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Jarallah: Hajraf nominated for GCC chief • Kuwait protects expats' rights

Zain Group revenue rises 35%, net income up 12%



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third quarter (Q3) and nine-month periods (9M) ended Sept 30, 2019. The company ended the period

serving 49.1 million customers, reflecting a 3 percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) increase.

For 9M 2019, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 1.2 billion (\$4.0 billion), up 35 percent Y-o-Y, while consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 538 million (\$1.8 billion), up 66 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 44 percent. Consolidated net income amounted to KD 153 million (\$504 million), reflecting a 12 percent Y-o-Y increase. Earnings per share amounted to 35 fils (\$0.12) for the nine-month period.

Commenting on the performance to date, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said: "Impressive growth in key financial metrics for the Q3 and 9M periods of 2019 are primarily a result of the heavy investment we have undertaken in expanding our 4G and 5G networks, to enhance customer experience and increase market share."

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented: "The third-quarter saw numerous milestones and was characterized by profitable growth across all key operations, indicative of the success of our digital strategy." Kharafi also touched upon the company's progress in the area of fintech. (See Page 11)

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said on Tuesday that Kuwait conveyed messages from Iran to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain regarding the situation in the Gulf region, and "until now no answers have emerged". The Iranian foreign ministry had said last month that Iran is prepared to hold talks with regional rival Saudi Arabia, "with or without the help of a mediator". Saudi Arabia, which is locked in several proxy wars in the region with Iran, has blamed Tehran for attacks on Saudi oil plants on Sept 14, a charge Iran denies. The kingdom has said it prefers a political solution to a military one.

Jarallah said that positive consultations with Saudi Arabia regarding the Neutral Zone are continuing, and "they are looking forward to the final signing as soon as possible". The two countries halted output from the jointly run oilfields in the so-called Neutral Zone more than three years ago, cutting some 500,000 barrels per day or 0.5 percent of global oil supply.

Jarallah also announced that Kuwait has informed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states that former finance minister Nayef Al-Hajraf is its nominee for the post of GCC Secretary General. "We hope that the coming GCC summit will approve Dr Hajraf's nomination," he told reporters during a ceremony held by German Embassy in Kuwait on Tuesday evening to mark the national day of Germany.

Jarallah affirmed Kuwait's commitment to building on the achievements made in the GCC march of joint action. He expressed Kuwait's confidence in Hajraf's ability to

promote the GCC's role in meeting the aspirations of the people of its member countries. "Dr Hajraf has a great economic insight and I believe this is what the GCC needs at present," he stressed. Jarallah noted that consultations are underway among GCC members on the final date of the coming summit.

Jarallah also said Kuwait respects the dignity and protects the rights of its expatriate workers. Jarallah told reporters that international human rights organizations laud Kuwait's record in this regard, which is in accordance with its constitution and laws. On negotiations with the Philippines over the proposed form of contracts for Filipino nationals working in Kuwait, he pointed out that both sides will hold a new round of talks over this issue shortly.

Meantime, Jarallah revealed that Kuwait is preparing to host a donor conference in support of education in Somalia, scheduled for next year. He added that the planned conference is highly supported on the international level, out of the importance of education in achieving stability and development.

On Sunday, Kuwait announced, during the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) ministerial meeting hosted by Qatar, its readiness to organize the donor conference on backing Somalia's education.

The Kuwaiti move reflects the country's keenness on coordinating and intensifying efforts with the sisterly countries to maintain Somalia's security, safety and territorial integrity. — Agencies

Eight injured in Jordan stabbing; Jordanians held by Israel return

AMMAN: Eight people, including four tourists, were wounded in a knife attack yesterday at the famed archeological site of Jerash in northern Jordan, a security spokesman told AFP. Four tourists - three Mexicans and a Swiss woman - were wounded, along with a Jordanian tour guide and a security officer who tried to stop the assailant, public security directorate spokesman Amer Sartawi said. The attack took place around noon (1000 GMT) at the Roman ruins of Jerash, a popular attraction 50 km from the capital Amman.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday cabled Jordanian King Abdullah II, expressing sorrow on the stabbing incident. He expressed deep distress at such a criminal act that targeted the innocent, wishing the injured quick recovery. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister



Hiba Al-Labadi



Abdelrahman Merhi

Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the monarch.

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti protesters take part in a demonstration against alleged government corruption in Irada Square opposite the National Assembly yesterday. The protest was called by former MP Saleh Al-Mulla and was supported by a number of current lawmakers. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Current account posts surplus of \$10 billion: CBK

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said yesterday that the current domestic account posted a surplus of KD 3.2 billion (\$10.5 billion) in Q2 2019 against KD 2.6 billion (\$8.5 billion) in the year's Q1. The CBK reported in a press release, marking issuance of preliminary data of Kuwait balance of payments for Q2 2019 and the amended data for Q1, a 21.4 percent growth in Q2, reaching KD 528 million (\$1.7 billion). It alluded growth of the balance of payments to a rise in debt payments in Q2, estimated at KD 568.4 million (\$1.8 billion), 5.9 percent compared to Q1.

The growth increase was also a result of a decline in collected debts dues, estimated at KD 40 million (\$132 million). Initial data of the balance of payments in Q2 showed a rise of the value of the commodity balance by KD 287.5 million (\$948.7 million), 10 percent, as compared to Q1, where the surplus value reached some KD 3 billion (\$9 billion). The services account posted a drop in deficit value in Q2 by KD 326.8 million (\$1 billion), compared to the KD 2 billion (\$6.6 billion) deficit in Q1.

As to the financial account, initial statistics showed that the net value of external assets amounted to KD 184 million (\$607 billion), in contrast to Q1. The assets dropped in Q2 by KD 184 million (\$607 billion) compared to Q1. As a result of developments in the main accounts of the balance, its overall status posted in Q2 a surplus amounting to KD 1.3 billion (\$4 billion), against KD 2.1 billion (\$6.9 billion) in Q1. — KUNA

US navy prepares allies to 'protect navigation' in Gulf

AT SEA: The United States is training Gulf allies to "protect navigation" in the region's troubled waterways, as it seeks to build an alliance to contain Iran. Washington's three-week International Maritime Exercise (IMX), which started on Oct 21, came after a number of commercial vessels were attacked in the Gulf from May, ratcheting up regional tensions. Washington and other Western powers blamed the incidents on Iran, which has denied any involvement.

On Tuesday, the US invited international media to see part of the IMX, the second-largest maritime exercise of its

kind. The maneuvers involve 5,000 personnel, 40 vessels and 17 aircrafts from 50 countries deployed to the strategic waterway that separates Iran from the pro-US Arab Gulf monarchies. "This is the first time we are taking part in the IMX," the head of a Saudi naval de-mining team, Ali Bin Shreidi, told AFP aboard the Cardigan Bay, a British Royal Fleet Auxiliary landing ship 65 km off Bahrain's coast.

The officer and his three-member team were taking part in order "to increase our capabilities and share our

Continued on Page 24



AT SEA: A US pilot on Britain's RFA Cardigan Bay landing ship prepares to board a helicopter for a reconnaissance flight in the Gulf waters off Bahrain during the International Maritime Exercise (IMX) on Tuesday. — AFP

Investors hope Qatar dairy will be cash cow

DOHA: The cows of Qatar's Baladna farm, housed in climate-controlled farms in the desert, exemplify the lengths to which Qatar has gone to resist what it calls an economic "blockade" enforced by its Saudi-led neighbors. When the boycott began in June 2017, Qatar responded with sweeping measures, like liquidating a quarter of its cash reserves to steady the economy

and its currency, but it also flew in hundreds of Holstein cows.

The new herd was part of a plan to establish food security in the event that import routes were blocked - concerns that had seen supermarket shelves emptied in the opening days of the embargo. This week, Baladna will finish listing 75 percent of the company on the Doha stock exchange, allowing Qatari investors to own part of the Gulf nation's embargo fightback. "We were driven to do this by our commitment to provide Qatar with a fresh and steady supply of dairy products," said Baladna farm's vice-chairman Ramez Al-Khayyat.

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AL KHOR, Qatar: A worker inspects bottles of milk on the production line at a dairy factory at Baladna farm 60 km north of Doha on Oct 26, 2019. — AFP

Local

Estonian President lauds Kuwait's role in regional, int'l peacebuilding

Kuwaiti humanitarian work a role model for other countries to follow: Kaljulaid

KUWAIT: The President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid has commended Kuwait's role in regional and international peacekeeping, and the Gulf State's solid efforts toward achieving peaceful settlements in the Middle East region. Kaljulaid made her remarks in an exclusive interview with Kuwait TV and KUNA, after holding official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior Kuwaiti officials. "As I've said to His Highness the Amir: we admire Kuwait's role in peacebuilding, tedious and hard work towards peaceful development of the region. We admire your democracy and your parliament, and the hard work which you are making in a really not so stable area," she said.

The UN's naming of His Highness the Amir as 'Humanitarian Leader' and Kuwait as 'Humanitarian Center' is well-earned due to the Gulf country's humanitarian efforts around the world in aiding people suffering from harsh living conditions due to conflicts and natural disasters, Kaljulaid noted, adding the Kuwaiti humanitarian work should be a role model for other countries to follow. "I think this is a recognition. You have been able to build bridges with Iraqi people and all neighboring people. You have a deep understanding of their concerns, and you have been ready to contribute. We see you in this region as somebody who we could follow," said the Estonian President.

Future peace and prosperity

"We do not have lots of experiences in the region as

we only have one newly-established embassy. So, we do have and plan to rely extensively on your vast understanding and experience on how to, patiently and tirelessly, work towards better solutions for future peace and prosperity," she added. Furthermore, Kaljulaid mentioned that her country, despite being geographically far away from the region, has been very much present in the NATO mission in Iraq, helping to state-build and develop that country. "We've also been very active in UNICEF and UNHCR to solve the humanitarian crises in the region. So, you are (Kuwait) the beacon from the region that guides us on how to move forward," she remarked.

On her visit to the country, Kaljulaid indicated that despite this being her maiden visit: it is, however, the second official visit for an Estonian President to Kuwait since former President Lennart Meri's visit in 1993, during which Kuwaiti-Estonian diplomatic relationship was established. "We've just celebrated the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries," she said, noting "we brought with us a big business delegation with all the important players in Estonia, who are actually active in the Middle East region and helping to develop e-services. This has been one of the main aspects of our visit."

"We've also signed a memorandum of understanding in digital development, and currently working on the agreement of multi-protection investment, which awaits an EU approval," added the Estonian President. "We are also moving forward with the avoidance of double-



KUWAIT: The President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid. — KUNA

taxation agreement between the two countries. As I said, we already have signed MoU on digital development. On these three pillars, we could actually build a great cooperation," she added. The Estonian President also mentioned that the other aspect of her visit aims at bolstering the potential investment, digital, and business cooperation between Estonia and Kuwait on a "regional dimension."

Investment opportunities

"Estonia is the front-runner of the Three Seas Initiative, which is a regional development forum, and we really would like to see Kuwaiti investors participate in such a discussion platform about infrastructure development in Eastern Europe," said Kaljulaid. "We've

offered cooperation through the Three Seas Initiative, where we have the leverage of other 11 countries beside the Estonian market. Estonia is part of the EU; so if you are on our market, you are on one of the world's biggest and richest markets," she said. Moreover, Kaljulaid mentioned that her country offers the opportunity to establish companies and operate them under a low-bureaucracy environment. "You do not have to be an Estonian to file taxes for the company. In addition, you can do all these things online. There is a great opportunity to enter the European market through Estonia," affirmed the Estonian President.

"Kuwait is very active in development cooperation. The technologies that we use in state-buildings are very popular among African Union countries. So, we could match your experience and resources with our knowledge and work together in that region to the benefit of those countries, and also to the benefit of our businesses," she noted. "Estonia enjoys a bureaucracy-free business environment. You can run your business from far. If you become an Estonian e-resident, you gain access to all digital services and all businesses and procedures with the Estonian government. This can be done online," she added.

Kaljulaid also said that her country, beside of having a very useful low-bureaucracy business environment, is part of the EU as well, affirming "we're an attractive business environment indeed, even if we are traditionally a European social market economy." Estonia is a place where several various new technologies need an investment, she said, noting even though Europe is well-connected in its eastern and western parts; the interlinkage between east, west, north, and south is not so much present. There are several infrastructure projects in the European region that Estonia and Kuwait could jointly develop with the aid of Kuwaiti experience and capacity there. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid meets with Honorary President of Kuwaiti Women's Cultural and Social Society Lulwa Al-Qatami, along with society members. — Amiri Diwan photo

Estonian president receives feminist society chief

KUWAIT: Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid wrapped up yesterday an official visit to Kuwait during which she held official discussions with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Estonian President, along with her entourage, were seen off at the airport by Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Prior to her departure, President Kaljulaid met in her residence at Bayan Palace with Honorary President of Kuwaiti Women's Cultural and Social Society Lulwa Al-Qatami, along with society members. Earlier in the day, she visited Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center where she

toured its historical and cultural facilities that reflect Kuwaiti civilization. She was accompanied by head of the mission of honor, Amiri Diwan Advisor Ali Al-Rashed. President Kaljulaid also visited Al-Shaheed Park on Tuesday. Furthermore, President Kaljulaid received on Tuesday the Chairman of the Kuwaiti Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ali Al-Ghanem. She also held talks with the chief of Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Salem Al-Othaina.

In the meantime, Kuwait's Finance Ministry said that a full exemption of taxes on Kuwaiti

private and public investments in Estonia was agreed as a ministry delegation visited Tallinn. The decision will apply to dividends and interest profits obtained by the Kuwaiti government and privately-owned businesses alike, read a statement by the ministry. The agreement will benefit the prospects of investments by Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund, KIA, and companies, particularly with Estonia being distinguished in digital technology and telecommunications. The talks, which will be followed by another round in Kuwait at a future date, also witnessed discussions related to dual taxation avoidance and tax evasion prevention. —KUNA

Nazaha hosts workshop on financial disclosure

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) held a workshop on Nazaha's establishment law and the provisions of financial disclosure at its headquarters yesterday. During his presentation, executive Saleh Al-Taneeb, who is also the director of the department of the committees to examine reports and preparation of financial disclosures, said the workshop comes from the role of Nazaha in raising awareness about the provisions of law no. 2 of 2016 on the need to submit financial disclosure forms within the legally prescribed dates.

Taneeb added that this workshop was held due to the imminent period of updating the financial disclosures of approximately 13,000 citizens starting from mid-November 2019. "This workshop aims to identify the components of financial disclosure and the way to inquire about the date of updating the declaration, and how to fill it in a proper and complete form. This is in addition to the definition of the role of inspection committees and the role of the commission in maintaining the pri-

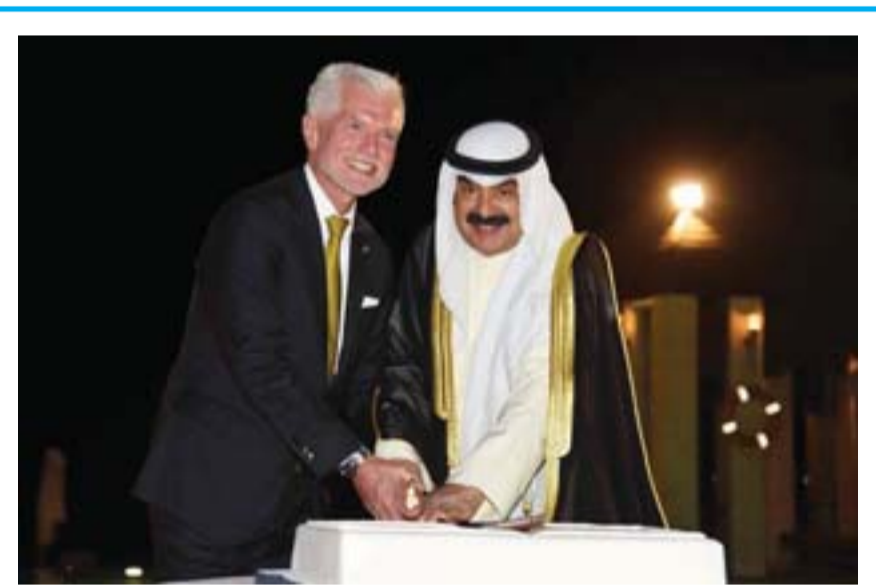


KUWAIT: Nazaha executive Saleh Al-Taneeb speaks during the workshop. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

vacy, confidentiality and security of these declarations," he said.

On the role of the committees, Taneeb said that the committees for examining financial disclosure reports check whether there are illegal earnings. Then the inspection committees prepare a report about illegal gains and pass judgment after hearing statements of the

person in question. The workshop included a presentation on Nazaha's establishment law and the goals and priorities of Kuwait's integrity and anticorruption strategy. The presentation also elaborated on the financial disclosure system and how to fill and update the relevant forms as per the dates determined by the law.



KUWAIT: German Ambassador to Kuwait Stefan Mobs hosted a reception Tuesday night to celebrate his country's national day. Senior Kuwaiti officials led by Deputy Foreign Minister Khalid Al-Jarallah, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

Kuwait's Amir receives congratulatory letter from Burkina Faso President

Sheikh Sabah congratulates Kuwait Boy Scouts Association Chairman

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a letter of congratulations from President of Burkina Faso Roch Marc Christian Kabore, expressing his sincere congratulations on the return of His Highness to Kuwait after completing medical examinations. His Highness the Amir sent a letter of gratitude to Burkina Faso's President, as well as wishing him good health and prosperity for his country.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to Head of the Kuwait Boy Scouts Association (KBSA) Dr Abdullah Mohammad Al-Turaiji on Kuwait becoming chair of the Arab Scout Organization and member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). His Highness the Amir also congratulated Turaiji on having been unanimously elected president of the Arab Scouts Organization during the 29th Arab Scout Conference recently held in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt. His Highness the Amir praised the efforts exerted by Kuwait in order to make this achievement, wishing everyone everlasting success in serving the nation in regional and international arenas. 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 him similar cables.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Sabah received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Deputy Prime

Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burkina Faso Alfa Barry. — KUNA

Kuwait, Burkina Faso ink accords

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burkina Faso Alfa Barry on the occasion of his official visit to Kuwait. Talks between the two sides dealt with means of beefing up the bilateral relations. They also reviewed regional and international affairs and various issues of common concern. Following the meeting, the two ministers signed accords for cooperation in aviation services, culture and arts, economic and technical sectors. They also inked a memo for consul-

tations between the two countries' foreign ministries.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah had received Minister Barry and his accompanying delegation, in the presence of Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, at Bayan Palace. During the meeting, Minister Barry expressed greetings of President of Burkina to His Highness the Amir, congratulating him on the success of his medical checkups. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Africa's Affairs Hamad Suleiman Al-Mashaan. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Cardiology Intervention Consultant at the Chest Hospital Dr Ahmad Abdullah operates the machine. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

New gen Corindus robotic system available in Kuwait

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The new generation of the Corindus robotic system is available in Kuwait at the Chest Hospital. Ten cases have already been treated with this machine successfully in three months. More patients will benefit from this medical device, which is only available in the UAE apart from Kuwait in the region.

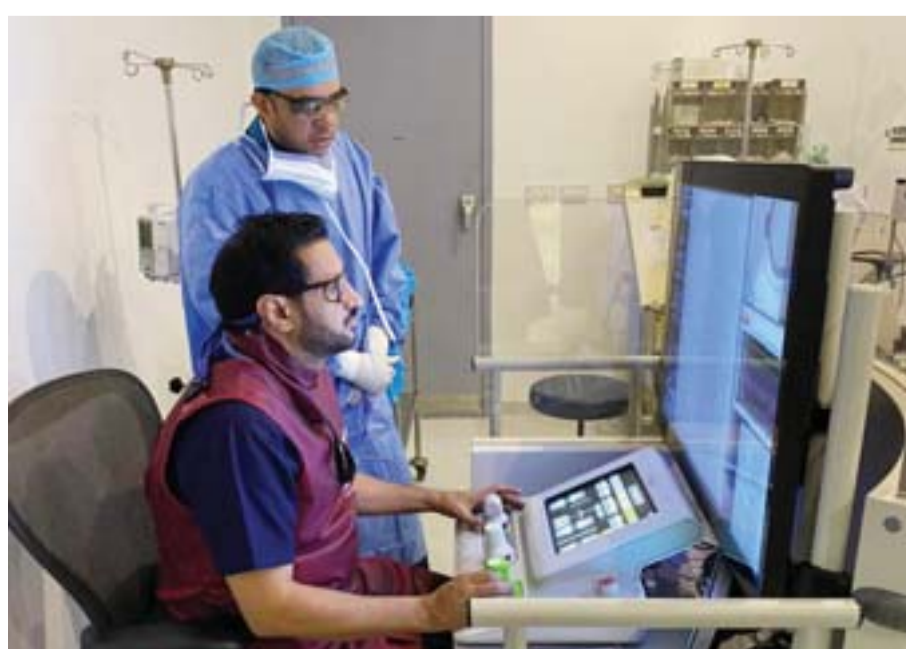
The Corindus robotic system is made in the United States and over 80 devices are in use around the world. "The first version of this machine was imported by Central Circle Company in 2016. Three months ago, the new upgraded version of the machine arrived in Kuwait. We upgraded the machine by exchanging the old one with the new machine," Cardiology Intervention Consultant at the Chest Hospital Dr Ahmad Abdullah told Kuwait Times.

