia announced yesterday the stock market debut of energy giant Aramco in what could be the world's biggest IPO, underpinning Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's ambitions to overhaul the kingdom's oil-reliant economy. After years of delay, Aramco said it plans to sell an unspecified number of shares on the Riyadh stock exchange, calling it a "historic" milestone for the world's most profitable company which pumps 10 percent of the world's oil.

However, the state firm said there were no current plans for an international listing, indicating that the long-discussed goal for a second offering on a foreign bourse had been put aside. The launch, which has been approved by regulators, forms the linchpin of Prince Mohammed's ambitious plans to transform the petro-state, with tens of billions of dollars needed to fund megaprojects and new industries.

With analysts saying that Aramco could be valued at up to \$1.7 trillion, the initial public offering (IPO) is potentially the world's biggest, depending on how much of the company it decides to sell. "Today marks a significant milestone in the history of the company and important progress towards delivering Saudi Vision 2030, the kingdom's blueprint for sustained economic diversification and growth," Aramco chairman Yasir Al-Rumayyan said. The final offer price and the number of shares to be sold "will be determined at the end of the book-building period", said the firm headquartered in the eastern city of Dhahran.

Aramco had initially been expected to sell



DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia: President and CEO of Saudi Aramco Amin Nasser (left) and Aramco's chairman Yasir Al-Rumayyan attend a press conference in this eastern Saudi city yesterday. — AFP

a total of five percent on two exchanges, with a first listing of two percent on the Tadawul Saudi bourse followed by a three percent listing on an overseas exchange. "For the (international) listing part, we will let you know in due course. So far it's only on Tadawul," Rumayyan said amid reports it was struggling to get institutional investors on board due to questions over transparency and governance. "An important function of the domestic IPO is to project confidence in the company towards the international market," said Cinzia

Bianco, Gulf research fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. "But doing it domestically encounters no meaningful obstacle. It allows Prince Mohammed to show he keeps his promises and gets things done."

First suggested by the kingdom's de facto ruler in 2016, the IPO was delayed several times, reportedly due to his dissatisfaction with the valuation of the firm, which fell short of the hoped-for \$2 trillion. Last week, Energy Intelligence cited sources as saying

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MPs congratulate Khannah on receiving 'Amiri pardon'

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A number of lawmakers yesterday congratulated jailed ex-MP Fahd Al-Khannah after he reportedly received an Amiri pardon that will free him from the central prison, barely a week after returning from Turkey. The

pardon has not been officially confirmed. Khannah is one of a number of former opposition lawmakers who were sentenced to several years in jail for breaking the law after they stormed the National Assembly building eight years ago.

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Footballers to gain pro status under privatization law

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti sports clubs are close to sealing professional status for their footballers after a milestone ministry of commerce decision was reached last month, allowing private owners to obtain full commercial rights of these institutions. The professional sports law will target domestic football - the sport having additionally been added to the Gulf Cooperation Council's classification of economic activities. It comes as a precondition by Asian and global football's governing bodies - the AFC and FIFA - for the participation of Kuwaiti clubs in regional and international association competitions.

For the first time, the decision will treat Kuwaiti footballers as company employees who are totally committed to their craft, Public Authority for Sports Deputy Sports Director Sager Al-Mulla told KUNA. Mulla said the step will also organize club-to-club transfer of players, deeming it "important, crucial and necessary" to the development and growth of the sport in Kuwait. Alongside ownership by Kuwaiti nationals, the move will also be open to foreign investors, said the official, as long as the necessary trade approvals are obtained from relevant authorities.

Domestic clubs such as Kuwait, Nasr and Salmiya have already applied for commercial licenses ahead of the regulations, currently being revised by sports authorities and the parliament. The aforementioned outfits will be included in the 14-club law, which includes Arabi, Jahra, Kazma, Khaitan, Qurain, Sahel, Shabab, Tadhamon, Yarmouk, Qadisiya and Sulaibikhat. Kuwait Sports Club board secretary Waleed Al-Rashed said the major motive behind the club's private ownership bid is to be allowed to compete in the AFC Champions League.

"Through these steps, the club hopes to raise the level of Kuwaiti football and offer full professional status to players, who will be fully dedicated to the business and will receive full rights and benefits," he said. Speaking of other advantages, he said clubs will also boost revenue from owning the exclusive broadcasting rights of their fixtures, allowing them to be financially self-sufficient. Rashed urged fellow clubs to follow suit due to the impetus this would give to developing the sport and its professionals. — KUNA

New Delhi gasps under choking smog

NEW DELHI: India's capital New Delhi was enveloped in heavy, toxic smog yesterday - the worst levels in recent years - with flights diverted or delayed as politicians blamed each other for failing to tackle the crisis. Every winter, the megacity of 20 million people is blanketed by a poisonous smog of car fumes, industrial emissions and smoke from stubble burning at farms in neighboring states.

Concentrations of particles measuring less than 2.5 microns hit the highest level of this season, exacerbated by light rains late Saturday, India's state-run System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and

Research (SAFAR) said. The reading for pollutants in the atmosphere hit 810 micrograms per cubic meter yesterday morning, beyond the "hazardous" zone according to the US embassy in Delhi, which independently monitors pollution levels. The recommended World Health Organization safe daily maximum is 25.

"Pollution has reached unbearable levels," Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted yesterday. Visibility was so poor that major carriers Air India and Vistara said yesterday flights were being delayed or diverted to and from Delhi's airports. Some cricket players and coaches have also been training in masks ahead of the Twenty20 international between Bangladesh and India later yesterday.

"It's actually scary - you can't see things in front of you," protester Jaivipra told AFP at a rally in Delhi yesterday calling for politicians to do more to curb pollution.

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NEW DELHI: Demonstrators wearing face masks due to heavy smog conditions take part in a demonstration demanding government measures to curb air pollution yesterday. — AFP

Iraq protests ramp up, shutting roads, offices and schools

BAGHDAD: Protesters in Iraq's capital and the country's south shut down streets and government offices in a new wave of civil disobedience yesterday, escalating their month-long movement demanding wholesale change of the political system. Demonstrations broke out on October 1 in outrage over rampant corruption and unemployment in Iraq. They were met with a violent crackdown that left dozens dead.

Since resuming later last month, the protests have swelled again with the support of students and trade unions, who jointly announced a campaign of non-violent resistance yesterday. In Baghdad, university-age demonstrators parked cars along main thoroughfares to block traffic on the first day of the working week in the Muslim-majority country, as police officers looked on.

Other students took part in sit-ins at their schools, and the national teachers union extended a strike they began last week. The engineering, doctors and lawyers syndicates have all backed the protests. "We decided to cut the roads as a message to the government that we will keep protesting until the corrupt people and thieves are kicked out and the regime falls," said Tahseen Nasser, a 25-year-old protester in the eastern city of Kut.

"We're not allowing government workers to reach



UMM QASR, Iraq: Iraqi protesters block the highway leading to Umm Qasr port during ongoing anti-government demonstrations in southern Iraq yesterday. — AFP

their offices, just those in humanitarian fields," such as hospital staff, he said. In the southern city of Diwaniyah, a banner hanging on the headquarters of the provincial council proclaimed: "Closed by order of the people".

The government has proposed a string of reforms, including a hiring drive, social welfare plans and early elections once a new voting law is passed. The pledges have had little effect on those on the streets, who have condemned the political class wholesale. "We decided on this campaign of civil disobedience because we have had it up to here with the government's lies and promises of so-called reform," said Mohammad Al-Assadi, a government employee on strike in the southern city of Nasiriyah.

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Khamenei rules out talks with US

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader yesterday again ruled out negotiations with Washington, a day before the 40th anniversary of the hostage crisis at the US embassy in Tehran. "Those who see negotiations with the US as the solution to every problem are certainly mistaken," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said during a speech to mark the anniversary, according to his official website. "Nothing will come out of talking to the US, because they certainly and definitely won't make any concessions."

On Nov 4, 1979, less than nine months after the toppling of Iran's American-backed shah, students overran the embassy complex to demand the United States hand over the ousted ruler after he was admitted to a US hospital. It took a full 444 days for the crisis to end with the release of 52 Americans, but the US broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980 and ties have been frozen ever since.

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Ali Khamenei

Amir receives Singapore President; Kuwait, Singapore hold official talks



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting President of Singapore Halimah Yacob, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes President of Singapore Halimah Yacob upon her arrival to Kuwait.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the visiting President of Singapore Halimah Yacob and her accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace yesterday. The two sides held official talks with the Kuwaiti side headed by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime

Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and senior state officials.

The talks discussed developing bilateral ties and cooperation on all levels, said Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Later, His Highness the Amir held a luncheon in honor of the distinguished guest. President Yacob, along with accompanying officials, had

arrived in Kuwait earlier on an official visit. She was received upon arrival by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, while the mission of honor was headed by Amiri Diwan Advisor Dr Youssef Al-Ibrahim.

Meanwhile, President Yacob received at her resident in Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-

Ghanem. President Yacob also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Furthermore, President Yacob received Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, head of the mission of honor escorting the Singaporean leader, Amiri Diwan Advisor Dr Youssef Al-Ibrahim, attended the receptions. —KUNA



President of Singapore Halimah Yacob meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



President of Singapore Halimah Yacob meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



President of Singapore Halimah Yacob meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Amir receives National Assembly Office members



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly's Office members. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly's Office members.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir then received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, who escorted members of the National Assembly's Office. Later, His Highness received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Ghanem who escorted members of the National Assembly's Office, as well as His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Deputy Premier and

Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Separately, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah offered his deepest condolences on the passing of the mother of Saudi prince Khaled Bin Saad Al-Saud. His Highness the Amir expressed his heartfelt sympathies in a cable he sent to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, commiserating with the Saudi ruling family in this time of grief. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar messages to the Saudi monarch. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Nepal's visiting Shooting Association President and head of Kuwaiti-Nepali committee Pushpa Das Shrestha. President of the Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Executive Director of ASC Duajj Khalaf Al-Otaibi attended the meeting. — KUNA

Kuwait hails 'Desert Davos'

RIYADH: Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Sabah yesterday praised Kuwait's participation in the Future Investment Initiative (FII), or 'Davos in the Desert.' In a press statement, the Kuwaiti envoy stressed keenness to participate in such a major economic initiative, noting the participation of Kuwaiti Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf, who represented the country's public sector. He stressed that the active participation of major international companies in various fields reaffirms Saudi Arabia's "attractive and stimulating economic environment at

the international level." Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah also underlined the Saudi youth and their distinguished efforts, which proved success of international conferences, summits and forums hosted by the Kingdom at the highest of levels. Minister Hajraf participated in a session titled 'The Middle East Welcomes Business: How the Region Became a Global Investment Hub' within the FII, which was also attended by Saudi Finance Minister Mohammad Al-Jadaan and Bahraini Minister of Finance and National Economy Sheikh Salman Al-Khalifa. — KUNA



Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

Local

Kuwait regional leader in fight against IS, extremist ideologies: US Report

US State Department's report on terrorism highlights Kuwait's efforts in this field

KUWAIT: The United States Department of State released its Country Reports on Terrorism 2018, highlighting each country's efforts in the global fight against terrorism. The following is a transcript of Kuwait's efforts in this field during the past year, which credits the Kuwaiti government for improving its counterterrorism measures, being a regional leader in the Global Coalition to Defeat, and implementing programs to fight extremist ideologies at public schools.

Overview: The Government of Kuwait focused on improving its capacity to implement counterterrorism arrangements concluded in previous years. Kuwait joined the United States and other members of the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC) in coordinated domestic designations of individuals and entities associated with Hezbollah and the Taliban. Kuwait is a regional leader in the Global Coalition to Defeat IS and co-leads, with Turkey and the Netherlands, the Coalition's FTF Working Group. In February, Kuwait hosted a full Coalition ministerial meeting at which the Coalition's Guiding Principles were affirmed.

2018 Terrorist Incidents: There were no reported terrorist incidents in Kuwait in 2018.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Kuwait made no significant changes to its counterterrorism legal framework or border security procedures in 2018. In January, the Court of Appeals upheld the sentences of seven defendants convicted of funding IS and training IS members to use arms. The first defendant, a Lebanese national, was also convicted of fighting for IS and sentenced to 15 years. The other six defendants (two Kuwaitis, two Saudis, one Syrian, and one

Egyptian) were sentenced to 10 years each. Also in January, the Criminal Court, after finding insufficient evidence, acquitted five Syrians and one Iraqi of transferring money to Syria through an exchange bureau to finance and support IS. In March, the Court of Appeals upheld the 2017 sentencing of a Filipina national to 10 years in prison, followed by deportation, for her affiliation with IS. The subject was in contact with the terrorist group in Libya where her husband was an IS fighter. She confessed to being a member of IS and plotting terrorist attacks in Kuwait. In July, the Court of Cassation upheld the Court of Appeals' five-year prison sentence of a Kuwaiti citizen for joining IS and fighting for the terrorist group in Syria. Charges also included exporting and selling Syrian oil for the terrorist group's benefit. During 2018, the Kuwaiti government participated in multiple Department of State-supported capacity-building workshops that focused on counterterrorism or counterterrorism financing. In addition, Kuwait concentrated on law enforcement and judicial capacity building across a broad spectrum of government agencies. For example, in December the Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) organized a three-day, AML/CFT training for practitioners from across

Kuwait's AML/CFT regime, to include Kuwait's FIU, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and others on a broad spectrum of investigative techniques often used in terrorism investigations.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Kuwait is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), the Defeat-IS Coalition's Counter-IS Finance Group, and the TFTC. Kuwait's FIU is a member of the Egmont Group. In 2018, Kuwait hosted two meetings of the TFTC Executive Committee in Kuwait City. In May, TFTC member states designated individuals and entities associated with Hezbollah. However, Kuwait chose not to designate Hasan Nasrallah, the Secretary General of Hezbollah. In October, Kuwait joined its TFTC partners in designating nine individuals

financing and FTFs.

Countering Violent Extremism: Kuwait's Ministry of Education implemented a program to fight what it viewed as extremist ideologies at public schools through teacher-training and student-counseling programs. As part of the government's National Plan to Reinforce Moderation, the Ministry of Information runs a television channel with programming aimed at audiences believed to be at higher risk of radicalization to violence. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs maintained a training program for imams and a separate program enabling social salon (diwanya) owners to invite religious scholars to engage attendees and counter the potential presence of "radicalizing influences." In August, the Ministry announced a new annual award for the imam who offers an innovative initiative in the field of "countering extremism."

International and Regional Cooperation: In January 2018, Kuwait joined the UNSC for a two-year term and serves as chair of the UNSC's Democratic Republic of the Congo Sanctions Committee and vice chair of the Somalia and Central African Republic sanctions committees. In February, Kuwait hosted the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq. In June, Kuwait participated in the FATF-MENAFATF joint plenary meeting in Paris. Kuwait is also an active member of the Arab League and of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Kuwait has been playing a lead role in mediating the GCC dispute among Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates on the one hand and Qatar on the other.



Kuwait plays lead role in mediating GCC dispute

associated with the Taliban, including those facilitating Iranian support to bolster the terrorist group. In 2018, Kuwait's National Committee on CFT finalized its National CFT Risk Assessment, which contains plans and recommendations that will be presented to the Kuwait Cabinet. In October, five Kuwaitis who work in counterterrorism and the financial industry participated in the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program, meeting with professional counterparts and visiting US public and private sector organizations related to combating terrorist



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Estonia's extraordinary ambassador and representative in Kuwait Jaan Reinhold. — KUNA

Estonian President due in Kuwait today

KUWAIT: President of the Republic of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid, along with her accompanying delegation, are scheduled to arrive in Kuwait today. During the visit, the Estonian President will hold official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday received the credentials of Estonia's extraordinary ambassador and representative in Kuwait Jaan Reinhold, who is based in Abu Dhabi. The reception was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran and Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar.

Estonian President's high-profile trip to Kuwait is a testament to a mutual desire to propel bilateral relations to greater levels, according to a Kuwaiti envoy. The visit should usher in a "watershed phase" in Kuwait's ties with Tallinn, the Gulf state's Ambassador to Germany

and non-resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Estonia Najeeb Al-Bader said yesterday. With her three-day visit, where she is due to hold "extensive talks" with Kuwait's political leaders, the Estonian president has taken up His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on his offer, added the diplomat.

Kaljulaid will be accompanied by a massive trade delegation, who will look into opportunities for bilateral trade and investment, the Kuwaiti envoy revealed. He went on to say that current happenings in the Middle East will also be among the topics of discussion, describing Estonia's newly acquired non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council as a sign of the international community's "trust" in the European nation. The Kuwaiti diplomat commended Estonia on "leading the digital revolution in Europe," saying the scarcity of natural resources did not deter the country from marching towards economic stardom. — KUNA

Palestine allocates \$3 million of Kuwait grant for Gaza

GAZA: The Palestinian government said yesterday that it has allocated \$3 million of a Kuwaiti grant for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. Palestinian Minister of Public Works and Housing Mohammad Zyara said in a statement that this amount would go to a number of infrastructure projects in the sector. He added that the total value of the Kuwaiti grant worth \$200 million was allocated for the reconstruction of several key sectors in the Gaza Strip. The number of these projects reached 53 projects in all the governorates of the enclave for the reconstruc-

tion of roads, infrastructure and public buildings, he said. The Israeli occupation launched a large scale war on the Gaza Strip in July 2014 lasted for about 50 days, killing around 1,935 Palestinians and wounding more than 10,000 others in addition to destroying large parts of the infrastructure and dozens of sites, houses and public utilities. During the donors' conference in Cairo in October 2014, Kuwait announced a \$200 million grant for the number of housing and industrial development sectors in the Gaza Strip. — KUNA



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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City's skyline captured at sunrise from Shuwaikh beach. — Photo by Renjish Sasinath (KUNA)

Supporting local products serves Kuwait's income diversification goals: Govt official

Kuwait funded 1,035 SMEs in 3 years with total cost of KD 177 million

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Supporting local products is a main focus for the Kuwaiti government to achieve its strategic goal of diversifying sources of income, a government official said yesterday. "The government has prioritized industry for its 'New Kuwait 2035' plan," said Mohamed Al-Adwani, Deputy Director-General of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI). "It also embraced the establishment of industrial cities with good infrastructure and convenient facilities, health services, commercial activities and services for SMEs, providing a legislative structure that allows the issuance of licenses easily."

Adwani was speaking on behalf of Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Services Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan during the inauguration of the 'Supporting Local Product' forum, which kicked off yesterday at the Diamond Hall of Sheraton Hotel. Organized by NoufEXPO and held under the minister's patronage, the forum is an initiative by Kuwait Journalists Association and Kuwait Association for the Protection of Industrial Properties in cooperation with Kuwait Industries Union.

Adwani stressed that the government is encouraging local products and supporting Kuwaiti industries. "Kuwaiti substitutes for imports is a basic goal for the state. The domestic industry sector is a pillar of the national economy, so important steps have been taken in order to strengthen it to be competitive in the domestic and neigh-



KUWAIT: Mohamed Al-Adwani, Deputy Director-General of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), speaks during the forum. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

boring markets, and encourage investors to launch new industries, especially in light of the rapid acceleration in global industries and the emergence of renewable energy industries every year," he said. Adwani also highlighted Kuwait's efforts in supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs), noting that the government has funded around 1,035 SMEs with a total cost of KD 177 million in the past three years.



KJA Secretary and Head of the Organizing Committee Adnan Al-Rashed delivers a speech.

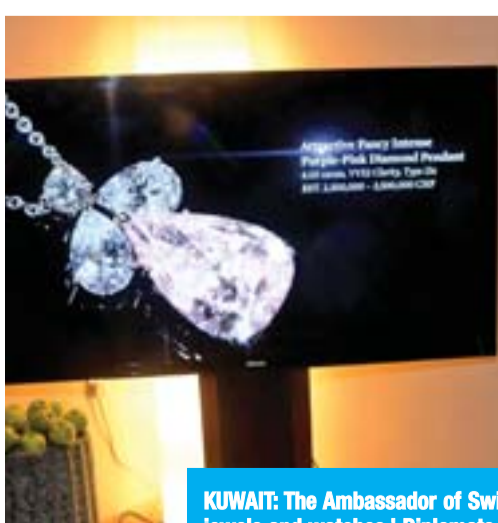
In the meantime, panel member MP Salah Khorsheed stressed the need to support small private enterprises and make procedures easier. "Small- and medium-sized enterprises are the ones that need the most support from the government. Other countries invest in those who put their ideas, efforts and money to create a project," he said.

KJA Secretary and Head of the Organizing Committee Adnan Al-Rashed thanked the participants and all compa-



MP Salah Khorsheed addresses the forum.

nies and establishments that sponsored the forum, saying the forum placed its belief in Kuwaiti products to support all effective contributions to diversify the economy and discuss means of achieving the goal of providing the best ways to help Kuwaiti products occupy a competitive place locally and internationally. The two-day forum was held under the slogan 'Our Industry is Our Pride', which reflects the confidence of the organizers in the quality of Kuwaiti products.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Switzerland Dr Benedict Gulber hosted a reception to promote the upcoming Geneva auction of 'magnificent jewels and watches.' Diplomats, businessmen and media persons attended the event, which the ambassador hosted at his residence over the weekend. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Gulf Bank promotes love for reading with children

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank hosted a 'Reading Fun Day' for children to encourage reading and learning, in collaboration with That Al-Salasil. The family fun day took place the morning of Friday, November 1 at the That Al-Salasil bookstore in The Avenues, and was aimed at children between 3 to 10 years old. The Reading Fun Day is a part of Gulf Bank's CSR initiatives to engage children in an effort to help them develop a love for reading while also improving literacy levels. During the event, Gulf Bank organized various educational and entertaining activities, with both Gulf Bank and That Al-Salasil employees enjoying storytelling, bookstore tours, and arts and crafts with the kids. Participating children at the event also received a number of attractive giveaways, which included the latest games and prizes.

Commenting on the event, Lujain Al-Qenaci, Assistant Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank said: "As a part of our various initiatives to support our local community, we are proud to offer events like our Reading Fun Day to give back to even the youngest members of our community. At Gulf Bank, we understand that financial education and literacy go hand in hand, which is why we make it a point to support and offer educational resources to our local community members whenever possible. These children are our future, we could not be prouder to instill in them a love for reading and learning." Gulf Bank is a proud supporter of the local community, and proudly participates in various CSR initiatives throughout the year aimed at empowering different members of society.

National Assembly panel to discuss bedoons' proposed bill next week

Ministry of Health exempted from 'ban on unaccredited certificates'

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A proposed bill discussed by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, the head of the central apparatus for illegal residents affairs Saleh Al-Fadhlah and the government will be referred to the parliament's legislative affairs committee next week to make sure it is constitutional, well-informed sources said. It will then be referred to the parliamentary defense and interior committee to issue a final report before returning it to the parliament for voting, said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"Some parliamentarians have already started urging relevant committees to reject the bill and merge it with another prepared by the lawyers society, which the lawmakers deem much better," the sources explained, adding that Ghanem's bill includes some 'difficult' articles such as giving bedoons other countries' citizenship and granting Kuwaiti citizenship to a limited number of up to 5,000 bedoons, although their total number in Kuwait is 120,000.

The sources added that Ghanem, Fadhlah and the government insist on passing the new law with a few

amendments that would not open the door wide for naturalizing bedoons in order to protect Kuwaitis' national identity. "The bill is expected to be discussed in parliament after December and is thus expected to be passed next year," the sources stressed.

Meanwhile, a report issued by the central apparatus for illegal residents affairs showed that the total number of bedoons receiving free education is 13,682 in various stages. The agency explained that the state had established a charity fund for education, which paid tuition fees for 15,448 students this year, with a total cost of KD 5.5 million. The agency added that bedoons are also accepted at Kuwait University (1,265 students) and PAAET (588 students), in addition to 141 postgraduate students. "Bedeons are treated like citizens in terms of fees and healthcare, which are fully paid by the govern-

ment," the report added, noting that the defense ministry had sent 112 bedoon patients for treatment abroad.

National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem had announced last July that under directions from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, a comprehensive and just solution will be struck to end the decades-old problem of thousands of stateless people or bedoons in a way that would not "inhibit their national identity rights," "undermine Kuwait's national identity" or "be at the cost of Kuwaiti citizenship."

certificates to scientific-related posts had caused problems in certain state departments, especially the Ministry of Health, in terms of hiring staff to fill their vacancies. Meanwhile, Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah issued a decision approving the charter of law number 14/2019 pertaining psychological health.

Shift allowances

Director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Yousif Al-Fauzan stressed Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan is keen on protecting the rights of DGCA employees and that he had contacted relevant bodies requesting approving the shift allowances they had been demanding. Speaking following a meeting with the DGCA employees syndicate, Fauzan explained that the allowances will be restricted to employees working shifts and expressed hope that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) will approve the allowances soon. DGCA employees had recently threatened to go on strike in protest of being left out of the allowances that they believe are their "legitimate right."

DGCA meets union to discuss labor demands



Unaccredited certificates

The Fatwa and Legislation Department issued a decision suspending the ban on unaccredited certificates for Ministry of Health (MoH) staff members until a special charter is issued. A government decision made last August to stop hiring candidates with unaccredited

Council Chairman confirms Finance Ministry, Municipality conflict report

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Municipal Council Chairman Osama Al-Otaibi confirmed a report carried by Arabic daily Al-Qabas on suspending some municipal procedures related to state property projects, adding that he had discussed the matter with the minister of state for municipal affairs, further noting that a meeting will be held tomorrow in the presence of representatives from relevant ministries. Otaibi expressed hopes that Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Shulah and Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf will help resolve the problem due to the revenues state property add to the treasury.

Al-Qabas had reported yesterday that a conflict is in place between the Finance Ministry and Kuwait Municipality over blueprints for state properties the former had requested in order to develop state lands, noting that the lack of a resolution is costing the state an estimated loss of over KD 1 billion.

Otaibi reaffirmed that the state property department had been contacting Kuwait Municipality, requesting certain blueprints without any reply, which had deprived the state treasury from considerable sums of money. "Many issues have been delayed for years, which is unacceptable," he stressed, noting that the meeting will be dedicated to tackling complications and lack of administrative coordination.

"We know that the municipality is understaffed, but it is unacceptable that some transactions take up to four years to be completed," he added, pointing out that ignoring incoming correspondence only complicates problems, especially since the state property department wants to sell some of its malls or invest in them according to BOT conditions, which requires certain certificates to be issued by Kuwait Municipality.

In other news, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Shulah yesterday headed a meeting with the supreme planning committee, Kuwait Municipality director and various municipal officials. The meeting was dedicated to discussing the new cleaning contracts and preparations for the rainy season.

Pharmacists decry govt procedure

The private sector Kuwaiti pharmacists forum (currently being established) strongly condemned Kuwait Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies' (KUCCS) attempts to stop the implementation of law number 30/2016 (pharmacies law) although it had been unanimously approved by a majority of lawmakers and the parliamentary health affairs committee. Head of the forum, pharmacist Mohammed Al-Enezi, said the forum had been established to protect the interests of pharmacy owners holding licenses since 1996. He added that the law aims at encouraging Kuwaiti pharmacists, protecting their rights and enabling them to find better investment opportunities in the private sector as part of the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Co-founder and pharmacist Hamad Al-Sultan said the law had given grace periods to co-ops and hospitals with a bed capacity of less than 50 till mid-2017 to legalize their statuses before extending the grace period for a further year that ended in mid-2018, followed by a third grace period that ended in June 2019. "Most co-ops have been evasively stalling," he stressed.

Pharmacist Faisal Al-Ruwaiyyeh called for fighting the rumors spread by KUCCS warning shareholders against the law. "Most co-op pharmacies are run by certain companies and all the profits go to them and not to shareholders," he underlined. Finally, forum members urged the health minister and minister of social affairs to look into the matter and help implement the law that has been delayed since 2016.

Embezzlement

The court of cassation yesterday sentenced a Kuwait ambassador working abroad to seven years in jail with labor for embezzling KD 220,000.

News in brief

Offices decry 'rejected maids' conundrum

KUWAIT: "Rejected" domestic help - a term often used to describe the action of sponsors returning housemaids back to the office where they hired them from - has become a nightmare that worries domestic help offices and threatens to make them go bankrupt, as they bear the cost of sending helpers back to their countries during the six-month probation period and have to pay the sponsors back. Al-Rai local daily claimed that 70 percent of domestic helpers brought in do not last in their jobs, which compels offices to send them back to their countries at their cost. Head of the domestic offices union Khalid Al-Daknann said if domestic helpers refuse to continue working within the first six months due to the sponsors' mistreatment, the office is committed to bearing the cost of sending them back home and are not allowed to let them work for another sponsor, which leads to huge losses for the offices. This rule does not apply to the government's Durra Company, which has the right to reemploy domestic helpers with other sponsors. He said not allowing offices to reemploy helpers threatens them with bankruptcy or closure. — Al-Rai

Health offices' deaths

KUWAIT: The health ministry is looking for deep-rooted solutions for accumulated debts of health offices due to bills owed to international hospitals and medical centers that treat citizens sent abroad for treatment, according to Al-Qabas local daily. Informed sources said the largest debts are those of the Washington and London that reached \$435 million and £129 million respectively. They said the total expenses demanded from the ministry and accumulated bills of the Washington office will reach \$774 million (about KD 235 million) at the end of the current fiscal year, while the total for London will be £204 (KD 81 million). The sources said around 1,623 citizens were receiving treatment abroad by the end of October. They added 665 citizens are being treated in the US, 614 in Britain, 330 in France, four in Germany, four in Egypt and six in Jordan. — Al-Qabas

Drug overdose deaths

KUWAIT: Drugs overdoses killed 35 Kuwaitis and 40 expats since the start of this year, an informed security source said. The source said morphine is the leading cause of death among addicts, and has caused the death of 30 citizens and expats, adding that the use of benzodiazepines in large quantities was the next leading cause of deaths, synthetic marijuana third, shabu fourth and hashish fifth. — Al-Qabas

Man questioned for 'indecent' contest video

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and agencies

KUWAIT: Police questioned a man who was arrested after posting a video online to announce hosting a contest deemed 'in violation of public morals.' The interior ministry's relations and security information department said in a statement released to the press yesterday that as soon as a video clip of a Kuwaiti launching a contest that is alien to Kuwait's traditions was posted online, criminal detectives identified the man and he was summoned. He said the video was for entertainment only, and took it off all his social media accounts, the statement said. He was sent to concerned authorities for further legal action, the ministry noted.

In other news, a 52-year-old Indian man committed suicide by hanging in Ahmadi governorate, according to preliminary investigation results. Police went to the residence, then informed the prosecution, which asked forensics to remove the body. Separately, a Syrian woman filed a debauchery complaint against a compatriot who stalked her in a street after he openly asked her to begin an illegal relationship with him, according to her statements to police. A police source said the woman told Hawally police that the man kept chasing her every time she left her house, but matters escalated when he asked her to meet him, Al-Rai reported yesterday. Detectives are investigating and will question the suspect.

Meanwhile, four persons held up a grocer and stole some products before escaping, Al-Rai reported. The Indian grocer told Mubarak Al-Kabeer police that his shop was stormed by the four suspects, who held him up and stole goods before escaping. Police are investigating. In the meantime, a thief impersonating a detective mugged an Indian man and took KD 70 and his mobile phone. The victim told Bayan police that he was stopped by a man claiming to be a detective, then after seeing his ID, the suspect threatened him and stole his valuables. Detectives are investigating.

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International

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2019



Priyanka Gandhi's WhatsApp hacked

Year before 2020 election, a divided and 'angry' America

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BAABDA: Lebanese protesters stage a mock hanging in a symbolic performance against sectarianism (center), Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war (right) and corruption during ongoing anti-government demonstrations in Downtown Beirut yesterday.—AFP

Thousands rally to support Aoun

Hezbollah TV channel says Twitter accounts suspended

BAABDA: Thousands of backers of Lebanon's embattled president rallied yesterday in a show of support, after more than two weeks of massive nationwide anti-graft protests that brought down the government. They paid tribute to President Michel Aoun outside the capital, ahead of another demonstration planned in Beirut to demand a complete overhaul of a political system deemed inefficient and corrupt.

In the town of Baabda, supporters of the retired general turned head of state filled up a two-kilometer-long road leading to the presidential palace, an AFP correspondent said. Fans of the president waved large Lebanese flags and orange-colored banners of the political party he founded, the Free Patriotic Movement, he said. "We are here, General. We won't abandon you as long as we live," one poster read, responding to a cross-sectarian movement calling for an end to his term. Some Aoun supporters wore orange T-shirts while others held up portraits of the 84-year-old president.

"General Aoun is a reformist and sincere man—not corrupt nor a thief," said one supporter who gave her name as Diana. "There has been corruption in the state for 30 years. The president isn't responsible. He's trying to fight against graft," she said. In Baabda, Aoun supporters said they backed the general demands of protesters nationwide, but insisted the president was the only man able to bring about reforms. "There were slogans against the president. That's not fair," said Hanna Nader, an

unemployed man in his forties.

More than 25 percent of the Lebanese live in poverty, the World Bank says. Economic growth in Lebanon has stalled in recent years in the wake of repeated political crises, compounded by an eight-year civil war in neighboring Syria. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced his cabinet would step down. But it is still unclear what a new government will look like and if it will include independent technocrats as demanded by demonstrators. Thousands of anti-government protesters flocked together in the northern city of Tripoli Saturday night, many from other parts of the country.

Twitter accounts suspended

In another development, the television station of Lebanon's powerful Shiite movement Hezbollah protested Saturday that most of its Twitter accounts had been suspended. Al-Manar accused the US-based social media platform of giving in to "political pressures". "Account suspended," one such Arabic-language account, @almanarnews, read late Saturday.

"There is no place on Twitter for illegal terrorist organizations and violent extremist groups," a Twitter spokesperson said. The accounts in English, French and Spanish were also not available, but the Twitter handles of specific television shows seemed to be functioning. Iran-backed Hezbollah is designated a "terrorist" group by the United States and several of its officials are under US sanctions, but

it is also a key political player in Lebanon.

The group held three ministerial posts and a majority with its Christian allies before Lebanon's cabinet fell this week after 13 days of mass anti-graft protests. Hezbollah is the only group not to have disarmed after Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, and it fought Israeli troops who occupied southern Lebanon until 2000. It has also been a key ally of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in the neighboring country's eight-year conflict.

'Extraordinary movement'

Meanwhile, Lebanon's banks did not see "any extraordinary movement" of money on Friday or Saturday, the first two days they reopened to the public after a two-week closure due to nationwide protests, the head of the banking association said. "The reaction was almost the way we expected and anticipated. However, people were asking a lot of questions and we provided as much assurances as possible," Salim Sfeir, head of the Association of Banks in Lebanon, told Reuters by email. Central bank Governor Riad Salameh said the reopening of banks "in general ... did not cause any disturbance at any bank".

"This is important given the long period of shut down and the events our country went through," he told Reuters in written comments. Analysts and bankers had cited widespread concern about a rush by depositors to withdraw their savings or transfer them abroad when the banks



BAABDA, Lebanon: Supporters of Lebanese President Michel Aoun take part in a counter-protest near the presidential palace in Baabda yesterday.—AFP

reopened. The nationwide protests that erupted on Oct 17 tipped Lebanon into political turmoil as it grapples with the worst economic crisis since the 1975-90 civil war.

The uprisings led Saad Al-Hariri to quit as prime minister this week. "We are trying to counter rumors and avoid panic in order to prevent any unnecessary and unjustified withdrawals," Sfeir said. When banks opened their doors on Friday, no formal capital controls were imposed, but customers encountered new curbs on trans-

fers abroad and withdrawals from US dollar accounts, bankers and customers said.

"No formal capital controls are considered," Salameh said on Saturday, adding that such a move would require a vote in parliament. "The banks are professionally handling [the situation] and the central bank is backing them," he said. A banking source said branch operations so far had been "better than expected". Amid rain, protest activity was low on Saturday, but there were calls on social media for gatherings later in the day.—Agencies

'Guardian of the forest' killed in Amazon ambush

SAO PAULO: A Brazilian land defender was killed and a second injured in an ambush by loggers in the Amazon rainforest, regional authorities reported. Indigenous leader Paulo Paulino Guajajara and his partner Laercio were members of "Guardians of the forest", a group who attempt to protect their land from illegal logging.

The two men had left their village on Friday night to look for water when the attack occurred, the Human Rights Secretariat of the Maranhao governorate said on Twitter. Paulo Paulino was shot in the neck and died in the jungle, according to the International Survival organization, who said his partner was injured but managed to escape. A logger has also been reported missing. Justice Minister Sergio Moro tweeted that the

police will investigate the murder, which took place in the Arariboia indigenous territory, roughly 500 kilometers from state capital Sao Luis.

"Paulino and Laercio are the most recent victims of a state that refuses to comply with what the constitution determines," Greenpeace said in a statement. Survival International researcher Sarah Shenker, who was in the region in April, said the work of the Guajajara is important to protect other indigenous people in the area. "The Brazilian government has to accept that it is their responsibility to protect those lands. That they do not, their absence there, is what pushes the guardians to assume this defense, a very hard and dangerous job," Shenker said.

Three other guardians have died in previous attacks. "It is time to stop this institutionalized genocide. Stop authorizing the bloodshed of our people!" Sonia Guajajara, coordinator of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, said on Twitter. Since taking office in January, Bolsonaro has been accused of harming the Amazon and indigenous tribes in order to benefit his supporters in the logging, mining and farming industries.—AFP



Fishermen pose for a picture with a Pirarucu (Arapaima gigas) at the Piagacu-Purus Sustainable Development Reserve in Amazonas state, Brazil.—AFP

International

Deadly bombing kills a dozen; Turkey blames Kurdish militia

Tel Abyad - a target of Turkey's cross-border incursion

ISTANBUL: A car bomb killed a dozen people and injured 30 on Saturday in a market of a Syrian border town that Turkish-backed forces seized last month, prompting Ankara to blame the Kurdish YPG militia it had targeted in its incursion. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said pro-Turkey fighters and civilians were among the dead and injured in Tel Abyad. Turkey's state-owned Anadolu Agency said 13 were killed after a "bomb-laden vehicle" exploded.

Tel Abyad is one of two major border towns that saw the heaviest fighting when Ankara launched the incursion on Oct 9 against the Syrian Kurdish YPG that drew international condemnation. The YPG had for years been allied to the United States in the fight against Islamic State. The explosion comes after two weeks of relative calm in northeastern Syria, and a day after Turkish and Russian troops began joint ground patrols under a deal between the two countries that pushed the YPG from Turkey's border.

While Moscow has said the YPG have withdrawn to at least 30 km from the border under the deal, Ankara has been sceptical and held out the possibility of new attacks if members of what it sees as a terrorist group remain. "We condemn this inhuman attack of the bloody PKK/YPG terrorists who attacked the innocent civilians of Tel Abyad who returned to their homes and lands as a result of the Operation Peace Spring," Turkey's defense ministry said on Twitter. Turkey's presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin

also pointed the finger at the YPG.

A spokesman for the Syrian Democratic Forces, which includes the YPG, was not immediately available for comment. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), based in Turkey, is designated a terrorist group by Turkey and its Western allies. Ankara considers the YPG a terrorist group because of its ties to PKK Kurdish militants in southeast Turkey. Days after President Donald Trump's abrupt decision on Oct 6 to pull out US troops from northeastern Syria, Turkey and allied Syrian rebels launched a cross-border offensive and seized control of Tel Abyad and some 120 km of land along the frontier.

Ceasefire deals Ankara struck first with Washington and then with Moscow halted fighting in recent weeks. The UK-based Observatory has said some 300,000 people have been displaced by the offensive and 120 civilians killed. The incursion, which was condemned by scores of countries in the West and the Middle East, left the Turkey-backed rebel Syrian National Army largely in control of Tel Abyad. Turkey's defense ministry published photographs of concrete and debris piled on a street in the town. Anadolu said some of those wounded in the blast were being treated in the Turkish city of Sanliurfa 55 km to the north.

On Wednesday, President Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey had information that the YPG had not completed its pull-out from the border region. He has warned that Turkey reserves the right to resume attacks. Russia is the Syrian



TAL ABYAD, Syria: Turkey-backed Syrian fighters inspect the site of a car bomb explosion in the northern Syrian Kurdish town of Tal Abyad, on the border with Turkey. — AFP

government's most powerful ally and helped it turn the tables in the country's eight-and-half-year civil war by retaking much of the country from rebels since 2015. The

Turkish-Russian deal last week allowed Syrian government forces to move back into border regions from which they had been absent for years. — Reuters

On Ukraine's frontline, fears and hopes after troops pull back

KATERYNIVKA: The chickens pecking around the rural Ukrainian village of Katerynivka paint a tranquil atmosphere. But a closer look reveals bullet holes on the houses of residents hopeful that peace can finally return following a long-awaited troop withdrawal. Katerynivka is in that part of eastern Ukraine's Lugansk region where the warring Kiev troops and Russia-backed separatists had agreed to pull back their soldiers and hardware.

It was part of a process toward peace announced by President Volodymyr Zelensky following his election in April. On Saturday, monitors with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) working in the conflict zone confirmed they have received notifications that both sides had pulled back from the zone around the town of Zolote, which includes the village. Katerynivka locals say they have waited long enough for the promised peace.

"Here, we all dream of the peace that Vovochka promised us, that everything would be as before," says 67-year-old Valentyna Reznik, using a diminutive form for the 41-year-old Ukrainian leader's first name. Peace in eastern Ukraine, where about 13,000 people have died over the past five years from the fighting, was one of Zelensky's campaign promises. The pullback of the zone around Zolote is a step toward a peace summit with Russia, to be overseen by France and Germany. But not everyone in Ukraine is



ZOLOTE: Ukrainian servicemen patrol in the streets of the Katerynivka village, in the Lugansk region after their withdrawal. — AFP

relied. Nationalist militia groups have accused Zelensky of surrendering Ukrainian land to Russia. And while the armed forces have pulled back, the far-right National Corps have sent men to the area. Some 40 of them are deployed in Zolote, a few kilometers from Katerynivka, to "observe the disengagement" and "protect" civilians," a spokesman for the group, Roman Chernyshev told AFP on Saturday.

'Just want shooting to stop'

Katerynivka is a typical settlement, with many residents retired or working in the coal mining industry. It is their misfortune that it sits close to the line of contact between the warring sides. It has been controlled by the Ukrainian forces for several years and about 90 of its houses in the

village sit in the new disengagement zone. Several residents interviewed by AFP expressed cautious optimism about the pullback, despite the criticism often heard in Kiev. "I don't think we're surrendering territories (to separatist control)," said Oleksiy, a 53-year-old miner. "Being realistic, we just want the shooting to stop." And since the pullout process started a few days ago, "it's gotten quieter", he added. Like many other villagers, Oleksiy works at the local coal mine.

But the struggling state-owned business has stopped paying salaries four months ago, deepening the economic misery in the region. Two locals, who requested anonymity, complained to AFP that Ukrainian soldiers had fired into enemy territory from residential areas. Afterwards, the soldiers departed, while "we were left terrified of the return fire", one man said. Ukrainian soldiers, some wearing "Ukraine or death" patches, on Saturday were moving to new positions several hundred meters from the traditional ones.

They confirmed that the shooting has practically stopped in recent days, but remained on their guard. "We doubt that the separatists have really retreated and we think they want to take our old positions," said Volodymyr, a bearded soldier with a Kalashnikov rifle slung over his shoulder. In case of attack, "we can return to our positions in four minutes," he said. "Some villagers are asking us why we're 'abandoning' them, that they are counting on us," he added. "Others have watched too much Russian television and now think that it's better if we leave."

It is true that in this part of the country, Russian television is more popular and is more widely available. For several years, many locals have viewed Kiev as the "Nazi regime" and the Ukrainian army as the "punishers". After Ukraine's military pullback, the Ukrainian police sent armed patrols to Katerynivka. — AFP

IS claims responsibility for deadly Mali attacks

BAMAKO: The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for a devastating raid that killed 49 Malian troops as well as a blast that led to the death of a French soldier who became the latest casualty in the conflict-torn region. The strikes underscored the fragility of an area straddling several West African countries battling increasing jihadist violence that has claimed hundreds of lives.

Friday's assault on a Malian military outpost at Indelimane in the eastern Menaka region near Niger killed 49 soldiers, wounded three and left 20 survivors, the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) said Saturday. "Soldiers of the caliphate attacked a military base where elements of the apostate Malian army were stationed in the village of Indelimane," the IS said in a statement on its social media channels.

On Saturday, French corporal Ronan Pointeau, 24, died after an armored vehicle in which he was travelling hit an improvised explosive device (IED) near the city of Menaka, a French defense ministry statement said. The IS late Saturday also claimed responsibility for that, saying its fighters had "detonated an explosive device on a French army convoy in the Indelimane area". Pointeau and his colleagues were escorting a convoy between the cities of Gao and Menaka.

"This insidious attack shows the importance and bitterness of the fight against armed terrorist groups" in the border region straddling Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, the French defense ministry said. French Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly said she would be "visiting Mali very soon to hold discussions with Malian authorities." President Emmanuel Macron paid tribute to Pointeau and expressed solidarity with the French and African troops fighting in the region. The Malian government initially said 53 people died in what it described as a "terrorist attack" at Indelimane.

An army officer said troops arrived at the outpost around 5:00 pm on Friday and "took back control of our positions." "The terrorists carried out a surprise attack at lunchtime. Army vehicles were destroyed, others taken away," he said. The attacks came a month after two jihadist assaults killed 40 soldiers near the border with Burkina Faso. Several sources have said the real death toll was higher. MINUSMA, the UN mission in Mali, condemned the raid and said its peacekeepers were helping Malian troops secure the region.

'We can resist'

"This bloodshed that Mali has been living through cannot go on," Imam Mahamoud Dicko, an influential religious leader in Mali, said. "Do you want us to resign ourselves to this suffering? We can resist," he added. Rights activist Alioune Tine, from Mali's western neighbour Senegal, called for action across Africa to tackle the threat. "If Africa does not mobilize for Mali and Burkina (Faso), it won't be spared the bushfire that is quickly catching West Africa's coastal countries, the next chosen targets" of the jihadists, he said.

The violence has also spilled over into Burkina Faso and Niger where extremists have exploited existing inter-communal strife, leaving hundreds dead. In Mali, the attacks have spread from the arid north to its centre, an ethnically mixed and explosive region. The recent assaults are a humiliation for the so-called G5 Sahel force - a much-trumpeted initiative under which five countries created a joint 5,000-man anti-terror force - and for former colonial ruler France, which is helping to bring security to the fragile region.

Northern Mali came under the control of Al-Qaeda linked jihadists after Mali's army failed to quash a rebellion there in 2012. A French-led military campaign was launched against the jihadists, pushing them back a year later. But the jihadists have regrouped and widened their hit-and-run raids and landmine attacks to central and southern Mali. — AFP

East Africa reeling from deadly floods in extreme weather

NAIROBI: A powerful climate phenomenon in the Indian Ocean stronger than any seen in years is unleashing destructive rains and flooding across East Africa - and scientists say worse could be coming. Violent downpours in October have displaced tens of thousands in Somalia, submerged whole towns in South Sudan and killed dozens in flash floods and landslides in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

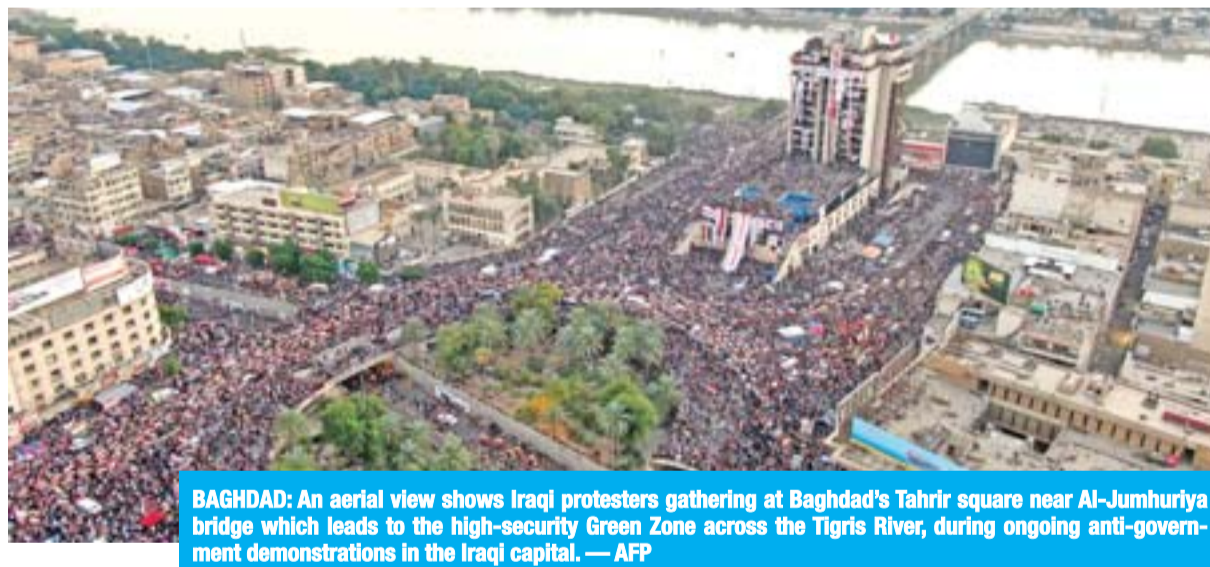
Rising waters have wiped out livestock and destroyed harvests in swathes of the region still reeling from severe drought. Close to a million people in South Sudan alone are affected, with growing fears of disease outbreaks and starvation. "This is a disaster... People are left with nothing," South Sudan's humanitarian affairs minister, Hussein Mar Nyuot, said Wednesday after the government declared a state of emergency.

The extreme weather is blamed on the Indian Ocean Dipole - a climate system defined by the difference in sea surface temperature between western and eastern areas of the ocean. At the moment, the ocean around East Africa is far warmer than usual, resulting in higher evaporation and moist air flowing inwards over the continent as rain: the hallmarks of a "positive" dipole. But scientists say the strength of this dipole is of a magnitude not seen in years, perhaps even decades.

These waters around East Africa are about two degrees warmer than those of the eastern Indian Ocean near Australia - an imbalance well beyond the norm. Australia's Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) said the dipole was the strongest since it began recording these fluctuations in 2001. Other datasets suggested a similar event in 1997, BoM added. "It's much stronger than records have shown from previous times," Red Cross climate advisor and meteorologist Maurine Ambani said. "This one is definitely significant."

This supercharged dipole has delivered a deluge far beyond anything normal during the "short rains" that shower the region every October. In South Sudan, medics were forced to use rowboats to manoeuvre around an inundated hospital in Pibor, the charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said.

In Maban, a child on oxygen support died when water flooded a generator, MSF said in a statement. There are fears of cholera and other waterborne diseases breaking out. — AFP



BAGHDAD: An aerial view shows Iraqi protesters gathering at Baghdad's Tahrir square near Al-Jumhuriya bridge which leads to the high-security Green Zone across the Tigris River, during ongoing anti-government demonstrations in the Iraqi capital. — AFP

Hollow building becomes centre of Iraq's uprising

BAGHDAD: The skeleton of a high-rise building overlooking Baghdad's central Tahrir Square known as the Turkish Restaurant has become a temporary home and a bustling centre for protesters staging demonstrations against Iraq's ruling elites. On the ground floor, a group of young men calling themselves the logistical support committee organized stacks of donated clothes, food, and other supplies such as battery packs, blankets and cigarettes on Saturday to keep the once-empty building's new occupants well-stocked.

"We didn't know each other but here, we became one," said Abu Al-Baqir, wielding a large wooden stick. "We are all Iraqis." Dressed in combat trousers and wearing an Iraqi flag as a cape, the 35-year-old is the leader of the group, made up of 20-odd young men who occupy a corner of the building's base. "We need razors up here!", shouted a young man wearing a gorilla mask from the third floor, lowering a basket. "And don't forget the bread, we're starving!"

Groups of young men have occupied all 18 floors of the building, with its cramped unlit narrow staircases. Inside, they dance, smoke shisha, play backgammon and chant for the downfall of the ruling elites. The mass squat started after a second wave of mass demonstrations against Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi's government began on the night of Oct 24. The demonstrators want to end the post-2003 political order, which they see as endemically cor-

rupt and which has failed to deliver basic services. Abdul Mahdi has promised reforms and a broad cabinet reshuffle but that has so far failed to appease them. Once a commercial centre, the building was bombed in two wars and subsequently abandoned. It has been dubbed the Turkish Restaurant because of the restaurant that occupied its top floor in the 1980s. Some protesters now call it Mount Uhud, in reference to a mountain in Medina where early Muslims battled those who sought to destroy the nascent religion. That battle ended in defeat.

Makeshift base

Protesters said they took over the building to stop security forces who used it to shoot at them in the first wave of protests in early October. More than 250 people have been killed nationwide since the protests started.

"They tried more than once to enter, they used violence, they used tear gas, some of us died, but we did not leave this building," said Khalil Ibrahim, a 28-year-old mechanical engineering graduate who introduced himself as the 14th floor spokesman. He has not been able to find work in three years. "We are staying until this corrupt regime and this subservient government fall," he said. On the balcony of the ninth floor, groups of young people draped in Iraqi flags dangled their feet far above the swarms of tuk-tuks and protesters below. In the distance is the Jumhuriya - or Republic - Bridge, scene of fierce clashes in recent days. It leads to the heavily fortified Green Zone which houses government buildings and foreign missions. They watched their fellow protesters, barricaded against scrap metal and dumpsters, face security forces firing tear gas. "I tell them today we are standing here in this building, tomorrow we will be standing in the Green Zone," said Ahmed Salah, camped out in the building for nine days. — Reuters

International

In a seismic shift, Britain orders an immediate moratorium on fracking

Opposition Labor party derides move as election stunt

LONDON: Britain will impose an immediate moratorium on fracking, the government announced on Saturday, saying the controversial gas extraction technique risked causing too much disruption to local communities through earth tremors. The move could win support for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives in constituencies in northern England where fracking had been planned, but was dismissed by the opposition Labor party as a "stunt" ahead of December's election.

The government had previously signaled its support for the shale gas industry as it seeks ways to cut Britain's reliance on imports of natural gas which is used to heat around 80% of Britain's homes. But fracking, which involves extracting gas from rocks by breaking them up with water and chemicals at high pressure, is fiercely opposed by environmentalists who say it is at odds with Britain's commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said that the government could not rule out unacceptable impacts on the local communities in the future if fracking continued. "We've always been clear that we will follow the science," she told BBC radio. "We cannot be certain that shale gas can be extracted safely, and therefore we must impose this moratorium until the science changes."

Saturday's announcement comes as Johnson gears up for an election on Dec 12. Proposals for developing fracking in several marginal seats in northern England will now be postponed. "The Conservatives' temporary pause of fracking is an election stunt to try and win a few votes," opposition Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn said in a tweet. "Boris Johnson described fracking as 'glorious news for humanity'. We cannot trust him. Labour would ban fracking. That's real change."

A year before 2020 election, a divided and 'angry' America

WASHINGTON: America yesterday kicks off the one-year countdown to Election Day 2020, with President Donald Trump betting an "angry" Republican surge can deliver him a second term, as the Democratic battle to win back the White House heats up. The building political clash - dramatically fueled by the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry into Trump - appears to virtually guarantee another year of sharp division in a nation long weary of such drama.

Polls suggest the country couldn't be much more divided. The latest projection from a University of Virginia political science team

points to a dead-even 2020 race, with each party leading in states totaling 248 electoral college votes, 22 short of the 270 needed for election. The division is reflected in the House, where the vote Thursday to formalize the impeachment inquiry passed almost entirely on party lines - more partisan than any of the three previous impeachment votes in US history.

'Mentally violent'

As that inquiry proceeds, Trump has lashed out in increasingly angry, personal and crude terms, seeking to damage his political foes while energizing a fiercely loyal base. In a speech Friday in Tupelo, Mississippi, he called Democratic leaders "mentally violent," denounced the impeachment inquiry as a "hoax" and said former vice president Joe Biden, once a Democratic frontrunner, was getting "slower and slower." Trump has even retweeted, with apparent approval, a warning by an evangelical pastor that his impeachment could "cause a Civil War like fracture in this Nation."

Amid all the furor, the top Democratic candi-

dates have struggled for a share of the spotlight while anxiety grows among some in the party that a clear, strong challenger with mainstream appeal has yet to emerge. Trump's focus on Biden - and the allegations, for which there is no evidence, that he and his son were somehow tainted by corruption in Ukraine - has weighed on the former vice president. He has slipped from a dominant position in the large Democratic field to fourth place among voters in the crucial, first-in-the-nation Iowa caucus, according to a New York Times/Siena College poll released Friday.

That survey put Senator Elizabeth Warren in the lead, at 22 percent, followed by Senator Bernie Sanders, at 19 percent, with a surging Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Indiana, at 18 percent, one point ahead of the far better-known Biden. But many Democrats fear Warren and Sanders are too liberal to win in a nationwide vote, and that Buttigieg - who has struggled to widen his appeal beyond a core of white, liberal voters - might not be electable. That also means less attention on the Democratic top issues, including health care, gun control and immigration reform. —AFP

Immeasurable toll

The decision follows a report on an incident at a site run by British energy company Cuadrilla near Blackpool, northern England where a 2.9-magnitude tremor shook houses in August. An anti-fracking campaign by local people emerged as a flashpoint in a growing climate activist movement opposing new fossil fuel projects around the world. Hundreds of protesters have been arrested over the past few years for trying to disrupt Cuadrilla's operations.

"The toll this has taken on our lives is immeasurable," said Maureen Mills, from Halsall Against Fracking. "The industry is all about itself and its shareholders."



Policy change comes weeks before election

Our communities are left physically and mentally drained and devastated. For what?" Campaigners resisting a vastly larger fracking industry in the United States also cheered Britain's decision.

"This is a major step in our global struggle against fracking," said Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, 19, youth director of climate justice group Earth Guardians who has been opposing the industry in his home state of Colorado for almost a decade. Fracking in England resumed only last



PRESTON: Cows graze in a field as work gets under way at the Preston New Road drill site where energy firm Cuadrilla Resources have commenced fracking (hydraulic fracturing) operations to extract shale gas, near the village of Little Plumpton, north west England. The British government called a temporary halt on November 2 to the controversial process of 'fracking' due to fears it could trigger earthquakes. — AFP

year after two tremors prompted a seven-year moratorium. The Blackpool incident was examined by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), which regulates and promotes Britain's oil and gas industry. Its report found it was not currently possible to predict accurately the probability or magnitude of earthquakes linked to fracking operations.

Cuadrilla is 47.4% owned by Australia's AJ Lucas, while a fund managed by Riverstone holds a 45.2%

stake. There was no immediate comment from the company. "Hydraulic fracturing stimulation is a long-standing technology used around the world," said Ken Cronin, chief executive of industry group UK Onshore Oil and Gas. "Going forward, we are fully committed to working closely with the Oil and Gas Authority and other relevant regulators to demonstrate that we can operate safely and environmentally responsibly." — Reuters



TUPELO: Donald Trump supporters show off a banner before the President's 'Keep America Great' campaign rally at BancorpSouth Arena in Tupelo, Mississippi. — AFP

UK PM Johnson rejects calls for no-deal Brexit

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson drew an angry backlash from Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage after he rejected calls to drop his Brexit deal and embrace a clean break from the European Union, potentially splitting the eurosceptic vote. Johnson had previously pledged to take Britain out of the EU with or without a deal on Oct 31, before lawmakers voted to force him to seek an extension until Jan 31. But he has abandoned the threat of a no-deal Brexit in his Conservative Party's manifesto for the Dec 12 election, the Times newspaper reported on Saturday. It added that the focus would be on getting his Brexit deal approved.