This new version has additional functions and benefits over manual routine PCI. "In addition to balloon and coronary stent operations, the new machine

can control the guide catheter. The Corindus robotic system has unlimited uses and it is 100 percent accurate. It provides exact measurements of the stent in diameter and length in accurate sizes with zero x-ray radiation. Also, it has less contrast, which is in the patient's favor," he added.

This machine is used for coronary intervention, which allows conducting balloon, coronary stent and catheter intervention without wearing an apron. "The Corindus robotic system is equipped with special glass protection from radiation. This machine is used for intervention and coronary stenting. It's the best of its kind in the world," explained Abdullah.

Local doctors received special training program in the United States to operate the machine. "Currently, there are four doctors who are trained to use it in operations. These doctors will then train other doctors to operate it. This machine is unique and has no competitors in the market," Dr Abdullah concluded.



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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait's building in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait Society for the Handicapped sponsors charity bazaar at Zahra Mall

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KUWAIT: In support of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH), Zahra Mall held a 'charity bazaar' fundraiser in memory of the late Moudhi Al-Sultan - one of the society's founders and prominent Kuwaiti philanthropist who organized more than 30 charity bazaars for the society's benefit in her lifetime. In commemoration of Sultan's efforts, KSH is launching a transformation campaign to expand and develop its services. The charity bazaar was held yesterday from 10 am - 9 pm at Zahra Mall and hosted a variety of vendors.

Munira Khaled Al-Mutawa, Chair of Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, stated that for 48 years, KSH has been providing integrated clinical and educational support to hundreds of severely disabled individuals aged 5 - 18 of all nationalities free of charge at its three locations in Hawally, Ahmadi and Jahra. In the near future, KSH will be expanding its services to focus on vocational rehabilitation training in a new facility that is currently under construction in Granata. Mutawa added, ever since its establishment, KSH has been evolving to become more supportive of the disabled community in Kuwait and this fundraiser marks the commencement of a new era for development and expansion.

The event was attended by the society's delegates and board members. It also included interactive displays of the honorable life of Moudhi Al-Sultan and her connection to the society. The event hosted a number of KSH's children who conducted a variety of live artistic demonstrations such as Japanese weaving (Saori), artworks



demonstration (acrylic painting), recycling and glass engraving activities. All proceeds gathered by Zahra Mall from the charity bazaar will be directed to the society's renovation program. All activities were open to the public free of charge.



KUWAIT: A general view of the charity bazaar held at Zahra Mall yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

Lawmakers demand urgent debate of election amendments

Some MPs object to new bedoons draft law

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Five lawmakers yesterday demanded an urgent debate in the National Assembly of proposed amendments to the election law to change the voting system. MPs Riyadh Al-Adasani, Abdullah Al-Kandari, Bader Al-Mulla, Mohammad Al-Dallal and Abdullah Fahhad said that a draft law on the amendments had been submitted to the assembly and referred to the interior and defense committee.

They said that the head of the interior committee promised that the committee will send its report on the amendments to

the assembly but has so far failed to do so although the amendments were submitted several months ago. The amendments basically call to allow voters to pick up two candidates in the assembly elections instead of one candidate under the existing law. The lawmakers said that under the assembly charter, any particular bill can be debated directly by the assembly without the need for the concerned panel to review it especially if it takes a long time.

In the meantime, a number of lawmakers yesterday expressed their opposition to a draft law submitted by the assembly speaker last week to resolve the problem of stateless people locally known as

bedoons. MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie said he totally rejects any law that does not fully provide bedoons their rights especially the right to Kuwaiti citizenship, adding that he and others will continue to press until bedoons get their rights.

The lawmaker was commenting on a draft law submitted by assembly speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem that calls to grant some bedoons Kuwaiti citizenship and others a premium residency provided they uncover their actual nationality. Subaie questioned how many more suicide cases among the bedoons are needed to highlight the plight of bedoons and push to resolve their decades-old problem.

MP Khalil Abul reiterated his backing to a draft law calling to grant bedoons full humanitarian and basic rights submitted by a number of MPs in the previous term. He also declared his support for a similar law presented by the lawyers association. MP Faisal Al-Kandari meanwhile denied reports that he had signed on the draft law filed by the speaker.

Head of the Foreign Relations Committee MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari said yesterday that the committee decided to invite the foreign ministry to review latest regional developments and the issue of mediation efforts Kuwait is carrying out to resolve the Gulf dispute.

Automobile parts dealers must present warranties

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan yesterday issued a decision on regulating the second-hand automobile spare parts market, by which vendors are mandated to offer warranty for the parts they sell to customers.

In other news, the Hawally committee at the Municipal Council yesterday approved a proposal by member Abdullah Al-Roumi on building a tunnel underneath Messila bridge to link Taawon Street and the Sixth Ring Road. The committee also approved a request by Touristic Enterprises Company to develop the Ras Al-Ardh Club and offer 5 percent of its total area, due to be reduced from 35,750 sq m to 35,265 sq m, for commercial use. In addition, the committee approved a request by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research to build new research and educational buildings along the seafront in Shaab. Meanwhile, the committee postponed discussing a number of requests by the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources and the finance, awqaf and social affairs ministries.

In the meantime, Municipal Councilmember Ali bin Sayer yesterday filed an inquiry to Kuwait Municipality's executive body concerning the lack of signboards at the new university's location in Shadadiya showing the names of 'Saihed Al-Awazem,' a historical name of the area, and Shadadiya, noting that such practices efface history and violate the Sabah Al-Salem University establishment law, which clearly mentions the location.

Bid to revive KPTC bus fleet

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Investment Authority's board of directors is currently studying a strategic plan by Kuwait Public Transport Company (KPTC) suggesting increasing its capital to handle the losses it has been suffering over the past few years to restructure and revive its bus fleet, well-informed sources said. The proposed strategy, which is expected to be approved, would take 3 to 5 years to revive KPTC's status as a leader and pioneer of the local public transport sector, the sources added. "Keeping the company as it is will only mean more losses of public funds," the sources stressed, pointing that restructuring the company and modernizing its fleet will increase its value in the event of selling it to a strategic investor in the future.

Housing units

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare said the total number of housing units in South Sabah Al-Ahmad project is 10,663, distributed over six out of the city's 11 districts. The authority explained that the project also includes 545 public buildings. In addition, the authority said the total number of housing applications made until the end of October is 87,828. The authority distributed 51,000 units in the period of 1956 to 1992, while 102,000 units were distributed in the period of 1993-2019.

Man with gun arrested at airport

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Police arrested a man carrying a gun inside Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 1 yesterday, the Interior Ministry said. The suspect had approached security officers, then pointed a gun to his own head, prompting police to evacuate the area. They then surrounded the suspect until he entered a safe zone where he was disarmed and arrested, the ministry said in a statement. The suspect, Kuwaiti, was inebriated at the time of arrest. The man has a criminal record and was previously deported from an Arab country for his misconduct, the ministry explained.

Five hurt in crash

Five persons were injured during a collision between an ambulance and a bus carrying workers on Abdali highway. The medical emergencies department said an accident took place resulting in the injury of five persons, including two paramedics. The injured were transferred to hospital by helicopter and four ambulances, all in good condition.

Kuwait wins int'l property ownership case

KUWAIT: An international court has issued a verdict in favor of Kuwait regarding a property ownership case, a senior law official announced yesterday. The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) dismissed the lawsuit filed by a foreign company against Kuwait, Chairman of Fatwa and Legislation Department Advisor Salah Al-Masad said. The Fatwa and Legislation Department was able to rebuff the first of such a lawsuit, which demanded a \$320 million-worth of compensation and alleged ownership of 80 million square meters of properties, valued at billions of US dollars, all of which based on alleged and "uncertified" ownership documents, said Masad. It is suspected that these "forged" documents have been issued for heirs of a Kuwaiti citizen in areas of Wafra and Khairan, he said, adding the foreign company alleges owning several properties in them and some investments as well. The judging panel heard both sides' pleadings at ICSID's headquarters in Paris, France, Masad mentioned.— KUNA

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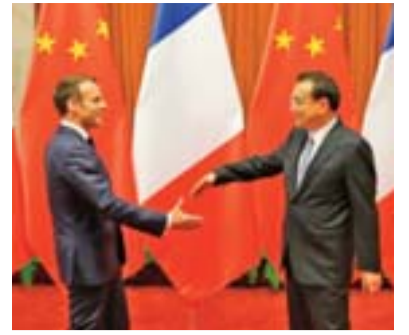
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International

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019



Xi, Macron unite on climate as US withdraws from Paris pact

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Dengue cases soar to record high in Pakistan



NEW DELHI: A motorist (C) wearing a face mask for protection against air pollution rides past an idol of Hindu god Hanuman. — AFP

Top court orders halt to stubble burning

Delhi residents are 'losing precious years' of their lives

NEW DELHI: India's top court has ordered a complete halt to stubble burning around Delhi, a major contributor to lethal smog that on Tuesday kept the metropolis of 20 million people choking in air rated "very poor". The Supreme Court said the capital's residents were "losing precious years" of their lives, adding "people are dying, this just cannot happen in a civilized country".

In a ruling following petitions filed by activists, the court's judges ordered an immediate halt to the practice of farmers burning crop stubble in the states surrounding the capital. They warned that the entire administrative and police hierarchy — all the way down to local officers — would be held responsible if the practice continued. Burning stubble is already illegal, but many hard-up farmers say they

have no choice.

Each winter, smog hits northern India as cooler air traps the stubble smoke, car fumes, factory emissions and construction dust close to the ground, creating a noxious cocktail that burns eyes and makes breathing difficult. On Sunday pollution shot up, with levels of particulates measuring less than 2.5 microns — so tiny they can enter the bloodstream — approaching 1,000 micrograms per cubic metre of air, the worst in three years.

The World Health Organisation's recommended safe daily maximum is just 25. Flights were diverted and hospitals reported a surge in patients with respiratory complaints. Concentrations of the tiny particles — which can be lethal with long-term exposure — fell Tuesday, with the government monitoring agency SAFAR rat-

ing the air "very poor", down from "severe" a day earlier. According to the AirVisual website, Delhi remained the most polluted city in the world on Tuesday ahead of Kolkata in eastern India and Lahore in Pakistan. Beijing was in sixth place.

Construction halt

Construction was banned temporarily in Delhi late last week, while schools have been closed until Wednesday — with city authorities handing out free anti-pollution masks to children. Authorities also parked a van with an air purifier near the Taj Mahal in a bid to clean the atmosphere that in recent years has damaged the iconic marble mausoleum, some 250 kilometers south of Delhi. "We read in newspapers about pollution in India and bought masks once we landed in Delhi. The air is really

bad here and we are worried about our children," Neelofar, a tourist from Iran at the Taj Mahal, told AFP.

On Monday Delhi authorities moved to reduce traffic by rolling out a scheme allowing cars with odd and even registration numbers on the roads on alternate days. Delhi's chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has called the city a "gas chamber", hailed the first day of the scheme as a success, with 1.5 million cars off the roads and traffic reduced. Two thousand volunteers and more than 465 police and transport officials were deployed at intersections, handing out fines of 4,000 rupees (nearly \$60) to 259 transgressors.

They included Vijay Goel, of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party, who flouted the law in his saffron sports utility vehicle to protest what called a

"stunt" ahead of upcoming city elections. Exempt from the restrictions were Delhi's seven million motorbikes and scooters, public transport vehicles, and cars carrying only women, stoking criticism that the measures were token.

Siddharth Singh, a climate policy expert, called the traffic restrictions "ineffective". "If air pollution was solely due to the vehicular traffic, then this would be a solution. Right now it cannot be a solution because motorized private transport has a very small share in the whole pie," Singh said. Stubble burning is believed to account for nearly half the pollution. Fourteen Indian cities including the capital are among the world's top 15 most polluted cities, according to the WHO. One study last year said that a million Indians died prematurely every year as a result. — AFP

India sets online monitors ahead of temple verdict

NEW DELHI: India has deployed thousands of additional security forces and roped in about 16,000 "digital volunteers" to sanitize social media of inflammatory posts ahead of a crucial Supreme Court verdict on a disputed religious site. Hindus and Muslims have for decades been bitterly divided over the 16th-century Babri mosque in Ayodhya, a city in the northern Uttar Pradesh state that Hindus believe is the birthplace of their god Ram.

Tensions boiled over in 1992 when Hindu zealots destroyed the mosque, sparking religious violence that killed 2,000 people. India's top court is expected to hand down its ruling on competing claims to the site's ownership before Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi retires on November 17. "Thousands of (additional) security personnel from different agencies have been deployed in and around Ayodhya. Additional vehicles, CCTV cameras, body cameras and drones too have been brought in," Ayodhya police senior superintendent Ashish Tiwari said yesterday.

"The police are also making other efforts to ensure that things remain calm. We have enlisted around 16,000 digital volunteers from 1,600 villages in the region to help monitor and flag sensitive content on the social media." The monitors will report what they deem is inappropriate content to police, who could then try to track down the posters and demand that



AYODHYA: Rapid Action Force (RPF) and Uttar Pradesh Police personnel patrol a street. — AFP

they delete their posts or messages.

Ayodhya — considered one of the holiest Hindu sites — is visited by religious pilgrims from all over India throughout the year. Around one million pilgrims are expected to be there early next week for a bathing ritual in the Saryu river that flows in the region. "We just have to stay alert and sensitive to the security of the visiting pilgrims," Ayodhya district magistrate Anuj Kumar Jha told AFP. "We are also keeping a very close watch on the social media to ensure there are no rumors or incitement."

Authorities clamped down on movement and assembly of people in the region last

month when the court was concluding its hearing into the dispute. The district also banned firecrackers and drones, only allowing them to be used if permission is granted. The Supreme Court has to decide on the appeals against a key 2010 verdict by the High Court which ruled that both groups should split the site, with Hindus granted the lion's share. Many Hindus believe the medieval mosque that stood there for 460 years was only built after the destruction of an earlier temple. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party has campaigned on constructing a new temple on the site of the razed mosque for decades. — AFP

South Koreans fake their funerals for life lessons

SEOUL: A South Korean service is offering free funerals — but only to the living. More than 25,000 people have participated in mass "living funeral" services at Hyowon Healing Center since it opened in 2012, hoping to improve their lives by simulating their deaths. "Once you become conscious of death, and experience it, you undertake a new approach to life," said 75-year-old Cho Jae-hee, who participated in a recent living funeral as part of a "dying well" program offered by her senior welfare center.

Dozens took part in the event, from teenagers to retirees, donning shrouds, taking funeral portraits, penning their last testaments, and lying in a closed coffin for around 10 minutes. University student Choi Jin-kyu said his time in the coffin helped him realize that too often, he viewed others as competitors. "When I was in the coffin, I wondered what use that is," said the 28-year-old, adding that he plans to start his own business after graduation rather than attempting to enter a highly-competitive job market.

South Korea ranks 33 out of 40 countries surveyed in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Better Life Index. Many younger South Koreans have high hopes for education and employment, which have been dashed by a cooling economy

and rising joblessness. "It is important to learn and prepare for death even at a young age," said Professor Yu Eun-sil, a doctor at Asan Medical Center's pathology department, who has written a book about death.

In 2016, South Korea's suicide rate was 20.2 per 100,000 residents, almost double the global average of 10.53, according to the World Health Organization. Funeral company Hyowon began offering the living funerals to help people appreciate their lives, and seek forgiveness and reconciliation with family and friends, said Jeong Yong-mun, who heads the healing center. Jeong said he is heartened when people reconcile at a relative's funeral, but is saddened they wait that long.

"We don't have forever," he said. "That's why I think this experience is so important — we can apologize and reconcile sooner and live the rest of our lives happily." Occasionally he has dissuaded those contemplating suicide. "I picked out those people who have asked themselves whether ... they can actually commit suicide, and I reversed their decision," Jeong said. The message of personal value resounded with Choi. "I want to let people know that they matter, and that someone else would be so sad if they were gone," he said, wiping away tears. "Happiness is in the present." — Reuters

International

Rebuke for Trump in races seen as barometers for 2020 election

In Virginia, Democrats will now hold all major statewide offices

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and his Republican allies suffered stinging defeats Tuesday as Democrats were projected to win closely-watched elections in two states, results that signal troubling headwinds for his 2020 re-election campaign.

The Republican Governor Matt Bevin in deep-red Kentucky was ousted by his Democratic challenger Andy Beshear, who led by less than half a percentage point with 100 percent of the vote counted, the official overseeing the election declared. Doubling the hurt, Trump's party also lost control of both chambers of the legislature in increasingly blue Virginia, US media including The New York Times projected. "We have called it for Attorney General Beshear to be the Kentucky governor-elect," Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes said on CNN.

The US president tweeted that Bevin "picked up at least 15 points in last days, but perhaps not enough (Fake News will blame Trump!)." Beshear, whose father was the last Democratic governor in the state, claimed victory, but Bevin did not throw in the towel. "This is a close, close race. We are not conceding this race by any stretch," the governor said. Should Bevin's loss be certified, it would be a shock defeat for a conservative in a southern state that Trump won by 30 percentage points in 2016.

In Virginia, Democrats will now hold all major statewide offices and rule the state assembly, a comprehensive consolidation of power not seen in the state since the 1990s. Democratic leadership swiftly portrayed the night as a massive boost for the party heading into next year's monumental battle against the president. "This historic victory should send a chill down the

spines of Donald Trump and every Republican," Democratic National Committee chairman Tom Perez said in a statement.

"Democrats are competing in every election and every state, running on our values, and channeling unprecedented energy into the voting booth — that's how we won tonight, that's how we'll beat Trump" in 2020. Tuesday's elections — including a governor's race in Mississippi that US media projected Republican candidate Tate Reeves would win — were tests of enthusiasm ahead of 2020 for Trump, who is deeply unpopular nationwide and is the subject of an impeachment investigation.

'Really bad message'

Trump hailed the Mississippi results, congratulating Reeves on Twitter and claiming that his support was key. "Congratulations to @tate Reeves on winning Governor of the Great State of Mississippi. Our big Rally on Friday night moved the numbers from a tie to a big WIN. Great reaction under pressure Tate!" Trump wrote. With Washington swept up in the impeachment saga, results in Kentucky, Mississippi and Virginia were being closely watched for how the crisis is influencing their voters, how strong the support is for Trump in Republican bastions, and whether Democrats are wielding increasing influence in the suburbs. The Kentucky result — boosted by strong Democratic turnout in suburban districts outside Lexington and other major cities — is all the more humiliating for Trump because he flew there Monday night to hold a large rally and implore his base to come out to the polls.

"If you lose, it sends a really bad message," he said.



LOUISVILLE: Apparent Gov.-elect Andy Beshear celebrates with supporters after voting results showed the Democrat holding a slim lead over Republican Gov. Matt Bevin at C2 Event Venue. — AFP

"You can't let that happen to me." Also on that night, he blasted Democrats for recently voting to bring the impeachment probe to a new, public phase. "The Democrats' outrageous conduct has created an angry

majority that will vote the do-nothing Democrats the hell out of office," Trump said. Instead, the opposite occurred. Bevin was in lockstep with Trump, as was Reeves in Mississippi. — AFP

Trump calls for 'war' on cartels

BAVISPE: President Donald Trump offered Tuesday to help Mexico hunt the killers of nine Mormon women and children shot dead in a lawless border area, and said the United States stood ready to back its southern neighbor in a "war" on drug cartels. Gunmen ambushed the members of the LeBaron family — a large clan of Mormons who emigrated to Mexico in the late 19th century — on Monday on a rural road between the states of Sonora and Chihuahua, which border the United States.

Three women and six children were killed, including a set of twin babies, said relatives and Mexican officials. Another six children were also injured — two seriously — in the attack, which left the family's cars riddled with bullets and one badly charred. Mexican Security Minister Alfonso Durazo said the family may have been mistakenly targeted or caught in the crossfire in turf wars between rival drug cartels.

"If Mexico needs or requests help in cleaning out these monsters, the United States stands ready, willing & able to get involved and do the job quickly and effectively," Trump wrote in a tweet. He praised Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador for prioritizing the fight against drug trafficking, but said "the cartels have become so large and powerful that you sometimes need an army to defeat an army!"

"This is the time for Mexico, with the help of the United States, to wage WAR on the drug cartels and wipe them off the face of the earth," Lopez Obrador said he would accept "all necessary cooperation" to get justice for the victims, all of whom lived on the Mexican side but



LEXINGTON: In this file photo taken on November 4, 2019 US President Donald Trump gestures as he speaks during a rally at Rupp Arena. — AFP

had dual nationality. But the left-wing populist, who has declared an end to Mexico's "drug wars," said he was not looking for a new one. "We don't agree (with Trump) on that," he told a news conference. "War is synonymous with irrationality."

He later tweeted that he had thanked Trump for his support in a phone call. The White House said the presidents had spoken about the "growing violent behavior" of drugs cartels and other criminal gangs. "President Trump made clear that the United States condemns these senseless acts of violence that took the lives of nine American citizens and offered Mexico assistance to ensure the perpetrators face justice," said spokesman Hogan Gidley.

Devastated members of the LeBaron family took to social media to call for prayers and

condemn the lawless violence gripping much of the border region. "It was a massacre," Julian LeBaron, an activist who has denounced criminal groups in the area, told Mexican radio network Formula. He said the women were on their way to the airport with their children when their SUVs were attacked at Rancho Las Moras, in Bavispe, Sonora.

Several children managed to escape and return home on foot, he added. Another, a three-month-old baby, was found wounded but alive beneath her mother's body. An eight-year-old girl was also missing for about 24 hours, before being found unharmed several kilometers away. Relatives said the children were all deeply traumatized. Five wounded children were airlifted for medical treatment in Phoenix, Arizona. — AFP

Egypt water crisis builds as temperature rises

FAYOUM: Ahmed Abd-Rabo used to get all the water he needed to feed his crops in northern Egypt. Then the canal linking his seven acres to the River Nile started drying up and he had to abandon half the plot. His smallholding is one of the victims of a creeping water crisis, exacerbated by Egypt's growing population and the impacts of climate change.

Egypt fears things could get even worse as Ethiopia starts filling the reservoir behind a giant dam upriver. On Wednesday, the United States is hosting talks between the countries and their fellow Nile-user Sudan to try to restart stalled talks over the hydropower project. But even if Washington succeeds where years of trilateral negotiations have failed, Egypt will still have broader water problems that have left it struggling to sustain food production.

"There is very little Nile water," said Abd-Rabo, standing next to the plot where he grows wheat and fodder in Fayoum, about 100km south of the capital, Cairo. "In winter, sometimes there's a bit more, but mainly because the land doesn't need a lot of water in the winter. But in the summer, we don't get any." Egyptian officials say they currently have around 570 cubic meters of water per person per year - hydrologists con-

sider a country to be facing water scarcity if supplies drop below 1,000 cubic meters per person per year.

Mud and soil

Egypt's figure is expected to drop to 500 cubic meters by 2025. That is without taking into account the impact of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which Egypt says will lower water levels further, though Ethiopia says it has taken the needs of Egypt and Sudan into account. The stakes are high. Talk of physical conflict between the countries along the Nile has receded, but Egypt sees the dam as an existential threat that could decimate farming and damage power supplies.

More than 80% of its water is used for agriculture, but scarcity means Cairo already imports about half its food and is the world's largest wheat importer. The government is urging farmers to use more efficient irrigation and plant seeds with shorter life spans that require less water. It is also trying to recycle more water. But the water management and irrigation schemes have not reached everyone.

"We are still using old irrigation techniques, which use mud and soil, and waste water," said Aref Mohamed, a farmer near the southern city of Luxor. Fines to stop farmers planting water-intensive rice in the northern Nile Delta are not being as strictly enforced as last year, locals say. The area under rice cultivation has shot up to 1.75 million acres from about 800,000 acres over the same period, according to irrigation ministry estimates. — Reuters

UN Palestinian agency head steps aside amid probe

JERUSALEM: The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees has stepped aside temporarily as an internal probe into alleged mismanagement at the organization proceeds, it said yesterday. Pierre Krahenbuhl, commissioner general of the agency known as UNRWA, will be replaced on an interim basis by the agency's acting deputy chief Christian Saunders, it said. The agency said findings in the probe so far "revealed management issues which relate specifically to the commissioner general."

"The commissioner-general has stepped aside until the completion of the process," it said. An internal ethics report has alleged mismanagement and abuses of authority at the highest levels of the agency, which has also faced a financial crisis after US funding cuts. UN investigators have been probing the allegations in the confidential report, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

The report describes "credible and corroborated" allegations of serious ethical abuses, including involving Krahenbuhl, a Swiss national. It says the allegations include senior management engaging in "sexual misconduct, nepotism, retaliation, discrimination and other abuses of authority, for personal gain, to suppress legitimate dissent, and to otherwise achieve their personal objectives." Krahenbuhl himself was alleged to have been romantically involved with a colleague appointed in 2015 to



KHAN YUNIS: Palestinian protesters wave their national flags during clashes with Israeli forces following a demonstration along the border with Israel east of Khan Yunis. — AFP

a newly created role of senior adviser after an "extreme fast-track" process, the report says.

That enabled her to join him on international business class flights, the report alleges. UNRWA came under heavy financial constraints after the United States suspended and later cut all funding for it in 2018. US President Donald Trump's administration, along with Israel, accuses UNRWA of perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The agency disputes that and says the services it provides would otherwise not be available to Palestinians.

A number of other countries suspended their contributions pending the outcome of the probe into alleged mismanagement.

UNRWA was set up in the years after more than 700,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled their lands during the 1948 war surrounding the creation of Israel. It provides schooling and medical services to millions of impoverished refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria as well as the Palestinian territories. It employs around 30,000 people, mostly Palestinians, and its UN mandate is set to be debated later this year. A European diplomat speaking on condition of anonymity said he was "grateful for all (Krahenbuhl) did to stabilize the organization during a difficult time, but stepping aside now is the correct decision." — AFP

Cyprus to strip citizenships after uproar over passports

ATHENS: Cyprus yesterday said it had started a process to strip 26 individuals of citizenship they received under a secretive passports-for-investment scheme, admitting it had flaws. The Mediterranean island has been rattled by disclosures of its investments scheme since Reuters exclusively reported last month a list of Cambodian beneficiaries, including its police chief and finance minister.

Rescinding citizenship is highly unusual, and the move came after authorities launched a probe in the wake of the report. "The Council of Ministers today affirmed the will of the government for strict adherence to the terms and conditions of the Cyprus investment program," Cypriot Interior Minister Constantinos Petrides told journalists after a four-hour cabinet meeting. Petrides did not disclose nationalities or identities of those affected. However, Cypriot sources said the group included nine Russians, eight Cambodians, five Chinese nationals, two Kenyans, one Malaysian and one Iranian. They involved nine investment projects, whereby groups of foreign investors in partnership can benefit from the scheme. Cyprus has had a citizenship for investment plan in place since 2013, under which a minimum 2 million euro (\$2.2 million) investment can buy

a passport and visa-free travel throughout the European Union.

Advertising the scheme is now banned, but at least one law office used to distribute pamphlets resembling passports to visitors at the island's main airport. Authorities say the program has gone through several transformations, and was overhauled in February 2019 with five different due diligence layers, compared to one in 2013. In five years between the inception of the citizenship scheme and 2018, the Cypriot government approved 1,864 citizenship applications. Including family members, the number was more than 3,200, and is close to 4,000 today.

"If there were nine investment cases, concerning 26 people among 4,000 applications, it is logical that some would be problematic when controls weren't strict," Petrides said. "There were mistakes, it was a mistake not to have criteria, for instance, for high-risk persons." The Reuters investigation showed that influential police, business and political associates of Cambodia's long-time ruler had overseas assets worth tens of millions of dollars.

Recently, Cypriot newspaper Politis reported Malaysian fugitive financier Low Taek Jho, accused of a multibillion dollar theft at state fund Malaysia Development Berhad (MIDB), was another beneficiary of a passport. Hun Sen has previously denied opposition allegations that members of his inner circle had other passports and lived the high life overseas. Some 70 percent of Cambodians live on \$3 a day, according to the Asian Development Bank. Petrides, whose ministry signs off on passport applications, said the individuals concerned had the right to appeal. — Reuters

International

France claims death of the top jihadist leader in Mali

Mali's army has been struggling to contain the Islamist insurgency

ABOARD A FRENCH GOVERNMENT PLANE: France on Tuesday announced the death of a top jihadist leader in Mali as it sought to reassure the West African nation of European support in the fight against militant bloodshed. French troops killed Moroccan Ali Maychou of the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM) in Mali last month, Defense Minister Florence Parly told AFP aboard a government plane as she returned from an official visit to the region.

He was "the second most-wanted terrorist in the Sahel, including by the Americans", after GSIM's number one Iyad Ag Ghaly, she said. Comprising several jihadist groups linked to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the GSIM has claimed responsibility for the biggest attacks in the Sahel since its official launch in 2017. Ag Ghaly is a Tuareg Malian who has been involved in militancy for nearly three decades.

Mali's army has been struggling to contain the Islamist insurgency despite help from France, African neighbors and the United Nations. A string of deadly assaults has underscored the fragility of a region where jihadist violence has claimed hundreds of lives. In the latest attack, claimed by Islamic State-allied militants, gunmen on Friday shot dead 49 Malian troops at an army base near the border with Niger.

Over the weekend, two more Malian soldiers and a French soldier were killed. France, whose 4,500-strong Barkhane force has been in the Sahel since 2014, has been trying to convince European partners to boost military assistance. Earlier Tuesday, Parly acknowledged the security situation was "clearly difficult" but said France was nearing a breakthrough in the talks. "By 2020, special forces from European countries will

be deployed in Mali alongside the French special forces to pass on exceptional know-how" to Mali's army, Parly said during a visit to the northern city of Gao.

She added that around a dozen countries had been approached to join the unit — to be named "Takuba", which means "sabre" in the Tuareg language — and had received encouraging replies. Participation is conditional on votes in national parliaments but Parly said she was "optimistic". Efforts to boost the European security presence in the region comes as continuing attacks have raised questions over the ability of the Malian army and its foreign backers to take control of the situation, as well as protests against international forces.

Instability and protest

Ali Maychou was killed during the night of October 8 with the help of Malian troops and US support, Parly said. He joined AQIM in 2012 before co-founding GSIM with Iyad Ag Ghaly and masterminding its expansion in the Sahel. "It's very important to profoundly disorganize these movements but that doesn't mean that these movements will self-destruct," Parly said. Northern Mali fell into the hands of jihadists in 2012 before the militants were forced out by a French-led military intervention.

But the jihadists have regrouped to carry out hit-and-run strikes in violence that has spread to central Mali. A month ago, some 40 troops were killed near the Burkina Faso border. Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has said Friday's attack shows the help of foreign forces is "necessary more than ever". MINUSMA, the 13,000-strong UN peacekeeping mission in Mali,



PARIS: The hearse transporting the coffin of French Brigadier Ronan Pointeau of the French Army 1st Spahi Regiment in Valence crosses the Alexandre III bridge in Paris on his way to the Invalides (Hotel des Invalides), for a military tribute. — AFP

helped the army build the Indelimane base last year, along with French soldiers.

The G5 Sahel, a five-nation joint taskforce set up in 2014 to tackle the jihadist threat, is also active in the region. It comprises troops from Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. But the ongoing instability

has stirred protests. In mid-October, hundreds of demonstrators set fire to tyres and ransacked UN supply containers outside a MINUSMA military camp in Sevare, near the central Malian city of Mopti. There have also been several protests against foreign troops in Niger since the beginning of the year. — AFP

Crops in the clouds: Rooftop farming in space-starved HK

HONG KONG: At the top of a three-storey building in Hong Kong, with car horns blasting on the streets below, Jim Fung teaches a dozen students how to thin out choi sum vegetables. "Always use the resources you have," the instructor said as he placed shredded office paper into soil-filled plastic crates and wound string around bamboo sticks to make support frames.

Fung was coaching the first cohort of students in an academy run by social enterprise Rooftop Republic to teach a new generation of urban farmers as demand for their skills soars. The organization is spearheading a movement to turn Hong Kong's idle rooftops and urban spaces into farms to help residents reconnect with nature and make the finance hub more liveable. Once a cluster of fishing and farming villages, Hong Kong is now one of the most densely packed cities on Earth, with 7.4 million people living on a quarter of its 1,100 square km of land.

The rest is mainly country parks and rural areas, but living in skyscrapers and working long hours has caused Hong Kongers to lose touch with the nature around them, say students at the academy. "We've become detached from the history of the sea and land that Hong Kong had," said Jessica Cheng, a Rooftop Republic student who works for a philanthropic organization. Andrew Tsui, one of Rooftop Republic's three co-founders, said he wants the academy to be "Le Cordon Bleu" (a famous cookery school) of urban farming.

To him, that means a place where graduates become masters of the practice and at the same time become "stewards of our planet, our wellbeing, and our communities", he said. Founded in 2015, Rooftop Republic has set up more than 50 urban farms so far. It launched its academy in March, starting with events and workshops. The organization's first urban farming course, which began last month, teaches students botany, organic farming and how to manage soil, pests, weeds and water resources.

Their classroom sits atop the headquarters of Hong Kong's Business Environment Council, a non-profit promoting sustainability in the world's second most-expensive city for property after Monaco, according to global realtor Knight Frank. Since 2008 more than 60 rooftop farms have sprouted up around Hong Kong, covering 15,000 square meters, said Mathew Pryor, who heads the University of Hong Kong's landscape architecture division. He estimates another six square km of rooftop space could be available — about half the size of Hong Kong's airport and just less than the seven square km of agricultural land in the city.

Hoping to expand that potential, Tsui told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that Rooftop Republic has been working with developers to include rooftop farms in their design blueprints. One day, he predicted, rooftop farmers will be as necessary as facility managers who look after clubhouses and pools. His organization will train about 150 urban farmers over the next year, he added. "We have the power to shape the future city we live in ... through demonstrating how adopting an urban farm lifestyle helps the end consumer become aware of ecology, biodiversity, nature, wellbeing and a circular food system," Tsui said. — AFP

UK PM's election campaign launch marred by gaffe

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's election campaign launch was marred by the resignation of one of his ministers, a gaffe about the victims of a deadly tower blaze and a doctored video of an opponent released by his party. Johnson called a snap Dec 12 election in a bid to break the Brexit deadlock that he says has paralyzed Britain for more than three years and had started to undermine confidence in the world's fifth largest economy.

But just an hour after meeting Queen Elizabeth to formally begin the election campaign, Johnson's minister for Wales, Alun Cairns, resigned after being accused of lying about his knowledge about an aide who allegedly sabotaged a rape trial. At the start of the campaign, Johnson's Conservatives enjoy a lead over the opposition Labour Party of between 7 and 17 percentage points, though pollsters warn that their models are wilying beside the Brexit furnace.

"Let's get Brexit done," Johnson, 55, said outside his Downing Street official residence, adding that Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn would bring yet more turmoil with fresh referendums on EU membership and Scottish independence. "Come with us, get Brexit done and take this country forward, or, and this is the alternative next year, spend the whole of 2020 in a horror

show of yet more dither and delay," he said.

Johnson said Corbyn hated wealth and was thus like Soviet leader Josef Stalin — who sent millions to their deaths in labor camps. Corbyn said such remarks were "nonsense" that the super-rich came up with to avoid paying more tax. Earlier, Conservative Party Chairman James Cleverly spent the morning defending distributing a doctored video clip of a rival Labour Party politician instead of touting Johnson's election campaign launch. Another prominent Conservative, Jacob Rees-Mogg, apologized on Tuesday after he suggested that victims of the blaze at London's Grenfell Tower should have used common sense to ignore firefighters' instructions to stay in the burning building.

Election gamble

Johnson, 55, hopes he will win a big enough majority in parliament to get the Brexit deal he agreed with Brussels last month ratified and lead Britain out of the EU at the end of December or in January. After failing to deliver Brexit on Oct 31, Johnson said his party offered the only way to deliver Brexit and painted Labour's Corbyn as a socialist wrecker determined to bring in yet more political crisis.

"They pretend that their hatred is directed only at certain billionaires — and they point their fingers at individuals with a relish and a vindictiveness not seen since Stalin persecuted the kulaks," Johnson wrote in an article for the Daily Telegraph newspaper. "They would destroy the very basis of this country's prosperity."

Millions of people were executed under Stalin and many more perished from abuse and disease in a vast network of prison camps, known as the Gulags. Relatively affluent farmers, known as kulaks, were



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks outside number 10 Downing Street in central London. — AFP

among the groups targeted. Speaking at a campaign event in the English town of Telford on Wednesday, Corbyn said Labour would deliver real change and share power and wealth with people who "don't have friends in high places".

"They quite shamefully think the victims of Grenfell fire died because they didn't have the common sense to save themselves," Corbyn said. "I'll tell you what's common sense — don't put flammable cladding on people's homes." He also cautioned against believing the consensus view that Johnson was assured victory, citing the 2017 election when Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, bet on calling a snap election when also far ahead in the polls but lost her majority. "In the 2017 election, there were queues of experts ... lining up at the beginning of the campaign to write off the Labour Party, and what happened then?" Corbyn said. — Reuters

Sudan rebels insist new parliament be formed only after peace deal

KHARTOUM: Sudanese rebel groups engaged in peace talks with Khartoum insisted yesterday that the country's new parliament be formed only after an agreement is reached to end long-running conflicts in three border regions. A power-sharing deal signed on August 17 between protest leaders and the generals who ruled Sudan after the April overthrow of longtime president Omar al-Bashir stipulates that a 300-member parliament be formed within three months.

Since the signing of the so-called "Constitutional Declaration", the transitional government, led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, has engaged in talks with three rebel groups to reach a peace deal to end the wars in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Rebel groups said that during talks in the South Sudanese capital of Juba, the two sides had agreed to delay the formation of a new parliament until a peace deal has been reached.

The groups said they would not give up their demand despite the protest movement's insistence on the original November 17 deadline stipulated by the so-called "Constitutional Declaration". "The Sudanese Revolutionary Front rejects any unilateral attempt to violate the Juba declaration that aims to build confidence measures," the rebel alliance said in a statement. The SRF called on Khartoum to "stick to what has been agreed on" in Juba.

It urged Khartoum not to set off any "upheaval that might disturb the atmosphere and create a state of mistrust that will delay the reaching of peace, which our country is in desperate need of". Hamdok's government has made reaching a peace deal to end conflict in the country's three war zones a priority. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and millions displaced in the rebellions by ethnic minority groups in the three conflict zones that met with an iron fist from Bashir's ousted regime.

Bashir himself is wanted by the Hague-based



Sudanese soldiers take part in an army exercise on the outskirts of the capital Khartoum. — AFP

International Criminal Court for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity for his alleged role in the war in Darfur. He denies the charges. Veteran Sudanese journalist Khalid Tijani said the forming of parliament by November 17 was now difficult. "The time left is not enough as there is still no agreement on the mechanism of appointing the lawmakers within the protest movement itself," Tijani told AFP.

"The military too is of the opinion that forming a parliament at this stage might lead to more complications as these lawmakers would be appointed and not elected," Tijani said the near-term developments in Sudan are expected to be influenced by what happens with the peace negotiations. "If a peace deal is reached, it will lead to restructuring of the government and possibly even the sovereign council," he said, referring to the 11-member ruling body that is currently governing the northeast African country. "And if peace is not achieved, then it will affect the entire transitional period."

Protest leader Sateia Al-Haj acknowledged that there were "obstacles" in forming of parliament before November 17. "The armed movements must have a fair representation in parliament and this can be done only after a peace agreement is reached," he told AFP. The protest movement Forces of Freedom and Change is expected to discuss the issue later on Wednesday or Thursday, Haj said. "If there is an urgent need to postpone the formation of parliament, then that is what is likely to happen." In September, Sudan declared a permanent ceasefire in the three war zones in a bid to boost the peace talks. — AFP

Spanish prosecutor to seek tougher rape verdicts

MADRID: Spanish prosecutors will appeal a court ruling which found five men who assaulted a 14-year-old girl guilty of sexual abuse rather than the graver crime of rape, a source at the prosecutor's office said yesterday. The ruling, which has sparked days of protests by women activists, has revived memories of the so-called Wolfpack case which led to mass rallies across Spain last year over chauvinism and sexual abuse.

Last Thursday, Barcelona's High Court sentenced the five men to 10-12 years in prison. It ruled that their 2016 assault was not rape because the victim, who was drunk and unconscious, could neither "agree to (nor) oppose the sexual relations". In its appeal, the Barcelona prosecutor's office said it wanted the men instead to be charged with rape, which carries prison sentences of 15 to 20 years. Women activists have branded last week's verdict a "disgrace" and have demanded that the government reform the penal code to allow for a broader definition of rape and tougher sentences.

Spanish law currently does not legally recognize rape unless physical violence or intimidation is employed. The Socialist government, which is facing a national election on Sunday, has appointed a panel to review relevant parts of the penal code. Many European countries have revised sexual violence laws to recognize the importance of explicit consent and take non-physical forms of coercion and abuse of power into account. In the Wolfpack case a lower court ruled in 2016 that five men who gang-raped a teenager at a bull-running festival were guilty of sexual abuse. Following the mass protests and an appeal, Spain's Supreme Court ruled in June this year that they were guilty of rape and increased their sentences to 15 years from nine. — AFP

International

Xi, Macron unite on climate as US withdraws from Paris pact

World's largest economy the sole major outlier from the agreement

BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron declared yesterday that the Paris climate pact was "irreversible" showing a united front after Washington formally withdrew from the accord this week. The joint declaration came at the end of Macron's second visit to China, which started on Monday in Shanghai and included talks on trade and the Iranian nuclear issue.

The French leader also said he told Xi there was a need for dialogue to resolve months of unrest in Hong Kong — ignoring Beijing's prior warning that such sensitive topics should not be on the agenda. But Xi and Macron found common ground on climate change. Major powers expressed regret and concern after President Donald Trump went ahead with the pullout from the Paris accord despite mounting evidence of the reality and impact of climate change.

Washington presented its withdrawal letter to the United Nations on Monday, the first possible date under the accord negotiated by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama, making the world's largest economy the sole major outlier from the agreement. In a joint written statement, Xi and Macron reaffirmed "their firm support for the Paris accord which they consider as an irreversible process and a compass for strong action on climate".