On Friday, Johnson rejected a call from the Brexit Party to drop the deal he negotiated with the European Union last month in order to form a new electoral pact, saying that he could put his deal through parliament after any election win. "What we've got is a fantastic deal that nobody thought we could get," Johnson said. "As soon as we get back in the middle of December, we can put that deal through."

Judge blocks Trump rule on immigrants' health insurance

WASHINGTON: A federal judge in Oregon has temporarily blocked a Trump administration proclamation that would have required prospective immigrants to prove they would have US health insurance within 30 days of their arrival or enough money to pay for "reasonably foreseeable medical costs."

Judge Michael Simon in US District Court in Portland, Oregon, granted a 28-day tempo-



LONDON: A combination of pictures created shows Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Boris Johnson (left) and Britain's main opposition Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn giving speeches. Britain will go to the polls on December 12, 2019 to vote in a pre-Christmas general election. — AFP

In Britain's tortuous journey since the 2016 referendum vote to leave the EU, businesses and economists have cautioned that leaving the bloc without a deal to smooth the transition would hurt the British economy. Proponents of a no-deal Brexit say it provides a clean break from EU rules and regulations. "If The Times are right and Boris Johnson will abandon a clean break Brexit, and he wins an election on this, we will never be free of EU rules," Brexit Party Leader

rarely restraining order that prevents the rule from taking effect on Nov 3. The legal challenge against it will continue. In an 18-page order, Simon said the potential damage to would-be immigrants and their families justified a nationwide block.

"Facing a likely risk of being separated from their family members and a delay in obtaining a visa to which family members would otherwise be entitled is irreparable harm," he wrote. Seven US citizens and an advocacy organization filed a lawsuit to block the rule, arguing it "rewrites our immigration and healthcare laws by Presidential fiat" and could bar hundreds of thousands of prospective immigrants.

Prospective immigrants had been scrambling to figure out how to get the necessary coverage, navigating a complex healthcare

Nigel Farage said in a tweet. "The deal is simply not Brexit and does not get Brexit done." The Conservative manifesto will also not include a commitment to a fiscal rule, the Times reported, relaxing the government's grip on public finances. The party did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The government's previous fiscal rule pledged to hold the underlying budget deficit below 2% of the country's economic output in the 2020/21 financial year. — Reuters

bureaucracy that has, for the most part, not previously catered to those who are not yet in the country. The Trump proclamation said it aims to stop healthcare providers and taxpayers from bearing "substantial costs in paying for medical expenses incurred by people who lack health insurance or the ability to pay for their healthcare."

It cited data that "lawful immigrants are about three times more likely than United States citizens to lack health insurance." Healthcare policy experts say immigrants use the US system less often than Americans. According to an analysis by Leighton Ku, director of the Center for Health Policy Research at George Washington University, recent immigrants without insurance accounted for less than one-tenth of 1% of US medical expenditures in 2017. — Reuters

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International

Indian state leader to move migrant workers from Kashmir after violence

India, China clash over Kashmir as it loses special status

KOLKATA: More than 100 migrant workers from India's Kashmir will be moved after a spate of killings by suspected separatist militants underlined the threat to outsiders in the restive region. Senior officials working for the chief minister of the eastern state of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, said on Saturday she decided to move the workers out of Kashmir to prevent them from becoming a potential target for militant groups who the government says have intensified attacks on civilians belonging to states except Kashmir.

The migrant workers will be identified and moved by train to eastern states, the officials said. Last week, suspected militants barged into a house in southern Kashmir, marched out six men who had come to work in the orchards and paddy fields from West Bengal, lined them up and shot them, police said. Five died, a sixth, who the gunmen had left for dead, survived, to tell the tale that has fanned fears of further attacks on outsiders, officials say.

"We have orders from the state leader to escort all the Bengali laborers out of Kashmir after five Muslim laborers from West Bengal were killed," said a senior police official in Kolkata, capital of West Bengal. Migrant workers are a soft target for militants, and during the past few weeks 11 have been killed, including the victims of this latest atrocity, the

government said. Much of Kashmir's economy is dependent on outside laborers who work in construction, hotels and apple orchards. None of the militant groups that are fighting Indian rule in Muslim majority Kashmir claimed responsibility for the attack on migrant workers. The separatist insurgency in Kashmir began three decades ago, but the latest flare up in violence followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision in August to take away the autonomy previously offered to India's only Muslim majority state. India is hoping that by opening up property rights in Kashmir to people from outside the region it can reignite economic growth, create jobs and turn the focus away from a militant uprising in which more than 40,000 people have died. But for the government to have any chance of succeeding, it will have to remove the growing sense of insecurity among Indians who have risked coming to Kashmir to make a living.

India, China clash

Meanwhile, India has engaged in a diplomatic war of words with China over Kashmir as it formally revoked the disputed state's constitutional autonomy and split it into two federal territories in a bid to integrate it fully into India. Shops and offices were shut in Muslim-majority Kashmir and the streets largely

deserted in its main city Srinagar as new administrators were sworn into office in the biggest restructuring of the 173-year-old former princely kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan, which claims the whole of Kashmir, has condemned the move and protesters took to the streets on its part of the territory. Its ally China, which is locked in a separate decades-old dispute with India over the part of Kashmir called Ladakh, also slammed India for unilaterally changing its status. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said Kashmir was a dispute left from history that should be peacefully resolved.

"The Indian government officially announced the establishment of so called Jammu Kashmir territory and Ladakh Union territory which included some of China's territory into its administrative jurisdiction," Geng said at a news briefing. "China deplores and firmly opposed that. India unilaterally changes its domestic law and administrative divisions, challenging China's sovereignty and interests. This is awful and void, and this is not effective in any way and will not change the fact that the area is under China's actual control."

India and China fought a war in 1962 and since then have been unable to resolve their border dispute. India's foreign ministry spokesman rejected China's comments and



KASHMIR: A Kashmiri woman shelters from the rain under an umbrella with a child while a man paddles a boat along Dal Lake in Srinagar yesterday. — AFP

said Kashmir was an integral part of the country and that any reorganization of the state was an internal affair. "We do not expect other countries, including China, to comment on

the matters which are internal to India, just as India refrains from commenting on internal issues of other countries," Raveesh Kumar told a news conference. — Agencies

Priyanka Gandhi hit by WhatsApp privacy breach

NEW DELHI: India's main opposition Congress party said yesterday that its general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had been informed by messaging service WhatsApp that her phone was hacked during this year's election campaign by malware from Israeli surveillance firm NSO. Last week, the Indian government asked Facebook-owned WhatsApp to explain the nature of a privacy breach on its messaging platform that has affected some users in the country.

The surveillance revelations came after WhatsApp sued Israeli surveillance firm NSO Group last Tuesday, accusing it of helping government spies break into the



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

phones of roughly 1,400 users across four continents including diplomats, political dissidents, journalists and government officials. NSO denied the allegations. India is WhatsApp's biggest market with 400 million users.

"When WhatsApp sent messages to all those whose phones were hacked, one such message was also received by Priyanka Gandhi Vadra," senior Congress leader Randeep Surjewala told reporters on Sunday.

Priyanka - she is usually referred to by just her first name - is the sister of Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi. Surjewala declined to share details about the alleged hacking. He said phones of other opposition leaders were also hacked. A government spokesman was not immediately available for comment. People familiar with WhatsApp's investigation told Reuters that a significant number of Indian civil society figures were put under surveillance using the Israeli spyware.

One source familiar with the matter said that 121 people in India were among those targeted with the hacking software. WhatsApp has not identified anyone by name. Users including Indian lawyers, academics, Dalit rights activists and journalists have come forward to say they received warnings from WhatsApp that they were the targets of espionage. — Reuters

News in brief

Philippine death toll hit 21

MANILA: The death toll in two powerful quakes that struck the southern Philippines in the past week has risen to 21, authorities said yesterday, as survivors struggled to access food and water. The 6.6-magnitude and 6.5-magnitude quakes hit the island of Mindanao two days apart, destroying buildings and displacing tens of thousands of residents. Some villagers staying under tents near a highway were begging for help from passing motorists, carrying placards asking for food and water, TV footage showed. Rescuers had found more bodies, many crushed by falling debris and landslides caused by the violent shaking, the national disaster council said. The quakes also left 432 residents injured with two people still missing, it added. Thursday's big quake was the third since mid-October in the Mindanao region, which makes up a third of the Philippines. — AFP

Venezuela diplomats expelled

SAN SALVADOR: El Salvador has ordered Venezuela's diplomats to leave the country within 48 hours, in line with President Nayib Bukele's position that the Venezuelan government of Nicolas Maduro is illegitimate. More than 50 countries have switched their recognition to national assembly speaker Juan Guaido as Venezuela's legitimate acting president. Before his election in June, Bukele said he would maintain a "distant" relationship with Caracas and close ties with the United States, which has demanded Maduro's exit from power. "The government of El Salvador expels the diplomatic corps from the regime of Nicolas Maduro," Bukele said in a statement posted his Twitter account late Saturday. US Ambassador Ronald Johnson reacted warmly to the decision. "We applaud the government of President Nayib Bukele for ensuring that El Salvador is on the right side of history," he said on Twitter. — AFP

Fire on Japan PM's jet

TOKYO: A minor fire broke out mid-flight on a Japanese government jet yesterday while Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was on board, but it was extinguished quickly with no injuries, media reports said. The leader was flying to Bangkok from Tokyo on a Boeing 777-300ER to attend talks at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit. About an hour after take-off, an in-flight announcement said that an oven on the plane had sparked a small blaze, the Asahi Shimbun reported. Ten minutes later, another announcement said the fire had been extinguished, with no smoke or smell detected, the newspaper said in an online article. Jiji Press and Kyodo News reported similar stories, citing government sources. There was no change to Abe's itinerary, Kyodo said. — AFP

Allegiance to new IS leader

CAIRO: Egypt's Islamic State affiliate, Sinai Province, has sworn allegiance to the new leader named by the group following the death of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the affiliate said on Telegram. Sinai Province, which has waged an insurgency against the Egyptian state, posted pictures of around two dozen fighters standing among trees, with a caption saying they were pledging allegiance to Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashemi Al-Quraishi. Quraishi was named on Thursday in an audio message that also confirmed Baghdadi's death and vowed revenge against the United States. US special forces killed Baghdadi in a raid in northwest Syria. Islamic State has resorted to guerrilla attacks since losing its last significant piece of territory in Syria in March, and has posted dozens of claims of responsibility for attacks in several countries since Baghdadi's death. — Reuters

Thailand unveils 'anti-fake news' centre to police the internet

BANGKOK: Thailand has unveiled an "anti-fake news" centre - the Southeast Asian country's latest effort to exert government control over a sweeping range of online content. The move came as Thailand is counting on the digital economy to drive growth amid domestic political tensions, following a March election that installed its junta leader since 2014 as a civilian prime minister. Thailand has recently pressed more cybercrime charges for what it says is misinformation affecting national security. Such content is mostly opinion critical of the government, the military or the royal family.

Minister of Digital Economy and Society Puttipong Punnakanta broadly defined "fake news" as any viral online content that misleads people or damages the country's image. He made no distinction between non-malicious false information and deliberate disinformation. "The centre is not intended to be a tool to support the government or any individual," Puttipong said on Friday before giving reporters a tour.

The centre is set up like a war room, with monitors in the middle of the room showing charts tracking the latest "fake news" and trending Twitter hashtags. It is staffed by around 30 officers at a time, who will review online content - gathered through "social listening" tools - on a sweeping range of topics from natural disasters, the economy, health products and illicit goods. The officers will also target news about government policies and content that broadly affects "peace and order, good morals, and national security," according to Puttipong.

If they suspect something is false, they will flag it to relevant authorities to issue corrections through the centre's social media platforms and website and through the press. Rights groups and media freedom advocates were concerned the government could use the centre as a tool for censorship and propaganda. "In the Thai context, the term 'fake news' is being weaponized to censor dissidents and restrict our online freedom," said Emilie Pradichit, director of the Thailand-based Manushya Foundation, which advocates for online rights.

Pradichit said the move could be used to codify censorship, adding the centre would allow the government to be the "sole arbiter of truth". Transparency reports from internet companies such as Facebook and Google show Thai government requests to take down content or turn over information have ramped up since the military seized power in 2014. A law prohibiting criticism of the monarchy has often been the basis for such requests for Facebook. In Google's cases, government criticism was the main reason cited for removal of content. — Reuters



BANGKOK: Myanmar's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi attends the 10th ASEAN-UN Summit in Bangkok yesterday on the sidelines of the 35th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit. — AFP

UN chief calls for safe return of Rohingyas

BANGKOK: The UN chief yesterday urged Myanmar to ensure the "safe" return of Rohingya refugees driven out by army operations, a plea made in front of Aung San Suu Kyi more than two years since her country cracked down on the Muslim minority. Speaking at a summit of Southeast Asian leaders in Bangkok - with Myanmar's de facto head Suu Kyi in the room - Antonio Guterres said he remains "deeply concerned" about the plight of the Rohingyas.

Violence in Rakhine state in 2017 forced more than 740,000 Rohingyas to flee, most seeking refuge in overcrowded camps in neighboring Bangladesh, in what UN investigators say amounted to genocide. Myanmar does not recognize the Rohingyas as citizens. The country says it welcomes back those who agree to a bureaucratic status below full citizenship, and if they agree to live under tight guard after their villages were incinerated.

Guterres said Myanmar is responsible to "ensure a conducive environment for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable repatriation of refugees". Suu Kyi sat in

the room expressionless as Guterres spoke. Only a few hundred Rohingyas have returned to Myanmar so far, with many fearing further persecution in the Buddhist-majority country. The secretary-general also called on Myanmar "to ensure humanitarian actors have full and unfettered access to areas of return".

Despite repeated entreaties by the UN and endless criticism by rights groups and world leaders, Myanmar has refused to bend in its approach to the Rohingya. Much of Rakhine remains largely closed to aid workers and journalists, who can only visit on tightly controlled, military-chaperoned trips. It has launched an extensive and increasingly bloody campaign against Rakhine Buddhists, who are also fighting the central state for greater autonomy. Suu Kyi has come under fire for failing to use her moral force to defend Rohingyas after the 2017 unrest.

The treatment of the minority has shredded her image as an upholder of human rights in the eyes of the Western world. Myanmar's army has come under fire for covering up the crackdown, which it blamed on Rohingyas "terrorists". A leaked ASEAN report earlier this year said the repatriation effort could take a further two years. Suu Kyi has faced pressure over her country's treatment of the Rohingyas from fellow ASEAN members Malaysia and Indonesia, which are both Muslim-majority. — AFP

Police fight running battles with youths outside Paris

VERSAILLES: French police fought running battles Saturday night in a poor suburb northwest of Paris with groups of young men who burnt a circus school and

wounded two officers, the authorities said yesterday. The trouble, which is said to be related to the pending demolition of a building block in the disadvantaged neighborhood of Noe, started with youngsters throwing Molotov cocktails in the evening, according to a police source.

When officers arrived, they were attacked with projectiles and targeted with fireworks. At the height of the confrontation, police were facing off with a group of about 30 men, said the source. Two police members sustained light injuries. In the fray, the troublemakers burnt a circus tent, which its operator said had cost about 800,000 euros (\$894,000) and where children from deprived back-

grounds were being trained in the circus arts. Two suspects were arrested.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner described the acts on Twitter as "cowardly and foolish", and said he was confident the police would identify and catch those who got away. Mayor Catherine Arenou said the suburb had been caught for days in the grip of criminal acts by youngsters in the Noe neighborhood who keep smashing the street lights. The mayor said a youth information centre in the neighborhood was also targeted on Saturday night, with petrol found inside and traces of an attempted fire. — AFP

Analysis

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Once a whites-only team, the Springboks thrive with racial unity

The racial transformation of the Springboks roared into overdrive when Siya Kolisi skippered a team including six black players to a Rugby World Cup final triumph over England. South Africa outplayed the pre-match favorites 32-12 in Japan on Saturday, winning by a much wider margin than even their most partisan supporters anticipated. And for those who believed black players would strengthen a national team once reserved for whites, it was a day of vindication.

Some white supporters had believed that including blacks would seriously weaken the team and turn the Springboks into rugby also-rans. Kolisi, who last year became the first black Test skipper of the team after 127 years of whites captaining the green and gold, said racial unity sparked success in Yokohama. "We have so many problems in our country and this team comes from different backgrounds, different races, but we came together with one goal and we wanted to achieve it," he said. "I really hope we've done that for South Africa. (It) just shows that we can pull together if we want to achieve something."

Kolisi said the Springboks had received countless messages from home as the nation rallied behind his team. "Since I've been alive, I've never seen South Africa like this," he said. "Thank you so much. We love you South Africa and we can achieve anything if we work together as one."

However, the selection of six black players in a Springbok World Cup final team has been a long and tortuous journey. There have been highs like the elevation last year of Kolisi to lead a team that for 90 years chose only whites. There have also been lows, most recently when star lock Eben Etzebeth was accused of assaulting and racially abusing a homeless black man just before flying to Japan. Etzebeth, who captained the Springboks two seasons ago after first choice Warren Whiteley was injured, denies the allegations.

Springboks coach Rassie Erasmus is adamant that there are no racists in his charge, telling AFP that "I would not tolerate racism in my squad. I can guarantee you that this team is a nice, close-knit one, and there will never be something like that (racism)." But the coach had to turn firefighter in Japan after celebrations following a mammoth pool win over Italy triggered social media fury.

Branded a 'sell-out'

Six white reserves excluded black starter Makazole Mapimpi from a huddle and the immediate reaction on social media was that the winger had been racially shunned. In fact, the "bomb squad", as the reserves label themselves, always celebrate separately from the starters. Mapimpi, the second highest try-scorer at this World Cup with six, backed the reserves on Twitter only to be branded a "sell-out".

Kolisi was also labelled a "sell-out" this year, for suggesting that late former president Nelson Mandela would not have backed Springbok racial quotas. The 27-year-old, born into poverty in the eastern Cape, does not enjoy being called the first black Test captain of the Springboks. "That is not a description I find natural," he admitted to AFP before the tournament. "I'm privileged to captain a team that represents all South Africans."

Kolisi was born during the death throes of apartheid in 1991 and three years later multiracial elections ushered long-time political prisoner Mandela to power. Mandela later played a key role in defusing demands from elements within the ruling African National Congress party that the emblem of a leaping Springbok be ditched. The political icon reasoned that the Springboks were dear to South African whites and he wanted to foster national unity in the aftermath of the divisive apartheid era.

He arrived at the 1995 World Cup final in Johannesburg wearing a replica of the shirt of skipper Francois Pienaar and a mainly white crowd chanted "Nelson, Nelson, Nelson". Mandela later presented the trophy to Pienaar after a dramatic triumph over arch-rivals New Zealand, and hopes were high that a new, multiracial team would be born.

Winger Chester Williams, who died in September of a heart attack, was the lone black in the 1995 team, an unacceptable situation given only 10 percent of the population was white. But when the Springboks conquered the world again in France 12 years later, there were just two black starters, wingers JP Pieterse and Bryan Habana. Despite growing government anger at predominantly white teams, a succession of Springbok coaches ignored emerging black stars, until Erasmus assumed control last year. He offered black players equal opportunities and a record 11 made the trip to Japan with six in the final starting line-up and another on the bench. — AFP

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



Israeli Army soldier Samuel Boujenah gestures as he explains the Israel-Lebanon conflict to foreign journalists in the military base of Har Dov on Mount Hermon, a strategic and fortified outpost at the crossroads between Israel, Lebanon and Syria on Oct 30, 2019. — AFP

Israel eyeing Lebanon protests closely

Looking down on Lebanon from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, soldiers wonder whether the political turmoil in the neighboring country will weaken arch-enemy Hezbollah or make it more dangerous. "There, Hezbollah is very, very strong," said Samuel Boujenah of the Israeli military, gazing at a valley where calm was recently shattered by clashes with the Iran-backed Shiite group.

He was standing on Mount Hermon, a strategic and fortified outpost at the crossroads between Israel, Lebanon and Syria where Israeli military vehicles patrol and drones buzz in the sky. It was in this region where on September 1 three Hezbollah anti-tank missiles hit near the Israeli township of Avivim, the first attack near a civilian area since the 2006 war between the armed Lebanese movement and Israel.

Motorists travelling along the winding mountain road still feel the bumps in the bitumen left by the strikes. The frontlines have been unchanged for years, but it is the events of recent weeks in Lebanon that, Israel hopes, may weaken its foe Hezbollah, which it regards as a terrorist organization. Lebanon has been rocked by unprecedented, cross-faith civic protests that have bridged sectarian divides to demand the removal of the entire political class, whom the demonstrators accuse of systematic corruption.

'Opportunity for change'

Hassan Nasrallah, the chief of Hezbollah - a major political

player - has warned the unrest could lead to "chaos and collapse" of the economy. Now Israel wonders whether Lebanon's troubles - and the rising street pressure that is also being felt by Nasrallah - could spell a threat or an opportunity for the Jewish state. "We are monitoring what is happening in Lebanon, of course we have an interest," Israeli army spokesman Jonathan Conricus told reporters during a recent Mount Hermon visit. "We don't have any involvement in what is going on," he stressed.

But he said Israel remains worried about Hezbollah, which could "collect intelligence, patrol the area and, when they want to, attack Israel" from southern Lebanon, including with precision guided missiles it has been manufacturing. Conricus argued Lebanon should "get rid of" Hezbollah. "As long as they allow Hezbollah, Iran's proxy, to do what they want in Lebanon, that becomes a threat for us, and maybe now it is a good opportunity to change that," he contended.

Aid as leverage

Israel is trying to convince the international community to limit Hezbollah's influence. The Jewish state believes leverage could be exerted through economic aid for Lebanon, a country burdened by public debt of \$86 billion, or 150 per cent of GDP. "Israel has asked the United States and European countries to make any aid

to Lebanon conditional on the closure of Hezbollah missile factories," a senior Israeli official told AFP, requesting anonymity.

Middle East expert Eyal Zisser of Tel Aviv University said such a strategy could achieve "some minimal progress", including pushing Hezbollah to back off developing missiles, but cautioned that it would not resolve the wider conflict.

A far worse outcome would be for an under-pressure Hezbollah to seek to divert attention and rally support by unleashing new attacks against Israel, warned Orna Mizrahi, a former security executive in the Israeli prime minister's office and now an analyst at the Institute for National Security Studies. If Hezbollah "want to demonstrate that they continue the fight against Israel and they are the protector of Lebanon, you can't ignore the scenario of deterioration - that if they are doing something, and Israel is retaliating, then we get some kind of deterioration," said Mizrahi.

In the long term, Israel must face the danger that Hezbollah will maintain its influence in Lebanon, or even increase it if chaos sets in, as Nasrallah has already suggested. Such a scenario, said Mizrahi, "might be more complicated for us". For the time being, however, said the Lebanese daily L'Orient-Le Jour, the country's self-inflicted chaos meant that "if anyone is having a laugh", it is Israel. — AFP

Singapore-on-Thames? London's City mulls post-Brexit future

With a crucial election, Brexit and potential trade deals looming, the future of the beating heart of Britain's financial sector will be shaped in the coming months. The spectre of a "Singapore-on-Thames" - a highly deregulated British financial sector like the city-state - is the dream of some pro-Brexit financiers, who have criticized European rules that they believe are holding them back.

But regulators don't appear to be in a mood to tear up the rulebook just yet. "It has been 10 years since the financial crisis and the subsequent reforms we put in place, and now is the right time to review our approach to regulation," Nausicaa Delfas, from the UK Financial Services Authority (FCA), said this week. "Brexit provides added impetus to look at things again."

At a London conference on the issue, Barnabas Reynolds, who specializes in UK and EU regulation at law firm Shearman & Sterling, said the regulators should look at everything. Like many in the City - the financial hub in central London - he did not see "what's wrong" with the idea of a Singapore-on-Thames. European financial rules, although designed under Britain's influence, have restricted the sector's ability to compete with Wall Street, he added.

Fintech boom

The Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, thinks differently. He says there will be "no bonfire of

financial regulation" and instead promises a "dynamic" approach to "optimize our efforts without compromising on the level of resilience". Most of the financial community is convinced that Britain, whose financial rules are currently aligned with those of the EU, has no interest in moving too far away from them at the risk of being denied access to the vital common market.

"We have been on a trajectory of improving the regulation rather than weakening it," Iris Chiu, a law professor at University College London, told AFP. But some sensitive areas will be in the spotlight as soon as Brexit is completed, such as limits on bank bonuses or possible supervision of the booming fintech industry.

"Fintech is one area where the UK is seen as an international market leader" and it will want to defend its position, said Sarah Hall, from "The UK in a Changing Europe" think-tank. This could mean applying a lighter touch to start-ups in the sector with regards to transaction traceability, customer data or the origin of funds. The Solvency II Insurance Directive is also one of the areas where Britain may want to diverge from the EU, particularly on the amount of mandatory capital reserves, she added.

Devil in the detail

Anti-corruption groups such as Transparency International, whose recent report denounced the billions of dollars of illicit money that passes through Britain and its offshore territories, are still concerned. They fear backtracking after the efforts of recent years to lift banking secrecy in territories such as the Isle of Man and Jersey, even if others such as the British Virgin Islands are still largely escaping scrutiny.

Paul Fox of Finance Watch also points out that the devil often lies in the detail, and that any adjustments "can give rise to regulatory arbitrage" by investors who take advantage of any glitches in the new rules, at the risk of destabilizing the financial system. Britain's Brexit



deadline has been pushed back again, this time to Jan 31 after lawmakers called for more time to scrutinise Prime Minister Boris Johnson's deal with Brussels.

He is hoping to win a parliamentary majority in early elections called for Dec 12, which in theory could make getting the deal through parliament easier. The political deadlock has led to delays in the ratification and implementation of some financial transparency laws, including on trusts - investment vehicles that are often family owned. Wealth management is one of the "areas of interest for Labour" if they came to power after next month's general election, said Sarah Hall.

The Labour party, led by the veteran socialist Jeremy Corbyn, has proposed a radical plan to re-nationalise key industries, and tackle what he sees as a "corrupt system" of wealth and privilege. Business leaders have already warned it could cost the country dear. Hall said the ultra-rich have already begun to divest their assets from London and place them outside the country out of fear of a Labour government, which would likely implement further capital controls and raise taxes. — AFP

Crypto-currencies and criminality: Myth or reality?

The recent bust of a worldwide international paedophile ring using Bitcoin payments highlighted one of the key fears surrounding crypto-currencies - their use by criminals. Social networking giant Facebook is keen to get in on the act by launching a digital currency called Libra. But US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has aired his ongoing opposition to the move, saying many concerns remained unresolved, including "the issue of money laundering". Despite tighter regulations and increased vigilance by the authorities, illegal activities related to virtual currencies remained "significant", Madeleine Kennedy, from the research firm Chainalysis, told AFP.

1 percent of transactions illegal

A Chainalysis report published in January said that in 2018, one percent of Bitcoin transactions - the most widely used cryptocurrency - involved illegal activities. The

equivalent of \$600 million was also spent using Bitcoins on the dark web, a set of hidden networks where a multitude of illicit products, including weapons and drugs, are traded. In comparison, the global turnover of drug trafficking is estimated at several hundred billion dollars.

Kennedy believes the use of Bitcoins for criminal purposes was partly based on a "misunderstanding". The confidentiality reputation of the most famous cryptocurrency is unrivalled, with all transactions recorded in an unforgeable public ledger, the blockchain. But it is "more transparent than some traditional financial systems and certainly more than cash", she added.

The British and US authorities last week announced more than 300 arrests in 38 countries as part of an investigation that led to the dismantling of an unprecedented child pornography ring. Investigators analyzed the blockchain and succeeded in "de-anonymising Bitcoin transactions," according to Ron Fort, the head of criminal investigations in the US tax services.

Concerns about Monero

But if Bitcoin is still the reference currency for criminals because of its popularity, they are turning to less transparent alternatives, such as Monero, which began life in 2014, according to the European law enforcement agency Europol. Monero's users can remain anonymous until they need to interact with a cryptomarketing plat-

form or invest their funds with a "wallet" - the equivalent of an account for virtual currencies.

It is phenomenon that also worries the German finance ministry, which recently published a document warning that anonymous cryptos could become "a real alternative to Bitcoin". Monero, whose capitalization is still 160 times lower than Bitcoin, uses a complex architecture that makes transactions "much more difficult to track", said Kennedy. "But no more than the many shell companies in the many tax havens," said Emilien Bernard-Alzias, a lawyer at Simmons & Simmons, a specialist in financial markets.

"We have always seen both legal and technical arrangements to conceal money transfers from the courts," he told AFP, adding that only cash can be considered "perfectly untraceable". Also, since Monero does not allow large quantities of money to be bought, criminals are encouraged to convert their funds and must therefore use service providers subject to anti-money laundering regulations.

Unlike currencies that have made anonymity a marketing feature, Facebook has repeatedly said in recent months that Libra will be transparent and comply with the authorities' requirements. Libra "will clearly not be ideal for laundering dirty money", said Bernard-Alzias, although it will probably need to use blockchain analysts "to satisfy regulators", added Kennedy. — AFP

Business

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12 GCC markets remain subdued as Tadawul trends downwards**13** Cocoa deals help African farmers, but not enough to ease poverty**14** Global Finance names Boubyan Bank as 'World's Best Islamic Digital Bank'

DHAHRAN: President and CEO of Saudi Aramco Amin Nasser (left) and Aramco's chairman Yasir Al-Rumayyan attend a press conference in this eastern Saudi city yesterday. — AFP

Saudi bourse sags as Aramco listing looms

Analyst sees risk in IPO listing only on domestic market

DUBAI: Saudi stocks sagged two percent yesterday after the announcement that the blockbuster listing of state energy firm Aramco was headed its way, as analysts warned it risked overwhelming the local bourse. After years of repeated delays, Aramco yesterday announced its intention to float an unspecified percentage of its shares on the Tadawul stock market, the region's biggest capital market.

The state-owned company however said there was no decision yet on the second part of the IPO to list on an international stock market, raising doubts that this much-anticipated step will ever happen.

The local bourse lost 1.99 percent to 7,590.33 points during the session. Ellen Wald, author of "Saudi Inc.", said that listing on the domestic market without any plans for an international offering was risky because it could "completely overweight" the local market. "If oil prices drop or Aramco stock falls, it is such a large part of Tadawul, it could bring the entire stock market down," she warned.

The Saudi stock market is the largest bourse in the Middle East and North Africa with a capitalization of \$500 billion, and

although it has undergone key reforms in the past several years, more regulatory work is still needed. If Saudi Arabia decides to sell two percent of the company, it could generate close to \$40 billion, a huge amount that would impact liquidity levels in a country that has been facing sharp declines in oil revenues.

'Coercion'

The richest Saudi families, many of whom had members detained in Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel during a months-long corruption crackdown in 2017, have been pressed to commit large sums, Bloomberg News has reported. The Tadawul All-Shares Index fell 4.0 percent in October as investors opted to sell their holdings to generate the necessary cash for the Aramco IPO. TASI is now 1.0 percent down on last year's close.

"Pressuring rich Saudis, many of whom were imprisoned at the Ritz, to invest in the Aramco IPO and to hold on to the shares is basically coercion," Wald said. The giant listing could end up taking money out of the Saudi economy that could be used to diversify it in more fundamental ways, analysts say.

"The IPO could cause a setback that will

vacate a lot of money out of the other industries," said Samir Madani, co-founder of website Tanker Trackers, an oil shipping monitoring website.

"If Saudi citizens take on large loans in order to buy overpriced shares, they could be stuck with big piles of mortgage debt in the event of a market crash." Tadawul has also eased conditions for foreigners to enter the market, which won boost this year when it was included in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index—a move which typically spurs foreign investment inflows.

However, despite introducing a number of reforms the kingdom has struggled to attract the funds it needs to remodel its economy. The Riyadh bourse said it was ready and able to deal with such a huge share offering.

"We are proud that Aramco has selected Tadawul as the venue for the intended listing of its shares. Tadawul and its infrastructure are ready to receive this historical listing," CEO Khaled Al-Hussan said on Twitter. "Saudi Aramco's selection of Tadawul will mark a major milestone in Saudi Capital Market's journey and bolster our position among international stock exchanges." — AFP

Big central banks move to wait-and-see mode

WASHINGTON/FRANKFURT/TOKYO: A concentrated burst of interest rate cutting and other measures to loosen global financial conditions by the world's central bankers looks to have largely run its course, and policymakers now appear content to wait and see if their handiwork staves off a deeper slowdown in the months ahead.

Led by the US Federal Reserve's nearly yearlong pivot away from a tightening bias, rate setters from Australia to Brazil and the eurozone to the Philippines have lowered borrowing costs in recent months to blunt the headwinds from global trade tensions headlined by the standoff between Washington and Beijing.

It is an easing wave that appears to have crested for now. For their parts, the Big Three in the central bankersphere - the Fed, European Central Bank and Bank of Japan - are in no rush to

drive rates any lower, especially in Europe and Japan where they are already in negative territory.

The Fed last week cut rates for the third time since July, but officials emerged from the meeting with a near-explicit declaration to expect no more for the moment. In Europe, meanwhile, a changing of the guard at a deeply divided ECB likely means that its September rate cut will not be followed in the near future, with their focus instead being on jawboning the trading bloc's political leaders to step up their own efforts at stimulus.

In Japan, a BOJ weary of expending its limited ammunition has so far avoided cutting rates at all in the latest global wave. It would prefer to hold fire for as long as possible, relying instead of pledges of more accommodation in the future should it be needed. And in the developing world, the pace of easing has slackened notably

from a crescendo reached in August, although October marked the ninth straight month of net rate cuts by emerging market central banks.

How long a pause?

To be sure, the factors allowing policymakers to take a breather may prove fleeting - on the trade front in particular. In mid-October the International Monetary Fund pinned the blame on the US-China trade war when it slashed its global growth forecast to the slowest pace since the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

The dispute, initiated by US President Donald Trump, is in a state of detente as the two sides work to complete "Phase One" of a wider deal. But the erratic American president has abruptly changed stance before and may again. Still, the messaging in the past two weeks from central bankers in Frankfurt and Tokyo was consistent with the Fed's new stance: Let's see how what we've done plays out.

"We see the current stance of monetary policy as likely to remain appropriate as long as

incoming information about the economy remains broadly consistent with our outlook," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said in his press conference last week after the US central bank cut its benchmark rate by a quarter point to a range of 1.50-1.75 percent.

A solid upside surprise on job growth in October only cemented that view. "We've done the adjustment," Fed Vice Chair Richard Clarida said in an interview on Bloomberg TV after Friday's payrolls report. The ECB has restarted a 2.6 trillion euro bond-buying program after cutting its interest rate on deposits in September. Back then investors were betting on two further rate cuts by March of next year, but have since pared their expectations as deep divisions emerged among ECB policymakers on the path ahead. New ECB President Christine Lagarde, who took office on Friday, will have to heal a rift between representatives of cash-rich countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and France, who opposed the decision to resume bond purchases, and the struggling periphery. —Reuters

Five things to know about Aramco IPO

RIYADH: Ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia is undergoing a major transformation under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who intends to end the kingdom's addiction to oil revenues. As the country opens up on the economic front, there have also been some social reforms including more freedoms for women, but progress has been erratic and critics pushing for faster changes have ended up in jail.

Why is the IPO such a big deal?

The sale of part of Aramco forms the foundation of Prince Mohammed's turnaround plan for Saudi Arabia. The size of the listing remains in the air, but originally it was hoped it could generate as much as \$100 billion. That figure, based on a \$2 trillion valuation of the company now seen as unrealistic, may not be reached but even so it is likely to be the biggest share market offering of all time.

That money is needed to fund mega-projects like NEOM, a \$500 billion futuristic mega city planned on the northern Red Sea coast, which officials say will have flying taxis and talking robots. With no foreign listing planned at the moment, the crown prince will be relying on Saudi billionaires to heavily support the offering, and the kingdom's representatives are reportedly visiting global capitals to woo investors further afield.

Will it be a success?

After years of stop-start progress towards the IPO, skepticism abounds and the new stock will be under close scrutiny when it launches on the Saudi bourse in coming weeks. Apart from holding out for the big-ticket valuation, the delays are also said to be related to Saudi concerns that a foreign listing could shine an unwelcome light on the secretive company's finances and inner workings.

"Should shares fall sharply after they begin trading, it would be a highly visible blow to the credibility of the economic reforms so closely associated with Mohammed bin Salman, which

is why the valuation is so important," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute in the United States. "International investors will pay very close attention to how Aramco performs on the domestic exchange, especially in the absence of any firm detail over the international portion of the eventual dual listing."

Why is Aramco so important?

Aramco pumps about 10 percent of the world's oil from its wells beneath the desert sands—mostly in the kingdom's east but also in the evocatively named "Empty Quarter" in the south. There are also some major offshore oil fields. The energy behemoth generated the most profit of any corporation last year with net income of \$111 billion—more than Apple Inc., Google's parent Alphabet Inc. and Exxon Mobil Corp. combined.

How is MBS remaking the economy?

Even before he became crown prince in June 2017, the son of King Salman—often known by his initials MBS—had announced a plan to diversify the economy and push it away from its long reliance on oil. Since then, the kingdom has witnessed a number of never-before-seen initiatives, mostly related to entertainment and tourism, including vast multi-island luxury destination projects.

Selling the crown jewels

Aramco's IPO has generated a feeling of pride among Saudis, although some are concerned about sharing the "family jewel" with foreigners. "Aramco means family. From the work environment to the personalities you come across, it feels natural. It feels like home," Naif Ghofaily, an Aramco employee in his 30s, told AFP. "The sale has brought a lot of exposure for the company on a global scale. Although one of the biggest companies in the world long before its proposed listing, I feel as if many more people recognise Aramco today." —AFP

Business

KAMCO reports KD 18.23m revenues; net profit of KD 0.93m for 9M 2019

Fees and commission represent 71.4% of total revenues

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the GCC, announced its financial results for the nine months period ended September 30th, 2019 reporting a net profit of KD 0.93 million (Kuwaiti fils 3.93 per share) compared to KD 1.1 million (Kuwaiti fils 4.45 per share) for the same period in 2018.

Fee income reached KD 13.02 million representing 71.4 percent of the total revenues which stood at KD18.23 million. Successful completion of the merger with its subsidiary Global Investment House remains one of the major milestones for KAMCO this year. The team continued working hard to align operations leveraging on synergies, competencies and offerings. Completion of the merger will result in KAMCO becoming one of the largest, strongest, and a more efficient player in the regional investment services sector namely asset management, investment banking and brokerage.

Last September, KAMCO and Global shareholders approved all matters pertain-

ing to the draft merger contract between the two companies. KAMCO's shareholders approved the restructuring of the company's capital and increasing the paid-up capital by around KD10.5 million to reach KD34.2 million through the issuance of around 105 million new shares in exchange for Global minority shares based on the share swap ratio supplemented in the independent investment advisor report. As set out in the draft contract of merger by amalgamation between KAMCO and Global, KAMCO shall be the merging company and Global the merged.

The Company's assets under management stood at \$13.7 billion invested through funds and portfolios in various asset classes and jurisdictions making it the fifth largest asset manager in the GCC region as per Moody's asset management report issued last September.

During the nine months, Asset Management was recognized for the performance of its managed equity funds. Three equity funds managed by KAMCO



Faisal Mansour Sarkhou

and its subsidiaries were ranked amongst the top 5 performing equity funds in the Kuwaiti market. KAMCO's flagship fund was ranked the second performing equity fund in its category with a return of 15.4 percent YTD, following the Global Premier Market Index Fund, a fund managed by KAMCO's subsidiary, which was ranked the

top performing equity fund in Kuwait, with a return of 19.8 percent YTD. The team has also increased the number of portfolios under management while enhancing our current products to offer clients a wider range of investment solutions that best suit their risk appetite.

On the Investment Banking side, KAMCO was appointed by the Capital Markets Authority to manage the second phase of the privatization process which consists of the initial public offering (IPO) of Boursa Kuwait Securities Company ("Boursa Kuwait"). The IPO was launched on October 1st and will run until December 1st of 2019, concluding the final phase of Boursa Kuwait's privatization process. KAMCO also acted as the Issuance Advisor and Subscription Agent to Kuwait Projects Company's ("KIPCO") rights issue. The transaction successfully registered an increase of 452.75 million new ordinary shares, representing an increase of approximately 29.3 percent of KIPCO's existing issued and paid share capital from KD

154.73 million to KD 200 million. The team has concluded two major transactions this year and is currently working on several interesting mandates some of which are expected to be concluded before year end.

Oula Wasata, the brokerage arm of KAMCO, continued executing its strategy to focus on institutional clients and has resulted in gaining market share. During the nine months period, operational expenses stood at KD 13.88 million which includes non-recurring expenses associated with the merger transaction such as advisory fees and other expenses incurred by both KAMCO and Global.

Commenting on the results, Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, CEO of KAMCO, said, "This is an exceptional and key phase in the history of KAMCO with the acquisition and merger with Global. Successful completion of the merger, cost rationalization and synergy will enhance efficiency and set KAMCO on the growth pattern paving the way for immense growth opportunities and value creation for all our stakeholders."

NBK Money Markets Report

Fed cuts rates again to sustain US GDP growth

KUWAIT: The Federal Reserve cut interest rates by 0.25 percent for the third time this year to help sustain US growth. The cut was widely expected as market participants remain concerned about a slowdown in the economy while the trade war between the United States and China continues. Despite cutting rates, the Fed was relatively optimistic mentioning an extensive list of reasons the economy is doing well under the current stance of monetary policy including robust consumer spending and strengthening home sales.

The Fed decision and statement now allude to a potential pause in their "mid cycle adjustment" rate cuts implemented this year. The key change in the statement was the removal of the promise to "act as appropriate to sustain the expansion". Now the FOMC will merely monitor developments as it "assesses the appropriate path" for the fed funds rate. Fed governor Jerome Powell stated that risks to their "primary outlook" were "now moving in a positive direction," and that it would "require incoming data to cause a material reassessment of the Committee's primary outlook." In other words, economic data would have to deteriorate notably to cut further or inflation would have to pick up considerably to hike again. Neither looks likely over the short-term, so it is more likely that the Fed is done with policy changes for the time being.

The dollar fell to a 10-day low against its major counterparts after the FOMC meeting as cuts in US rates promote the attractiveness of foreign currencies. Also, as the dollar remains near historically high levels, any improvement in global data is likely to weigh on the dollar as investors bet on improving growth in Europe and other regions. Indeed, after no-deal Brexit risks diminished and positive data came out of Europe, we saw the pound sterling and euro both rebound considerably against the U.S. dollar this month.

Cocoa deals help African farmers, but not enough

ABIDJAN: The willingness of some multinational firms to pay a cost-of-living bonus for African cocoa planters is welcome but will not save many farmers from grinding poverty, industry sources say. Ivory Coast and Ghana, which together account for more than 60 percent of global cocoa production, initiated deals with chocolate makers in July, adding a "living income differential" (LID) to prices.

Barry Callebaut and Nestle, two world leaders in cocoa products, confirmed that they would pay a supplement of \$400 (almost 360 euros) per ton above the market price to help farmers, in the wake of announcements during an October meeting of the World Cocoa Foundation in Berlin. The neighboring

GDP better than expected

US economic growth slowed less than expected in the third quarter as a further contraction in business investment was offset by resilient consumer spending, further reducing market fears of a recession. GDP increased at a 1.9 percent annualized rate in the third quarter down from 2.0 percent pace in the April-June period. Businesses maintained a steady pace of inventory accumulation, exports rose and the housing market rebounded after contracting for six straight quarters, the government said in its estimate of GDP. Growth in consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of U.S. economic activity, slowed to a still-healthy 2.9 percent rate last quarter after surging at a 4.6 percent pace in the second quarter.

Non-farm payrolls

Non-farm payrolls rose by 128,000 in October overcoming an autoworkers' strike and beating expectations. Notable job gains occurred in food services, social assistance, and financial activities. The unemployment rate ticked higher to 3.6 percent, in line with estimates, but remains around the lowest in 50 years. The pace of average hourly earnings picked up a bit, rising 0.1 percent to a year-over-year 3 percent gain in line with expectations.

Trade negotiations

US President Donald Trump said the United States and China would soon announce a new site where he and Chinese President Xi Jinping will sign a "Phase One" trade deal after Chile canceled a planned summit set for mid-November. "China and the USA are working on selecting a new site for signing of Phase One of Trade Agreement," Trump said on Twitter. Chile's decision to cancel the Nov. 16-17 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Chile ruined plans for Trump and Xi to sign a deal on the sidelines. Trump offered no specifics on when a new meeting might be set but the White House said it expected to finalize a deal "within the same time frame."

The 27 EU member states approved an extension to the Brexit deadline to the end of January but also gave the UK the possibility to leave the bloc sooner if its withdrawal agreement has been ratified. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who opposed the delay, urged the EU member states to not allow any further extensions

West African countries in June said they would set the minimum price per ton at \$2,600 (2,330 euros) for the 2020/2021 season. Nestle "have already started buying 2020/2021 cocoa with the living income differential", declared the world's largest food and beverage company in a statement.

"The LID will help improve farmers' living income and complement all our efforts to improving the lives of farmers," it said. Barry Callebaut, another firm with headquarters in Switzerland, declared that it agrees with the principle enabling the Ivorian and Ghanaian governments to back a minimum cocoa price to cocoa farmers.

'Historic!'

The firm stressed that the LID should be "executed in a way which contributes to sustainability and structurally improves farmer livelihoods, without inducing further expansion of cocoa production into forests." "This is historic! The two countries together have managed to convince private buyers to raise the purchase price so that producers can earn more," Michel Arrion, executive director of the International Cocoa Organization (ICO), said.



beyond January 2020.

In a "gamble" attempt to defeat the stalemate in parliament and gain majority, Johnson pushed for, and was approved, a general election on December 12. While Johnson's party is seemingly leading in the polls, the decision could go either way leading to further delays. Former PM Theresa May went into her 2017 snap election in an even stronger position but ended up losing seats and her majority in parliament. Still, Johnson has concluded it would be better to hold an election now, rather than try to force his Brexit deal through parliament in the face of strong opposition.

Eurozone GDP & inflation

Euro zone economic growth in the third quarter defied market expectations of a slowdown and was steady quarter-on-quarter, preliminary data showed, while headline inflation slowed because of a sharp fall in energy prices. The European Union's statistics office Eurostat estimated GDP grew 0.2 percent in the July-September period against the previous three months, the same as in the second quarter. Expectations were for a 0.1 percent increase only.

Bank of Japan

The Bank of Japan held their short-term interest rate target at -0.10 percent with a 10-year Japanese Government Bond yield target around zero as widely expected. However, the Japanese central bank offered more clarity on its forward guidance for keeping rates low. Prior it was to spring 2020, which was deemed as too short. Now the commitment is simply

for "as long as necessary." The more important change was to make reference to rates being at "their present levels or lower" for both short-term and long-term rates which is another change that opens up the prospect of another cut in the deposit rate from the current -0.10 percent. However, the BOJ will likely follow the US Fed's approach and wait for further noticeable deterioration in the economy before acting.

Oil lower, gold higher

A Reuter's survey showed that oil prices are likely to be pressured this year and next as low demand from a slowing global economy and a surge in US shale output offset support from OPEC production cuts and Middle East supply risks. The poll of 51 economists and analysts forecast Brent crude would average \$64.16 a barrel in 2019 and \$62.38 next year. Oil prices fell around 3.6 percent last week down to 59.8 as investors worried about progress in US-China trade talks. Gold rose last week as the dollar came under pressure after the US Federal Reserve cut interest rates while uncertainty surrounding a US-China trade deal bolstered the metal's appeal as a safe-haven investment. Gold is highly sensitive to any reduction in interest rates, which decreases the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding bullion. Gold rose 1.30 percent to \$1513.55 last week.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30325
The USDKWD opened at 0.30325 yesterday morning.



Ivorian cocoa farmers hold cocoa pods in the plantation near Sinfra, in the central region in Ivory Coast. —AFP

Ivory Coast, with 40 percent of world production, and Ghana, with 20 percent, pressed hard for a deal that would benefit cocoa planters, who receive only six percent of a global market for cocoa and chocolate valued at \$100 billion per year. The purchase price of cocoa to Ivorian farmers was set at 825 CFA francs (1.25 euros) per kilogram at October's opening

of the new cocoa year, a raise of 10 percent, according to the Coffee Cocoa Council (CCC). Experts in Ivory Coast say that cocoa prices are still too low, even with the LID, since more than half of the million people working in the sector live below the poverty line, earning less than \$1.2 per day according to the World Bank. — AFP

Aramco listing: A much-awaited market debut

PARIS: State-owned oil giant Saudi Aramco fired the starting gun yesterday on its stock market debut, which could be the biggest in history. The journey to the historic listing is a saga that began in 2016.

Here are some key dates.

Plans unveiled

In January 2016, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as he was then-tells The Economist that Saudi Arabia is considering issuing shares for Saudi Aramco in an initial public offering (IPO). It is the first time a proposed listing of the world's largest crude oil producer had been made public. The oil giant quickly confirms the plan, which would make it the first major state-owned oil firm in the Gulf to be floated on the market. In April 2016, Riyadh makes official its intention to float up to five percent of Aramco. The state energy giant announces in September that it aims to launch the IPO in 2018.

First of the delays

As experts raise doubts over the projected timeline for a listing, Aramco says in October 2017 that it will take place in the second half of 2018. On January 1, 2018 Riyadh announces that Aramco has been granted a joint-stock status allowing individuals to hold shares.

London's Financial Times reports on March 12 that the IPO may be delayed until 2019, and other reports indicate the shares will be sold only on a local exchange. In April 2018, the Saudi finance minister raises the possibility of a 2019 market launch.

2020 or 2021?

In an October 2018 interview with Bloomberg, Prince Mohammed-now the crown prince and de facto ruler-insists the listing will go ahead in "late 2020, early 2021". On April 1, 2019 Aramco opens its secretive accounts for the first time and reveals it made the world's biggest corporate profit in 2018.

'Very, very soon'

On August 29 the Wall Street Journal says Aramco is considering a two-stage stock market debut, first domestic and then international, with Tokyo as a possible location. But on September 14 drone strikes hit two Aramco oil facilities, causing catastrophic damage and temporarily knocking out half of the kingdom's oil production. The attacks are claimed by Yemen's Huthi rebels who are battling a Saudi-led coalition, but suspicion instead falls on their sponsors Iran. Aramco insists the attacks will not deter its IPO plans.

On October 14, Aramco chairman Yasir al-Rumayyan says the energy giant will announce the long-awaited stock market debut "very, very soon".

But on October 17 the prospect of another delay is raised with the reason said to be the prospect of falling short of the \$2 trillion valuation desired by Saudi rulers.

Green light

As global bankers and policy-makers converge on Riyadh for its annual investment conference, Saudi energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman says on October 30 that the timing of the IPO will be dictated by the crown prince. On November 1, sources in New York tell AFP that the young ruler will formally announce the listing in coming days.

On November 3, journalists are called to Aramco's headquarters in eastern Dhahran for the news everyone's been waiting for-but despite firing the starting pistol on the IPO, the company says its date and size will be decided later. — AFP

Business

Global Finance names Boubyan Bank as 'World's Best Islamic Digital Bank'

Award places itself among big players such as Citibank and StanChart

KUWAIT: Confirming its leadership in digital banking, Boubyan Bank has placed itself among the top players by receiving the World's Best Islamic Digital Bank Award from Global Finance for the fifth year in a row. Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed, the Bank's Vice-Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, stated: "We are proud that we are ranked among top players this year as we have been selected by an impartial organization as the world's best Islamic bank in one of the highly competitive areas, namely digital banking services."

"This award comes as a culmination of a remarkable year in digital banking services in addition to the number of awards received by the bank in this field along with being named the Best Islamic Digital Bank in the Middle East by Global Finance as well.", he added.

Al-Majed went on to add: "The most significant aspect of this award is placing Boubyan Bank, being an Arab and Islamic bank, in the ranks of top banks, which is a new achievement for Kuwaiti banks in particular, and Kuwait's banking and financial sector in general."

Alongside Boubyan Bank, the list of the best included Citibank and Standard Chartered, the two internationally renowned banks, an achievement for Kuwaiti banks at the international level, which adds to the number of achievements of Kuwaiti banks over the past years. "The bank takes pride in its record of awards and recognitions, especially the ones received in the recent years, where we have been recognized by

regional and global institutions which are renowned for their fairness and the credibility of their choices that are based on numbers, financial results, and market achievements". Al-Majed stated. Al-Majed stressed: "Such global recognitions put more responsibilities on the management to commit to the remarkable service levels we provide to our customers. We believe that creativity and innovation are the way to continue in our path of success."

On his part, Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, the bank's Deputy CEO, stated: "Boubyan Bank is considered one of a few banks in the region, and may be globally as well, that satisfied the conditions of the award's submission as all the standards set by Global Finance were met by Boubyan Bank's experience in the past years." In its report about the selection criteria set by a panel of international judges, Global Finance referred to such criteria as:-

- Strength of strategy set by the bank for attracting and servicing digital customers.
- Success in getting clients to use digital offerings.
- Growth of digital customers who use digital banking services through their various channels, especially smart phones.
- Innovation and creativity in providing outstanding banking and non-banking services via electronic channels.

Digital Customers' Base

Al-Tuwaijri added: "Over the past years, we have been witnessing an unprecedented



Adel Al-Majed

increase in the number of Boubyan Bank customers' base using online or mobile banking solutions."

"This was associated with the growth in the number of customers, accordingly, the number of banking transactions performed using all of our channels multiplied over the past years, compared with an average growth ratio of other banks; this adds to the challenges faced by our bank.", he added. He further stressed that Boubyan has been at the forefront of the banking scene in the past years by offering many services for the first time in Kuwait, where the phrase "for the first time in Kuwait" has been synonymous with Boubyan Bank's digital achievements. "This year witnessed the introduction of many services and products firstly introduced to the market by Boubyan Bank which continues to be the leader in Kuwait in attempt to provide its customers with

exceptional and unique banking experience.", Al-Tuwaijri added.

A great remarkable year

Boubyan Bank earned a number of awards this year in the banking technologies area, including Global Finance's awards, namely, the Best Islamic Digital Bank in the Middle East, the Best Islamic Digital Bank in Kuwait, the Best Mobile Banking App in Kuwait, and the Most Innovative Digital Bank in Kuwait, and the Best Innovation in IMAL Technology.

Furthermore, Boubyan Bank received many awards in the field of customer service, the most prominent of which are two awards from Service Hero, the international consumer-driven customer satisfaction index. The bank received the First Place Award in Customer Service as a Country Winner, for the fourth time in addition to being named the Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service for the ninth year in a row since 2010. Boubyan's choice by Service Hero relied on a group of criteria they followed during the survey, which extended over one year among consumers who evaluated companies on a scale of 10 against their service-level expectations, their experience and their satisfaction following the customer-service experience.

The evaluation relied on many elements such as staff's attitude, location of the bank, speed of service, confidence in the product, quality of service or product, value for money, the contact center, and the website of the bank. Service Hero survey imple-

ments a strict protocol to confirm the identity of consumers who take part in the survey. Furthermore Boubyan Bank has continued its local achievements and followed the journey it started before many years by being named the Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait in 2019 by the Banker for the second year in a row due to the growth witnessed by the various indicators of the bank as well as the growth of its market shares.

In its report about the selection criteria for choosing Boubyan, the Banker, the renowned international financial publication, stated that the bank managed during a relatively short period to make great leaps in growing its financial indicators, especially its market shares, in one of the most competitive markets in the region. Al-Majed added: "Since creativity and innovation represent two main pillars in Boubyan Bank's business model, we have been constantly keen over the past years on enhancing our innovation and our services extended to customers. To maintain its edge in the market, Boubyan Bank continued offering new and innovative banking products and services in addition to improving existing ones."

"God willing, Boubyan will maintain the highest standards upon offering products in a comfortable and innovative manner that befits the needs of customers whether in terms of technology or traditional ways of banking. Through our care, persistence and dedication to work, we managed to achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction," he concluded.

BFGoodrich tips for the off-road driving season, brought by KAICO

KUWAIT: BFGoodrich Tires, which are imported by Kuwait Automotive Imports Co - KAICO (AlShaya AlSagar), has 27 SCORE Baja 1000 wins and 70 over-all four-wheel SCORE Desert Race titles to its name. For more than 40 years the brand's never-satisfied approach to tire making has built its reputation as an off-road leader. After years of industry firsts, creating a desert racing dynasty and countless overlanding adventures, they have learned this: If you're not pushing yourself to do it better, then there's no point in doing it at all.

Off-road driving can be fun, especially when it's intentional. To derive maximum pleasure and safety from Off-Roading, we recommend that the user understands some basic tips and techniques. Here are some tips for different Off-Road surfaces:

Safety checks

1. Check tyre pressure and condition
2. Wear your seatbelt
3. Ensure correct recovery practices and stay clear



of winches, tow straps or any recovery equipment used on the trail. These may break and can cause severe injury.

4. Never stand or let anyone stand in your vehicle
5. Soft-top vehicles must have a roll bar - this is imperative for your safety in the event that your vehicle flips.
6. Never travel alone - if you must go solo, let someone know where you'll be.

On sand

1. Deflate your tires to increase the footprint, it is recommended not to deflate below 15 Psi and ensure to re-inflate the tires to a safe pressure when returning to the road.

2. Be gentle with steering and braking inputs when tyres are deflated to avoid unseating tyre from wheel rim.
3. Use steady momentum all the way through.
4. In sand, if your wheels start to spin, ease off the gas a little to let the tires slow down and regain traction.

Sadiq Ali, Tires & Lubricants Divisional Manager at KAICO said "BFGoodrich has a big market throughout the year in Kuwait, though the desert off-roading season is always exciting for us."

Ashish Tandon, General Manager at KAICO said: "We are proud to be the distributor of the BFGoodrich Tires brand in Kuwait. Being the largest seller for off-road tyres in Kuwait, it is our duty to share safety tips with our customers, especially at the beginning of Off-Roading season in the region."

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma draws

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly and monthly draws on Al-Najma Account and the weekly draw on the "Salary and Cash on Top" campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Latifa Al-Jean.

The results of the draw were as follows:

- 1- Al-Najma monthly account - the prize of KD 20,000 was for the share of Obaid Ali Al-Mutairi.
- 2- Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 was for the share of Faisal Mohammad Arafat.
- 3- The "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign prize of KD 1,000 was for the share of Waleed Marzouq Al-Fadhli.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

As regarding "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees as well as the retirees and which is valid until 31 December 2019 and the mechanism of joining this campaign for availing its benefits, the bank explained that Kuwaiti employees with a salary of KD 500 and above whether newly-recruited or in service can transfer their salary to the Bank and avail the benefits of this campaign by getting instant cash gift of KD 250 or an interest free loan 5 times the salary up to KD 10,000, add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000. As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift. The retirees with pension KD 1,000 and above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private & public sector as well as the retirees. Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced and unrivalled services & products the Bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Fayez Saleh Abdullah Alotaibi
 2. Nourayah Saleh Radhi Alrashdeedi
 3. Marzouq Abdulla Neyal Alotaibi
 4. Taregh Abed Zadeh
 5. Adel Hussain Abdulredha Shishter
- In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Huawei Watch GT 2 officially arrives in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The innovative technology developer, Huawei Consumer Business Group Kuwait (CBG) has announced its latest smartwatch Huawei Watch GT 2 on 31 October, 2019 at the Huawei Experience Store (HES), in the Avenues Mall, Phase IV, Electra.