Without directly naming the U.S., Macron said he "deplores the choices made by others" as he sat next to Xi following the talks at the imposing Great Hall of the People in the Chinese capital. "But I want to look at them as marginal choices," Macron said. With the European Union, China and Russia backing the pact, he added, "the isolated choice of one or another is not enough to change the course of the world. It only leads to marginalization."

'Law of the jungle'

In his remarks, Xi took a veiled swipe at the United States, which launched a trade war with China last year

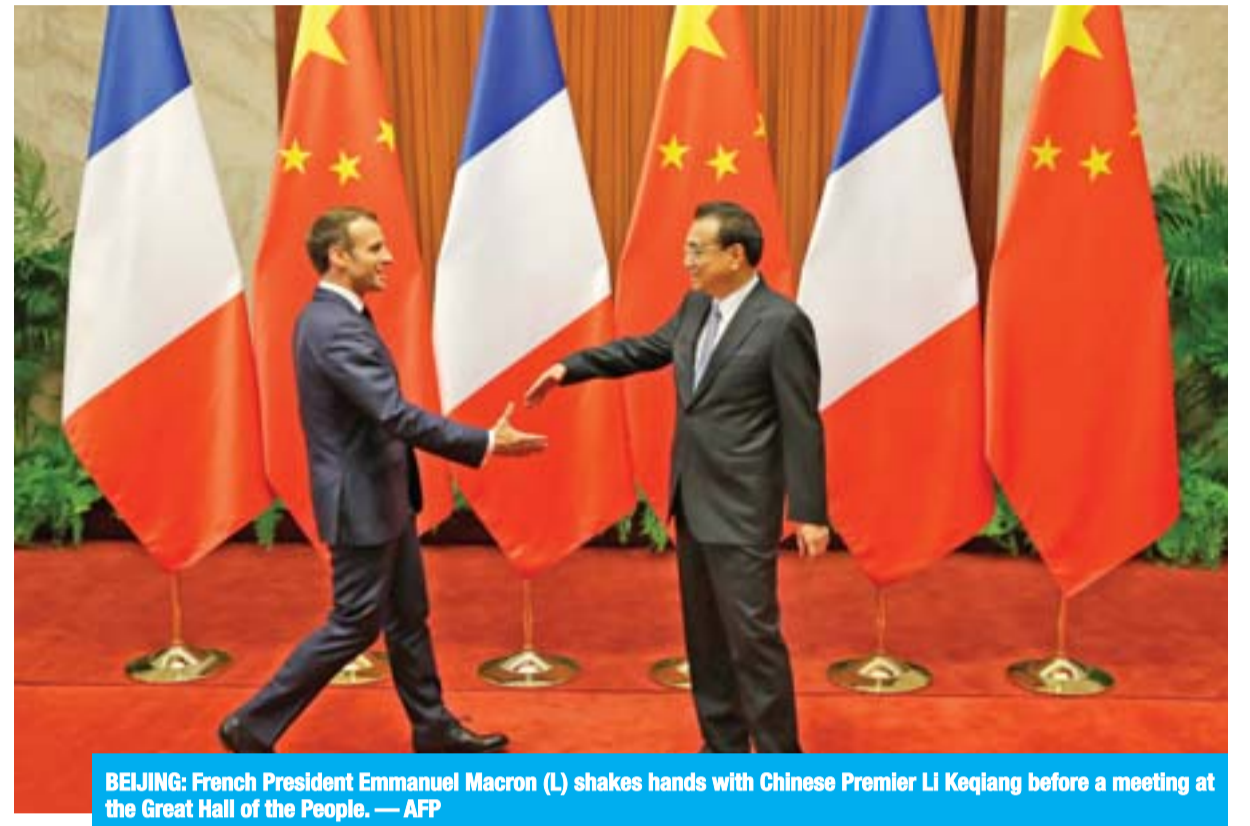
and has angered Beijing on various diplomatic issues. "We advocate for mutual respect and equal treatment, and are opposed to the law of the jungle and acts of intimidation," Xi said. "We advocate for openness, inclusion and for mutually beneficial cooperation, and are opposed to protectionism and a zero-sum game."

China's efforts against climate change are key as it is the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. Xi also called on the international community to "jointly protect our homeland planet Earth", saying "we are against the attempt to place national interests above the common interests of humanity". In a document titled the "Beijing Call for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change", the two leaders voiced their determination to improve international cooperation to "ensure a complete and efficient implementation of the Paris accord". The document includes a commitment to restoring almost a third of degraded land as well as eliminating fossil fuel subsidies in the medium term.

Unrest in Hong Kong

After the meeting, Macron said at a news conference at the French embassy that he had raised the unrest in Hong Kong during his talks with Xi. "I obviously conveyed our concerns, which are shared by Europe," Macron said, adding that he told Xi that there was a need for "de-escalation through dialogue." The international finance hub has been convulsed by five months of huge and increasingly violent protests calling for greater democratic freedoms.

A Chinese foreign ministry official had warned prior to Macron's visit that Hong Kong was a matter of China's internal affairs and should not be on the diplomatic agenda. But it did not stop the two sides from striking deals, including an agreement to protect 200 European and Chinese agricultural products — whose names are tied to their regions — against counterfeiting, from Champagne



BEIJING: French President Emmanuel Macron (L) shakes hands with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang before a meeting at the Great Hall of the People. — AFP

to Feta cheese and Panjin rice.

The two sides also committed to signing by January 31 a contract for the construction of a nuclear fuel recycling plant in China, which would involve French energy

giant Orano. On Iran, Macron said the two countries agreed to deepen joint efforts to convince Tehran to "fully respect its obligations" under the 2015 nuclear deal with major powers. — AFP

Duterte foe accepts anti-drug war post

MANILA: A fierce critic of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly anti-drug war accepted a top post yesterday to help steer the campaign, pledging to halt killings of the innocent. While critics said the appointment is an effort to tarnish an adversary, the move will put Leni Robredo in the cockpit of the internationally condemned crackdown.

Duterte offered the post to Robredo, who is vice president but was elected separately, after her repeated criticism of a campaign that has killed thousands. "I want to fix the campaign against illegal drugs, stop the killing of innocents and bring to account abusive officials," Robredo told a press conference. She will be the co-chair of a committee responsible for overseeing the crackdown, which was until now led by the national anti-drugs agency.

Duterte critics were skeptical of the appointment, with Senator Lila de Lima calling it a "silly trap". The president wants to "create the narrative of putting all the blame of his failures on someone else", added De Lima, who is imprisoned on drug charges she says are politically moti-



BANGKOK: Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte attends the plenary session of the 35th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit. — AFP

vated. Opinion polls say the drug war has the overwhelming backing of Filipinos, yet it has high-profile critics among opposition politicians, the powerful Catholic church and advocacy groups.

'Brink of surrender'

Foreign institutions have also stepped in to question the

killings, including International Criminal Court prosecutors who have launched a preliminary probe. Drug agents say they have killed just over 5,500 alleged dealers and users who fought back during arrest, but watchdogs say the true toll is at least four times higher.

Advocates allege the campaign is a war on the urban poor which has had the side effect of unleashing a rush of killings linked to everything from personal disputes to political rivalries. Duterte's spokesman Salvador Panelo has denied the appointment was an effort to drag Robredo into the morass of the campaign to co-opt her. "Effectively, we're giving her a ladder to the presidency. This is her chance," Panelo said on Tuesday.

Duterte has previously derided Robredo's capability to potentially lead the country, which she would have to do if the president dies or cannot function. But in a turnaround labeled by critics as a trap, Duterte said in a speech last week that the drug situation has "worsened" with the police on the "brink of surrendering". "It's beyond my competence, but maybe she will do better," Duterte told reporters last week.

Several members of Duterte's cabinet said they would work with Robredo in good faith, but not all of them were so welcoming. C'mon Leni, let's try something new. Except legalizing the drug trade, rehabbing drug dealers instead shootin' em", foreign secretary Teodoro Locsin wrote in a tweet. — AFP

15 killed in alleged rebel attacks in Thailand's south

YALA: At least fifteen people were gunned down in an ambush by suspected Muslim militants in Thailand's violence-wracked south, an army spokesman said yesterday, one of the bloodiest days in the 15-year insurgency. Thailand's three southernmost provinces have been in the grip of a conflict that has killed more than 7,000 people, as Malay-Muslim militants fight for more autonomy from the Thai state.

Despite the high death toll, the highly localized unrest garners few international headlines. The region is heavily controlled by the police and the military, with residents and rights groups accusing them of heavy-handed tactics. Villagers trained and armed by security forces are also enlisted to monitor remote villages, though they are rarely targeted by the rebels. This changed late Tuesday when militants struck two checkpoints in Yala province manned by civilian defense volunteers, opening fire on them as a group of villagers stopped to talk, southern army spokesman Pramote Prom-in told AFP.

In the largest death toll in years, "twelve were killed at the scene, two more (died) at the hospital, and one died this morning", said Pramote, adding that five others were injured. The attackers took M-16 rifles and shotguns from the checkpoints, he said. "These acts were by militants." Nails were also scattered on the roads in an apparent effort to slow the security forces, the army said in a separate statement.

A bomb squad was dispatched yesterday morning to investigate and detonate an explosive device suspected to have been left by fleeing attackers about three kilometers from one checkpoint. The southern army commander told reporters that the attackers were targeting "weak points". "This is just to gain the headlines and scare Thai people nationwide," said Pornsak Poonsawasdi. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-cha said the perpetrators must "be brought to justice", according to Defense Ministry spokesman Kongcheep Tantravanich.

Tit-for-tat attacks

Rebels seeking autonomy for the culturally distinct region bordering Malaysia have been fighting the Buddhist-majority Thai state, which colonized the area over a century ago. The conflict is characterized by tit-for-tat attacks that usually target symbols of the Thai state and its security forces but civilians from both Muslim and Buddhist communities often get caught in the crossfire.

The violence has bled into tourist destinations, like in 2012 when a series of car bombs in Songkhla province's Hat Yai killed 13 people. The incidents have been fewer



YALA: The body of a person killed in an attack by suspected Muslim militants is brought to a hospital in Yala province. — AFP

in recent years, but the hits have become "more intense", said Don Pathan, an expert on the so-called Deep South. Tuesday's attack marked the largest coordinated effort "in a very long time", he added. It comes days after Bangkok hosted the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit, which brought head of states from all over the world — along with hundreds of foreign journalists.

"It (the attack) is a reminder that they are still here," Pathan said. Civilian defense volunteers rarely draw the rebels' ire "unless if they cross the line and become part of the government security apparatus", he added. The rebels accuse the state of railroading their distinct culture as well as carrying out routine abuses which go unpunished. The latest incident stoking outrage in the region was the death in August of Abdulloh Esomusor, a Muslim man who was detained by the military and left in a coma after being interrogated at a notorious Thai detention centre.

Suspects are routinely taken for interrogation and held under emergency laws in detention centers where rights groups have documented torture. Days after Abdulloh's detention, four people were killed in a late-night attack on a military outpost, fuelling speculation of a retaliatory operation. A week later, several small bombs exploded in Bangkok, injuring four people as the city hosted a major summit attended by top diplomats, including US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Thailand has linked the bombs to southern insurgents — though no group ever claimed responsibility for the attacks. — AFP

Thai PM says Cambodian oppn leader not allowed to transit

BANGKOK: Thailand will not allow Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy to transit through the kingdom in a bid to return to Phnom Penh, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-cha said yesterday. Rainsy, who has lived in France since 2015 to avoid jail for convictions he says are politically motivated, has promised a dramatic homecoming on November 9, Cambodia's Independence Day.

But Cambodia's strongman premier Hun Sen has said repeatedly that arrest warrants for his arch-rival have been sent to neighboring countries and troops deployed at the Thai-Cambodian border to stop his return. Prayut confirmed that authorities are on the lookout for Rainsy and any key opposition members. "We will not allow anti-government (parties) to use Thailand as a base," the Thai leader said in an apparent reference to Rainsy's Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP).

The CNRP was dissolved in the lead-up to last year's heavily criticized elections in Cambodia, which Hun Sen's party swept, turning the country into a one-party state. Since then, key opposition members have fled the country. Police have rounded up dozens of opposition activists in recent weeks ahead of Rainsy's planned return. In neighboring Thailand, authorities were sent photos of the opposition members and Rainsy — who on Tuesday posted a Thai Airways stub on social media showing a seat in his name on a Paris to Bangkok flight on Friday.

But Prayut said authorities have been told to stop him. "I do not think he will be able to enter (Thailand)," he said. Hun Sen has ruled Cambodia for 34 years, but the CNRP and Rainsy — who analysts say remains a popular symbol for change — are thorns in his side. The tensions were on display Wednesday when the Cambodian ambassador to Indonesia Hor Nambora stormed a press conference by deputy CNRP leader Mu Sochua — who is also planning to return to Phnom Penh to support Rainsy.

Organizer Darmawan Triwibowo of pro-democracy NGO Kurawal Foundation said they rebuffed the ambassador's demands that the "illegal" event be cancelled. The embassy later issued a press release calling for Mu Sochua's arrest and immediate deportation to Cambodia, citing her status as a "fugitive". In Malaysia meanwhile, two opposition activists — one of them an asylum seeker — were detained as they were boarding flights to Thailand, Human Rights Watch's Phil Robertson told AFP, adding that they will face imprisonment if deported to Cambodia. "Freedom of expression and association have been so destroyed in Cambodia that now its diplomats think they can extend their rights-violating tactics overseas," Robertson said.

Dramatic shooting

In other news, an American drug suspect and his Thai wife who went on the run after they shot and stabbed their way out of a courtroom were apprehended Wednesday, authorities said, with the man shooting his wife and then himself as police closed in.

The couple, along with an associate, had made their brazen and violent escape from a court holding room in the seedy southern city of Pattaya on Monday, wounding a police officer before fleeing in a pick-up truck. But yesterday they were tracked down in Sa Kaeo province, which shares a border with Cambodia, with the American taking his wife hostage in the ensuing standoff with police. "The foreign suspect shot his wife, and then himself," Sattawat Hiranburana, assistant to the national police chief, told AFP, adding that the American had sustained "serious" injuries. The wife was also wounded though in a less critical condition, Sattawat said. The couple are facing death penalty charges for drug trafficking, although sentences are rarely carried out. — AFP

Dengue cases soar to record high in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A record-breaking 44,000 people have been infected with mosquito-borne dengue in Pakistan this year, a senior health official said yesterday, as increased outbreaks linked to rising temperatures and erratic rainfall ravage other parts of Asia. Dr Rana Safdar, a senior official at the National Institute of Health (NIH), told AFP the figure is a huge leap from the previous record of 27,000 infections in 2011.

Safdar said 66 people had been killed by the disease so far in 2019, compared to 370 in 2011. He blamed climate change for the surge, but would not elaborate. The government was "employing all available resources at its disposal to contain the problem", he said. Physician Dr Mahseema Siddique, who treats dengue patients, blamed the government for the rise in cases, saying local authorities in Punjab and Islamabad in particular had failed to take precautions such as covering up water reservoirs or spraying anti-dengue chemicals.

"They woke up only after hundreds of people got infected and that was too late. There are a large number of areas where spray teams could not make it," he said. The highest number of patients was recorded in the capital Islamabad and neighboring garrison city of Rawalpindi, where 12,433 people were found infected with the virus. Dengue is transmitted mainly by the Aedes Aegypti mosquito, which thrives in densely-populated tropical climates and breeds in stagnant pools of water.

Mosquitoes pick up the virus from infected humans — even asymptomatic ones — and pass it along to other people through bites. Infections have steadily climbed across the globe since the 1970s due to rising temperatures and irregular monsoon rains linked to climate change, which allow for ideal mosquito breeding conditions.

But this year outbreaks have rampaged through Southeast Asia in particular, infecting hundreds of thousands, killing hundreds, and crippling health care systems as governments struggle to contain the untreatable virus. Dengue is mostly found in crowded areas, and breakneck urbanization across the globe has helped the virus thrive. Dubbed "breakbone fever", it inflicts sufferers with intense flu-like symptoms: severe headache, pain behind the eyes, full-body aches, high fever, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands or rash. — AFP

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Business

Zain Group revenue rises 35%, net income up 12%

Bader Al-Kharafi hails success of digital strategy • Q3 2019 sees net income up 10% to KD 56m

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the third quarter (Q3) and nine-month periods (9M) ended 30 September, 2019. The company ended the period serving 49.1 million customers, reflecting a 3 percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) increase.

For 9M 2019, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 1.2 billion (\$4.0 billion), up 35 percent Y-o-Y, while consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 538 million (\$1.8 billion), up 66 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 44 percent. Consolidated net income amounted to KD 153 million (\$504 million), reflecting a 12 percent Y-o-Y increase. Earnings per share amounted to 35 fils (\$0.12) for the nine-month period.

For 9M 2019, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 41 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 27.1 in 9M 2018 to 46.0 in 9M 2019 (SDG / USD), cost the Group \$141 million in revenue, \$62 million in EBITDA and \$21 million in net income.

In Q3'19, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 411 million (\$1.4 billion), up 2 percent Y-o-Y in KD terms. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 183 million (\$603 million), an increase of 18 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting a 45 percent EBITDA margin. Net income for the three months amounted to KD 56 million (\$183 million), showing a 10 percent increase Y-o-Y. Earnings Per Share for Q3 reached 13 fils (\$0.04).

In Q3'19, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 38 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 28.1 in Q3'18 to 45.0 in Q3'19 (SDG / USD), cost the company \$42 million in revenue, \$19 million in EBITDA and \$5 million in net income.

Commenting on the performance to date, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "Impressive growth in key financial metrics for the Q3 and 9M periods of 2019 are primarily a result of the heavy investment we have undertaken in expanding our 4G and 5G networks, to enhance customer experience and increase market share. Given the many challenging socio-economic market conditions across our footprint, the Board is working closely with the management in dealing with these and seeking new lucrative opportunities in the ICT sector."

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "The third-quarter saw numerous milestones and was characterized by profitable growth across all key operations, indicative of the success of our digital strategy. This is highlighted by Zain Kuwait recording impressive net income levels and the soaring net income of Zain Saudi Arabia. Moreover, robust revenue growth in our data monetization programs, Enterprise (B2B), cloud services, as well as smart city initiatives in key markets are areas of the business that we will continue to foster, both in individual and enterprise segments."

Al-Kharafi continued, "The recent launch of 5G networks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is significant as it allows us to offer more innovative and compelling services to our customers across government, business, IoT, and smart city sectors, bolstering the digital economy in these areas. 5G technology will create vast opportunities in the value chain proposition in numerous industries and will push the telecom sector to a new and exciting phase of growth. Zain is mobilizing all its resources to capitalize on this enormous opportunity in creating shareholder value."

Al-Kharafi also touched upon the company's progress in the area of Fintech stating, "Our focus on exploring new lucrative areas of growth in the Fintech arena saw several major milestones including the launch of the Taman platform in Saudi Arabia, which made Zain the first telecom operator in the region to offer micro-financing to customers. Zain also entered into an agreement with Boubyan Bank in Kuwait to launch a digital platform for Islamic banking services, marking the first digital partnership of this nature in the

region. In addition, the volume of Zain Cash transactions in Jordan and Iraq continues to grow exponentially, reinforced recently by the agreement with UNHCR and IrisGuard to implement iris technology for cash disbursements to refugees in Iraq."

Al-Kharafi concluded by drawing attention to the success of Zain Group's API program launched in 2018 that has seen the company's operations in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan and Bahrain connected to the API. "We now have more than 12 partners connected, among them are Apple, Google, DoCoMo Digital, Digital Virgo, Eros, Deezer, Starzplay, and OSN, resulting in more than 2 million monthly transactions. It is extremely gratifying for us to see the benefits of one of the key aspects of our digital lifestyle strategy coming to life in such an impactful way."

Operational review of key markets for the nine months ended 30 September, 2019

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, Zain Group's flagship operation saw its customer base serve 2.7 million. It remains the Group's most profitable operation with revenue for 9M 2019 remaining stable at KD 248 million (\$818 million), EBITDA increasing 17 percent to KD 98 million (\$322 million), representing an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Net income increased an impressive 10 percent to reach KD 66 million (\$217 million) for 9M 2019, with data revenue growing 8 percent Y-o-Y and accounting for 37 percent of total revenue.

Saudi Arabia: The operator continues to grow all its key financial metrics, recording positive net income for the last five consecutive quarters. For the 9M 2019, Zain KSA generated revenue of \$1.64 billion, up 12 percent Y-o-Y, while EBITDA for the period increased by 49 percent to \$761 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 46 percent. Net income for the nine months soared to \$102 million, reflecting a significant improvement on the net loss of \$18 million a year earlier, highlighting an improvement of circa SAR 447 million (\$120 million). Data revenue represents 44 percent of total revenue and customers served stood at 7.7 million.

Iraq: Zain Iraq's 9M 2019 revenue reached \$792 million and EBITDA amounted to \$335 million, up 8 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting a much-improved EBITDA margin of 42 percent. The operation reported a net profit of \$36 million for 9M 2019, up 7 percent Y-o-Y. Zain Iraq's focus on expansion of 3.9G services across the country combined with numerous customer acquisition initiatives, resulted in it serving 15.5 million customers, a 3 percent increase Y-o-Y. Another contributing factor to the operation's positive performance was the significant growth of data revenue and robust growth in the Enterprise (B2B) segment.