The event showcased Huawei's innovative Huawei Watch GT 2, build hype around it, and was a chance for local media and public to experience the dramatic features of the Watch.

Huawei has proudly announced that it has sold-out more than 1,000 units of Huawei Watch GT 2 on its launching day, and the first stock is officially sold out. However, the watch will be available again to all Kuwait consumers approximately after 10 days at the Huawei Experience Store (HES), in



the Avenues Mall as well as the other retail stores in the State of Kuwait. The Huawei Watch GT 2 is also available for pre-order as upcoming stocks are limited.

The Huawei Watch GT 2 features up to 2 weeks of battery life, smarter health management, heart rate monitoring, intelligent personal training partner, fashionable appearance, incoming call reminding functions activated normally, BT call and music playing functions activated for 30 minutes, exercise function activated for 90 minutes, and scientific sleep monitor-

ing function activated at night per week, diverse functions and beautiful colors in addition to excellent properties of the previous edition. Beyond entertaining guests, the event showcased Huawei's commitment and ability to deliver the brand promise of "bringing users innovative products". Huawei keeps creating and improving its fitness smart watch series via technological innovation based on users' demands, delivering optimal product portfolios with even longer battery life. Get yours from and start your comfortable yet relaxed journey.



What's On

Jumeirah Messilah Hotel visits cancer patients at Kuwait Cancer Control Center



As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and its humanitarian role in spreading awareness of breast cancer in October, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa team paid a special visit to Kuwait Cancer Control Center and Al-Sidra Centre where they interacted with the centre's patients and presented them with gifts and flowers to raise their spirits. Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa team expressed their happiness to support the local community with various CSR initiatives throughout the year and stressed on the impor-

tance of philanthropy to spread awareness about various types of cancer as well as prevention and recovery. At Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, the resort recognizes that part of their role and duty is to create and shed light on initiatives that benefit the community. Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa team extended their utmost appreciation and gratitude to the management and employees of Kuwait Cancer Control Center and Al-Sidra Centre for their humanitarian and professional efforts and wish all patients a speedy recovery.



Lulu Hypermarket launches 'Hello Winter 2019' promo

Lulu Hypermarket, the premier retailer in the region, is providing shoppers with a range of warm options for the winter season with its latest promotion, the 'Hello Winter 2019'. The promotion was launched at the hypermarket's Al Rai outlet on 31 October in the presence of top Lulu Hypermarket management in Kuwait and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers.

A special 'Kids Winter Fashion Show' was held on the occasion lending more excitement and enjoyment to the event. Similar Winter Collection Fashion Shows are slated to be held on various dates at other Lulu hypermarket outlets. In addition, a 'Bloggers Meet' was arranged as part of the launch ceremony at the Al-Rai outlet so that Kuwait's online opinion-formers could review and comment on the event, while also allowing shoppers to meet and interact with their favorite bloggers.



The 'Hello Winter 2019' promotion, which is being held from 31 October to 12 November at all Lulu Hypermarket outlets, includes a diverse and exciting range of winter clothing and accessories at very special prices. Everything from fashionable winter garments to comfy footwear designed to provide warmth and style during the cold winter months are on offer during the promotion period. Discover branded, quality winter-wear at unbeatable prices from popular brands such as Arezzo, Cortigiani, Debacker, Eten and John Louis during the promotion period.

Among the hot-selling items on offer are a number of stylish jackets, sweaters and winter clothing accessories that combine affordability with style. Also, the wide range of winter-wear choices for children, including collections that are fun and casual, allow kids to make a fashion statement at very special prices.

Lulu Hypermarket has a loyal and passionate customer base that continues to grow year after year. The secret to this strong brand loyalty lies in the hypermarket's steadfast commitment to offer shoppers the widest range of high-quality products, from around the world, at very competitive prices, and in an ambience that provides for an enjoyable shopping experience.



Salute Yal Bannot performing at Al-Salam festival



Sudan's "Salute Yal Bannot" band performed during the second night of Al-Salam festival, which is organized by Loyac Arts Academy at the amphitheater of Al-Shaheed Park in the presence of several members of the Sudanese women society and the

economic assistant at the Sudanese embassy Dr Adam Ibrahim. The band sang in Arabic and English with music composed and lyrics written by the six members of the band. The band reflected on issues concerning women in general and the Sudanese people in particular.



ICSK bags championship for the 18th consecutive year

Amidst huge exultation, the 21st CBSE Kuwait Cluster Meet was organized at the Amateur Athletic Federation Stadium Khaifan on 30th October 2019. A humungous number of around 1,300 athletes from 17 schools across the country participated in the meet comprising of around 56 events including track and field. Dr V Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK Senior, and Baldwin Faive, Principal AlAMal School, inaugurated the meet.

Arul Dharamaraj, CBSE Kuwait Chapter Convenor, declared the cluster meet open in the presence of various CBSE school Principals in Kuwait. The Sports Cluster meet that traversed across 3 days, that is from 30th October 2019 to 1st November 2019. The Indian Community School Kuwait, has won the CBSE cluster

meet for the record 18th consecutive year with a groundbreaking lead score of 428 points. The second position was bagged by United Indian School, with 263 points and the third position was won by Gulf Indian School with 237 points. The 35 gold, 16 silver and 4 bronze medals achieved by the skillful children of ICSK brought a huge successful score of 428 points. ICSK's triumph as champions for the successive 18th year is the biggest highlight of this year's cluster meet.

The ICSK Under-14 girls' created a new meet record in 4x100 m relay in this meet and 7 ICSK athletes bagged individual championships also. The champions of ICSK got selected for the CBSE National Athletic Competition that is going to be organized in Chattisgarh, India from 26th to 30th November 2019.

The whole management of ICSK congratulated and applauded the members of the Physical Education Department for the new feat. ICSK has always promoted sports and sportsman spirit in its children as it believes in the caliber of its children and helps them achieve their dreams to the fullest. The valedictory function was graced by Principals of various CBSE schools in Kuwait and the meet was declared closed.



The Basmat Khair voluntary team joined the farming department at the educational workshops boy's school in celebration of this year's greening week. The event was attended by the team's leader Huda Farooq, the school principal, the head of the agriculture department Usama Abdelmaqsood and the team's members. The students participated in a Q&A session, followed by edu-

ational contests. They also went with the teachers to plant seeds in the school garden, as they were told about the importance of agriculture in our lives including food, medicine and many other industries, besides ensuring a clean atmosphere. The school officials lauded the participation of Basmat Khair's team in this activity and thanked them for the gifts given to the students.



NOTICE

Assalaamu Alaikum
Dear brothers and sisters,

The TIES Center cordially invites you to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) tomorrow Monday, November 4th, at 7pm. In that class, we will focus on verses 22 and 23 of Surat Al-Hashr (The Gathering). We will discuss a statement if sincerely said before death will qualify the deceased for Paradise.

We will learn some names and attributes of Allah (SWT) and discuss our responsibilities towards them. We will also examine what the testimony of faith means, why is it the best statement said by prophets and messengers, and our responsibilities towards it. Finally, we will explore the Islamic definition of arrogance, its punishment, and what Allah (SWT) does for someone who humbles himself for His sake. Come and learn more about the Book of Allah (SWT) in a serene, friendly and encouraging environment.

Health & Science

Environment now a focus for young Chinese: Sci-fi author Chen Qiufan

HONG KONG: China's millennials are increasingly pursuing happiness and sustainable living rather than wealth and luxury, award-winning sci-fi writer Chen Qiufan says, insisting the nation's youth are waking up to environmental issues. His acclaimed dystopian novel "Waste Tide", which depicted workers picking through toxic electronic detritus and children playing with discarded bionic limbs, served as a warning to his country at a time when it was the world's rubbish dump, and its most vulnerable communities bore the brunt of the West's voracious consumer culture.



Chen Qiufan

Forest, an Alipay mobile game that rewards users for adopting more environmentally friendly lifestyles by planting actual greenery, has led to around 122 million new trees in the ground since 2016, according to the UN. Speaking ahead of an appearance at the Hong Kong International Literary Festival in November, Chen told AFP his own passion for environmental issues was sparked by learning of the town of Guiyu — a waste site for the developed world's electronic junk that was once branded an "environmental calamity" by the UN.

Despite growing up just 60 kilometers away in the southeastern city of Shantou, he had barely heard of the e-waste hub where tens of thousands of poor workers dismantled discarded TVs, mobile phones and batteries — often with no protective gear, leaving them directly exposed to toxic chemicals. "There was a childhood friend who worked for an American recycling company and he told me about this place Guiyu," explains Chen, one of the stars of China's flourishing science fiction scene.

"I went there and it was totally shocking. They (the workers) suffered very low pay, they were infected by toxic air, water and soil," he adds. He began to question the throwaway culture of the developed world. "Waste is basically invisible in many ways, you dump it into the

trash and it just disappears and that's how our urban life functions," he muses. "But actually somebody is suffering from this."

'Increased inequality'

An alumna of prestigious Peking University, Chen is among a crop of talented Chinese sci-fi writers who are asking questions of their fast-changing country and the wider world — and finding literary success. Fellow novelist Hao Jingfang's "Folding Beijing", a tale of class inequality that echoes the real-life struggles of migrants in the Chinese capital, bagged a Hugo Award in 2016 and Chen has claimed a string of prizes in China.

In Chen's work, as well as discussing the degradation of the environment and its poisonous effect on the poorest, he critiques our increasing reliance on tech and its ramifications on society. He worries a lot that technology could increase inequality in China. "We can see a lot of kids in the countryside who are very poor and they basically use their phone to play games to kill time because their parents are all working in the cities to make some money. "But for those kids that are living in the city — from middle-class, well-educated families — they are mostly limited to using the tech for education purposes. So that makes the gap bigger and bigger," he says. But ultimately it's the whole global system that he thinks need to change, with tighter regulation around both tech and the culture of materialism that is driving the toxic waste problem — now a nightmare China's poorer Southeast Asian neighbors must deal with. He adds: "The issue is not resolved, it's just transferred. It's always there, switching from one backyard to another." — AFP

Getting measles 'resets' the body's immune system

WASHINGTON: Measles, the contagious childhood disease that is once more on the rise globally, is more harmful than previously thought. A new analysis of 77 unvaccinated children from the Netherlands carried out by an international team of researchers led by scientists at Harvard has found that the virus erases the body's memory of previous pathogens — effectively wiping its immunity memory.

The virus eliminated between 11 and 73 percent of the children's protective antibodies, blood proteins responsible for "remembering" previous encounters with disease, the team wrote in the journal Science on Thursday. This left some of the children with immunity close to that of a newborn baby. "It sort of resets your immune system back to sort of a more naive state," Harvard epidemiologist and coauthor Michael Mina told AFP. In order to rebuild their defenses, they will need to be exposed to numerous pathogens as they were in their infancy, he added. To validate their result, the team then carried out experiments on macaque monkeys, with the animals losing 40-60 percent of their protective antibodies. — AFP

'Environmental calamity'

Chinese are showing their concern online too. Ant

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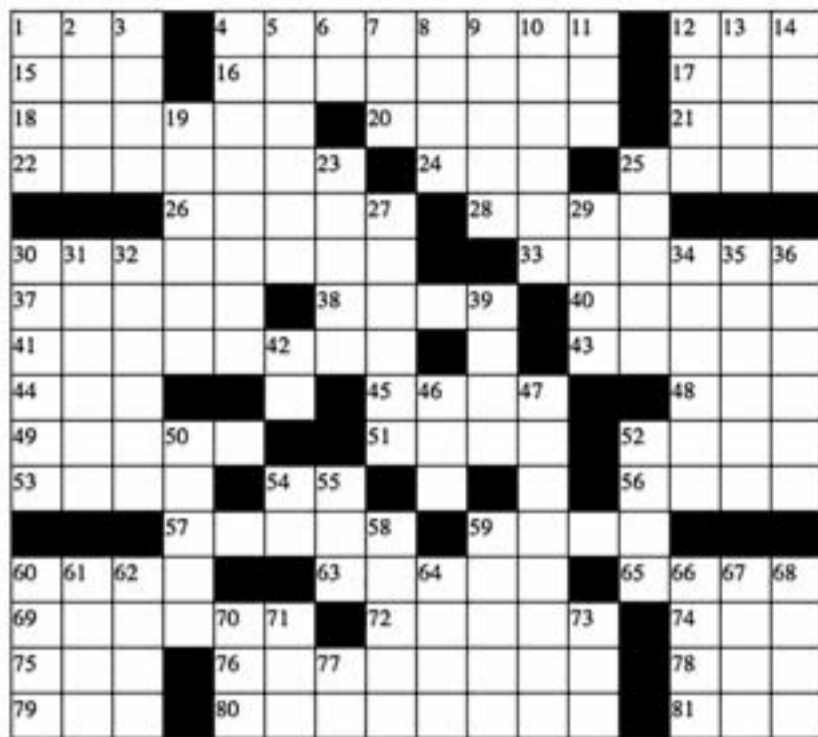
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2350



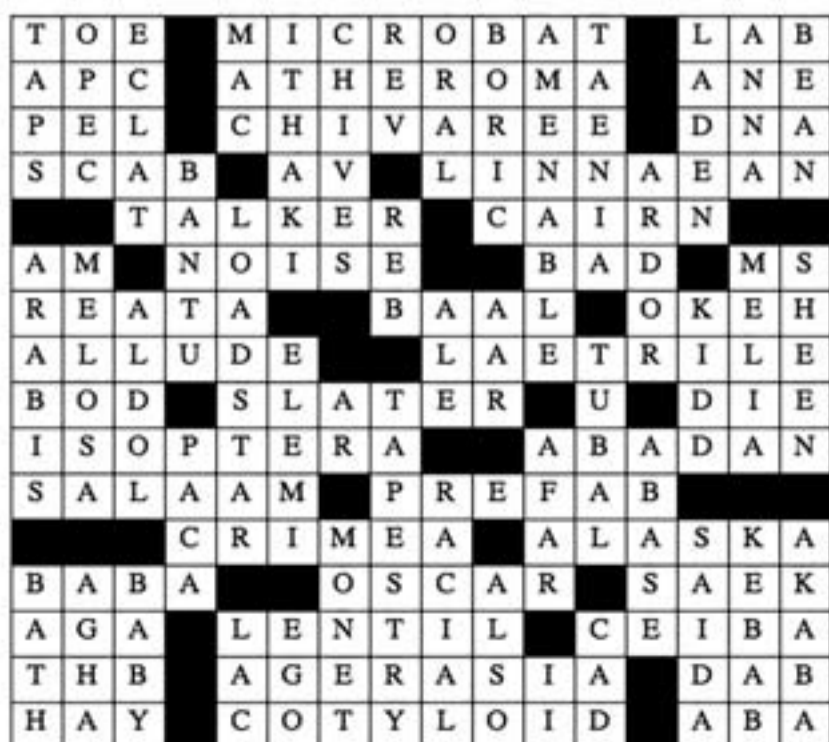
ACROSS

- Nocturnal mouse-like mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
- (used as intensives reflecting the speaker's attitude) It is sincerely the case that.
- Being one hundred more than two hundred.
- A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.
- A river in central Brazil that flows generally northward (with many falls) to join the Tocantins River.
- Canadian hockey player (born 1948).
- A short trip that is taken in the performance of a necessary task or mission.
- German composer of operas (1714-1787).
- An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
- Having hair on the cheeks and chin.
- The ratio of the distance traveled (in kilometers) to the time spent traveling (in hours).
- A long steep slope or cliff at the edge of a plateau or ridge.
- Suggestive of the supernatural.
- (biology) Relating to or produced by or containing bacilli.
- Imperial moths.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Any of various aromatic resinous substances used for healing and soothing.
- A state in New England.
- Perform on a stage or theater.
- Someone whose business is advertising.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- An inactive volcano in Sicily.
- (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A Hindu prince or king in India.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Made agreeably cold (especially by ice).
- A member of the Nahuatl people who established an empire in Mexico that was overthrown by Cortes in 1519.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- Small tree native to the eastern United States having oblong leaves and fleshy fruit.
- King of Saudi Arabia since 1982 (born in 1922).
- Goods (or wreckage) on the sea bed that is attached to a buoy so that it can be recovered.
- Conveying information to the muscles from the CNS.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- (Babylonian) The sky god.
- A mountain peak in south central Sri Lanka (7,360 feet high).
- A loud harsh or strident noise.
- The cry made by sheep.
- Arrange or order by classes or categories.
- Large northern deer with enormous flattened antlers in the male.

DOWN

- (pathology) An elevation of the skin filled with serous fluid.
- A river in northern England that flows southeast through West Yorkshire.
- A three-tone Chadic language.
- A clap of the hands to indicate approval.
- A severe or trying experience.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- Animal reproductive body consisting of an ovum or embryo together with nutritive and protective envelopes.
- A mood or display of sullen aloofness or withdrawal.
- Having a dusky brownish gray color.
- Chinese tree cultivated especially in Philippines and India for its edible fruit.
- Noisy talk.
- A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
- Baby bed with high sides.
- A steep rugged rock or cliff.
- A poisonous colorless flammable gas used in organic synthesis and to dope transistors and as a poison gas in warfare.
- Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus *Draba* having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
- Any tropical gymnosperm of the order Cycadales.
- The act of communicating with a deity (especially as a petition or in adoration or contrition or thanksgiving).
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- Regarded with deep or rapturous love (especially as if for a god).
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- Of or relating to or forming a limbus.
- Render capable or able for some task.
- Detected by instinct or inference rather than by recognized perceptual cues.
- Tough Asiatic grass whose culms are used for ropes and baskets.
- A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
- A slight amount or degree of difference.
- Striped hyena of southeast Africa that feeds chiefly on insects.
- A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
- French cabaret singer (1915-1963).
- A heavy precious metallic element.
- (informal) Informed about the latest trends.
- Any of several plants of the genus *Camassia*.
- New Zealand conifer.
- Type genus of the Ranidae.
- Largest known toad species.
- A band of nerve fibers linking the medulla oblongata and the cerebellum with the midbrain.
- An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
- Precipitation of ice pellets when there are strong rising air currents.
- Unpleasantly cool and humid.
- A committee in the executive branch of government that advises the president on foreign and military and national security.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- A column of light (as from a beacon).
- Informal terms for a mother.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have a fine sense of appreciation and are very attentive to your loved ones. You love to help and take care of others, expressing a first-rate sense of compassion. You possess an almost infinite ability to respond to the needs and demands of others. Fragile and refined, you are perhaps too reserved. Your love of truth makes philosophy and religious ideas a life-long habit. You appreciate things of a global or universal level and could learn to love travel. Appearances mean little to you and you value honesty and candor in your partner and friends. Lovely words and a flair for description entertain neighbors and friends in a social scene this afternoon.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

The world is a sacred place to you and you have an absolute commitment to spiritual ideas. You could be enjoying a luncheon with people that are within your spiritual association. Although you may not recognize that you have intuition, it is strong and you use it in helping others. You are sensitive, kind and gentle. You are a romantic too, with a tender heart. You always work for a real future, doing what has to be done. You love all that is musical and artistic. You have a sensitivity to all that is psychic or spiritual. You have real faith. There is a natural appreciation for the past that stands out today as you demonstrate trends or point out tendencies and the possibility.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Sympathy and understanding come into play this Monday as you interact with friends and family. It's wisdom, not knowledge, that counts now. Coming to grips with the past or getting in touch with the spiritual gives you a sense of completeness. If it makes sense you love it, and if it does not, you feel guilty about it—that's what it's like now. A loving attention to details and a sense of satisfaction in doing what is right are some of the qualities that come into play now—especially with respect to your health. You may find yourself at a nearby fruit and vegetable market this afternoon, mentally planning next week's menus. Your energies appear to be in the planning area this evening. You are at your mental best with sharp ideas and clear thoughts.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may be very forceful in what you say and think today. With all of this emotional energy, you could speak or communicate very well. You have much mental drive to accomplish whatever you set out to do today. There is the possibility of new visions or sudden insights into your self-image or into your ideals and dreams. This is a time to reshape and renew your philosophy or religion during which your imagination is at full tilt. There are breakthroughs in compassion and communion. The new and unexpected may figure in your living situation or surroundings. An insight about your support system, your mother, or other females may be important.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Lovers, children and other people or things dear to your heart are emphasized this day. Being appreciated and admired for your creative offerings are powerful needs. Taking chances can bring big rewards. Watch those judgments... They will keep you from joy and your expectations will make you unhappy. The best technique for now is to clear the mind and go-with-the-flow. You may enjoy getting away from your usual routine to do something different for a change. Your desires are strong and you will want to enjoy yourself. Romance is very possible. There is a basic drive to appreciate and taste life. Travel to a friend's new home may bring about an opportunity to talk about old times and laugh a lot! Take a simple housewarming gift.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Faith, optimism and a yearning to explore all kinds of new horizons are some of the focal points in your life. Travel, education and other ways to stretch your horizons open new doors of opportunity. Religious, philosophical and cultural matters are likely to have a special appeal for you now; transmitting ideas on a broader scale brings gain. You could decide you want to be a broadcaster on the airwaves. There is much energy and drive, perfect for starting something out or taking care of personal business. Very physical too—exercise is in order. A team effort will pay off, big time. Your emotions and the emotions of those around you are quite clear. This evening is a good time to catch up on family matters and, if needed, improve communications.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may want to organize or rearrange your living situation. You may find ways that will help make it easier to help you remember to put things in their proper place. Marking containers, organizing the garage or utility room may take up most of your day. Later this afternoon you may decide to create a place to have "me time." This would be a nice chair, magazine rack, lamp or a desk where you can write or read or use your computer. Later today you will look for family or friends to join together for a little visiting time. A drive into the country with one of your friends or family members will find you at a garage sale, country vegetable stand or movie. This is a great time to share your time with another person and enjoy discussing all sorts of subjects.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Social connections are on your mind—on a more intellectual level than in the past, most likely. Powerful changes within you are demanding recognition and this may mean a new artistic interest or talent. Recognition will come in time—patience. A friend may want you to ride a motorcycle with him or her, or enter into some other situation that your participation might be worrisome. You may find that you have a problem with saying no. Today you learn to rise above the imagined guilt to state your thoughts. You are surprised at your progress and pleased with yourself. You may decide to look for another challenge so you can try out your new mind-set all over again.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation this day or feel especially kind toward a friend or neighbor. Someone may compliment you on your belongings. You could find that you are in the mood to share and plans may develop to create a garden between neighbors. There is time today to have new thoughts and sudden insights and to get an unexpected boost in your ideas. Communications are simplified; connections of all kinds, news and so on, are furthered, which could mean the purchase of a camera, new phone, computer or some other form of communication. There is a time later to enjoy some special time with someone you love.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

If there is something that needs to be said on the home front today—speak up now. Others lend their support to whatever you want to accomplish. Move forward instead of backward and keep your thinking in a forward-moving mode. Everything comes together to value and to bring out your unique and unusual qualities. You may find that someone close to you understands and is supportive of your eccentricities. You could come up with new solutions or inventions. Communicating with others in clear, intelligent conversations is important just now. Your timing should be perfect and others will find you most spontaneous.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

If you are a female, you may find yourself hiding from someone today because you forgot to complete your makeup or do not have on the right clothes. Careful, you could knock something over, or run into someone, by running in the opposite direction. If you are a male, you may turn your head to someone's flattery that is not sincere. Look beyond the flattery to what this person is really saying. This is a busy day and one might find you huffing and puffing often. You can get more done than the average person and some things you have been putting off are included in your rush to ready yourself for the week ahead. Do be careful not to break some prized possession.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

There is much to do today—fortunately you have the energy to match your goals. You can expect a sense of support and good will from those around you. Free your mind while you work or tend to your projects and find your sense of humor—laughter is contagious and will put everyone in a good mood. A family member brings you good news this afternoon. There is much communication surrounding this subject. Phone calls and letters are underway. Your extra confidence may make you a bit outspoken so take care with your words while surrounded by so many people. Pamper yourself this evening, set some of those serious thoughts to the side and enjoy a loved one's attention or pour your own attention onto a loved one.

Wordsearch Puzzle

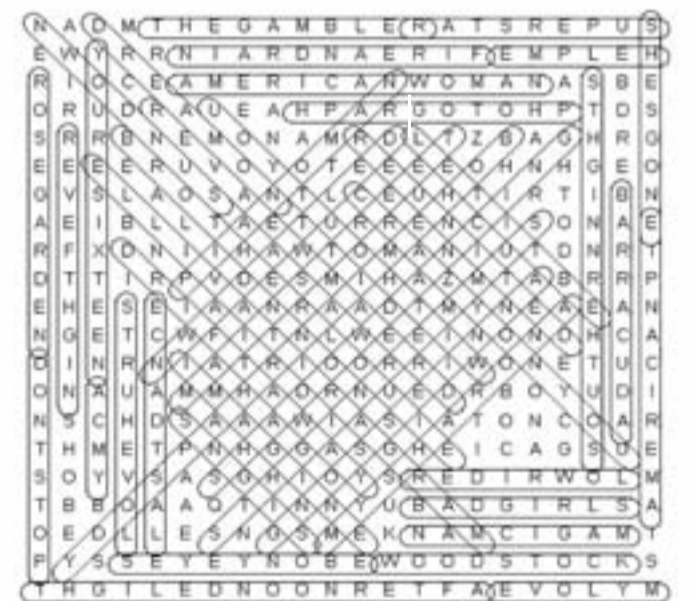
More 80's Songs

Find and circle all of the 1980's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an Elton John song.



- AFRICA
- ALWAYS
- AMERICA
- BEAT IT
- BROKEN WINGS
- CALL ME
- CONTROL
- CRUISIN'
- DOWN UNDER
- ENDLESS LOVE
- FAITHFULLY
- FAME
- FAST CAR
- FREEDOM
- GLORIA
- GUILTY
- HEARTBREAKER
- HEAVEN
- HOLD ME
- HUMAN
- HUNGRY HEART
- INFATUATION
- KOKOMO
- LA BAMBOLA
- LET'S DANCE
- MAGIC
- MANIC MONDAY
- MONEY MONY
- NEVER
- NOTORIOUS
- OUR HOUSE
- PASSION
- PATIENCE
- PINK HOUSES
- PURPLE RAIN
- ROCK ON
- SAILING
- SARA
- SATISFIED
- SHOUT
- SONGBIRD
- SUKEYAKI
- SUSSIDIO
- THE FLAME
- THE LOOK
- THE ROSE
- TIME
- TOO SHY
- TRUE
- TRULY
- TWO HEARTS
- VACATION
- VOICES CARRY
- WE BELONG
- WHIP IT
- YOUR LOVE

More 70's Songs



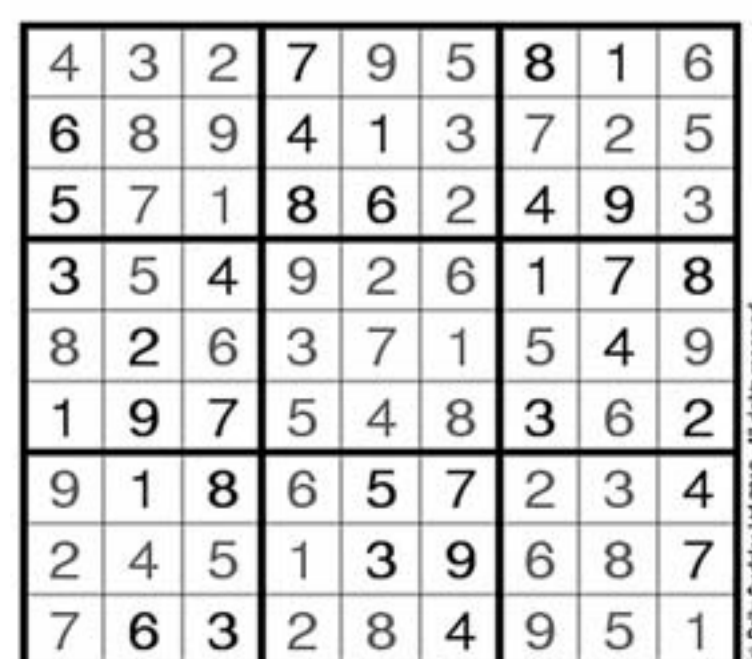
- AFTERNOON DELIGHT
- AMERICAN PIE
- AMERICAN WOMAN
- ANNIE'S SONG
- BAD GIRLS
- BARRACUDA
- BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY
- BROTHER LOUIE
- CRAZY ON YOU
- DELTA DAWN
- DON'T STOP
- DREAM ON
- DREAM WEAVER
- DRIFT AWAY
- EBONY EYES
- FIRE AND RAIN
- HELP ME
- IMAGINE
- LAST DANCE
- LET IT BE
- LOVE HURTS
- LOW RIDER
- MAGIC MAN
- RAIN STREET
- MARGARET
- MY LOVE
- MY SHARONA
- NIGHT FEVER
- PHOTOGRAPH
- PEANO MAN
- REUNITED
- ROSE GARDEN
- SHADOW DANCING
- SHE'S GONE
- SIGNS
- SOUTHERN NIGHTS
- SUMMER NIGHTS
- SUNDOWN
- SUPERSTAR
- THE GAMBLER
- WITHOUT YOU
- WOODSTOCK
- Y.M.C.A.
- YOU'RE SIXTEEN

Hidden words: AMERICA BREAD NAZARETH HEART BLONDE BOSTON CHICAGO ABBA QUEEN KISS

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2019



Two jousting competitors come together during the inaugural 'Ashes' jousting tournament between Australia and England at the Koyal Castle in Leigh Creek, some 100 kms west of Melbourne. — AFP

Celebrities back call for climate action in Extinction Rebellion video

Singer Ellie Goulding, actor Imelda Staunton and model Daisy Lowe were among celebrities demanding that the governments act on climate change in a video campaign launched by Extinction Rebellion on yesterday ahead of Britain's Dec 12 general election. Extinction Rebellion launched in London a year ago, inspiring waves of colorful, disruptive actions around the world to call for rapid cuts in carbon emissions and the repair of collapsing ecosystems. Thousands of people have been arrested during protests.

The group's emphasis on the role that culture can play in shaping attitudes towards the twin climate and ecological crises has drawn support from a range of leading names from the worlds of music, fashion, art and film. The new video was created in a collaboration between film-maker Richard Curtis and RANKIN, a creative agency headed by the British photographer of the same name. It features people aged 8 to 80 demanding a halt to the destruction of forests and oceans and the loss of plant, insect and animal species.

"Time has run out. It's act now or face almost unimaginable consequences for life on Earth," said British television presenter and naturalist Chris Packham. "So if the drivers of change are asleep at the wheel, it's time to shake and wake them with one hand and to empower ourselves to make our own differences with the other," Packham said. Among the best-known actors to feature in the film is Jim Carter. He played Mr Carson the butler in "Downton Abbey", a film and television series that won numerous awards for its portrayal of British aristocratic life in the early 20th century.

Other celebrities include Camilla Thurlow, who appeared in British hit reality series "Love Island", film and television director Stephen Frears, and actor Jaime Winstone. "This film must reach governments and ring the alarm bell to act now on the climate crisis we are all living in," Winstone said. "We must all ask of them #WhereIsYourPlan." — Reuters

For Sidy Diallo, the weekend brings another marathon-run barefoot

Sidy Diallo has traveled the globe, sometimes running marathons in consecutive weeks—he is running Sunday in New York—to preach the still largely unappreciated benefits of running barefoot. "There's a man without shoes. Watch out for him!", a pedicab driver shakes his head in amazement at the sight of the tall, spindly runner making his way through Central Park. Having trained for and run 63 marathons barefoot since 2015, Diallo has grown accustomed to the full gamut of reactions, from sympathy to open hostility.

"Insane! He's crazy!" shouted one spectator he passed while running the Chicago Marathon three weeks ago, said the Guinean-born Diallo. "When people see me like that," he said, "it brings out the animal in them and some get angry... and even aggressive." Others wince, worried he is in pain or doing damage to his feet. "I see the fear on the faces of some people," Diallo says.

There was definitely pain in the early days, he acknowledges. A physician by training who switched careers and is now a French diplomat, he made his first shoeless runs a bit tentatively. Having taken up running relatively late in life, at 55, he had run 100 marathons-wearing shoes-starting in 2010. But by the time he turned 60 in 2015, he was craving a new challenge.

A price to pay, at first

"There is a price to pay" in the first painful days of barefoot running, Diallo concedes. "Your feet and legs have to adapt. Your entire body has to get used to it."

Like others before him, Diallo, who posts on Facebook as Dr. Barefoot, has reverted to the stride used by the first humans, for whom running barefoot was a matter of survival, not just fun. The 2009 book "Born to Run" by Chris McDougall sparked a mini-revolution in the American running community, inspiring many runners to go minimalist.

McDougall wrote about a tribe in northern Mexico known as the Tarahumaras whose members could run dozens of miles a day along rugged canyon paths wearing simple sandals cut out of old car tires. He taught himself to run as they did—and as ancient man did—using a style known as a forefoot strike, in which the ball of the foot lands first, rather than the heel strike used by nearly all shoe-wearing runners.

"When you run with shoes, the impact with each stride is 100 percent," generally placing great pressure on the heel, Diallo explained. "When you run barefoot, the body naturally cushions the impact," dramatically lessening it. Several scientific studies have concluded that barefoot running is indeed less traumatizing to the body than the heel-strike running that the cushioned heels of modern sports shoes encourages. Diallo and McDougall say barefoot running has helped them avoid major injuries. Ira Rohde, president of the New York chapter of the Barefoot Runners Society, agrees.

'You feel good'

But despite the publicity generated by "Born to

Run" and the growing popularity of running in the Western world, barefoot running remains a micro-niche. "In the USA, the 'fad' phase of barefoot running is certainly long gone," Rohde says. "There remains much more interest in Europe." Despite posting a notice about his plans to run last Sunday, Rohde was the only person to show up barefoot, under a light drizzle, for his usual run in Central Park.

Ken Posner, a specialist in barefoot trail-running, says that in 20 years in New York he remembers seeing only seven barefoot runners. And in the 80 marathons or ultra-marathons he has run, he has seen only three. He attributes this to the weight of social convention. To run without shoes, he says, you have to be "willing to stand out very visibly from the crowd." Patience is also required. "You have to slow down when the ground gets rough, and it seems like most people are in a constant rush."

Still, this author of "Running the Long Path" believes his philosophy will spread, as it has among those already running in lightweight, minimally cushioned shoes designed to be just a step away from running barefoot. "A lot of people are starting to do it" and finding it to be surprisingly enjoyable, Diallo says. "Imagine yourself walking on a beach of fine sand, or on a lawn. You feel good. It's the same sensation, only super-sized!" — AFP



French barefoot runner Sidy Diallo, who ran the November 3 New York City Marathon barefoot, trains in Central Park, New York. — AFP photos



Nick Jonas felt isolated after his diabetes diagnosis

The 27-year-old singer has been fighting type one diabetes since he was a teenager, and has said his experience with the "invisible illness" has been tough, and now wants to teach others how to "thrive" despite their diagnosis. Posting on Instagram to mark the start of Diabetes Awareness Month, he wrote: "14 years ago this month I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. This experience has shaped how I approach my health - working out, eating well, and always thinking about my blood sugar and insulin needs. You can't always see what goes into managing an invisible illness, and Type 1 diabetes can feel lonely and isolating. That's why I co-founded @BeyondType1 in 2015, to make sure no one feels alone with this diagnosis and to share how you can thrive with Type 1 diabetes. November is Diabetes Awareness Month - join us at Beyond Type 1 by sharing how diabetes has impacted your life using #TheDropSpotted. I'm so grateful to my fans for your support and kindness! (sic)" The Jonas Brothers star

recently revealed he came "very close to a coma" when he was first diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 13, after he began to face the warning signs of the disease - in which the pancreas doesn't create enough insulin, and therefore causes high blood sugar levels - including losing weight and craving sugary drinks. He said: "I was very close to a coma. Like a day away, if I hadn't gone to the hospital." Nick requires medication to keep his insulin levels in check, but has said he was fearful of relying on his prescribed insulin to maintain his health for the rest of his life. The 'Sucker' hitmaker added: "I kept asking my parents - am I going to be okay? I was just so concerned that it was going to limit my ability to do all the things I wanted to do. I was very scared - it's a big life change." But over the years, his health battle has become more "manageable".



Mel B is a real romantic

The 44-year-old star insists she isn't as "loud and scary" as people think from her Spice Girls persona and she can be very "shy" when it comes to love. She said: "I think people always think of me as loud and scary but, actually, I'm a real romantic. I like to be treated like a lady. I have never had a one night stand and believe it or not, I can be very shy." Mel - who has children Phoenix, 20, Angel, 12, and Madison, eight, from previous relationships - loves to stay fit as she thinks it's vital for her physical and mental health, but she insisted she never goes out to try and look good for a man. She added: "I think the mind and body are connected, and if you feel in a good place mentally, it has a big effect on how you feel physically. I don't work out thinking I must have my body in shape for a man - I want to look good and feel good for myself. I've been through an awful lot on the past 12 years and I really do feel like I'm in a much better place physically and mentally." After splitting from her husband Stephen Belafonte - who she accused of abusing her - in 2017, Mel is happy to be back in the UK and have reconnected with her family. She shared: "I'm just enjoying being a mum, raising my kids back home in Leeds. I've been spending time to really connect back with my family, friends and myself." The '2 Become 1' singer was recently romantically linked with hairdresser Rory McPhee and she admitted she can't keep it quiet when there's someone significant in her personal life.

Jennifer Garner leans on boyfriend John Miller

The 'Justice League' star had spent a year away from alcohol before he admitted to having slipped up during a Halloween party last weekend. And Jennifer - who has been supportive of Ben throughout his sobriety journey - is said to have been hit hard by the news of his relapse, so is now relying on her new beau John to be her "rock". A source told Us Weekly magazine: "[Jennifer] knows she can rely on [John]. They are very happy, and going strong. John has been a rock for Jennifer, especially during Ben's recent relapse." The news comes after it was recently reported the 'Peppermint' actress, 47, is still "supporting" Ben, but is "sad" to see him relapse. Another insider claimed: "She's upset but always supportive." Ben, also 47, was believed to have relapsed when he was seen stumbling and falling against a car after attending the UNICEF Masquerade Ball at the Kimpton La Peer Hotel over the weekend. Following the sighting, the 'Argo' star - who has daughters Violet, 13, and Seraphina, 10, and son Samuel, seven, with Jennifer - told reporters he wouldn't let his slip up "derail" him from his sobriety journey. He said: "Well, you know, it happens. It's a slip, but I'm not going to let it derail me." The slip-up and his subsequent comment came just after Ben joked about headlines focused on his private life, and then pledged to donate to homeless charity The Midnight Mission. He wrote on social media: "HA, you got me. I'm dating. But let's be serious for a moment and talk about something that is actually important. I have been in recovery for over a year and part of that is helping out others. @themidnightmission is an incredible organisation that helps those in need with housing, training, development and recovery. I'm making a donation today because there are people battling addiction every day that don't have the resources and need help. @raya, you in? Who else is with me? (sic)"



Antonio Banderas credits Nicole Kimpel for saving his life

The 59-year-old actor was rushed to hospital back in 2017 after suffering chest pains while exercising which was later discovered to be a heart attack, and has said his girlfriend was the key to his survival after she happened to buy maximum strength aspirin for a headache the day before. Speaking on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!', he said: "The night before that I had this event, my girlfriend, she had a headache and we didn't have anything in the house. So she went out to buy something, a painkiller or whatever. She bought this aspirin, which is the only thing that she found and she found the maximum one, I think it was five milligrams." The next morning, when I started having the symptoms and I clearly knew what was going on, she put one of those aspirins inside of my tongue and that saved my life. So I had a second chance, and some stuff changed in my life, since then." The 'Mask of Zorro' star previously said his health scare was a "turning point" in his life, as it changed him "psychologically". He said: "It was a turning point, psychologically. And the tendency you have as a human, after a cardiac event, is to show yourself in a perfect state. You want to do even more. You go, 'I can do a good job!' And so I chose to do more interesting movies." Antonio admitted his life hasn't been "perfect" but said he's now devoted to telling the "truth" and being honest about his life. He added: "I'm 60 next year and have realized there is a moment in your life when there is only space for truth. My life has never been perfect. I travel through with my own s**t. But the challenge for anyone famous is just to recoup the normality of everyday life. If you've made yourself a castle, your contact with reality vanishes. It's dangerous. Because you start thinking you are special, but you're not. You connect to people artistically, but that doesn't make you special. You can go cuckoo."

Catherine Zeta-Jones has special bond with daughter

The 50-year-old actress - who has Dylan, 19, and Carys, 16, with husband Michael Douglas - is able to talk to her youngest daughter about "everything" and the teenager values having such an "open and honest" line of communication with her mother. Catherine said: "We are very close - we talk about everything." Whilst Carys added: "It's really special - I am lucky. We are open and honest with each other. She has taught me all the ins and outs of life but also to have fun and cherish every moment." And Carys thinks the 'Chicago' star is hilarious. She added: "Our sense of humour is pretty similar so we are always laughing when we are together. My mother is, honestly, the funniest person I know." Catherine is very "proud" of her daughter. Asked the best thing about their relationship, she added: "The best part is being her mother. I am so proud of her." The pair are the latest famous family to star in Fendi's #MeandMyPeekaboo series of handbag advertisements and were delighted to work with the fashion house. Catherine told HELLO! magazine: "Fendi means innovative and elegant fashion." Carys added: "It means family. The second we started working with them, they made us feel right at home and welcomed us. It also means elegance and timelessness. Fendi fully embodies all it means to be an Italian brand ... We had so much fun [shooting the campaign]. The team played music the whole time. Luckily enough, we have the same taste in music so we were listening to all classic rock and disco as we shot and were dancing between takes."

Liam Hemsworth buys mansion next door to brother Chris' home



The 'Hunger Games' star has reportedly decided to move into a 35-hectare property in Broken Head, near Byron Bay, Australia, so that he's closer to his sibling and his family following his split from wife Miley Cyrus in August this year. According to Australia's Daily Telegraph newspaper, the mansion was bought by the hunk's family company CHLH Management last week for \$4.25 million (AUD). His decision to invest in a property in his home country comes just months after him and Miley decided to end their marriage less than a year after they tied the knot. However, it didn't take the 29-year-old actor long to find someone new as he's now reportedly dating Maddison Brown, but they're keen to take things slowly. A source said recently: "It's very new. Liam is taking it slow but he's definitely interested in her." A second source said: "He hasn't been dating anyone. But he's open to meeting people." Liam filed for divorce from Miley, 26, several days after their split - at a time when she was romancing Kaitlynn Carter. The 'Slide Away' hitmaker has since ended things with the 'Hills: New Beginnings' star, and is now believed to be dating Cody Simpson. In a statement released at the time of their break up, a representative for Liam and Miley said: "Ever-evolving, changing as partners and individuals, they have decided this is what's best while they both focus on themselves and careers. They still remain dedicated parents to all of their animals they share while lovingly taking this time apart. Please respect their process and privacy." — Bang Showbiz



Caitlyn Jenner set to star in Britain's 'I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!'

The 70-year-old former Olympian - who was known as Bruce Jenner before her gender reassignment surgery in 2017 - is reportedly being paid £500,000 to take part in the forthcoming series of the creepy-crawly show. A source told The Sun newspaper's TV column: "She's such a huge name and a great get for producers. ITV think she is one of their best ever signings. It's a real bolt from the blue. They've asked her every year for a long time, but she finally felt the time was right." Caitlyn will fly to Australia next week and be kept in hiding until the show's series launch on November 17 when she will join the rest of the contestants in the jungle. Bosses are reportedly hoping that the former 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star will talk about her relationship with Kris Jenner, who she divorced in 2015 after 24 years of marriage, on camera and reveal some secrets about the matriarch. They will also no doubt be encouraging

Caitlyn to talk about his famous daughters Kendall, 23, and Kylie, 22, as well as her step-daughters Kourtney, 40, Kim, 39, and Khloe, 35, while she's lounging around the camp with fellow British celebrities.





Jousting competitors prepare for the inaugural 'Ashes' jousting tournament between Australia and England at the Kryal Castle in Leigh Creek, some 100 kms west of Melbourne. — AFP

Australia win the inaugural 'Ashes' of jousting against England



Australia and England took their storied sports rivalry to another level, and another century, this weekend as the two nations faced off in a jousting tournament, won by the Australian side yesterday. Dubbed the "Ashes" of jousting—a reference to the historic cricket Test matches between the two countries—three Australian "knights" bested a trio of English counterparts over two days of competition in a small town in rural Victoria state.

Dressed head-to-toe in medieval-style armor and mounted on steeds sporting skirts in team colors, the competitors charged one another on opposite sides of a barrier, scoring points if they could break their wooden lances against the opponent's torso—one point for a broken lance, three points if it shatters. Australia took top honors in the inaugural version of the tournament with 89 points to 75 for England. Hoping this weekend's joust will become a tradition, organizers modeled their trophy on cricket's Ashes urn, which carries the remains of cricket bats burned after Australia defeated England in a Test in 1882. It has become the symbolic trophy of the two countries' biannual cricket Test matches.

Not to be outdone, Sunday's jousters burned some of the lance tips broken off during their competition and put them in a small vase as the Australians' trophy. "The next Ashes will be taking place in England in two years time and they'll have the chance to win the trophy and take it over there," said Phil Leitch, the Australian captain. Despite the homage to cricketing history, Leitch doesn't think the sporting events are really on an equal footing.

"I think it's 100 times more exciting than watching cricket—seeing men on horses each traveling at about 40 kilometers an hour, hearing the crack of the lance, seeing pieces of wood go flying in the air ... that's much more exciting for me than cricket," he told AFP. Historical jousting has been popular in England for decades, said England captain Andy Deane, but "unbeknownst to us, (on) the other side of the planet, Australians are doing the same." "All in all great result for Australia," concluded Leitch. "And hopefully in a couple of years we'll be over in the UK defending our title." — AFP



Zee5 Global, LuLu customers celebrate Diwali with Dia Mirza in Dubai, Abu Dhabi



Close on the heels of announcing its partnership with LuLu a few months ago for their "Celebrating India" festival, global digital platform Zee5, in association with LuLu, rolled out a series of special events for Diwali. Customers across LuLu stores in Madina Zayed Mall, Abu Dhabi and Al Barsha, Dubai were treated to a visit from Bollywood's favorite star and Kaafir's lead actor Dia Mirza who came in all the way from India for this very special Diwali celebration.

Amongst a host of fun activities, Zee5 and LuLu curated a rangoli competition for artists in the Middle East. Encouraging audiences to bring their A-game, the winners of the challenge got a chance to meet Dia Mirza in person and go on a shopping spree with her at LuLu's fabulous stores. They were absolutely delighted to have Dia spend the day shopping with them and share fashion tips to be in style this Diwali.

Commenting on her visit, Dia Mirza said, "It's always exciting to meet my fans from different parts of the world and I'm especially so happy to have been able to celebrate Diwali with my fans in the

Middle East this time. Zee5 has really done a tremendous job in reaching out to audiences across the globe and I'm glad I was able to be a part of this special initiative."

In addition to the fun activities, LuLu shoppers who bought products worth 100 AED or more won a one-month free subscription to Zee5 giving them access to exclusive content including movies, shows and originals like Dia Mirza's Kaafir, Arjun Rampal's The Final Call, recently released show Bhram starring Kalki Koechlin and more.

Commenting on the same, Archana Anand, Chief Business Officer, Zee5 Global said, "With such a large Indian diaspora residing in the Middle East, Diwali becomes one of the most popular festivals in the region. We've partnered with LuLu to make this an extra special Diwali for their customers with various exciting events and offers and hope to make this a most memorable event for them."

Speaking on the occasion, Aboobakker TP, Regional Director of LuLu Hypermarket Abu Dhabi said, "We have always been committed to highlighting significant festivities for the Indian community

like Diwali. This year, we are very proud to celebrate with Dia Mirza, who is well-known for her acting roles promoting Indian tradition and lifestyle. Through these occasions, other nationalities can experience the beauty and diversity of Indian culture. Apart from these events, we are offering a wide range of products in stores for gifting and feasting."

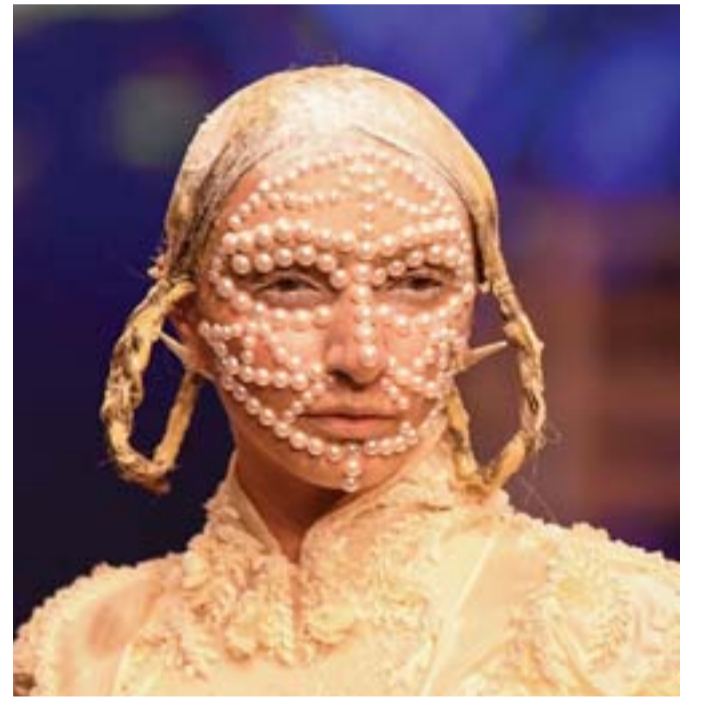




Fashion Forward Event



Models present creations by Amato during the Fashion Forward event at the Dubai Design District, in Dubai. — AFP photos



Classifieds

Monday, November 4, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Sunny with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Fair and Relatively humid with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 03/11/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	21 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	31 °C	15 °C			
ABDALY	30 °C	15 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	30 °C	18 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	28 °C	24 °C			
AHMADI	27 °C	22 °C			
NUWAISIB	29 °C	19 °C			
WAFRA	30 °C	15 °C			
SALMY	30 °C	16 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	11/04	Partly cloudy and Relatively humid with a chance for scattered light rain	32 °C	16 °C	VRB-NE	06 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	11/05	Sunny and some high clouds will appear	31 °C	16 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	11/06	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	30 °C	14 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Thursday	11/07	Sunny	30 °C	15 °C	NW	10 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:41
Sunrise	06:02
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:39
Sunset	17:01
Isha	18:19

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	30 °C
MIN. Temp.	14 °C
MAX. RH	71 %
MIN. RH	21 %
MAX. Wind	NW 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

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American Airlines 22087425
Jet Airways 22924455
FlyDubai 22414400
Qatar Airways 22423888
KLM 22425747
Royal Jordanian 22418064/5/6
British Airways 22425635
Air France 22430224
Emirates 22921555
Air India 22456700
Air India EXPRESS 22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines 22424444
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Lufthansa 22422493
PIA 22421044
Bangladesh Airlines 22452977/8

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 4/11/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 4/11/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	UAE	877	Dubai	14:00
JZR	1338	Al Najaf	00:10	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	ZAV	4131	Bahrein	14:00
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA	221	Bahrein	14:15
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	QTR	1078	Doha	14:25
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	364	Colombo	14:35
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:35
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	562	Amman	14:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	618	Doha	14:50
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	152	Mashhad	14:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
JZR	502	Jeddah	02:55	KAC	118	New York	15:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	516	Tehran	15:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	JZR	1336	Al Najaf	15:50
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	546	Cairo	16:05
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	JZR	732	Cairo	16:10
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15
IGO	1759	Delhi	05:10	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	JZR	116	Doha	17:05
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:10
KAC	352	Kochi	05:25	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	JZR	124	Dubai	17:40
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	JZR	104	Bahrain	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	1339	Al Najaf	18:05
KAC	702	Asyut	06:10	KAC	158	Istanbul	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	MSR	875	Cairo	18:30
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	UAE	870	Dubai	19:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	RJA	640	Amman	19:05
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	GFA	217	Sharjah	19:20
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	ABY	123	Dammam	19:25
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	744	Dammam	19:25
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:15	JZR	1340	Al Najaf	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KNE	381	Taif	20:00
ETD	9873	Tbilisi	08:25	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	NIA	1501	Asyut	20:10
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:10
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	KAC	620	Doha	20:30
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	KAC	174	Munich	20:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
GOW	061	CNN	09:30	JAV	621	Amman	20:45
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	RBG	219	Sohag	20:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	IAW	157A	Al Najaf	21:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	168	Paris	21:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
THY	1282	Trabzon	11:05	KAC	164	MXP	21:40
NIA	1401	Sohag	11:35	KAC	622	Doha	21:50
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	KAC	564	Amman	21:55
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	IAW	157B	Al Najaf	22:15
JZR	1334	Al Najaf	12:35	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:25
KAC	742	Dammam	12:55	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45
				JZR	128	Dubai	22:50
				MSC	411	Asyut	23:15
				MSC	614	Cairo	23:30

Boos, blood and belt: Trump watches UFC in New York

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump was booed for the second time in a week at a sporting event Saturday as he watched mixed martial artists brawl in a cage in New York. Trump sat around 15 feet away as UFC fighters delivered vicious kicks and punches to the face and body of their opponents, regularly drawing blood, at Madison Square Garden. The president was seen clapping and at one point stood up for a better view as 20,000 pumped-up fans screamed and swore amid an electric atmosphere at the pay-per-view spectacle.

Jeers rang out as Trump, wearing a dark suit and red tie, punched his fist and waved at the crowd as he walked into the arena shortly before 10 pm (0300 GMT). Many fans also cheered the US leader and there was no repeat of the loud chants of "lock him up" that greeted his appearance at a World Series baseball game last weekend. "We'd be having more fun if he wasn't here," 50-year-old Anna Torres, who booed loudly with her boyfriend, told AFP.

Some spectators, however, were delighted to see the president, who has a fight of his own on his hands back in Washington with the Democrats' bid to impeach him. "It's disrespectful to boo because he is our president," said Nico Ferranti, 30, adding that he was unsurprised to see the president turn up. "He's from New York and he likes this kind of stuff. Back in the day he was on *Wrestlemania*," said Ferranti, referring to Trump's infamous scripted bodyslam of WWE President Vince McMahon in 2007.

Several dozen protesters carrying placards with slogans such as "Trump/Pence

Out Now!" and "Headlock Him Up", in reference to a UFC move, demonstrated outside the Manhattan venue. Inside, the president, 73, looked concerned as a lightweight fighter delivered a brutal left kick to his rival's face during the first bout on the main card. The contact, which left the fighter sprawled on the ground for around 30 seconds, drew loud gasps from the capacity crowd as they watched the slow-motion replay of his face being squished.

Trump, who spent three hours at the fight night, could be seen clapping in support when the felled fighter finally got to his feet. He also heard fans chant "USA" as an American brawler triumphed over his Bulgarian counterpart. In the crowd, sporadic, alcohol-fueled fights broke out. At least two people were dragged away by security in just one section. Down below, ring girls wearing just shorts and a bra walked around the periphery of the cage carrying boards above their heads displaying the number of the next round.

The president attended with sons Donald Jr and Eric, and several Republican leaders. All three Trumps retweeted a video showing spectators applauding the TV reality star-turned politician. "I cheered for him," said Ilya Dibner, who had travelled from Philadelphia for the event. "I may not agree with his policies but it's cool he's sitting out there with the people when he could be in a box."

Trump has long been a fan of UFC, hosting events at his hotels, and is known to be close to its president Dana White, who has publicly backed POTUS. Trump hosted UFC events at his since-bankrupt



NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump is seen next to Panamanian boxer Roberto Duran as he arrives to attend the Ultimate Fighting Championship at Madison Square Garden on Saturday. — AFP

Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City decades ago when the sport was spurned by most venues, White said in an interview last year with *The Hill*. "I would never say anything negative about Donald Trump because he was there when other people weren't," said White, who spoke at the 2016 Republican National Convention in

support of Trump's candidacy.

Trump was due to stay overnight at Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue before leaving yesterday morning, a departure that coincides with New York's marathon, adding to fears of traffic chaos in the Big Apple. Trump's visit came two days after he announced that he and his family

would be changing their main residency from New York to Florida, where tax rates are lower. Trump left shortly before 1:00 am after Jorge Masvidal defeated Nate Diaz for the "BMF" belt in the night's final fight. Wrestler-turned actor Dwayne Johnson, known as "The Rock", presented the belt. — Agencies

Iraq protests ramp up, shutting roads...

Continued from Page 1

Demonstrators there organized sit-ins on the four bridges leading out of the city, as well as its main streets and squares. Schools and government offices were closed there and across a half-dozen other cities in the south. In Basra, the oil-rich port city, public schools were shut down for the first time since the movement erupted last month.

Protesters also kept up their closure of the highway leading to the Umm Qasr port, one of the main conduits for food, medicine and other imports into Iraq. A source at the port told AFP that around a dozen ships had pulled away to take their goods elsewhere on Saturday, after waiting to unload their cargo. The spreading sit-ins indicate a new phase in the protests, already hailed as the largest grassroots movement in Iraq in decades.

Under ex-dictator Saddam Hussein, rallies that were not exuberantly supporting him or his Baathist government were banned. After he was toppled by the US-led invasion of 2003, political parties tussling for influence were the only actors able to draw large numbers out into the streets. "Iraq's civil society which was undermined by decades of Baathist authoritarianism and sectarianism is recovering," wrote Harith Hasan, a scholar at the Carnegie Endowment's Middle East Center.

But the movement has also been bloodied by the deaths of more than 250 people, the vast majority of them protesters. On Saturday, medical sources told AFP at least one person was killed and dozens wounded in clashes with security forces near the capital's Tahrir Square, a focal point for demonstrators. Young protesters have spilled over from Tahrir onto two main bridges leading to the western bank of the Tigris.

They parked cars across roads yesterday, while large numbers of students and schoolchildren thronged towards the square, AFP journalists said. Alaa Wissam, a 25-year-old architect, said young people were heading to the square to volunteer their help. "This thing will help young people to have a role in the change that is happening," she said.

Riot police deployed along the bridges have fired tear gas to keep back protesters, who have dug in to their positions behind their own barricades. Amnesty International slammed Iraqi forces days ago for using two types of military-grade tear gas canisters that have pierced protesters' skulls and lungs. Rights groups have also expressed worry over the detention of protesters, journalists and medics.

Yesterday, the Iraqi Human Rights Commission said Saba Mahdawi, a doctor and activist, had been abducted the previous evening after providing medical aid to protesters. The Commission did not say who may have seized Mahdawi but urged security forces to investigate the matter and other "organized kidnapping operations" in recent weeks. Later, the interior ministry announced the release of a second demonstrator, seized two days earlier, without providing a name. — AFP

rels of crude oil produced globally from 2016 to 2018, it said yesterday. Its net income for the third quarter of 2019 amounted to \$21.1 billion, according to Reuters calculations, dwarfing the income for the same period of oil giants like Exxon Mobil Corp, which was just over \$3 billion. "Selling a small piece of Aramco in a captive market gives the KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) more control to prop the value of Aramco up over its fair value," said Gary Ross, CEO at Black Gold Investors.