Sudan: Substantial currency devaluation (approximately 41 percent) in Sudan affected the operation's financial results in USD terms for 9M 2019. Nevertheless, in local currency (SDG) terms, the operator continues to perform remarkably well as revenue grew by 47 percent Y-o-Y to SDG 10.0 billion (\$217 million, down 14 percent in USD terms). EBITDA increased by 49 percent to reach SDG 4.0 billion (\$88 million, down 13 percent in USD terms) and net income increased by 41 percent to SDG 1.6 billion (\$35 million, down 19 percent in USD terms). Data revenue accounted for 16 percent of total revenue and grew 34 percent in SDG terms, while the operator's



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

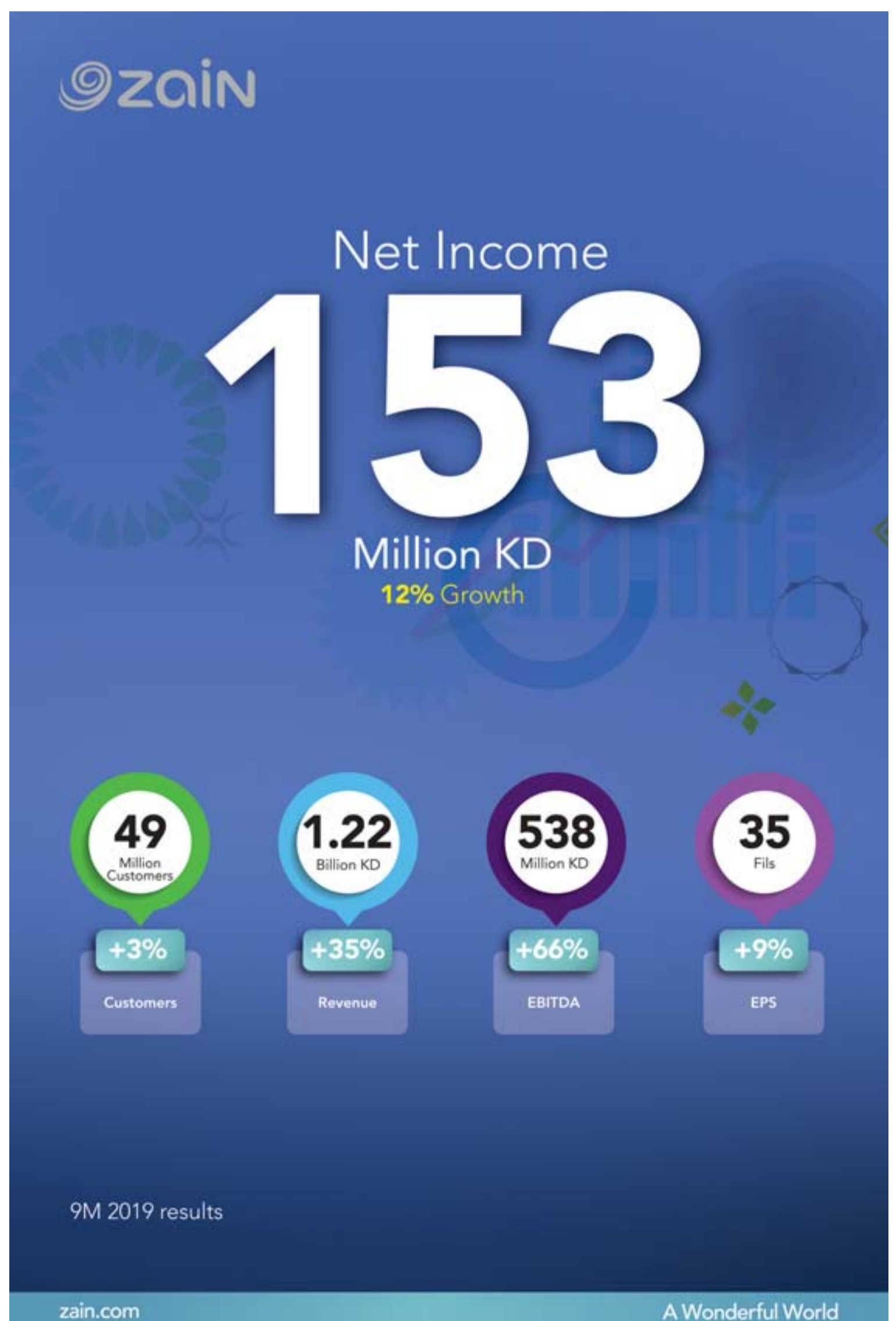


Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

customer base increased 8 percent to reach 15.4 million.

Jordan: Zain Jordan served 3.8 million customers at the end of September 2019, maintaining its market leading position despite intense price competition and challenging economic conditions in the Kingdom. Y-o-Y revenue was stable at USD 369 million, with EBITDA up 14 percent to reach \$169 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 46 percent. Net income increased 6 percent to \$59 million for 9M 2019. With the ongoing expansion of 4G services across the country, data revenue represented 40 percent of total revenue.

Bahrain: Zain Bahrain generated revenue of \$121 million for 9M 2019, down 6 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the period amounted to \$42 million, up 37 percent, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 34 percent. Net income amounted to \$10 million, reflecting a 4 percent increase.



Business

The luxury crossover evolves to new heights: Introducing 2020 Lexus RX

Class-leading hybrid electric model contributes to a more sustainable future

KUWAIT: Bringing an unparalleled level of elegance and refinement to the high-end crossover market, the new 2020 Lexus RX was launched recently. An array of interior and exterior enhancements builds on the iconic luxury crossover's enduring appeal, with reinvigorated design and function elements that will exceed the expectations of the most discerning owners.

First launched in 1999, the Lexus RX has created the blueprint for luxury crossover utility vehicles and set the tone in the segment ever since. The 1999 Lexus RX 300 was the world's first luxury crossover, while the 2006 Lexus RX 400h was the world's first hybrid electric luxury crossover. The 2020 model's sleek new exterior retains a sporty and powerful feel, while the character line that runs from the front to the rear has been improved, adding an exceptional flow and consistency to the overall appearance that emphasizes Lexus' new design language.

The new Lexus RX also embraces Lexus' reputation for engaging performance. The engineering team scrutinized every part of the vehicle and has made significant enhancements to the rigidity of the body and suspension system, as well as adding a new shock absorber and brake-control system. The result is a vehicle with outstanding handling, which enables drivers to trace their desired driving line with incredible precision.

Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "We are thrilled to launch the new RX in the Middle East - a groundbreaking vehicle that further elevates Lexus' status as a pioneer in the luxury crossover segment. This exciting new model blends brave design and stunning looks with innovative technology to deliver a safe and comfortable ride for occupants. The 2020 Lexus RX is the latest step in our ongoing drive to create amazing experiences for owners and passengers by developing vehicles that truly ignite their emotions, and offer them a highly engaging driving experience."

Miyamoto added: "Lexus' hybrid electric variant, the RX 450h, reflects our continuous commitment to providing environmentally-friendly vehicles while offering cus-



tomers the opportunity to experience the power and pleasure of sustainable mobility through cutting-edge technology. I want to thank all our customers in the region for continuously inspiring us to push the boundaries of creativity, craftsmanship, and innovation, and look forward to surpassing their expectations."

The 2020 Lexus RX represents a subtle evolution of previous generations' dynamic exterior aesthetic, which begins with a new L-patterned grille mesh and a smoother surround that blends more seamlessly into the front bumper. Prominent grille arrangements have been sculpted into the bumper corners, with the fog lights now residing in the lower part of the front bumper. Slender new headlamps add an extra element of sharpness to the frontal appearance. A similar re-think has been applied to the rear, where the fog lights have been integrated more effectively into the valance area, and the functions of the combination lamps are arranged in a strict horizontal

divide, increasing the sense of vehicle width. The luxury crossover receives several changes designed to enhance driving dynamics across the lineup. Both the front and rear stabilizer bars are now hollow to reduce weight, yet their thicker diameters and reinforced bushings help minimize body roll and improve steering response. The shock absorbers have been re-tuned to complement the stiffer roll bars, while upgraded dampers feature a new friction-control device that helps control high-frequency vibrations for a smoother ride.

Responsiveness is further refined by the Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS), which offers a range of up to 650 instantaneous compression and damping adjustments to more precisely manage overall handling, stability, and control, together with the newly added Active Corner Assist (ACA), which helps prevent understeering on turns by applying more braking force to the inner wheel.

The 12.3-inch high-resolution, split-screen Lexus Multimedia System touchscreen has been moved nearly 5.5 inches closer to the driver and offers control of both audio and climate systems. The touchscreen also includes a rearview camera to assist the driver in reversing. Furthermore, the new Lexus RX's advanced smartphone integration offers access to in-car connected technology applications from Apple CarPlay(r) and Android Auto, together with a designated phone storage area and six USB ports to ensure occupants always remain connected on the go.

Additionally, the 2020 Lexus RX adds the convenience of a hands-free power backdoor, which is activated via a foot-operated system that can be used when the user's hands or arms are full, such as when carrying goods. Placing or kicking up a foot toward a sensor beneath the rear bumper cover opens or closes the electrically actuated backdoor.

IMF cuts eurozone growth forecasts, as Germany slows

BRUSSELS: Eurozone economic growth is set to slow more than expected as the bloc's manufacturing crisis could spill over to the larger services sector under protracted global trade tensions, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday.

The IMF said the 19-country euro zone would grow by 1.2 percent this year, revising down its earlier estimates from April of 1.3 percent growth for the bloc. That is a significant slowdown compared to last year's 1.9 percent expansion. The bloc's economy would grow by 1.4 percent in 2020 and 2021, the IMF said, cutting its previous estimate of 1.5 percent growth in both years.

The slowdown is mostly due to anaemic growth in Germany, the euro zone's largest economy, and stagnation in Italy, the third-biggest, the fund said, revising down its earlier forecasts for both countries. Germany is now expected to grow by only 0.5 percent this year, slower than the 0.8 percent the IMF had predicted in April. That would be one-third of 2018 growth.

The IMF also cut its growth forecast for France, the bloc's second-largest economy, despite better-than-expected output estimates for the third quarter released last week. The country is now expected to grow by 1.2 percent this year, instead of the 1.3 percent previously forecast. To counter the slowdown, the fund reiterated its call for a "synchronized fiscal response" by euro zone governments, in a clear message to Berlin to invest more. It said the slowdown, so far mostly caused by the impact of global trade tensions on the bloc's export-driven industry, could spill over to services, the largest economic sector in the eurozone.

Britain's process to leave the European Union was also a cause of concern, with a no-deal Brexit causing vast negative effects on both Britain and the EU. In the event of an orderly Brexit, which could occur by the end of January, the IMF confirmed its earlier estimates that Britain's economy would grow by 1.2 percent this year and 1.4 percent



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (front right) and German Finance Minister and Vice-Chancellor Olaf Scholz (front left) address journalists during the handing over by members of the German Council of Economic Experts of the council's 2019/2020 annual report on the country's national and international economic developments yesterday at the Chancellery in Berlin. — AFP

next. Growth was 1.4 percent in 2018. Inflation in the bloc is expected by the IMF to be 1.2 percent this year, 1.4 percent next and 1.5 percent in 2021, short of the European Central Bank's target of a rate close but below 2 percent.

Meanwhile, eurozone business activity grew more than initially thought last month but remained close to stagnation, according to a survey whose forward-looking indicators suggest the existing growth might dissipate.

Wednesday's survey of businesses comes soon after the European Central Bank resumed its 2.6 trillion-euro bond-buying program to try and stimulate inflation and growth. The former head of the ECB, Mario Draghi, repeatedly called on eurozone countries to add fiscal support to stoke growth, saying because monetary policy could only do so much, and yesterday's readings suggest additional support

may be needed. His successor, Christine Lagarde, took over at the ECB last week. She will need to smooth over the differences between cash-rich countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, who opposed the decision to resume bond purchases, and the euro zone's struggling periphery.

IHS Markit's final eurozone composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), considered a good gauge of economic health, rose to 50.6 from September's 50.1, its lowest in more than six years. That exceeded a preliminary estimate of 50.2 but remained near the 50 mark separating growth from contraction. "Despite the upward revision, the index is consistent with the economy barely growing at the start of Q4. We expect growth to slow across the board," said Melanie Debono at Capital Economics. — Reuters

15.6 billion yen. "Not so desperately bad" But some analysts said the results were "not so desperately bad". "How you react to these three-month figures would depend on your investment style, whether you trade over short periods of time or invest for the longer term," Seiichi Suzuki, senior market analyst at Tokai Tokyo Research Institute, told AFP.

"It's difficult to make a quick verdict on its business model." The company did not publish its outlook for the year to March 2020, but there is uncertainty ahead as shares in its key investments such as Uber and Slack continue to slide. Last month, SoftBank confirmed that it was injecting billions of dollars into WeWork, once hailed as a shining unicorn and valued at \$47 billion at the start of the year. The start-up has gone from an investor darling to cancelling its IPO and seeing its co-founder Adam Neumann pushed out, albeit with a reported package of more than \$1.5 billion.

Son insisted the firm was not a "sinking ship", but acknowledged he had "learned a lot" from the turmoil. "I want to make it clear. Firms that accept SoftBank's investments must be self-sustaining. We do not make investments for the purpose of rescuing companies," he said. "Regarding WeWork... This will remain an exception. I want to make it clear."

No new WeWork buildings

Under the agreement announced last month, SoftBank will pump a total of \$9.5 billion into WeWork. It will increase its stake in the firm from 29 percent to around 80 percent, and put top executive Marcelo Claure in place as executive chairman of the board. WeWork, which launched in 2010, has touted its model as revolutionizing commercial real estate by offering shared, flexible workspace arrangements, with operations in 111 cities in 29 countries. In some cities, it is one of the major landlords, but its model of offering flexible, short-term leases is viewed by some as less of a selling point and more of a liability for investors. It is also hemorrhaging money, with sources



TOKYO: Japan's SoftBank Group CEO Masayoshi Son speaks during a press briefing on the company's financial results in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

saying it must raise at least \$3 billion to cover its financing needs through the end of the year. To cut costs, Son said WeWork would stop construction of new buildings and sell businesses unrelated to the main office-sharing model.

Bloomberg reported yesterday that the start-up was considering giving up office floors in at least six Hong Kong locations. SoftBank has taken stakes in some of Silicon Valley's hottest start-ups through its \$100 billion Vision Fund. In July, the firm announced its long-mooted Vision Fund 2, again targeting funds of around \$100 billion, but investors have been slower to commit. And in recent months, Son's once-vaunted investment strategy has been questioned, with the disappointing IPO in May of Uber-one of its marquee names-only compounding the criticism. — AFP

US committed to Britain trade deal after Trump expressed doubt

WASHINGTON: The United States and Britain remain committed to reaching a post-Brexit bilateral free trade agreement, the White House said Tuesday, after President Donald Trump questioned whether such a deal is possible.

Last week, Trump warned Prime Minister Boris Johnson that the terms of his EU divorce deal meant that "under certain aspects... you can't trade" with the United States. Trump used a lengthy appearance on Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage's radio phone-in show Thursday to share his characteristically blunt views ahead of a December 12 snap election in Britain.

Trump's remarks threatened to hurt Johnson at the outset of a campaign that has huge implications for Britain's future place in Europe and the rest of the world. Both Trump and Farage are deeply polarizing figures in Britain who could hurt Johnson's chances with more moderate voters. On Tuesday, Trump and Johnson spoke, the White House said.

"The two leaders again reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the Special Relationship through a robust bilateral free trade agreement once the United Kingdom leaves the European Union," deputy press secretary Judd Deere said. Trump also insisted that NATO allies "robustly fund their defenses"-a reflection of his argument that the US bears a disproportionate share of spending within the transatlantic alliance. — AFP

Boeing still hopes 737 Max will fly again this year

NEW DELHI: A top Boeing executive insisted yesterday the aviation giant was confident its controversial 737 Max jets could be flying again before the end of the year.

Darren Hulst, a Boeing vice-president, told AFP the firm was working with the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to end the grounding of the jets since two crashes which left 346 dead. The international suspension of 737 Max flights in March has cost Boeing billions of dollars and forced it onto the defensive over its safety record. "Our belief is the timeline for return of service with the FAA can be as soon as this quarter," Hulst said.

"But it's really up to each individual regulator on what they require and (we are) working closely with each one of them," he said. "We have developed the software and we are working with the FAA on the timing of the certification."

"We have done test flights, both in the air and also simulator testing. The next step is determining the certification flight with the FAA and that's when it moves from our timeline to the regulator's timeline," Hulst said. Boeing has been reeling since the crashes of a 737 Max jet operated by Indonesian carrier Lion Air in October last year that left 189 passengers and crew dead and an Ethiopian Airlines crash this year that killed 157 people.

All 400 737 Max jets have been grounded since. Boeing's former chairman Dennis Muilenburg faced grueling questioning in the US Congress last week as lawmakers questioned whether the company had compromised safety to rush the 737 Max jets into service. The questions come as Boeing faces mounting competition from European rival Airbus in key markets such as India, where Hulst spoke. India will be the world's fastest-growing aviation market over the next 20 years, Hulst said. Boeing expected India to order 2,380 planes worth \$330 billion over the next two decades, the executive said. — AFP

SoftBank Group logs worst quarterly loss, Son admits 'poor' decisions

TOKYO: Japanese giant SoftBank Group said yesterday it suffered an operating loss of \$6.4 billion in the second quarter, the worst in its history, as it took a hit from investments in start-ups including WeWork and Uber. The eye-watering results follow a turbulent period for the firm and led CEO Masayoshi Son to admit regret over errors as he faces criticism over his commitment to start-ups some say are overvalued and lack clear profit models.

In the three-month period ending September 30, operating losses hit a whopping 704.4 billion yen (\$6.4 billion), worse than many analysts had expected. Speaking shortly after the earnings were released, Son said: "This is the biggest quarterly loss we have seen since our founding."

"My investment decisions were in many ways poor. I regret them deeply." But he defended his overall strategy, including continuing to plough funds into troubled office-sharing start-up WeWork, and insisted shareholder value continues to increase. "This is not a storm. Only small waves in a normal time," he said.

"There is no change to our vision, no change to our strategy. We will move ahead." The firm said first-half operating losses from its Vision Fund and Delta Fund came to 572.6 billion yen, largely "due to a decrease in the fair value of investments including Uber and WeWork and its three affiliates". Overall, net profit in April-September sank 49.8 percent to 421.6 billion yen on an operating loss of

Business

Investors left exposed as Trump's SEC gives America Inc helping hand

Clayton measures could help reverse a 20-year decline in company listings

WASHINGTON: The United States' top market cop is slowly taking the shackles off corporations. Since becoming head of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in 2017, Jay Clayton has presided over more than two dozen measures which make life easier for America Inc, according to a Reuters analysis of SEC announcements and interviews with more than a dozen lawyers, academics and advocacy groups.

The changes — 17 implemented so far with a further nine proposed—are part of a broader push to help reverse a 20-year decline in US public company listings by modernizing disclosures and cutting regulatory costs for firms. But a majority of them will weaken investor safeguards or diminish their rights, according to lawyers, consumer and investor groups and SEC sources.

"Under Clayton's leadership, the Securities and Exchange Commission has been quietly chipping away at an array of rules, many quite technical in nature," said Anna Pinedo, a partner at law firm Mayer Brown. "Although individually these haven't gotten much attention, in aggregate the SEC's rulemaking agenda under Clayton adds up to positive changes for public companies."

Clayton declined to be interviewed for this story but his spokeswoman said protecting the interests of Main Street investors was a top priority. "The initiatives advanced under his leadership maintain or enhance investor protections, including by ensuring today's investors receive the material information necessary to make investment decisions," Natalie Strom said in a statement.

Appointed by President Donald Trump with a mandate to entice more companies to go public, Clayton pledged to boost jobs and pension pots by making it more attractive for small companies to sell shares on stock exchanges while also protecting mom-and-pop investors. Corporations led by the US Chamber of Commerce, the country's biggest business group, have said red tape is partly to blame for a 50 percent decline in the number of listed companies over the past two decades.

"Clayton recognizes that the decline of public companies is a threat to the long-term competitiveness of the American economy," said Tom Quaadman, executive vice president of the Chamber's Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness. "Clayton has taken a holistic step-by-step approach to reverse this situation." But trimming companies' disclosure requirements, for example by giving them more leeway over how and what they divulge in regulatory filings, and more freedom to make redactions, mean investors will get less information, say critics. It is still too early to see the full effects of most of the changes but corporate governance experts worry that they swing

the balance in favor of companies and make public markets more treacherous for both institutional and retail investors. "The deregulatory agenda now advancing at the SEC is too often driven by lobbyist intuition rather than hard facts about the markets we oversee," Robert Jackson, one of five SEC commissioners, told Reuters. He has opposed several of the measures.

One of Clayton's most contentious proposals would relax a requirement, created by Congress in 2002 following the Enron accounting scandal, for companies with less than \$100 million in revenues to get their internal financial reporting controls signed-off by an independent auditor.

Another controversial proposal to cap financial rewards for whistleblowers could reduce the incentive for company insiders to come forward with evidence of wrongdoing. After fierce attacks by corporate governance advocates, that proposal may be softened as Clayton tries to get it across the line in coming months. This week, he proposed changes that would limit the ability of shareholders to submit proposals on items like executive compensation to company management.

To be sure, Clayton has toughened market oversight in some areas. Some of the measures aimed at simplifying financial disclosures make it easier for investors to identify material information and give them more information on certain topics, such as how company employees deal in their stock. Cryptocurrency offerings have slumped after Clayton said they should be regulated like stock offerings, and he passed a package of measures this year requiring stockbrokers to disclose potential conflicts of interest, and the commissions they earn, when giving financial advice. The broker rules, however, were heavily criticized by advocates for mom-and-pop investors who said they still left investors exposed to conflicted advice.

Real costs for real people

Going public is expensive. Investment bankers, lawyers and auditors collectively charge millions of dollars to prepare companies for their stock market debut and it can cost millions more to comply with ongoing regulatory requirements. But there are other reasons why companies are staying private, denying ordinary investors the sort of investment opportunities they traditionally rely on to fund their retirement.

For one, deregulation in the private market since 1996 has made it easier for firms to raise money from private investors, cutting most Americans out of the equation. Record low interest rates in recent years have spurred those wealthy individuals and institutions to put more cash into start-up investments. Over the past five years, there



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Monday in New York City. — AFP

has been at least \$150 billion raised in private equity and debt placements, compared to \$90 billion over the previous period, according to data from Dealogic. The overall figure is likely to be far larger as data on such private deals is not comprehensive.

And while the total number of public companies is lower than 20 years ago, the total value of public companies has doubled, partly due to mergers and acquisitions. The IPO market has improved this year. As of the end of October, there had been 37 small-cap company listings, each raising between \$300 million and \$1 billion, on track to beat last year's 39 listings and in line with 2017.

Bankers said this was largely due to a buoyant stock market, boosted by record low interest rates, rather than any regulatory changes introduced by the SEC. "Although these new tools have been put in place and positively received, the continued strength of the broader market has been the primary factor driving IPO volumes," said Jim Cooney, head of equity capital markets for the Americas at Bank of America. A former Wall Street deals lawyer who

has represented a roster of big banks and hedge funds, including Goldman Sachs and Deutsche Bank, Clayton initially disappointed Republicans and corporate lobbyists who had hoped he would hand them quick big wins. Instead, Clayton focused on building consensus with the four other commissioners who decide on rule-making and enforcement actions at the SEC. Two of the five current commissioners were picked by the Democratic party. The rest, including Clayton, are Republican appointees. Over the past year, though, Clayton has proved more willing to push through changes despite dissent from the Democratic commissioners, most notably Jackson, who has voted against several measures since joining in January 2018. Jackson, an academic who has studied the reliability of corporate disclosures, said reducing the frequency and substance of information companies had to publish, "comes with real costs for real people". Allison Lee, the other Democrat commissioner, declined to comment. Republican commissioners Hester Peirce and Elad Roisman, did not respond to requests for comment. — Reuters

KFH Takaful: Discounts up to 50% for insurance cardholders

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Takaful Insurance Company has added new and exclusive benefits to its health insurance policy, offering discounts of up to 50 percent to health insurance card holders. The offer includes many health clubs, medical clinics and nutrition and health centers. This comes as part of the company's efforts to distinguish its customers and encourage them to manage a healthier lifestyle.

KFH Takaful said in a press release, that insurance card holders will benefit from first-of-kind discounts in insurance market, confirming the company's interest in offering new and exclusive services to its customers. In order to benefit from the discount, customers can reveal the valid KFH Takaful health

insurance card to the related entities involved in the discount offer.

Meanwhile, KFH Takaful, through health insurance policy, seeks to meet the needs of companies and institutions by reducing the medical burdens and expenses incurred by the participant for receiving treatment in private and government hospitals according to the terms and coverage of the contract. The program includes hospital accommodation, related check-ups, outpatient consultations, prescription medications and treatments, as well as routine dental check-ups and pregnancy and childbirth expenses. To learn more details about the participating companies and benefits and promotions that KFH Takaful offers, customers can visit KFH Takaful website.

Jazeera Airways launches direct flights to Kathmandu

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, yesterday announced the launch of flights to Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM), serving the Nepalese capital with four return flights weekly starting from November 17, 2019, and is scheduled to increase to daily flights in January 2020. The launch marks the first direct commercial flights to be operated between Kuwait and Kathmandu, Nepal, with a duration of around 5 hours and 45 minutes. The direct flights offer connecting flights to cities in the Middle East and Europe.

Jazeera Airways CEO, Rohit Ramachandran, said: "We are glad to be serving the world's 19th top destination for the year as per Trip

Kuwait-Kathmandu Flights Schedule

Flight Number	Frequency	From	To	Departure (Local Time)	Arrival (Local Time)
J9 539	Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday	Kuwait	Kathmandu	09:05 am	4:20 pm
J9 540	Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday	Kathmandu	Kuwait	5:05 pm	8:00 pm

Advisor and open a direct flight for travellers to enjoy the wonderful landscape and culture that Nepal has to offer. The new route also supports efforts to strengthen economic trade between both countries and opens a new low cost option from Nepal to the Middle East and Europe through Kuwait."

The Kuwait-Kathmandu route is operated by return flights on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. The departing flight number J9 539 from Kuwait to Kathmandu is scheduled at 09:05 am local time and arrives at 4:20 pm local time of these days, while the return flight number J9 540 from Kathmandu to Kuwait is scheduled at 5:05 pm local time and arrives at 8:00 pm local time. Bookings for Kuwait-Kathmandu

flights are now open and available on jazeeraairways.com. Fares start from KD65 for a one-way flight on Economy Class and KD129 for a return flight on the same class. Business Class fares start at KD154 for a one-way flight and KD313 for a return flight.

Jazeera Airways flies to 31 popular destinations across the Middle East, India and Europe comprising high-demand business, leisure, family and weekend destinations including London, Dubai, Bahrain, Doha, Beirut, Amman, Alexandria, Cairo, Sharm El Sheikh, Assiut, Luxor, Sohag, Jeddah, Riyadh, Taif, Najaf, Mashhad, Kochi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Lahore, Istanbul, Bodrum, Baku, Tbilisi and Kathmandu.

Adidas has eyes on 2019 finish line after Q3 profit slip

FRANKFURT: German sportswear maker Adidas said yesterday it remains confident of hitting full-year financial targets after a profit slip in the third quarter, buoyed by fast-rising sales. In July-September, Adidas' bottom line fell back 1.8 percent year-on-year, to 646 million euros (\$715 million), slightly beating forecasts from analysts surveyed by Factset.

But revenues surged 9.1 percent to 6.4 billion euros. Double-digit growth in China and North America was Adidas' biggest sales driver, while Europe inched up more tentatively.

Its flagship brand with the three stripes sold six percent more even in a year without mammoth sporting events, while struggling US subsidiary Reebok also lifted sales slightly.

Meanwhile growth in online sales slowed to 14 percent in the third quarter, compared with 76 percent a year before. Despite the growth, operating, or underlying profit at Adidas also fell back, shedding 0.3 percent to reach 897 million euros.

The operating result was weighed down by advertising costs as the company looks to rev up sales in the second half of the year. "We confirm our full-year outlook and remain confident about a significant top-line acceleration during the fourth quarter," chief executive Kasper Rorsted said in a statement.

The Bavarian group expects to make net profits between 1.88 and 1.95 billion euros this year, up between 10 and 14 percent on 2018's result. — AFP

Rosneft's Q3 profit jumps after pipeline cleanup

MOSCOW: Russia's Rosneft energy giant yesterday announced a large jump in third quarter year-on-year net income due to sales growth and clean-up of contamination of a strategic pipeline.

Between July and September, Russia's largest oil producer posted net income of 225 billion rubles (around \$3.5 billion), up 58.5 percent on the same period last year and up 16 percent on the previous quarter. In the third quarter, the state-controlled group "was able to increase liquids production" quarter on quarter and "partially compensate" for production decline in the second quarter as a result of restriction of oil intake into trunk pipelines, said Rosneft chief

South Africa's Ramaphosa gets \$13.5 billion of investment pledges

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa secured about 200 billion rand (\$13.5 billion) of investment pledges, mainly from domestic companies, yesterday as part of his drive to boost flagging economic growth. Ramaphosa announced the investments during his opening speech at a forum aimed at drawing sorely-needed direct investment into the economy.

"The new investments over five years are with the view of addressing low economic growth and reducing unemployment," Ramaphosa said. "It is pleasing to see that

Igor Sechin. He added in a statement the increase in income was also due to sales growth amid falling crude prices. In April, a key pipeline to Europe named Druzhba, or Friendship, was shut down due to contamination with chlorine compounds.

The pipeline takes oil to a number of countries including Poland, Germany and Slovakia. On Tuesday, Rosneft reported that its liquid production rose 2.1 percent from the second to the third quarter due to the contamination being cleared up. "We restored crude oil refining throughput and strengthened our positions in the traditional markets," Sechin was quoted as saying.

The group's liquid production figure was nevertheless down 1.4 percent year-on-year, which the company attributed to Russia's agreement with OPEC to reduce production. Rosneft announced in late October it will price its oil exports in euros, not dollars, to reduce the impact of US sanctions.

Russia is seeking to wean its economy off the dollar and has cut the currency's share in its international reserves. — AFP

investors still consider South Africa as a country that has much to offer." At last year's forum, Ramaphosa had set a goal of attracting \$100 billion of new investments over a five-year period and he quickly secured more than half that amount in pledges. But many of those promises are yet to translate into projects that could make a meaningful dent in the country's 29 percent unemployment rate or lift the growth rate above last year's level of 0.8 percent.

The scale of the challenge Ramaphosa faces was underlined by Finance Minister Tito Mboweni's bleak medium-term budget speech last week, which slashed this year's growth forecast to 0.5 percent and showed government debt would shoot up to more than 70 percent of gross domestic product by 2023.

Moody's placed South Africa's last investment-grade credit rating on a "negative outlook" after Mboweni's updated budget projections, giving the country up to 18 months when it could be downgraded. A downgrade could trigger billions of dollars of outflows from South African government debt.

Despite a modest pickup in foreign direct investment

last year, investment by local firms has remained weak during Ramaphosa's presidency as cash-rich companies continue to send money offshore.

Domestic firms like telecoms firm MTN and paper company Sappi made some of the largest pledges at Wednesday's conference, with other large investments promised by state freight company Transnet and the state airports management company.

MTN pledged to invest 50 billion rand over the next five years and Sappi pledged 14 billion rand over several years. The new pledges would be a "shot in the arm" to the local economy, Ramaphosa said.

Ramaphosa has promised reforms from the energy to telecoms sectors, but progress has been slow due to opposition from labor unions and parts of his ruling African National Congress party. His investment conference last year secured nearly 300 billion rand of investment pledges from firms like miner Anglo American. During that conference, countries including China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates made a further \$35 billion in pledges. — Reuters



MOSCOW: Russia's Rosneft energy giant yesterday announced a large jump in third quarter year-on-year net income due to sales growth and clean-up of contamination of a strategic pipeline. — AFP

What's On

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa launches water walkers and high tech CACI treatments



Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa launched revolutionary technology for the first time in Kuwait: Water Walker & CACI (Computer Aided Cosmetology Instrument) machines available only at the award winning Talise Spa. The press conference was held in the presence of Ambassador of Japan, Takashi Ashiki and along with Chief Technical Officer of Water Walker, Yasutoshi Tajima and members of the media.

Assistant Director of PR and Communications, Yasmine Ismail, along with Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa marketing team welcomed media upon arrival and gave an introductory speech. Post the press conference, media were taken on a tour of Talise Spa to

learn more about the revolutionary technology behind the Water Walker & Spa Steed pro, Water Walker & Spa Compact and CACI machines. Targeting the ever-changing fitness and wellness needs of both men and women, Talise spa features special packages and sessions utilizing the Water Walkers. Training in water is perfect to do cardio and resistance training without risking gravity taking a toll on your joints.

The temperature of the water can be controlled and is set 2 degrees Celsius less than the human body temperature to aid in releasing more energy and hence burning more calories. Four certified professionals specifically flew into Kuwait from Osaka, Japan to install the Water

Walkers as well as gave intensive training to the staff at Talise Spa. The equipment are operated by fully qualified, professional trainers at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa.

CACI facial treatment delivers results equivalent to a face lift without the painful surgical process. The Orbital Skin Resurfacing is used for exfoliation to reveal a healthy radiant look, while Ultrasonic Deep Cleansing technology removes any make-up residue, blemishes or impurities. Its Wrinkle Comb Technology targets deep lines and wrinkles to provide a non-invasive alternative to dermal fillers.

The CACI, non-invasive facial treatment works as a

"workout for facial muscles", as the stimulating micro currents are applied to areas that traditionally suffer from wrinkles and lines, such as the jaw-line and areas around the mouth and eyes. The treatment also enhances the skin's ability to neutralize bacteria and helps to protect your skin from daily damage. Incarnating authentic luxury, Talise Spa, a haven for the mind and body, takes a holistic approach to embody the philosophy of preserving wellness. It focuses on body, mind and spirit rejuvenation with an array of health and beauty facilities as well as spa products. A daily calendar of activities such as meditation, yoga and other healthy lifestyle practices elevates the whole spa experience.



Second Lulu Express Fresh Market opens in Farwaniya

Lulu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, opened the second Lulu Express Fresh Market, a concept store at Radhiya Al Owayed Complex, Farwaniya on 6 November. Located near Farwaniya Roundabout, opposite to Police Station, Farwaniya, the second Lulu Express Fresh Market store in Kuwait was inaugurated by Chairman and Managing Director of Lulu Group International Yusuf Ali MA, along with Lulu Executive Director Ashraf Ali MA,

Kuwait Regional Director Mohamed Haris, and Kuwait Regional Manager Sreejith. The new outlet was launched in the presence of government officials, dignitaries and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers.

Lulu Express Fresh Market is the second such store format to open in Kuwait and adds to Lulu's growing retail footprint by taking the number of branches in the country to nine and the total Lulu outlets across the world to 181. The convenience-focused store, spread

across an area of 1550 square feet, has dedicated sections for fresh fruits and vegetables, chilled and frozen fish and meat, delicatessen, grocery, dairy, roastery, bakery and hot-foods, as well as non-food items and, health and beauty products. The new Lulu Express Fresh Market store's easy accessibility, its modern ambiance, clear layout, wide aisles and well-stocked shelves are focused on providing the utmost convenience to shoppers.



Sheikha Aida Salem inaugurates KCST exhibition

In the presence of Sheikha Aida Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Award, the Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) was honored to inaugurate the exhibition of projects prepared by the graduates of the Academy of Informatics that is under the umbrella of Developing the IT Academy of the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Award. The program

trains 100 children aged 9-16 years old on programming (ebot) systems and designing innovative projects. Sheikha Aida Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Award, praised the efforts of the Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) staff, who contributed significantly to the digital manufacturing course launched by the IT Academy.



Horeca witnesses substantial changes

Leaders Group Consultancy and development company announced that for the first time, the luxurious American brand of 'Certified Angus Beef' joins Horeca Kuwait 2020 due to be held in collaboration with Hospitality Services Co at Mishref International Fair Ground in the period of January 20-22, 2020.

Leaders Group added that this sponsorship is highly significant due to the fact that Angus Beef is the most delicious and most expensive in the world as it is produced by veteran ranchers and cattle raisers who highly respect the relation between land, animals and land resources. "Horeca is annually witnessing substantial changes in various levels be it the number of participants, the events and activities, the agreements made amongst displays or with interested visitors", leaders group said noting that Certified Angus Beef participation is one of the welcome changes.

In this regard, Certified Angus Beef agent, Gebran Edouard Charbine - Director, International Marketing stressed that Certified Angus Beef cattle is carefully raised in US ranches using top notch material and care methods. "USDA supervises our cattle, grades and makes sure it is safe for consumption", he stressed noting that all the beef is meticulously tested to achieve food safety, that USDA inspectors examine all slaughtered animals to make sure they meet the brand's ten strict standards and that all animals are passionately slaughtered. "This makes our beef tender

and tastier compared to other cattle slaughtered in the usual ways". Charbine added noting that methods of storage followed by CAB had increased the beef value and helped increase demands for it by well-off buyers in rich countries. Further, Charbine explained that the outstanding things about CAB, is that, following several researches conducted by the founders in 1978, they succeeded in setting a set of uncompromising standards for taste that no other beef has. "With the help of scientists, they implemented those standards in special ranches fully equipped with storage facilities.

Moreover, Charbine stressed that Abgus beef exported to Kuwait and various other markets are Halal and added that joining Horeca Kuwait 2020 for the first time is an attempt to reach this leading exhibition visitors. "Horeca activities and events have become a standard pattern in the art or food and hospitality industries", he concluded pointing that CAB are distributed in Kuwait by Al-Yasra, Al-Zas and US Food companies.



LAPA Peace Festival

LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) recently held its annual Peace Festival held in collaboration with Al-Shaheed Park, the park visitors enjoyed a wonderful evening with Egyptian Dina Al-Wadidi and her nine-member band. The concert was attended by the Estonian president, Kersti Kaljulaid, her accompanying delegation, the Amiri Diwan representatives and LAPA's chairperson, Fare'a Al-Saqqaf.

Speaking on the occasion, Al-Wadidi expressed her amazement with the audience on her first performance at Al-Shaheed Park's amphitheatre and in Kuwait. Al-Wadidi added that her performances were a mix of oriental and western songs and music in what is known as 'Fusion Music'. On his part, Al-Shaheed Park's vice manager, Salman Al-Roshoud stressed that the Al-Salam (Peace) festival aims at creating a mixture of culture and diverse music as a means towards achieving peace.



Health & Science

Arabiya Clinic sponsors Breast Cancer Awareness Day at KOTC



KUWAIT: On the occasion of Breast Cancer World Awareness Month, Arabiya Clinic organized and presented at the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) a series of awareness lectures for breast cancer in addition to some of the services and medical check-ups dealing with women's and men's health.

The meeting commenced with an awareness lecture from Dr Berchanti Bershad, a registered dentist with more than 12 years of experience in the treatment of teeth, gums and dental surgical implants. The audience were informed about the close association between breast cancer and dental health and the dangers of neglecting gum and teeth examinations. Studies of the most prestigious universities in the field of research indicate that 14 percent of people with gum problems may have cancer compared to people who have no dental problems. Regarding the link between dental diseases and cancer, the bacteria in the oral cavity which causes tooth pain and gum disorders transfers to other organs in the body through saliva and blood circulation. This affects some parts of the body, resulting in the occurrence of breast cancer.

This was followed with a lecture given by Dr Matthew, a general practitioner with long experience in the field of dental treatments and health in addition to the Hollywood Smile. His lecture, titled 'Smile Design,' discussed healthy

lifestyle and exercise with attention to diet and oral health. He said that breast cancer does not mean the end of the road, and that many cases have been cured because of the lack of despair and the insistence on life. He informed of the importance of dental examination and treatment before starting chemotherapy courses. In the interest of public health, dental health is a way to a better life and an escape from diseases. Breast cancer does not only affect women, but also occurs in men. The cases of breast cancer in men constitute between 0.5 and 1.0 percent. Most diagnosed cases of breast cancer in men is in the advanced stages, mostly due to the lack of awareness of the possibility that men can develop breast cancer.

This was followed with a lecture by Dr Rasha Salah, a senior in oral and dental surgery. Her lecture drew the attention of the audience on the topic of 'protecting your children's teeth may save their lives.' This is important due to the stem cells existing in the bone marrow, which is largely stored in the first teeth of the children. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information in the United States, stem cells can be used to treat serious diseases such as cancer or diabetes which may later infect the child.

Finally, Dr Divya Viswanathan presented a lecture titled 'oral care for patients in need of chemotherapy, radiation therapy and bone marrow transplantation,'



where oral and dental hygiene care is required during chemotherapy. She said that this treatment may cause infections and small wounds in the mouth that heal with difficulty. She added that in the event of feeling pain during dental care, you can use painkillers. It is also important during treatment to stay away from spicy or acidic foods, as well as stay away from smoking.

She ended that many people who are treated for cancer get a lot of problems in the mouth or teeth, which

disappear after attention to oral health treatment, but in the case of neglecting oral health, mouth problems may develop for months or years. Dr Medhat Qadis Ibrahim, a doctor in internal medicine, surgery and intensive care, carried out free checkups and consultations. He discussed medicines and the importance of early screening for the detection of breast cancer and the importance of a blood test for the indication of tumors for the prevention of cancer.