Salah Shamma, head of investment, MENA, at Franklin Templeton Emerging Markets Equity, said some local investors could be selling other shares in order to shift investments to Aramco, but this could well be a case of "short-term pain for long-term gain". To comfort investors, Aramco said yesterday the state will forgo its right to receive a portion of cash dividends on shares, giving priority to new shareholders.

Aramco is also cutting royalties it pays to the state. Effective Jan 1, 2020, it will adopt a progressive royalty scheme, with a marginal rate set at 15 percent up to \$70 per barrel, 45 percent between \$70 and \$100, and 80 percent if the price rises higher. The firm said the Saudi market regulator, which approved the application to list yesterday, issued an exemption for non-resident institutional foreign investors to subscribe. Saudi investors would be eligible to receive bonus shares - a maximum of 100 bonus shares for every 10 allotted shares.

At a valuation of \$1.5 trillion, Aramco would still be worth at least 50 percent more than the world's most valuable listed companies, Microsoft and Apple, which each have a market capitalization of about \$1 trillion. But a 1 percent sale would raise "only" around \$15 billion for Saudi coffers, ranking Aramco as the 11th biggest IPO of all time, Refinitiv data show. "Some perspective on the Aramco IPO for the overall Saudi diversification story is needed: The likely Aramco IPO proceeds will be less than the Aramco dividends the government received in the first half of 2019 alone," said Hasnain Malik, head of equity strategy at Tellimer.

The promised listing has had Wall Street on tenterhooks since Prince Mohammed flagged it in 2016. Aramco mandated 27 banks to work on the deal including Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, JPMorgan and Morgan Stanley. "I think this is the right time for us to take Aramco to be a public company...we wanna go IPO and we wanna go now," Rumayyan told reporters yesterday when asked about the timing. — Agencies

MPs congratulate Khannah on...

Continued from Page 1

The convicted former MPs left the country just before the jail terms were issued by the court of cassation in the summer of last year. Since then, the former lawmakers have been living in Turkey. But Khannah surprisingly decided to return and was immediately taken to jail to serve the three-and-a-half-year term against him. But two days ago, he was rushed to hospital after suffering from high blood pressure and suffocation.

MPs Nasser Al-Dossari and Mohammad Al-Huwailah congratulated Khannah on Twitter and wished him all success. Former MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Faisal Al-Mislem, who face the same problem and are currently in Turkey, congratulated Khannah on the pardon and for his safe return to the country.

Meanwhile, MP Abdullah Al-Kandari yesterday resigned as a member of the Assembly's public funds

defense committee in protest over conflict of interests, as at least one member had been implicated in the bank account scandal of 2011. Kandari said he decided to step down because MPs involved in alleged corruption cannot defend public funds. About 13 MPs were accused of accepting millions of dinars in bribes that were deposited in their bank accounts. The public prosecution said it could not press charges against them over a lack of sufficient legislation.

MP Mohammad Hayef yesterday called on the ministers of public works and municipality to resign if they fail to tackle the problems of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, which is one of the poorest and most unorganized areas of Kuwait. The lawmaker said the two ministers have failed to take care of the area, which has deteriorated.



Fahd Al-Khannah

Khamenei rules out talks...

Continued from Page 1

Khamenei, however, said the Iran-US "disputes" did not start with the embassy takeover. "It goes back to the 1953 coup, when the US overthrew a national government which had made the mistake of trusting the US - and established its corrupt and puppet government in Iran," his Twitter account said in English. That CIA-organized coup, supported by Britain, toppled the hugely popular prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh who was responsible for nationalizing Iran's oil industry.

The coup reestablished the rule of country's last shah, Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi, who had fled the country in Aug 1953 after trying to dismiss Mossadegh. Tensions have escalated again between Tehran and Washington since US President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal last year and reimposed unilateral sanctions.

Khamenei pointed to North Korea's negotiations with the US as a sign of Washington's untrustworthiness, tweeting that "they took photos and praised each other, but the Americans did not lift sanctions even a bit. That's how they are in negotiations: they'll say we brought you to your knees and won't make any concessions at the end."

Khamenei called French President Emmanuel Macron's efforts to set up talks between Iran and the

US "naive". He said Tehran had tested Washington by calling on it to lift sanctions and return to the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which gave Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear program. Macron's efforts to initiate a phone call between US President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September ended in failure.

Rouhani stressed he would only hold talks with the US if sanctions were lifted first. Khamenei said Macron had considered a meeting with Trump to be "the solution to all of Iran's problems", making the French president either "very naive" or the "accomplice" of the United States. And "for the sake of testing and to clarify for everyone, I said despite the fact that America had made a mistake in leaving the JCPOA, if they lift all sanctions, they (the US) can take part in the JCPOA although I knew they would not accept, as they did not," he added.

Slamming the seemingly unending "American demands", Khamenei said that after telling Iran to not be "active in the region" and end its production of missiles, Washington will next "say give up religious laws and don't insist on the issue of the hijab". Tehran has hit back three times with countermeasures since May in response to Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear deal by suspending parts of its compliance with the agreement's terms. It has threatened to go even further if remaining parties to the deal - Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia - cannot help it circumvent US sanctions. — AFP

Saudi oil giant Aramco heads...

Continued from Page 1

they expect the Saudis to settle on a valuation of \$1.6 trillion to \$1.7 trillion. Sources have told Reuters the oil company could offer 1 percent-2 percent of its shares on the local bourse, raising as much as \$20 billion-\$40 billion. A deal over \$25 billion would top the record-breaking one of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba in 2014.

It remains to be seen whether Saudi authorities are able to find "a compromise between the crown prince's stated preference and market realities in their valuation of Aramco," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute in the United States. "As the process has been delayed repeatedly and built up as such an integral component of the crown prince's plan to transform Saudi Arabia, international investors will pay very close attention to how Aramco performs on the domestic exchange," Ulrichsen told AFP.

Aramco, which makes Saudi Arabia the world's top energy exporter, is seen as the kingdom's crown jewel and the backbone of its economic and social stability. Its 2018 net profit of \$111.1 billion is higher than the profits of Apple, Google and Exxon Mobil - combined. Aramco only began releasing interim financial results recently, but in its push for transparency, the secretive company also released yesterday results for the nine months to September, saying net profits came in at \$68 billion.

The government is reportedly seeking to get wealthy Saudi families to invest in the IPO and to ease lending restrictions for ordinary citizens to buy a stake in the company. Some Saudi commentators have also sought to promote investment in the stock as a patriotic duty, although observers pointed to the perils of the strategy. "Listing on the domestic market without firm plans to list internationally is risky for the Saudi stock market because it could completely overweight it," Ellen Wald, author of the book "Saudi Inc", told AFP. "If oil prices drop or Aramco stock falls, it is such a large part of Tadawul, it could bring the entire stock market down."

Aramco accounted for about one in every eight bar-

New Delhi gasps under...

Continued from Page 1

Nurses at the demonstration said they were seeing more people suffering from respiratory problems. "Patients are coming with more lung and respiratory diseases, like more (are) affected with asthma," Reshma CM said.

The conditions sparked a blame game between state and federal politicians over who was responsible for the conditions, which authorities said Friday reached "emergency" levels. In a tweet last week, Kejriwal called on the state governments of neighboring Punjab and Haryana to take action. "Delhi has turned into a gas chamber due to smoke from crop burning in neighboring states," he tweeted. Federal Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar accused Kejriwal of politicizing the issue and

presenting the two states "in a bad light and as villains".

Schools in Delhi have already been ordered closed until tomorrow, and construction halted. From today, there will be an odd/even car license plate scheme to cut traffic. Global non-profit Vital Strategies' senior vice president for environmental health, Daniel Kass, said while temporary curbs were helpful, they had limited impact over time. "They are insufficient to address the most important aspect of air pollution, which is what people live with day-to-day," Kass told AFP. He said a range of measures needed to be imposed at local and national levels for air quality to improve.

Apart from changing agricultural practices, he said the measures should include more public transport investment, emission controls on two-wheelers, switching electricity generation sources, and accelerating the conversion of home-heating from charcoal to natural gas. Last year, a UN report found 14 of the world's 15 most polluted cities were in India, with one US study saying it kills a million people prematurely every year. — AFP

Sports

Bottas on pole at US Grand Prix, Hamilton starts in fifth

Hamilton without a pole since German Grand Prix in July

AUSTIN: Valtteri Bottas kept alive his hopes of delaying Lewis Hamilton's sixth drivers' world championship celebrations by claiming pole position with a record lap on Saturday in qualifying for the United States Grand Prix.

The Finn, who has to win today's race and hope his Mercedes team-mate finishes outside the top eight to keep the championship alive, clocked a best lap in one minute and 32.029 seconds to outpace second-placed Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari by 0.012 seconds.

Max Verstappen was third for Red Bull ahead of Charles Leclerc in the second Ferrari and Hamilton, who was fifth. It was the champion-elect's equal worst qualifying of his career on American soil, but he was only three-tenths adrift of his team-mate.

Hamilton is now without a pole since the German Grand Prix in July. For Bottas, it was a first pole in the United States, his fifth this season and the 11th of his career, his best lap on his first run in Q3 remaining fast enough to put him on the prime starting spot.

Alex Albon was sixth in the second Red Bull ahead of the two McLarens of Carlos Sainz and Lando Norris with Daniel Ricciardo ninth for Renault and Pierre Gasly 10th for Toro Rosso. "I'm really happy about that and it was a nice lap — and to get those kind of laps on a track like this is a good feeling," said Bottas.

"On my last lap, I was losing grip overall so I am glad nobody improved in the end on the second runs. It was tricky for me yesterday (Friday) so I was do the work today and find what I needed in Q3."

In significantly warmer conditions, prompting many to discard jackets and coats, Leclerc was keen to make an early entry impression in Q1 after missing the morn-

ing session following an engine failure.

He posted an early marker lap before Norris took top spot briefly ahead of a reinvigorated Hamilton, who went fastest in 1:33.454. Verstappen, still itching with frustration after being stripped of pole in Mexico a week earlier, was second-quickest for Red Bull, ahead of Bottas, in the second Mercedes.

The Finn, unflappable as ever, could only keep his title bid alive by winning and hoping for a rare flop, outside the top eight, from his team-mate.

'TRACK HAS IMPROVED'

"We think the track has improved, so we'll take another lap," said Bottas's engineer as he and Hamilton stayed out to gain more understanding of the track in the changing conditions. Unexpectedly, as they did so, Norris topped the Q1 times while out went Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi and Kimi Raikkonen and the two Williams men, George Russell and Robert Kubica, split by Racing Point's Sergio Perez.

The Mexican will start from the pit-lane on Sunday after being penalised for a weighbridge transgression on Friday. The Mercedes men, both on medium compound tyres, were first out for Q2 with the Ferraris following on the same rubber.

Hamilton set the pace ahead of Bottas until Red Bull's Verstappen, on mediums, and Albon, on softs, went third and first, sandwiching Hamilton. Albon's lap in 1:32.898 put him within reach of Hamilton's 2018 qualifying lap record and the top six were separated by only three-tenths of a second before their second flying runs.

Leclerc went top ahead of Ferrari team-mate Vettel



AUSTIN: Pole position qualifier Valtteri Bottas of Finland and Mercedes GP is presented with the Pirelli Pole Position trophy by racing legend Mario Andretti in parc ferme during qualifying for the F1 Grand Prix of USA at Circuit of The Americas in Austin, Texas. — AFP

to lead the way into the top ten shootout while out went Daniil Kvyat of Toro Rosso, Renault's Nico Hulkenberg, Kevin Magnussen of Haas, Lance Stroll of Racing Point and Romain Grosjean in the second Haas.

Along with Verstappen, both Magnussen and Sainz

were also qualifying to start their 100th Grand Prix race. In Q3, Bottas smashed Hamilton's qualifying record in 1:32.029 on his first run to lead Vettel, Verstappen and Leclerc with the Briton back in fifth, three-tenths adrift. — AFP

Alvarez KO's 'Krusher' Kovalev to claim WBO light heavyweight title

LAS VEGAS: Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez knocked out Sergey Kovalev with a vicious combination in the 11th round to win the WBO light heavyweight title on Saturday, moving up two weight classes to become a four division champ.

The 29-year-old Mexican superstar caught Russia's Kovalev with a left hook-right hand combination that sent the former champion almost crashing through the ropes near the end of the 11th round at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

"This is just one step in my history," Alvarez said. "Be patient because Canelo will make history. It's a guarantee." 'Krusher' Kovalev was officially knocked out at 2:15 of the 11th and stayed down for some time while being attended to by his corner and the doctor.

It was one of the most devastating knockouts of the brilliant career of boxing's biggest star Alvarez, who was fighting in the 175 pound division for the first time. "The plan was patience, to have patience. We knew it would take time for me to get to him. I am new at this division, but overall it was successful," Alvarez said.

The fight had been close throughout with Kovalev (34-4-1, 29 KOs) winning most of the early rounds by using a steady jab to keep the burly Alvarez at a distance. Alvarez was ahead 96-94, 96-94, 95-95 on the scorecards.

Alvarez (53-1-2, 36 KOs) becomes just the fourth boxer in history to win a junior middleweight world title and one at light heavyweight, a spread of 21 pounds (154 to 175). The other three are Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns and

Mike McCallum.

Alvarez is also the second fighter from Mexico to win a light heavyweight belt, joining Julio Gonzalez who did it in 2003 and 2004.

'VERY CLOSE'

Despite giving up a size and reach advantage, Alvarez's best punch throughout was the left hook which he used in the 11th to initially send Kovalev staggering backwards to the ropes. As a defenceless Kovalev was going down, Alvarez then landed a vicious right hand to the face that knocked the champion out cold. "It was a very close fight. He was defensive, closing up his guard. All he was doing was establishing his points, getting points. But we knew it was coming and everything came out the way we had planned," Alvarez said.

This was Alvarez's first fight since a unanimous decision over Daniel Jacobs in May. Alvarez is now riding a four fight winning streak with his lone blemish being a majority draw against Gennady Golovkin in their first of two bouts.

He sought out Kovalev to add another belt to his impressive collection which includes titles at junior middleweight, middleweight and super middleweight. Many boxing fans would have liked to have seen Alvarez face rival and former unified titleholder Golovkin for a third time after two highly entertaining but disputed bouts — a draw in 2017 and a majority decision win for Alvarez in the 2018 rematch. But Alvarez had other plans.

Alvarez left that door open on Saturday for another showdown with Golovkin. "It is really not a challenge for



LAS VEGAS: Canelo Alvarez poses with referee Russell Mora following his victory over Sergey Kovalev in WBO light heavyweight title fight at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. Alvarez won with an 11th-round knockout. — AFP

me," he said. "We fought 24 rounds and we beat him. But if it represents business then why not."

Kovalev was the biggest name in the light heavyweight division having boxed there his entire career, which began in 2009. "I tired after the sixth round," said Kovalev. "I had instructions to use more jabs. Just not enough stamina. It is okay. I will be back."

The Russian was hoping that a win over pound-for-pound king Alvarez would help resurrect an ageing career that had been on shaky ground of late. Kovalev lost his WBA, IBF and WBO belts in back-to-back defeats to Andre Ward in 2016 and 2017, but regained a share of the title after beating Colombia's Eleider Alvarez in a rematch in February.

SHORT BREAK

Kovalev was coming off an 11th-round knockout of mandatory challenger Anthony Yarde in August, making this one of the shortest breaks between fights in his career. Even though he beat Yarde, Kovalev still found himself in trouble and was nearly stopped in the eighth round.

In bizarre move for a major boxing card, Saturday's main event was delayed for over an hour with both fighters left to lounge in their dressing rooms with gloves on because the boxing streaming service DAZN wanted to wait until a televised mixed martial arts bout in New York had finished first.

The Vegas boxing crowd was shown the martial arts fight on a big screen in the arena while they waited. — AFP

World champ Chen, Kostornaia win French Grand Prix

PARIS: Double world champion Nathan Chen booked his place at December's figure skating Grand Prix Finals by winning gold at the French leg of the series in Grenoble on Saturday. America's Chen scored 297.16 points to beat Russia's Alexander Samarin in second place and France's Kevin Aymoz who finished third to secure a spot in Turin's season finale with three events to spare.

"I am happy to have qualified for the final. Placement-wise of course I'm happy with the results," Chen told isu.org. "I made a lot of silly errors, errors that I need to fix," he added.

Chen's second gold medal of the series after winning at Skate America in Las Vegas hands the 20-year-old a chance to claim his third straight overall Grand Prix title.

Later Saturday, 16-year-old Russian Alena Kostornaia carried her lead from the short programme

to the free skating with an overall score of 159.45 points to clinch her second senior medal in only three competitions.

Kostornaia, who claimed gold at the Finlandia Trophy in mid-October, saw off Mariah Bell of the United States who was second on 142.64 and compatriot and Olympic champion Alina Zagitova in third with 141.82.

"I am pleased that I was able to skate well and to show a clean programme. I hope to improve my jumps and my programme with each competition and to perfect myself. "I had a show number to this music and I liked it so much and we decided to use it for this season," said Kostornaia who skated to 'Twilight', 'New Moon' and 'Supermassive Black Hole'.

Elsewhere, four-time world champion ice dancers Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron clinched their fifth French Grand Prix win in the space of six years. The French pair scored an overall 133.55 points to beat the American pair of Madison Chock and Evan Bates with Italy's Charlene Guignard and Marco Gabrri in third.

Russia's Anastasia Mishina and Aleksandr Galliamov took the pairs won ahead of compatriots Daria Pavliuchenko and Denis Khodykin. Grenoble is the third stop on the six-round Grand Prix series. — AFP

Du Toit voted player of the year in WCup Rugby awards

TOKYO: South Africa flanker Pieter-Steph du Toit was named World Rugby Player of the Year yesterday as the World Cup-winning Springboks swept the main awards. Rassie Erasmus won coach of the year and South Africa also took the team award at a glittering ceremony in Tokyo, a day after they lifted the Webb Ellis Cup for the third time.

The 27-year-old du Toit was instrumental in South Africa's World Cup campaign, especially effective at the breakdown and winning the battle against England's famed "kamikaze kids" back row in the final.

"It's a massive honour for me to accept this award," said Du Toit, who plays his club rugby for Western Province. "I think when we come back (to South Africa), it's going to be an unbelievable experience... We can't wait to get home. We miss our country so much," added the 55-cap loose forward.

"I've got three younger brothers and they tell me 'You're living our dream', so I have to live up to that," he told

reporters. Du Toit beat off competition including his team-mate wing Cheslin Kolbe, as well as All Black Ardie Savea and England's young star Tom Curry.

The women's player of the year award went to Emily Scarratt, the 29-year-old centre who helped England to a Grand Slam in the women's Six Nations.

The World Rugby panel picked South Africa as men's team of the year and Erasmus as top coach after the Springboks won the World Cup and also secured the Rugby Championship for the first time since 2009. Erasmus took over as director of rugby at the end of 2017 and shortly afterwards doubled his responsibilities by becoming head coach following the sacking of Allister Coetzee after a miserable run of 12 losses from 25 games.

He has rapidly turned the Boks' fortunes around, culminating in Saturday's 32-12 win over England in the final when Siya Kolisi, their first black captain, lifted the trophy in Yokohama.

"I'm very, very proud to be South Africa," said the affable Erasmus, a strong believer in building a game plan around kicking half-backs and a solid set-piece.

"We're all trying to be like the All Blacks. We've enjoyed the last 24 hours. We'll enjoy the next two weeks and then after that, we want to be like New Zealand, to be consistent," he added. "We really needed some good news," he said, referring to the "many challenges" faced by his country. — AFP

Vinales storms to Malaysian MotoGP victory

SEMPANG: Spain's Maverick Vinales stormed to a dominant victory in the Malaysian MotoGP yesterday as world champion Marc Marquez fought his way from near the back of the starting grid to finish second. Ducati rider Andrea Dovizioso came in third but there was disappointment for French rookie Fabio Quartararo, who only managed a lacklustre seventh-place after starting from pole.

Vinales's second win of the season was a major boost following last week's Australian MotoGP, where he crashed out after leading for much of the race — and compatriot Marquez went on to win. The Monster Energy Yamaha rider said the victory felt "amazing" after his disappointing performance in Phillip Island.

"In Phillip Island, I felt like I had the victory in my hands but I made a mistake and I crashed," he told reporters at the Sepang circuit following the penultimate race of the season.

"Here all weekend I've been very consistent. I knew if I got first place I had a chance to push, push and push." The 24-year-old surged into an early lead at Sepang after starting second on the grid and never looked threatened. By the halfway mark, he had opened up a two second lead over second-placed Marquez, and was over three seconds ahead of him when he crossed the finish line.

Marquez's performance was even more astonishing, however, after he started 11th on the grid following a terrifying crash in qualifying that saw him thrown from his bike. Within a few laps the Repsol Honda rider, who was crowned world champion for the sixth time last month, had smashed his way through the pack and was trying to chase down Vinales.

While he did not manage to catch his compatriot, Marquez nevertheless opened up a sizeable gap with the rest of the field and cruised to a comfortable second place. The 26-year-old said the first lap, which catapulted him to the front, was "incredible" and congratulated his team for the good result.

"We started from 11th, and we cannot forget that here normally we struggle a lot," he said. As well as the rider's title, Marquez has helped secure the constructor's championship for Honda this season. And on Sunday, he added another record to his list — the most points scored in a season in motorcycling's premier class.

He has now racked up 395, higher than the previous record of 383 held by three-time world champion Jorge Lorenzo. There was a tough fight for third place between Italy's Dovizioso, who won at Sepang in 2016 and 2017, and nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi.

Rossi managed to push past Dovizioso on several occasions, only for the Ducati rider to snatch the lead back and finish just ahead of his compatriot. Quartararo had dominated all weekend going into the MotoGP, topping the timesheets in practice and smashing the Sepang lap record, before seizing his fifth pole position of the season.

The 20-year-old Petronas Yamaha rider had been aiming for his maiden MotoGP victory — but in the event, he was no match for his more experienced rivals and fell to the back right at the start. The MotoGP in tropical Malaysia has often been disrupted by torrential downpours in previous years but the rain stayed away this year for the whole weekend.

In the Moto2 class, Alex Marquez — Marc's younger brother — was crowned world champion after finishing second in his race yesterday. — AFP

Sports

76ers stun Blazers on Korkmaz 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left

Hornets hang on to beat depleted Warriors

PORTLAND: The Philadelphia 76ers overcame both the absence of suspended center Joel Embiid and the hot-shooting Portland Trail Blazers on Saturday night and remained the only unbeaten team in the NBA. Furkan Korkmaz hit a 3-pointer from the right side with 0.4 seconds left to lift the 76ers to a 129-128 road victory, their fifth win this season. Damian Lillard of the Blazers missed a long 3 at the buzzer. A 3-pointer by second-year guard Anfernee Simons with 2.6 seconds remaining erased a 126-125 Philadelphia lead, but it wasn't enough for the Blazers, who fell to 0-2 at home. The Blazers led by 21 points midway through the third quarter, only to have Philadelphia close to within three points three times early in the fourth quarter and twice down the stretch before taking their first lead on two free throws by Ben Simmons with 10.1 seconds remaining.

HORNETS 93, WARRIORS 87

Terry Rozier dropped in a go-ahead basket with 1:09 to play, and Charlotte survived a frantic finish to hold off injury-depleted Golden State in San Francisco. Charlotte's Dwayne Bacon and Golden State's Eric Paschall shared game-high scoring honors with 25 points as the Hornets capped a 2-2 Western swing by taking advantage of a Warriors team missing injured stars Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, D'Angelo Russell and Draymond Green. The Warriors led 69-60 after a three-point play by Paschall with 4:02 remaining in the third quarter, but then ran out of gas on the second night of a back-to-back, scoring just 18 points in the game's final 16 minutes.

SUNS 114, GRIZZLIES 105

Devin Booker had 21 points and three 3-pointers, and Aron Baynes had 20 points and a career-high four 3-pointers as balanced Phoenix beat host Memphis. Kelly Oubre Jr. scored 15 points, Frank Kaminsky had 14 points off the bench and Ricky Rubio had 11 points, six assists, five rebounds and three steals for the Suns, who have won two straight and are 4-2 for the first time since 2013-14. Ja Morant had 24 points and seven assists, and Dillon Brooks and Brandon Clarke had 16 points apiece for the Grizzlies, who have lost four of their first five in coach Taylor Jenkins' first season.

Kuwait's Mustafa tops in bowling championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti bowler Mustafa Al-Musawi gave a good performance ending on top of the preliminaries of the 13th Kuwait Open Bowling Championship, as the preliminaries will end today evening before moving to the deciding rounds.

Al-Musawi was able to reach the best score from the fifth to the tenth round collecting 1,335 points out of 1,500 while Qatar's Abdelrahman Al-Juaidah scoring 1,311.

The twice United States Champion Greg Young was in third place with the score of 1,288, followed by the British legend, the former world champion and Europe Dominic Barrett with the score of 1,257 and Thai Napat Buspanikoknol with the score of 1,255. It is noted that the top 10 list included three Kuwaitis, Iyad Al-Amiri, Saleh Habeeb and Abdallah Ahmad.

Second place finisher in the 2017 world championship Ildemaro Ruiz ended in the 22nd place with 110 points,

BUCKS 115, RAPTORS 105
Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 36 points, grabbed 15 rebounds and added eight assists as Milwaukee held on to defeat visiting Toronto. The Raptors tried to come back from a 26-point deficit but could get no closer than four points in the fourth quarter. It was the first meeting between the teams since the Raptors eliminated the Bucks in the Eastern Conference finals last season. Kyle Lowry led Toronto with a season-best 36 points, and Pascal Siakam had 16 points before fouling out with 1:41 to play in the fourth quarter.

PISTONS 113, NETS 109

Andre Drummond collected 25 points, 20 rebounds, six assists, five blocks and three steals while also making the clinching free throws as depleted Detroit topped visiting Brooklyn. Luke Kennard supplied 24 points and Bruce Brown scored a career-high 22 points with seven assists for the Pistons, who were missing four key players. All-Star forward Blake Griffin, who hasn't played this season due to hamstring and knee injuries, was joined on the sideline by the team's top three point guards — Reggie Jackson (back), Derrick Rose (hamstring) and Tim Frazier (shoulder). Kyrie Irving recorded a triple-double with 20 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for the Nets. Taurean Prince had 20 points. Joe Harris contributed 18, Spencer Dinwiddie scored 16 and Caris LeVert added 14.

NUGGETS 91, MAGIC 87

Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray combined for three clutch hoops, and the Denver defense held Orlando without a point for nearly 2 1/2 minutes down the stretch as the visiting Nuggets outlasted the Magic. Murray scored a team-high 22 points, and Jokic had 20 to pace the Nuggets, who snapped a two-game losing streak despite shooting just 37.0 percent from the field. Nikola Vucevic had a game-high 24 points, and Aaron Gordon had 21 for the Magic, who led by as many as 12 points in the first half.

TIMBERWOLVES 131, WIZARDS 109

Andrew Wiggins scored a team-high 21 points as visiting Minnesota finished with six players in double figures in rolling over Washington. Minnesota was missing top scorer Karl-Anthony Towns, suspended by the NBA after two



MEMPHIS: Ja Morant #12 of the Memphis Grizzlies shoots the ball against the Phoenix Suns at FedExForum in Memphis, Tennessee. — AFP

games due to his part in a dust-up with Philadelphia's Joel Embiid earlier this week. Robert Covington had 20 points in 20 minutes. Jarrett Culver also scored 20 points, followed by Gorgui Dieng (18), Jeff Teague (15) and Jake Layman (14). Teague added 13 assists. Bradley Beal led Washington with a game-high 30 points, but the Wizards simply could not shoot well enough to stay with Minnesota. Washington shot 38.9 percent in the game, and with the Timberwolves often close to 60 percent, the Wizards could not rally.

THUNDER 115, PELICANS 104

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 23 points, Darius Bazley added 17 off the bench, and Oklahoma City beat visiting New Orleans. Oklahoma City also got 17 points off the bench from Dennis Schroder, who grabbed nine rebounds and finished with a game-best 20 plus-minus rating. New Orleans, which has lost five of its first six games, scored 53 bench points, led by Redick's 17. Guards Josh Hart and Frank Jackson added 12 apiece. Hart recorded a double-double with a career-high 15 rebounds. — Reuters



Mustafa Al-Musawi

which reflects the strong competition between an elite group of world champions and professionals who are competing for prizes totaling \$218,000.

Saudi player Prince Mohammad bin Sultan bin Saudi bin Abdelaziz in competitions held at the new Kuwait Bowling Center at the invitation of President of International and Asian Bowling Federations and Chairman of Bowling Club Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad, and thanked him for the opportunity to participate in championships



Prince Mohammad bin Sultan

held in the Arabian Gulf region. Prince Mohammad lauded the outstanding organization of both the Asian Championship and the Open. He described the new scoring system as good for those who can control their shots and results will be good, adding that as a new system it needs some time for training and practice to deal well with it.

Prince Mohammad said that "we are trying hard to perform in a way that reflects the true level of Gulf players who are occupying advanced places in this Kuwait Open.

the innings. De Grandhomme also pushed the pace, facing only 12 balls for a whirlwind 28. England in reply looked comfortable at 91 for four in the 11th over before New Zealand removed the remaining six wickets to end the innings with a ball to spare.

Mitchell Santner claimed three for 25 while Tim Southee, Lockie Ferguson and Ish Sodhi took two wickets apiece. England captain Eoin Morgan said it was easy to analyse the reasons for the loss, and the issues were repairable.

"We dropped catches and we continued to lose wickets," he said. "We need to keep the attacking positive mindset. I think it's important to make mistakes, but I think the most important part is to learn from them."