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ANESTHESIA

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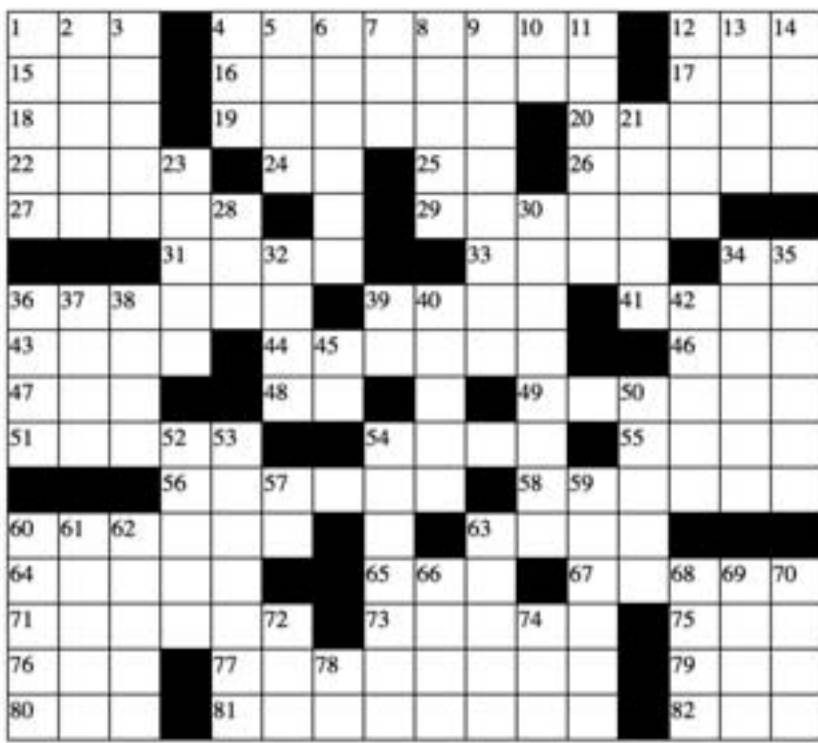
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- Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2353



ACROSS

1. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
4. Made clean.
12. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
15. The upper side of the thighs of a seated person.
16. (architecture) A slender upright spire at the top of a buttress or tower.
17. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
18. An abnormally large amount of this fetoprotein in the fetus can signal an abnormality of the neural tube (as spina bifida or anencephaly).
19. A detective who follows a trail.
20. Any of a number of tiny parallel grooves such as.
22. Speaking a Slavic language.
24. A mouth or mouthlike opening.
25. A light strong gray lustrous corrosion-resistant metallic element used in strong light-weight alloys (as for airplane parts).
26. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
27. The civil and religious leader of a Muslim state.
29. Any of numerous ornamental shrubs grown for their showy flowers of various colors.
31. Ancient Greek philosopher who formulated paradoxes that defended the belief that motion and change are illusory (circa 495-430 BC).
33. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
36. Someone who cuts or beautifies hair.
41. A city in northern India.
43. The chief solid component of mammalian urine.
44. (mathematics) Directly proportional.
46. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
47. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
48. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
49. First in order of birth.
51. Formerly a term of respect for important white Europeans in colonial India.
55. Little known Kamarupan languages.
56. According with custom or propriety.
58. Generic term for inflammatory conditions of the skin.
60. Imperial moths.
64. Short and fat.
65. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
67. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
71. Covered with paving material.
73. German mystic and theosophist who founded modern theosophy.
75. A vinyl polymer used especially in paints or adhesives.
76. The compass point that is one point south of due east.
77. One of four subclasses or superorders of Monocotyledones.
79. Lap that forms a cloth border doubled back and stitched down v 1.
80. Any of various long-tailed rodents similar to but larger than a mouse.
81. A great raja.
82. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.

DOWN

1. Bottle that has a narrow neck.
2. Little known Kamarupan languages.
3. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
4. The unit of frequency.
5. (trademark) A type of inflatable air mattress.
6. Romanian violinist and composer (1881-1955).
7. (Babylonian) The sky god.
8. Italian chemist noted for work on polymers (1903-1979).
9. Type genus of the Schizaeaceae cosmopolitan especially in tropics.
10. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
11. Remove salt from.
12. Small genus of hairy herbs with yellow flowers.
13. The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.
14. A small ball with a hole through the middle.
21. (Greek mythology) The Titaness who was mother of Helios and Selene and Eos in ancient mythology.
23. Hungarian hunting dog resembling the Weimaraner but having a rich deep red coat.
28. A fixed charge for a privilege or for professional services.
30. Brown or blackish Alpine mosses having a dehiscent capsule with 4 longitudinal slits.
32. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
34. A frequently prescribed sleeping pill (trade name ProSom).
35. (Hinduism or Buddhism) A sacred word or syllable repeated in prayer or meditation.
37. The form of RNA that attaches the correct amino acid to the protein chain that is being synthesized at the ribosome of the cell (according to directions coded in the mRNA).
38. Not only so, but.
39. An organization of independent states to promote international peace and security.
40. Covered with sedges (grasslike marsh plants).
42. Small compact-bodied almost completely aquatic bird that builds floating nests.
45. A state in midwestern United States.
50. In a state of mental numbness especially as resulting from shock.
52. Muslims collectively and their civilization.
53. Perennial herb of North America.
54. Tropical American herbs sometimes included in genus Episcia.
57. A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
59. A Ukrainian peninsula between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.
61. Jordan's port.
62. Deserving a curse.
63. English monk and scholar (672-735).
66. Stiff coarse fiber from the outer husk of a coconut.
68. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
69. Report or maintain.
70. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
72. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
74. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
78. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your audience will be attentive to you today. Take the lead and others will follow. Be yourself and project your voice into the auditorium of eager listeners. Information will flow freely, and you shouldn't discount any ideas from the peanut gallery. Be open to questions and comments from others. Their participation is vital to your performance.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You could feel confident today, and you should have a strong idea of exactly what it is you want. Information is power. Others are working to wield power over you. Don't let them get away with it, especially today. Encourage synergistic behavior among all parties. You can accomplish a great deal by working together instead of against one another.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your mind will expand today. You'll feel like there's a ton of information crammed into your head that needs processing. Regarding big projects, try to finish them as quickly as you can. The best policy is to pace yourself. If you wait until the last minute to finish, the quality of your work will suffer. Make a plan and maybe even a timeline. Set small deadlines as you go along.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Try not to read too much into other people's words today. You may have spent hours tearing apart every off-the-cuff remark. You may build up a wild scenario in your head regarding what that person is thinking. Instead of trying to sneak up on the answer through the back door, try the direct approach. Simply ask your question.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Long-term trends are coming to an important climax now. This dramatic period is highlighted by the added amount of information being thrown your way. Try to make small adjustments to your direction that incorporate this new information. Be aware of the prevailing winds and your relationships will be much better off.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Take a break from what you're doing. Look at what people are doing around you. Check your plans in relation to those of others and see if there's a way you can combine forces and kill more birds with fewer stones. Cooperation instead of competition is the lesson that needs to be emphasized today. The better you learn this today, the better off you'll be tomorrow.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Get involved with the energy of today so you don't get left out of the loop. Your contribution to the group is important. You should foster positive relationships among all parties. Think big. You can do no wrong by expanding your mind out into the minds of others. Make a commitment to quench your thirst for knowledge and freedom through information.



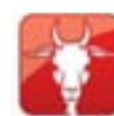
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You can add more tools to your toolbox today. Express your concerns and you'll find helpful remedies present themselves. Keep the lines of communication open and let the information flow. There's a great expansiveness that comes when you think for yourself - and think big. Don't get bogged down with the emotional side of things. Concern yourself with the facts.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Join others before you make your big travel plans. The smallest idea can be quickly transformed into a huge plan of attack, thanks to the prevailing winds of the day. There's a light, communicative feeling in the air encouraging cooperation. If you find that people aren't chiming into the group effort, you may want to excuse them from the group.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Don't get stuck doing just one thing today. The more varied your activity, the easier it will be for you to integrate the different pieces of the puzzle. This is a day to think big. The more you know, the greater an asset you'll be when it comes time to solve the biggest problems. Learn how to multitask effectively.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You might be in a whirlwind today, and there will be information buzzing around asking you to do this and go there. You're the one most perfectly suited to deal with the tone of the day. Stay lively and upbeat. Don't get stuck on any one thing. Keep the energy moving. The answer will be right there waiting for you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You might be jumping around today. This is one of those situations in which you don't want to stay in one place for too long. Each place is an individual step that leads to where you want to go. Keep your eyes focused ahead and keep on going. Stagnating will leave you lost in the middle of nowhere.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movies: Musicals

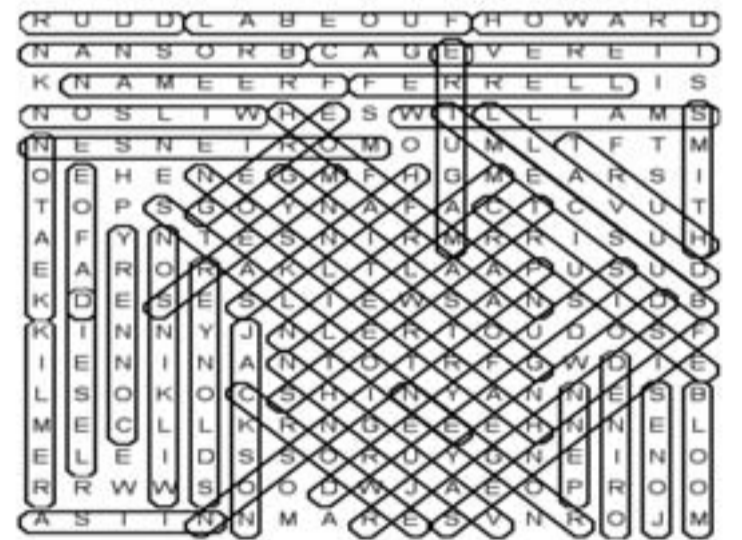
Find and circle all of the Movie Musicals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional Movie Musical.



- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| A CHORUS LINE | CHICAGO | HELLO, DOLLY! | PAL JOEY |
| ALL THAT JAZZ | EVITA | HIGH SOCIETY | SHOW BOAT |
| ANNIE | FAME | HOLIDAY INN | SILK STOCKINGS |
| BLUE HAWAII | FANTASIA | JAILHOUSE ROCK | SOUTH PACIFIC |
| BRIGADOON | FUNNY FACE | LA TRAVIATA | STATE FAIR |
| BUGSY MALONE | FUNNY GIRL | MARY POPPINS | SWEET CHARITY |
| CABARET | GIGI | MOULIN ROUGE | SWING TIME |
| CALAMITY JANE | GOOSEPELL | MY FAIR LADY | THE MUSIC MAN |
| CAMELOT | GREASE | NEWSIES | TOMMY |
| CARMEN | GYPSY | OKLAHOMA! | TOP HAT |
| CAROUSEL | HAIR | OLIVER! | WEST SIDE STORY |

Yesterday's Solution

Movie Actors 2



- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| ASTIN, Sean | FIENNES, Ralph | MARTIN, Steve |
| BLOOM, Orlando | FREEMAN, Morgan | MORTENSEN, Viggo |
| BROSHAN, Pierce | GERE, Richard | MYERS, Mike |
| BUSCEMI, Steve | GOSLING, Ryan | PATTINSON, Robert |
| CAGE, Nicolas | HANKS, Tom | PENN, Sean |
| CONNERY, Sean | HARRELSON, Woody | REYNOLDS, Ryan |
| CROWE, Russell | HOFFMAN, Philip Seymour | ROGEE, Seth |
| CRUISE, Tom | HOWARD, Terrence | RUDO, Paul |
| DAFOE, Willem | HURT, William | SMITH, Will |
| DE NIRO, Robert | JACKSON, Samuel L. | STALLONE, Sylvester |
| DIESEL, Vin | JONES, Tommy Lee | STEWART, Patrick |
| DOWNEY JR., Robert | KEATON, Michael | VAUGHN, Vince |
| DREYFUSS, Richard | KILMER, Val | WILKINSON, Tom |
| DUVALL, Robert | LABEOUF, Shia | WILLIAMS, Robin |
| EVERETT, Rupert | MAGUIRE, Tobey | WILSON, Owen |
| FERRELL, Will | | |

The hidden movie title is: KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

Daily SuDoku



medium

Yesterday's Solution



very hard

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019



A camel performs during a 'dance competition' held during the Pushkar Camel Fair in Pushkar, in the western state of Rajasthan. — AFP

Bombs and blasphemy: The risks of watching gay art in Russia

Whenever the play "Out of the Closet" is performed, Russian drama company Teatr.Doc has to take extra precautions: the audiences' passports are checked to ensure everyone is at least 18 and the process is filmed to prove the law has been followed. There is no nudity and few obscene words in the play, which is about Russian gay men coming out to their parents. But it is an offence to distribute "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships" to minors under Russian law.

"Teatr.Doc is like a besieged fortress today," Anastasia Patlay, director of the documentary play, told the audience before the lights were dimmed to start the show in Moscow. "We are not happy about it. But, apparently, it's a symptom of the situation we live in." Fearless Teatr.Doc is no stranger to controversy. In 2014, the theatre was evicted from its site after staging a satire that lampooned President Vladimir Putin and a production about the death in jail of whistleblower Sergei Magnitsky.

Its latest battle is to tell lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) stories in Russia, where homosexuality was a criminal offence until 1993 and classed as a mental illness until 1999. LGBT+ plays, films and books have been censored and attacked and violence towards gay people has increased since 2013, when the Kremlin adopted the "gay propaganda" law as part of a drive to defend what Putin called Russia's "traditional values". "We comply with the law," Patlay said. "The play is marked as appropriate for 18+, and we check people's passports every time. But I never rule out getting in trouble with it."

Trouble came in August, when anti-gay protesters attempted to disrupt "Out of the Closet" by repeatedly calling the police to the theatre and picketing the event. One evening performance was interrupted when a minor with a fake ID was planted in the audience and hecklers accused Teatr.Doc of breaking the law, said Patlay, who was taken to the police station for questioning, along with the 15-year-old.

SERB, a vigilante group that describes itself as "pro-Kremlin", said on Russian social network VK that it disrupted the play, which its leader Gosha Tarasevich said was "a cancerous abscess on the body of Russia". "We don't want Russian culture to be associated with garbage, and Teatr.Doc is promoting garbage," Tarasevich said in a phone interview. Such incidents are not unusual in Russia. Russian Orthodox religious activists invaded the stage during a performance in 2013 of gay Irish playwright Oscar Wilde's "An Ideal Husband", which they said was blasphemous for featuring a gay priest.

Three years later, demonstrators in St. Petersburg tried to disrupt "All Shades of Blue", a play about gay men, first by urging the audience not to enter the theatre, and then by reporting a bomb in the building after the show had started.

While the "gay propaganda" law does not require LGBT+ content to be removed from films and plays - merely for them to be clearly marked as suitable only for over 18s - film distributors

sometimes choose to delete provocative scenes. In May, Russian film distributor Central Partnership edited out all the gay sex scenes in "Rocketman", the Elton John biopic, following its general release in the country. In a statement, the company said it did so to "comply with the Russian legislation".

Risks

A spokesman for the ministry of culture said it screens all films for compliance with Russian law before issuing a distribution certificate. "The ministry does not hand out instructions to cut any specific scenes out," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. But companies often decide not to take the risk with LGBT+ content, said film critic Ksenia Ilyina, a judge at Russia's independent LGBT+ film festival, Side by Side, which has taken place in Moscow and St. Petersburg since 2008.

"They know that if anything goes wrong, their operation may be suspended or fines may be imposed, and no one wants that," she said. "It's all about taking fewer risks and inviting fewer troubles." Side by Side's founder Manny de Guerre said it is targeted by pro-Kremlin and religious groups almost every year. "This year, we had a really difficult festival... Three bomb threats, several nationalist Orthodox groups causing problems, gathering outside the cinema theatre, threatening to throw green dye on to people," she said. "Two young men got into a screening and threw liquid ammonia - and we had to evacuate everyone."

The chemical compound can cause burns and blindness. De Guerre was shocked because Side by Side was on a list of international film festivals officially approved by the ministry of culture under a new vetting system introduced last year. "But apparently that made our opponents even more enraged," she said. Tarasevich told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that SERB was one of several groups that protested outside the festival. "LGBT people don't irritate us as long as they don't promote their inclinations," the activist said.

"If they just quietly make their same-sex love, God bless them, because one can't go against their nature - even though it is against traditional Russian values. "But when they're trying to impose their views through their so-called art on others, we protest." While there is no evidence that anti-gay groups have ties to the authorities, LGBT+ activists believe they are encouraged by the Kremlin's stance. "The homophobic policies Russian authorities implement essentially breed these conservative groups," said Svetlana Zakharova, spokeswoman for the Russian LGBT Network, a campaign group.

"No one orders them (to disrupt LGBT+ events), but they feel like it's their duty to defend Russia, to defend traditional values... It's a scary situation to be in - when you go to a movie and can end up being attacked." — Reuters

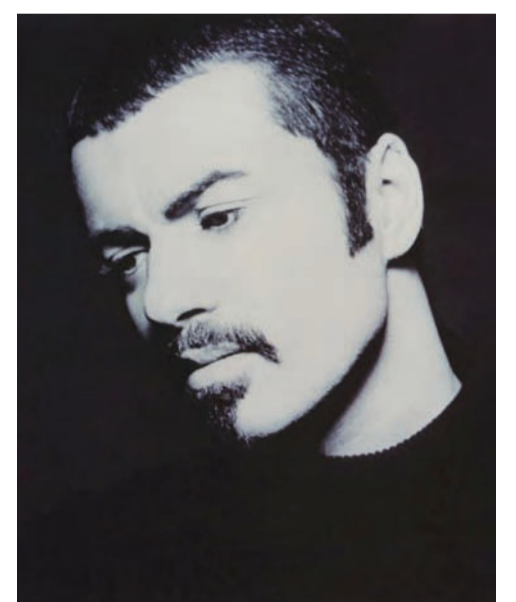
Late pop idol George Michael returns with new song

A new track recorded by George Michael in his last studio sessions before his 2016 death was released yesterday, in which the late British pop idol sings about social ills. "This Is How (We Want You To Get High)", his first original material since 2012, will play at the end of upcoming festive film "Last Christmas", itself inspired by Michael's solo tunes and hits from his Wham! days. One of the best-selling artists of all time, Michael, who rose to fame in the 1980s as part of duo Wham!, died at his home on Christmas Day 2016, aged 53. A coroner said he died of natural causes.

"The previously unreleased track, which was recorded during George's final studio sessions, is his first original material to be shared for seven years," a press release said. "The lyrics, written exclusively by George, see the star addressing society's ills with his trademark blend of self-deprecation and wry humor." Against a catchy melody, Michael's distinctive vocals belt out lines like "Your daddy was a drinker", "My daddy was a toker", "I will always try to get my life together" and "This is how we want you to get by on your sorry lives".

An accompanying lyric video features animation of Michael over the years. The Grammy Award-winner, who had several drug-related run-ins with the law, began working on the song in 2012. It was finalized in the studio in 2015. Born Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou to Greek Cypriot immigrant parents, Michael was known for Wham! and solo hits like "Last Christmas", "Careless Whisper" and "Faith". The "Last Christmas" film, starring Emilia Clarke and Henry Golding about a woman working as an elf in a Christmas shop, takes its name from the 1986 Wham! festive tune.

The soundtrack for the romantic comedy,



co-written by Oscar winner Emma Thompson, features 12 Michael solo songs and three Wham! tunes. "Emma had a meeting with him and he was intrigued because... the intention was never to make his story, it was to make a story inspired by a song," David Livingstone, a producer on the film, told Reuters, referring to a meeting Thompson had with Michael to discuss a screenplay.

Thompson heard the new tune and three other unreleased Michael songs last year when working on the soundtrack. "It's not like a song that's been dug out of the vaults, that's been sitting there unused because it wasn't good enough. It was a song that he intended to do something with and this is its new home," Livingstone said. "(It) does feel like it's tailor-made." — Reuters



Nina Dobrev splits from Grant Mellon

The 'Vampire Diaries' star and the director had been romancing for almost a year, but they've reportedly decided to call time on their relationship, as they've not been seen together for over a month. One source said: "Nina hasn't brought him around to any of her events in over a month and hasn't mentioned Grant. She has been partying and hanging out with friends without him. He has been shooting a Netflix film outside of Los Angeles and they haven't been hanging out together. Nina seems to be doing fine but none of their friends have seen or talked to Grant." But friends of the 30-year-old actress aren't sure what happened between the pair, as Nina "hasn't mentioned the breakup" to anyone. Another source added to E! News: "Nina hasn't mentioned a breakup. But she hasn't spoken about Grant in several weeks. She seems to be quite happy and has recently been out socialising with friends, each time without Grant." Nina and Grant, 33, first

sparked romance rumours back in January this year, before seemingly confirming their relationship when they sat court side together while enjoying an LA Lakers game. At the time, an insider said they had "been intentionally keeping their relationship as low-key as possible". Prior to dating Grant, the 'Fam' star was romantically linked to 'Scream Queens' actor Glen Powell, but their relationship only lasted a few months before their demanding schedules saw them drift apart. A source said of their 2017 fling: "There hasn't been an official 'split' but Nina and Glen have been taking time apart. Nina just wrapped on a project and is about to start another and her schedule has been a huge part of it. They haven't been spending much time together since the end of the summer." Nina also formerly romanced her 'Vampire Diaries' co-star Ian Somerhalder, who is now married to Nikki Reed.