After England lost Johnny Bairstow first ball, and Vince in the second over, Morgan (32) and Dawid Malan (39) set about rebuilding the innings. But when Morgan gave de Grandhomme his first catch, the wickets fell regularly with only Chris Jordan (36 off 19) providing any solid resistance at the lower part of the batting order.

Malan fell to an exceptional diving catch by Guptill who also accounted for the wicket of Jordan in a polished New Zealand fielding performance. Game three in the series is in Nelson tomorrow. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Completed scoreboard in the second Twenty20 international between New Zealand and England in Wellington yesterday.

New Zealand

M. Guptill c Vince b Rashid	41
C. Munro lbw b Curran	7
T. Seifert c Billings b Mahmood	16
C. de Grandhomme b Gregory	28
R. Taylor lbw Jordan	28
D. Mitchell c Jordan b Curran	5
J. Neesham c b Jordan	42
M. Santner c Brown b Jordan	0
T. Southee not out	4
Extras (lb 3, w 2)	5
Total (for 8 wickets, 20 overs)	176
Fall of wickets: 1-23 (Munro), 2-57 (Seifert), 3-85 (Guptill), 4-96 (de Grandhomme), 5-121 (Mitchell), 6-151 (Taylor), 7-151 (Santner), 8-176 (Neesham)	
Bowling: Curran 4-0-22-2 (2w), Mahmood 4-0-46-1, Jordan 4-0-23-3, Brown 2-0-32-0, Rashid 4-0-40-1, Gregory 2-0-10-1.	

England

J. Bairstow c Mitchell b Southee	0
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D. Malan c Guptill b Sodhi

J. Vince c Santner b Ferguson	39
E. Morgan c de Grandhomme b Santner	1
S. Billings c de Grandhomme b Sodhi	32
S. Curran c Grandhomme b Santner	8
L. Gregory c de Grandhomme b Southee	9
C. Jordan c Guptill b Santner	15
A. Rashid b Mitchell	36
S. Mahmood c Southee b Ferguson	4
P. Brown not out	4
Extras: (lb 2, wd 1, nb 0)	3
Total: (for 10 wickets, 19.5 overs)	155
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Bairstow), 2-3 (Vince), 3-40 (Morgan), 4-64 (Billings), 5-91 (Curran), 6-93 (Malan), 7-134 (Jordan), 8-144 (Gregory), 9-148 (Mahmood), 10-155 (Rashid)	
Bowling: Southee 4-0-25-2, Ferguson 4-0-34-2, Santner 4-0-25-3, Neesham 2-0-23-0, Sodhi 4-0-37-2 (1w), Mitchell 1.5-0-9-1.	
Result: New Zealand won by Series: 1-1	

McIlroy wins at WGC-HSBC Champions

SHANGHAI: World number two Rory McIlroy said his recent return to top form was motivated by the realisation that at 30 he faces a ticking career clock, after he won his fourth event of the year at the WGC-HSBC Champions yesterday.

McIlroy was the class of the field throughout the tournament in Shanghai, which ended when a defeated defending champion Xander Schauffele in a sudden-death play-off. It was the Northern Irishman's first win in east Asia's premier event and keeps him on course in a personal quest to retake the world's top golf ranking that he last held in 2015.

McIlroy went a rock-solid 67-67-67-68 for the tournament and said his resurgence was fuelled by the fact that "I don't have as much time left as I used to when I was 20." "Even if I'm having a bad day, I'm trying over every single shot. My concentration is better and my mental capacity on the golf course is much better than it ever has been," he said.

"I think that's a big key to why I'm able to play consistently week-in, week-out." He had a one-stroke lead stepping to the 18th tee of regulation play but nearly put his drive into the imposing lake that hugs the long par-5 hole at Sheshan International Golf Club.

He could only salvage a par, leaving him tied with Schauffele after the American carded a birdie. But the Northern Irishman shrugged off the mistake to split the fairway in the play-off replay on 18 as Schauffele's tee shot missed left. McIlroy went on to win the hole and the \$1.745 million winner's purse. He is coming off a strong 2019 that saw him secure the FedEx Cup, win PGA Tour Player of the Year honours, and climb the world golf rankings.

McIlroy burst onto the stage a decade ago as a shaggy-haired youngster widely predicted to dominate golf for years but was overtaken by a succession of other young stars. He said this week that next on his list was recapturing the world's top rank, currently held by American golfer Brooks Koepka.

As the sport buzzes with the return of Tiger Woods — who achieved a record-tying 82nd PGA Tour win this past week in Japan — McIlroy showed that he also remains a potent force. — AFP

Beaumont hails Japan 2019 as 'probably greatest Rugby WCup'

TOKYO: World Rugby chairman Bill Beaumont has lauded Japan 2019 as "probably the greatest Rugby World Cup". The six-week event, the first to be staged in Asia in the World Cup's 32-year history, culminated with South Africa hammering England 32-12 in Yokohama on Saturday as they clinched a third global title.

"Japan 2019 will be remembered as probably the greatest Rugby World Cup," said Beaumont during the tournament's closing press conference in Tokyo yesterday. "It has certainly been the most ground-breaking in terms of bringing the game to new audiences and attracting new fans to the sport."

"It has been amazing what we've experienced over the last six weeks, culminating in an outstanding final." France will stage the 2023 edition, with Beaumont confirming a dual bidding process will start late next year for the 2027 and 2031 World Cups.

Japan was awarded the right to stage the 2019 World Cup a decade ago as part of the same process that saw the 2015 edition go to England, rugby union's birthplace. Now officials hope that a split between a World Cup in an established rugby nation and an emerging one could be repeated with a view to taking the tournament to either the United States or Argentina for the first time.

"As we look to the future, I can confirm today that the Rugby World Council has approved the implementation of a dual host selection process for 2027 and 2031," Beaumont said. "The dual selection process will be launched in November 2020 and will enable World Rugby to select an optimal combination of hosts rather like what we've achieved here," the former England captain added.

Meanwhile World Rugby chief executive Brett Gosper, reflecting on the success of Japan 2019, said: "Is this the greatest World Cup ever? Certainly the statistics would say that it is. "More than 1.7 billion social media views, a world record TV audience, 99 percent stadium attendance. 1.2 million in the fanzones."

"Possibly the largest digital sports event of 2019, with 1.8 million new participants in Asia and 770,000 new participants in Japan." As for the financial strength of this World Cup, the Australian added it had been responsible for a "record tourism and economic impact boost of \$400 billion", while the £2 million raised for the ChildFund Pass It Back scheme was also a record for the tournament's corporate social responsibility programme. Gosper also proclaimed Japan 2019 the "most competitive World Cup ever" with the average winning margin between Tier One and Tier Two nations reduced to a new low of 30.5 points. "More than just that, Japan 2019 showed the power of a nation that really did dare to dream," Gosper added.

"We really hope that other unions find the courage to throw their hats in the ring to host the tournament." Japan, following on their shock win over South Africa four years ago — the biggest upset in World Cup history — beat both Ireland and Scotland as they became the first Asian side to reach the quarter-finals before succumbing to the Springboks.

The Brave Blossoms' success had reopened the debate about whether Japan should join the southern hemisphere's Rugby Championship or even Europe's Six Nations. "There has been much talk about the future of the Brave Blossoms," said Beaumont. "We will do everything in our power to support them and all emerging teams to get regular access... to high-level competitions. "Japan will have matches against England, Ireland and Scotland in the next 12 months. "The international calendar is something that is an evolving thing." — AFP

Sports

De Ligt keeps Juventus top and Inter at bay with derby winner

Juve's unbeaten start keeps them on course for ninth straight league title

TURIN: Matthijs de Ligt made sure Juventus kept hold of top spot in Serie A on Saturday after his first goal for the club saw off local rivals Torino, leaving Inter Milan in second despite Romelu Lukaku taking his league tally to nine with a brace in a 2-1 win at Bologna.

Inter had briefly led in Italy after Lukaku slotted home a 92nd-minute penalty to snatch the three points at Bologna, but Juve retook first place thanks to De Ligt, who smashed home the only goal of the game in Turin with 20 minutes remaining.

Maurizio Sarri's side stay a point ahead of Inter thanks to a hard-fought derby win that saw both sides exchange blows in a bruising contest. "I am really happy, of course. It was a really important game, as Inter won also. We won 1-0 and it was my goal, so really special," De Ligt told DAZN.

De Ligt has had a shaky start to life in Italy and could well have given away an early penalty when he touched the ball with his arm early in the first half, but was let off by referee Daniele Doveri and the VAR officials. However the Netherlands international, who had already been denied by a superb Salvatore Sirigu stop just before the break, came up trumps in the 70th minute when he met substitute Gonzalo Higuain's pull back just after the Argentine had forced a corner with a sizzling volley. "Obviously, when you come to a new club, it's always going to be hard. It's going well, the guys made me feel welcome and I think I'm improving every game," added De Ligt.

The win maintains Juve's unbeaten start to the season and keeps them on course for a ninth straight league title, while Inter have to content themselves with second despite Lukaku's match-winning display. The Belgian became the first player since Ronaldo in 1997/98 to score at least nine goals in his first 11 Serie A matches as an Inter player after a 75th-minute tap-in

which cancelled out Roberto Soriano's deflected opener and a stoppage time spot-kick winner.

"I'm pleased to have had such a good start, but I am 26 years old and I need to grow every day, along with the whole team," Lukaku told Sky Sport.

Inter have been tipped as the principal challengers for Juve's Serie A title but had to be saved from a lacklustre display by their star summer signing, who arrived from Manchester United for 65 million euros (\$73 million). His form will be a big boost going into Tuesday's huge trip to Borussia Dortmund, which could make or break their Champions League campaign with both sides level on four points behind Group F leaders Barcelona.

Inter are also six points ahead of Roma, who moved third in Serie A on Saturday after their 2-1 win over wobbling Napoli. Rising star Nicolo Zaniolo opened the scoring midway through the first half with his fourth goal in as many games in all competitions before Jordan Veretout sealed the points from the penalty spot 10 minutes after the break and stretched Roma's unbeaten league run to six games.

"I'm very pleased with my current form, I hope to continue like this and to score many more goals," Zaniolo told Sky Sport. Arkadiusz Milik's fifth goal in four games closed the gap for Napoli, but the defeat sees them drop down to seventh, level on 18 points with Lazio and Cagliari and 11 behind Juve after winning just one of their last five in Serie A.

Paulo Fonseca's Roma meanwhile are on a fine recent run despite an injury crisis that kept a host of first team starters out of action over the last few weeks. They are set to have further selection problems next week after Mert Cetin, who replaced suspended Federico Fazio, was sent off for two bookable offences deep in stoppage time. — AFP



TURIN: Torino's midfielder Daniele Baselli from Italy (L) fights for the ball with Juventus' midfielder Miralem Pjanic of Bosnia-Erzegovina (R) during the Italian Serie A football match Torino vs Juventus at the 'Stadio Olimpico Grande Torino' in Turin. — AFP

Isles win ninth straight on Varlamov's shutout

BUFFALO: Semyon Varlamov stopped all 27 shots he faced Saturday night, and Derick Brassard scored the game's only goal early in the first period as the New York Islanders matched their longest winning streak in 30 years by beating the host Buffalo Sabres 1-0. The Islanders have won nine straight for the first time since a nine-game run from Dec. 31, 1989, through Jan. 19, 1990. It is tied for the second-longest winning streak in franchise history behind a 15-game streak mounted from Jan. 21 through Feb. 20, 1982. The 1-0 win was the first for the Islanders since they beat the New Jersey Devils on Feb. 19, 2016. The Sabres have lost three in a row (0-2-1) since a 9-2-1 start. The 1-0 loss was the first for Buffalo since it fell to the Dallas Stars on Jan. 30. Sabres goalie Carter Hutton took the hard-luck loss after stopping 20 shots.

STARS 4, CANADIENS 1

Denis Gurianov scored two goals, and Ben Bishop made 35 saves as Dallas beat visiting Montreal. Gurianov collected his third and fourth goals of the season, including his first career score on a penalty shot. After being slashed by Nick Suzuki on a breakaway attempt 18:49 into the second period, Gurianov made no mistake in firing the penalty shot past Carey Price. Dallas has won three games in a row, including wins on consecutive nights after Friday's 2-1 road victory over the Colorado Avalanche. The Stars are 6-1-0 in their last seven games.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, FLYERS 3 (OT)

Mitch Marner scored the tying goal 5:03 into the third period, Frederik Andersen made 37 saves and Andreas Johnsson scored in the 11th round of a shootout to give visiting Toronto a win over Philadelphia. Kasper Kapanen and Jason Spezza each had a goal and an assist for Toronto, which snapped a three-game road slide thanks to Johnsson's shootout score. The Maple Leafs are 3-2-2 in their last seven games. Flyers defenseman Ivan Provorov and Claude Giroux each scored power-play goals and both recorded an assist as the Flyers lost for just the second time in six home games this season.

OILERS 2, PENGUINS 1 (OT)

Leon Draisaitl scored on a breakaway at 2:37 of overtime as Edmonton won its second game in a row, defeating host Pittsburgh. Draisaitl cruised down the left side and remained a step ahead of Pittsburgh winger Alex Galchenyuk. Draisaitl drew a penalty against Galchenyuk, but it didn't matter as the Oilers forward snapped the puck past Matt Murray to end the game. Colby Cave also scored, and Mike Smith made 51 saves for Edmonton. Defenseman Brian Dumoulin scored the tying goal in the third period, and Murray turned aside 26 shots for Pittsburgh, which saw its two-game winning streak come to a halt.

RANGERS 2, PREDATORS 1

Alexandar Georgiev made 32 saves, and visiting New York held on to beat Nashville. Filip Chytil and Ryan Strome scored for the Rangers, who won for the first time this season when scoring less than four goals and played their second straight game without Mika Zibanejad. Zibanejad sat out with an upper-body injury he sustained on a hit by Boston's Patrice Bergeron. Viktor Arvidsson scored a power-play goal for Nashville, which entered leading the Western Conference with 53 goals. The Predators lost their second straight and were held to one goal for the first time this season.

JETS 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3 (OT)

Kyle Connor scored with 1:38 remaining in overtime as Winnipeg rallied from a two-goal deficit to win in Las Vegas. Connor, who also had two assists, picked up a drop pass from Patrik Laine above the left circle, went in and fired a wrist shot through the pads of Malcolm Subban for



DALLAS: Alexander Radulov #47 of the Dallas Stars skates the puck against Shea Weber #6 of the Montreal Canadiens in the third period at American Airlines Center in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

the game-winner. Mathieu Perreault had two goals, and Mark Scheifele also scored for Winnipeg, which was playing the final game of a three-game western road trip. Laurent Brossoit finished with 23 saves.

BLUES 4, WILD 3 (OT)

Ryan O'Reilly scored the overtime game-winner as St. Louis edged Minnesota in St. Paul, Minn. O'Reilly deked past Zach Parise in the high slot before snapping a wrist in the top left corner. The Blues erased a 3-2 deficit to earn their seventh comeback victory of the season. Overall, they have won four consecutive games and six of their last seven following a four-game skid. Mackenzie MacEachern, Sammy Blais and Carl Gunnarsson also scored for the Blues, and Jake Allen made 20 saves. Marcus Foligno, Kevin Fiala and Mats Zuccarello scored for the Wild, and Devan Dubnyk stopped 25 of 29 shots.

COYOTES 3, AVALANCHE 0

Darcy Kuemper stopped all 33 shots he faced to record his first shutout of the season for host Arizona, who cruised over reeling Colorado. Christian Dvorak and Phil Kessel scored in the first period, and Conor Garland added a goal in the second for the Coyotes, who have won three of four and seven of nine. The shutout was the 17th of Kuemper's career. Pavel Francouz made 25 saves for the Avalanche, who have lost four in a row (0-3-1) since an 8-1-1 start. Forward Nathan MacKinnon's 15-game point streak to open the season — the longest in the NHL — was snapped. He had four shots.

BRUINS 5, SENATORS 2

David Pastrnak collected a goal and two assists as host Boston skated to its fifth consecutive victory at the expense of Ottawa. Patrice Bergeron, Brad Marchand and Danton Heinen each scored and set up a goal, and Jake DeBrusk also tallied for the Bruins, who are 7-0-2 in their last nine games overall. Tuukka Rask made 30 saves to improve to 7-0-1 on the season. Anthony Duclair scored his fourth goal in as many contests and Connor Brown also tallied for the Senators, who have lost their last nine meetings against Boston.

FLAMES 3, BLUE JACKETS 0

David Rittich stopped 43 shots for his second shutout of the season to lead visiting Calgary to a victory over Columbus. Sean Monahan, Sam Bennett and Matthew Tkachuk scored goals for the Flames, who improved to 3-1-1 over their last five games. Elias Lindholm added two assists. It was the third career shutout for Rittich, who also blanked Vancouver 3-0 on Oct. 5. Joonas Korpihalo had 26 saves for the Blue Jackets, who saw their winless streak extended to four games (0-3-1) while getting shut out for

the first time this season.

PANTHERS 4, RED WINGS 0

Jonathan Huberdeau scored two goals and added one assist, and Sergei Bobrovsky made 22 saves as Florida defeated struggling Detroit in Sunrise, Fla. Huberdeau — the longest-tenured Panthers player in his eighth season — has six goals in his past six games and nine on the campaign for the best 14-game start of his career. It was his 18th career two-goal game, although he has yet to produce a hat trick. Bobrovsky, who left the Columbus Blue Jackets as a free agent and signed a seven-year, \$70 million contract with the Panthers in July, turned in his first shutout of the season.

DEVILS 5, HURRICANES 3

P.K. Subban scored four minutes into the third period on a redirection to break a tie, and New Jersey held on to defeat host Carolina for only its third victory in 12 games this season. Miles Wood, Jack Hughes, Nico Hischier and Damon Severson also had goals for the Devils. New Jersey goalie Mackenzie Blackwood made 24 saves, though he faced only four shots in the third period. With a 3-2-3 record, he has all of the team's goalie victories this season. Warren Foegele, Teuvo Teravainen and Erik Haula scored for the Hurricanes, who were unable to pull even with an extra skater before the deficit grew to two goals.

KINGS 4, BLACKHAWKS 3 (OT)

Drew Doughty scored with 17 seconds left in overtime, and Los Angeles ended a four-game losing streak with a win against visiting Chicago. Kyle Clifford, Matt Roy and Michael Amadio also scored. Dustin Brown and Tyler Toffoli had two assists each and Jack Campbell made 24 saves for the Kings, who owned a 49-27 shot advantage. Dominik Kubalik, David Kampf and Jonathan Toews scored, and Corey Crawford made 40 saves for Chicago, which has lost six of seven.

CANUCKS 5, SHARKS 2

Elias Pettersson scored twice, and Jake Virtanen had a goal and an assist as Vancouver finally solved backup goaltender Aaron Dell, defeating host San Jose. Brandon Sutter and Adam Gaudette also scored for the Canucks, who extended their points streak to seven games (5-0-2) and have won nine of 12. Brock Boeser and Bo Horvat had two assists apiece. Vancouver goalie Thatcher Demko lost his bid for his first NHL shutout when San Jose's Marc Edouard-Vlasic scored on a short-handed goal off a two-on-one with Barclay Goodrow at 10:51 of the third period to make it 4-1. Evander Kane scored with 22 seconds left to cap the scoring. Demko made 24 saves. — Reuters

Relief for Villas-Boas as Marseille win, Depay rescues Lyon

PARIS: Marseille took advantage of two comical defensive mix-ups to secure a 2-1 win at home to Lille on Saturday that sent them up to fourth in Ligue 1 and alleviated some of the pressure on coach Andre Villas-Boas. Morgan Sanson stroked home the opening goal on 48 minutes after Lille goalkeeper Mike Maignan spilled a cross following a hefty collision with team-mate Gabriel. The Brazilian centre-back unwittingly gifted Marseille a second goal 11 minutes from time when Valentin Rongier's tame shot struck Dario Benedetto before Adama Soumaoro's attempted headed clearance struck Gabriel and looped in off the post. Lille captain Soumaoro rose magnificently to nod in a corner to give the visitors hope but Marseille held on to move level with third-placed Nantes on 19 points. It was just a second win in seven league outings for Marseille and the ideal tonic for a team dumped out the League Cup in midweek following a display branded "shameful" by Villas-Boas.

That 2-1 loss at Monaco followed a 4-0 humbling away to Paris Saint-Germain, a defeat which left OM winless in 16 Ligue 1 meetings with their greatest rivals. "I think we deserved the win. We played with everything we'd been missing the past two matches," said Villas-Boas.

"We spoke (this week). We were all frustrated because we played two good second halves, which shows we're capable of doing it. It just needs to be applied for 90 minutes." As for Lille, Christophe Galtier's side have not won away from home in the league since March and missed the opportunity to reduce the gap to leaders PSG.

"I think we're going to be in the New Year's Eve bloopers," said Galtier. "You can't concede goals like that at this level, two goals from big mistakes." Memphis Depay conjured up a superb 95th-minute winner as Lyon twice fought back from a goal behind to defeat Toulouse 3-2. Yaya Sanogo put Toulouse ahead on 15 minutes but Depay soon levelled after a slick assist from Jeff Reine-Adelaide.

Toulouse regained the lead when Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes crashed into team-mate Jason Denayer coming for a cross, with the ball rolling off Lopes into the net. Moussa Dembele's eighth goal of the season pulled Lyon level again before a brilliant solo strike from Depay won it at the death. "This should make the players take note that you must never give up," said Lyon boss Rudi Garcia, whose side moved up to eighth. "Even when we were trailing twice I felt there was character in this team and this proves the players refused to accept defeat."

Angers climbed to second, seven points adrift of PSG, as a Stephane Bahoken penalty earned the hosts a 1-0 victory over Strasbourg. Amiens beat Brest 1-0 at the Stade de la Licorne, where a 25-year-old home fan was rushed to hospital after suffering a head injury following a nasty fall.

The man was reportedly bleeding heavily after tumbling several metres from a stand on to concrete. An update from the stadium announcer said the supporter had since regained consciousness.

Metz remain in the bottom three after blowing a two-goal advantage in a 2-2 draw at home to Montpellier, while the clash between Nimes and Rennes was postponed due to heavy rain.

Defending champions PSG suffered a shock 2-1 defeat at the hands of Dijon, who started the weekend at the foot of the table, on Friday with coach Thomas Tuchel accusing his expensively-assembled team of "being too passive and not playing together".

It was the third loss of the season for PSG who could also see their lead at the top trimmed to just five points by the end of the weekend. — AFP

25 Bottas on pole at US Grand Prix, Hamilton starts in fifth

26 76ers stun Blazers on Korkmaz 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left

27 De Ligt keeps Juventus top and Inter at bay with derby winner



Leicester seal victory at Palace

Everton deny Tottenham long-awaited away win



LONDON: Leicester City's English defender Ben Chilwell (2L) jumps over Crystal Palace's Scottish midfielder James McArthur during the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Leicester City at Selhurst Park in south London yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Leicester City underlined their Premier League top-four credentials as goals by Caglar Soyuncu and Jamie Vardy sealed a clinical 2-0 victory at Crystal Palace yesterday.

Soyuncu, who has replaced centre back Harry Maguire this season, broke the deadlock when he headed in James Maddison's 57th-minute corner for his first Leicester goal. Leicester never looked like relinquishing their lead and Vardy added some late gloss with his 10th goal of the season.

As impressive as last week's 9-0 win at 10-man Southampton was, yesterday's display was perhaps more meaningful in terms of Leicester's ambitions this season. Palace could have gone fifth with a win but Leicester were in control throughout and thoroughly deserved a third successive

league victory to put them back above Chelsea into third place on goal difference with 23 points from 11 games.

They are only two points behind champions Manchester City, who are in second place, and six above fifth-placed Arsenal. While Leicester's slick attack has made the headlines in the past week, they have conceded only eight goals in the league this season and keeper Kasper Schmeichel had a quiet day.

What is more, in terms of Premier League wins since Brendan Rodgers took over after the sacking of Claude Puel eight months ago, only Liverpool and Man City have won more league games.

"The creativity and attacking talent we have is incredible," Vardy, who leads the Premier League scoring charts, said. "We

have so many options and it can only benefit us." After an even first half of few chances, Leicester looked the more likely side to score after the break, especially from the set piece deliveries of Maddison.

From one Maddison corner Jonny Evans forced a fine save by Vicente Guaita and from the next, the ball flashed across the area where Soyuncu stooped to score. Leicester's second in the 88th minute was a great team effort that oozed class. The outstanding Youri Tielemans found Vardy who then played a one-two with Demarai Gray before peeling off and slotting a left-foot shot past Guaita.

Leicester could have made it 3-0 in stoppage time when Ben Chilwell hit the post from a tight angle. Palace boss Roy Hodgson said he had seen enough to sug-

gest Leicester can sustain their challenge.

"They carry a very clear goal threat and that's a major difference," he said. "The service (Vardy) is getting now and the ability of the midfield to keep the ball is elevating them to a team in the top four. "They are in the top four on merit. That's how well they're playing."

Meanwhile, Cenk Tosun's header eight minutes into stoppage time salvaged a 1-1 draw for Everton against Tottenham in a match overshadowed by a serious injury to Everton midfielder Andre Gomes.

Spurs' Son Heung-min was shown a straight red card for his foul on the Portuguese international, but the injury was suffered as Gomes's momentum saw him crash into Serge Aurier. The visitors led 1-0 at that stage thanks to Dele Alli's strike just

after the hour mark.

Everton were then left frustrated as Alli was not penalised for a handball inside his own area despite a lengthy delay for a VAR review. The injury to Gomes was the turning point with Son visibly upset even before he was shown a red card.

And Tottenham failed to hold out for a first away win in the Premier League since January when substitute Tosun bulleted home a header from Luca Digne's cross during 12 minutes of time added due to VAR reviews and Gomes's injury.

A point does little to improve a poor start to the season for either side with Everton still hovering just one place above the relegation zone, while Spurs remain in the bottom half with 13 points from their first 11 games. — Agencies

Mushfiqur leads Bangladesh to first T20 win over India

NEW DELHI: Mushfiqur Rahim yesterday said pollution did not bother him after his unbeaten half-century powered Bangladesh to their first-ever Twenty20 international victory over India in smog-hit New Delhi.

Mushfiqur made 60 to anchor Bangladesh's chase of 149 as the tourists achieved their target with three balls to spare. They won by seven wickets to lead the three-match series 1-0. The Indian capital has been blanketed by smog with authorities saying air pollution had reached "emergency" levels, with schools closed and other restrictions imposed. But it was business as usual at Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotla ground with Bangladesh restricting the hosts to 148 for six after electing to bowl first.

The tourists, who had trained in masks for the opening game of their tour, were in trouble at 54-2 when Soumya Sarkar, who made 39, and Mushfiqur put on a crucial 60-

run stand for the third wicket. "Pollution is not an issue for me. I was more concerned about facing the opposition bowlers than worry about pollution."

"Thank u to both the teams to play this game @ImRo45 @BCBTigers under tough conditions .. well done bangladesh," the former India captain wrote on Twitter.

Soumya was bowled by paceman Khaleel Ahmed but Mushfiqur survived a dropped chance at 38 to hit four consecutive boundaries off Ahmed to put Bangladesh ahead. Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad joined Mushfiqur at the crease and brought up the win with a six off debutant all-rounder Shivam Dube. He made an unbeaten 15.

Bowlers Shafiqul Islam and Aminul Islam claimed two wickets each to play a key part in Bangladesh winning their first T20 against India in nine attempts.

India lost early wickets including skipper Rohit Sharma who was trapped leg before wicket for nine off Shafiqul in the first over of the innings. Aminul then struck twice to rattle the opposition top-order with KL Rahul, who made 15, and Shreyas Iyer, who scored 22, letting go of their starts. Opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan made 41 with three sixes but returned to the pavilion after being run out as India slumped further.

Pollution levels turned hazardous during the past week, putting the match in danger of being called off, but the BCCI felt it was too late to change the venue.—AFP

Djokovic cruises to fifth Paris Masters title

PARIS: Novak Djokovic eased to a record-extending fifth Paris Masters title by brushing aside Canadian youngster Denis Shapovalov in Sunday's final, boosting his hopes of taking the year-end world number one spot. The top seed claimed a dominant 6-3, 6-4 victory over his 20-year-old opponent, who looked nervous after being the beneficiary of Rafael Nadal's withdrawal before their scheduled semi-final. Djokovic will lose top spot in the rankings to Nadal next week, but could still equal Pete Sampras' record by finishing a sixth year as the world's best player.

The 33-year-old Nadal is a fitness doubt for the ATP Tour Finals, which start in London on November 10, due to an abdominal muscle strain, while Djokovic has won the season-ending championships five times. Djokovic, who

lost to Russian Karen Khachanov in last year's Bercy final, saved the only break point he faced as he sealed his fourth win from as many matches against the world number 28 Shapovalov. The 16-time Grand Slam champion has now won 34 Masters titles, moving to within one of Nadal at the top of the all-time list, and 77 on the ATP Tour in total.

It was Djokovic's fifth trophy of the season after previous triumphs at Wimbledon and the US Open, as well as at the Madrid Open and in Tokyo. His success adds to his previous Paris Masters titles from 2009 and 2013-2015. Shapovalov, who claimed his maiden ATP title last month in Stockholm, kicked off the second set with a double fault, before a mishit forehand handed Djokovic a break point.

But the left-handed Canadian recovered with aces on both break point and game point to hold his serve. The form that he showed in his brilliant quarter-final win over Gael Monfils on Friday was nowhere to be seen, though, and the 32-year-old Djokovic moved to the brink of victory with a break in game seven to lead the second set 4-3.

Shapovalov, who will move into the world's top 15 next week, gave himself a glimmer of hope by moving to 30-40 on Djokovic's serve, but the Serbian closed the door, although he was then forced to serve for the title.—AFP