Alexa Demie wants to create full-fledged fashion empire

The 'Euphoria' star has found herself hailed as a style icon following the success of the HBO drama - which she stars in alongside Zendaya - and has now said she plans on using her title to her advantage by creating her own fashion brand. Alexa - who is the daughter of a make-up artist - said: "[I want to create] a full-fledged fashion empire. I love fashion ... It's a part of my journey and part of the empire I want to create." The 24-year-old actress is keeping details of her new venture under wraps, but says she is "actively working" on the plans. She added: "It's something I'm actively working on that you'll see soon enough. Rather than waiting around to get picked as the face of an established brand, it's like, why not create your own?" And the beauty has already garnered a following for her fashion looks, as fans of 'Euphoria' have been recreating the outfits she wears on the show as Maddy. She said: "To see all of the girls and boys re-creating the makeup looks and wearing the outfits - it's really exciting." Alexa is keen to get stuck in to other projects too, as she's interested in releasing music and pursuing a career on the other side of the camera. Speaking to Who What Wear, she explained: "I don't like being told what to do. I've always known I wanted to be really successful and create whatever I want to create. I'm a musician, and I love fashion. And I want to direct and write my own stuff. There are so many other parts of me. So now that that's becoming my reality where I can take an idea to any ... producer and have them be excited to make it, that part feels really good."



Angelina Jolie failed an audition because she wore PVC pants

The 44-year-old actress has admitted that early in her career she failed to secure a part she auditioned for because of her fashion choices, as the shiny material had "fused together" during her wait to be called to audition. Speaking about her sense of style growing up, she said: "At school I wasn't that popular person; I was a punk. I loved leather, PVC, and fishnets. Those were my three favourite fabrics in my early 20s. I remember the first time I wore PVC pants. I was waiting for an audition, sitting in the sun in L.A. By the time it was my turn, my pants had fused together. I didn't get the part." But the experience didn't impact Angelina's love for PVC, as she also recalled wearing a similar outfit when she married her first husband Jonny Lee Miller, whom she wed when she was 21 in 1996, and eventually divorced in 1999. She added: "But I loved those pants. I wore something similar when I married Jonny [Lee Miller]." During her punk phase in her 20s, the 'Maleficent: Mistress of Evil' also began getting tattoos, and spoke about one she had inked when she was "feeling lost" and "restless". Speaking to Harper's Bazaar magazine, she said: "I have a tattoo, 'A prayer for the wild at heart kept in cages.' I got it when I was 20. I was with my mum one evening, and I was feeling lost. I was restless - always. I still am. We were driving to dinner, and she talked about spending time with Tennessee Williams and how much she loved his words. She told me he wrote that, about the wild at heart. We drove to a tattoo parlor, and I got it inked on my left arm. What she did for me that night was to remind me that the wild within me is alright and a part of me."

Gal Gadot's life changed when she became a parent

The 'Wonder Woman' actress - who has Alma, eight, and Maya, two, with husband Jaron Varsano - penned a touching tribute to her eldest daughter on her eighth birthday on Wednesday, in which she reflected on the "love and light" the youngster has brought into her life. Sharing a photo of Alma as a baby with Jaron, Gal wrote on Instagram: "8 years ago today my life has changed forever. Alma decided she had enough and came out a good few weeks before my due date. She has brought so much love and light into our home. So much laughter with cheeky funny moments, so much curiosity, both daring and naive.(sic)" The 34-year-old actress pledged to do "anything" for her daughter - but urged her not to grow up too quickly. She continued: "Thank you for teaching me so much about life without even know you are and for giving me the most precious title I could ever ask for. 'I promise I'll do anything for you, love and protect you forever. Just please, don't grow up so fast.. Take your time. I can't believe you're 8 already. Love you to the moon through all galaxies double the number of grain of sand in the universe.(sic)" Gal played the titular role in hit movie 'Wonder Woman' and, as a mother of daughters, hopes its success will lead to more female-driven movies being commissioned. She previously explained: "Having two girls, I can only hope that this is not just a trend. Now, because we did well at the box office, I hope that there's going to be more female-led stories that everyone can enjoy because at the end of the day, I enjoyed so many male-led stories. We're talking about representation, so on Earth there's 50-50 men and women, and it should be the same on film, on TV, on everywhere."



Britney Spears has self esteem problems

The 'Toxic' singer has been working with a fitness coach to arch her back as she believes her lack of confidence has caused her to "slouch" so she's doing her best to improve her posture. She wrote on Instagram: "Body language is everything! The way you speak to yourself and carry yourself can affect your mood I have self esteem problems so I slouch ... These poses help me everyday become stronger and it's quite fun doing them. I feel so different everytime I do it, cause I'm not used to the feeling of my back being out !!!(sic)" In the accompanying video - in which she wears a bright blue bikini - Britney balanced on her coach as he lay on the ground, holding up her upper body with his hands and supporting her butt with his feet, as she moved into different poses with her legs. She explained: "By hanging upside down it opens my back and it enables me to breathe better and to open up. And to feel better. So here I go." The 'Lucky' singer suffered a much-publicized breakdown in 2007 and it was recently claimed that she'd have died if it weren't for the efforts of her father, Jamie Spears, who took control of her affairs. Dance studio boss Robert Baker recently said: "I've known Britney since 1998. I saw her at the height of her fame and saw her struggling when things got tough. She was spiraling out of control. She was going through the worst time of her life and needed help. Her dad stepped in and gave her the help she needed. If he hadn't, things could have been very different. I don't think she would still be with us today."



Emilia Clarke tempted by online dating in the past

The 33-year-old actress has previously romanced the likes of Seth MacFarlane - whom she dated from 2012 to 2013 - and Charlie McDowell, whom she split with earlier this year, and has said that following her high-profile relationships, "there was a time" when she almost signed up to a dating app. Emilia explained that fame has made online dating impossible, but she has been tempted to set up a fake profile. She said: "There was a time. I was definitely tempted. [I missed online dating] because I was on people's television right when it all began. So there are all my single friends being like [swiping]. I'm like, 'What are you doing?' *Shopping for a boyfriend.' 'OK cool.' 'If I wasn't in the job I'm in, then I definitely would do it, 100 percent. And I feel like it's not a taboo anymore.' The 'Game of Thrones' star would love her future man to have a good sense of humor, and above all needs them to be "considerate and nice". She added to the Daily Mirror newspaper: "If you make me giggle, then I'm in pretty much. And someone who is considerate and nice. Like when someone takes you out on a date and they've thought about kind of an interesting thing to do ... that goes a long way. But a sense of humor is 100 percent it. If you can laugh with someone, it's just the sexiest thing in the world." Meanwhile, Emilia previously said her career had ruined her love life for several years. The 'Last Christmas' star said: "I kept thinking that for clarity of mind, I had to be in one place. And then I just realized that's not how this life is going to work. It makes [romantic relationships] absolutely impossible. I'm sappy and I do like to believe that when the right person comes along, it will work, because you want to make it work. Everyone else seems to manage it."

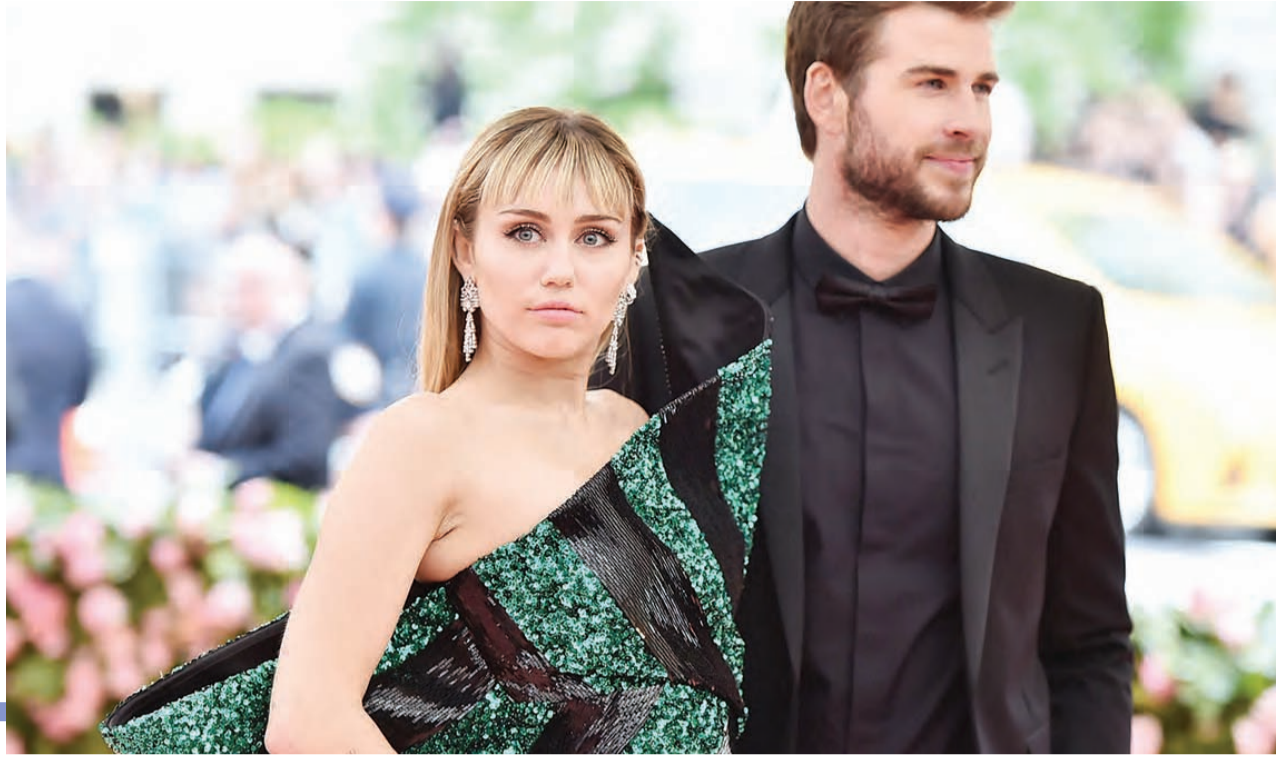


Lifestyle | Gossip

Miley Cyrus unfollows Liam, Kaitlynn Carter on Instagram

The 'Malibu' hitmaker has cut social media ties with her exes, and although the exact timing of the move is unclear, it looks like she may have unfollowed them after the respective break-ups. The last photo she liked on ex-husband Liam's account was a snap of them from June - when they were still together - while the last post she liked on Kaitlynn's was from their summer getaway. The 29-year-old actor also doesn't follow Miley, although the 31-year-old reality star still does. The pair didn't start dating until August, when Miley split from estranged husband Liam, but Kaitlynn - who split from her own man Brody Jenner this year - recently admitted whilst their romance only lasted around a month, she had fallen head of heels for the 26-year-old singer. In an

essay for Elle, she wrote: "This past July, I went on vacation with a female friend; the next thing I knew, I was in love with her. It wasn't quite that simple, of course. But it also wasn't very complicated, either. "Until that trip, it had never crossed my mind that I was even capable of loving a woman the way I loved her. But after reflecting on my romantic history, I realized that I've never really had a 'type.' " Meanwhile, it's said Liam is "taking it slow" with Maddison Brown, 22, after the pair were spotted passionately kissing during a recent lunch date in New York. However, friends say the star isn't ready to rush into anything with the 'Dynasty' actress after splitting from Miley over summer after less than a year of marriage. A source previously said: "It's very new. Liam is taking it slow but he's definitely interested in her."



Jennifer Lawrence, Cooke Maroney enjoy honeymoon in Indonesia

The 29-year-old actress wed the 34-year-old art dealer in Rhode Island last month and they are now enjoying their first days as a married couple at the exclusive Nih Sumba Resort. The remote island destination is spread across 530 acres and has 33 luxurious villas with facilities such as private plunge pools but the couple are staying in the even more exclusive private residence of the resort's owner, Chris Burch, People magazine reports. The abode, known as Mendaka, is available to book and has previously been used by the likes of Jennifer's 'American Hustle' co-star Christian Bale, who stayed there last year. Insiders revealed the couple have spent time at the resort going horseriding and have taken trips to nearby Sumbanese villages, which the hotel helps to support via their own charitable foundation. The idyllic retreat - which opened in 2015 and was named best in the world two years later - has plenty on offer to keep Jennifer and Cooke occupied, including yoga, a spa offering alfresco massages, and a boathouse, where guests can arrange excursions to surf, fish, charter a boat, dive, kayak, spearfish, snorkel, jet ski or stand-up paddleboard. Jennifer - who previously dated actor Nicholas Hoult and director Darren Aronofsky - and Cooke got engaged in February, after less than 12 months of dating. However, a source claimed that the loved-up duo had an instant connection.



Jessica Biel wears 'real' Justin Timberlake outfit for Halloween

The 'Sinner' actress dressed as her husband with her pals as his *NSYNC bandmates for the spooky holiday last week and she added authenticity to her transformation by digging out the jumpsuit he wore to the 1999 American Music Awards as her costume. Speaking on 'The Late Late Show with James Corden', she said: "I surprised Justin because I remembered that we have that exact jumpsuit that he wore in storage. "So we pulled it out and it was the real one. It's for real. It's the real jumpsuit... "I was working in New York so I literally was flying back on Halloween night. I had missed my flight. The whole crew of all our friends being the band members were waiting on me to get there and I was late. "So my friends threw my outfit in the car. I went from the airport. I changed in the car." Despite Justin's surprise at his wife's outfit, the 37-year-old star revealed her costume theme was actually the 'SexyBack' hitmaker's idea. Asked how he reacted, she said: "This was his idea. It was all his idea." James didn't think such a suggestion would have gone down so well with his own wife, Julia. He laughed: "I can't imagine my wife's face if I went, 'You know what you should dress as?' Me." "She would divorce me so fast. She'd divorce me in a heartbeat." While Jessica dressed up as Justin, her spouse - with whom she has son Silas, four - went as a mic and the actress admitted it caused him a lot of problems throughout the evening. She said: "He wore the hugest costume, it was so funny, he could barely move.



Iskra Lawrence is pregnant

The 29-year-old model has confirmed she is expecting her first child with boyfriend Philip Payne and she's already into her second trimester. Alongside a number of professional photos she shared to Instagram showing off her growing bump, Iskra wrote: "It's not just the two of us anymore, we're soon to be a family of 3. "When @philipapayne ran out and got us six boxes of #ad @firstresponsepregnancy Early Result tests, our lives changed forever. We were so shocked when we saw those two lines and we knew for sure we were having a baby. Right now we're 17 weeks and 3 days pregnant!" "I've never been more excited to meet anyone, and Philip and I are in love with our mini baby P bump (sic) "And the producer can't believe he is so "blessed" to be becoming a father. He wrote on his own Instagram account: "Who would've thought... I always look at you and think, God why me? How did I get this blessed, what on earth did I do to deserve this much happiness and favor? I'm entirely in awe at his grace "So much has changed so fast in such a short amount of time and I'd be lying if I didn't say it's all been taking me to a spin lol so many emotions, excited, scared AF, vulnerable, questions, Do I have what it takes? Am I ready? How do i become the best dad?" Philip went on to praise his girlfriend for being so supportive.



Cara Delevingne to host, produce new practical joke show

The 27-year-old model-and-actress is teaming up with streaming platform Quibi for the all-female venture, which will see her and her accomplices wreak havoc with stunts and gags - ranging from the extreme to the ridiculous - and she is "so excited" to get up to mischief. She said in a statement: "I am so excited to be partnering with such a revolutionary streaming service like Quibi and cannot wait to unleash some necessary mischief. "As someone who watches so much content on my phone, this feels like such a perfect partnership." The series will be produced by ITV America's Sirens Media and the company are thrilled to have the 'Suicide Squad' actress on board for the show because she's such an "icon". Their president, Jessica Sebastian - who will also serve as executive producer on the show - said: "Cara's an icon in so many ways, and it's a privilege to partner with her to develop something that authentically encapsulates her unique energy and sensibility. "As far as I know, a series in this space with this level of female guidance and representation, both in front of and behind the camera, is unprecedented, and we're ecstatic to bring this new take on the genre to the ideal platform in Quibi." Quibi is set to launch in April 2020 and Cara is the latest big name star to sign up to the streaming platform, which will also host shows featuring the likes of Tyra Banks, Don Cheadle, Idris Elba and Chrissy Teigen. It will also show Steven Spielberg's 'After Dark', a horror series which users will only be able to watch between sundown and sunrise local time, as well as a remake of MTV's 'Punk'd'.



Khloe Kardashian is 'so in love' with daughter True

The 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' star hasn't been in a relationship since she dumped True's father Tristan Thompson back in February, after he kissed family friend Jordyn Woods at a party. And whilst she would be open to dating someone if it felt "natural", the 35-year-old reality star has insisted she is "totally good" with being single. During a takeover of US talk show 'The Real' with her sisters Kourtney Kardashian and Kim Kardashian West, Khloe said about dating: "If it's natural, great. "But I'm so in love with True and I don't feel incomplete or like I need to distract myself in any way and I'm totally good and happy and I just love it." The 'Revenge Body' host also admitted that she doesn't have a "type", and instead looks for the person she has the biggest connection with. She added: "I think my biggest thing is not having any sort of type. "Like whoever I vibe and connect with is what I want to do. "I just don't really have any pressure on it." Meanwhile, Khloe recently admitted she will "never come in-between" Tristan and their 18-month-old daughter. The blonde beauty admitted it's "hard" to co-parent with her ex-boyfriend, but she'll never prevent the basketball star from seeing little girl, because she wants to allow him to have a relationship with her. She said: "It's hard, it's not easy for me. It would be easier for me to keep my daughter away and be like, 'No, 'cause you hurt me.'

Kris Jenner's daughters shower her with love on 64th birthday

The 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' star turned 64 on Tuesday, and to celebrate the special occasion, her daughters Kourtney Kardashian, Khloe Kardashian, and Kim Kardashian West took to social media. Khloe, 35, praised her mother for making "life perfect" in an Instagram post which featured several professional shots of the pair, as she wrote: "Happy beautiful birthday mommy!! We are here to celebrate you daily!!! You make life perfect! You make life happy and filled with love! You excite me when it comes to Life! You remind me that life is a celebration! You make me believe I could do anything at any time. You are a Queen who has raised mini Queens and a young King. That's a super woman to me!! "I only pray I can leave footprints on peoples souls the way you do. I love you so much. You've been my biggest inspiration for all of the years of my life. Your strength, compassion, love, work ethic, beauty and your incredible generosity is beyond anything else I have witnessed. "There are so many good things I could say about you. The list could go on forever. Mom, we ALL love and adore you!!! You are my hero and my heart! I will love you more and more everyday Until the end of time Thankful for our blessings and for the love you give each and everyone of us! Today please enjoy being the Queen that you are!!! Happy birthday Queen (sic) " Whilst Kourtney, 40, shared a clip of her mother singing during a karaoke evening, and wrote: "Happy birthday to the queen of everything (karaoke included). (sic) " And 39-year-old Kim praised the mother of six - who also has son Rob Kardashian, and daughters Kendall and Kylie Jenner - for being "the best mom in the entire world". — Bang Showbiz





In this photo breakdancer Johanna Rodrigues performs a dance move on a street in Bangalore. —AFP photos

'Better than the boys': Indian b-girl flips norms in world title bid

Long before b-girl Johanna Rodrigues began improvising routines combining Indian classical dance with headstands and backflips in a quest to "redefine femininity", she found inspiration at home in her widowed mother. A rare female face on India's breakdancing scene, Rodrigues is representing the South Asian nation at this week's Red Bull BC One world championship in Mumbai, where she will battle 15 women and 16 men for the top prize.

Competing against men comes naturally to the 23-year-old yoga instructor, who grew up idolizing athletes like Usain Bolt and harbored dreams of becoming a runner. "We tend to limit girls by segregating them from boys at an early age—setting up different goalposts especially when it comes to things like athletics at school," she tells AFP. "I never understood it... maybe because I had a mother who did everything a man was expected to do and everything a woman was expected to do, whether it was fixing lightbulbs, going to work, riding a motorbike, cooking dinner. "I always wanted to be better than the boys."

Born in New York's Bronx borough in the 1970s, breakdancing has become a phenomenon around the world and a staple of urban youth culture, performed everywhere from the slums of Mumbai to the streets of Cape Town. The dance is set to make its Olympic debut at

the Paris 2024 Games and Rodrigues hopes such recognition would "legitimize it in the eyes of parents" and encourage more Indian youths to try the sport. Although there are no verified figures on the number of male and female breakers in India, Rodrigues estimates that the competitive community today includes some 800 men—and just 40 women.

Breaking stereotypes

Rodrigues was a schoolgirl in the southern city of Bangalore when she encountered the world of breaking, taking a breather from studying for exams to watch a hip-hop dance performance. It was love at first sight. "It was amazing to watch them move with such a sense of freedom," she recalls. Learning the moves felt like a natural next step. "It felt so exhilarating to work with my body, to see what was possible," she says, breaking into a smile.

A year later, after training with her boyfriend who is also a b-boy (a term for a male breakdancer), she performed in public for the first time. Half a decade on, she says breaking has transformed her sense of self and raised her confidence as a woman living in conservative India. "I used to feel so worried for my safety, so nervous travelling on my own or being stared at, but now I feel totally comfortable dancing in a park or on the street," she says. "People's reac-



In this photo breakdancer Johanna Rodrigues reacts during an interview in Bangalore.

tions don't bother me."

Although Rodrigues has studied contemporary dance and ballet, today she mainly draws on the skills she has picked up learning yoga, the ancient indigenous martial art of Kalaripayattu, and Bharatnatyam—a dance form that originated in southern India's temples over 2,000 years ago. "All these elements are part of who I am... it's such an advantage as an Indian to be able to tap them and use them to create my own version as a b-girl," she says. Keen to boost female participation in the predominately male sport, she organizes summer dance camps for children through her studio Break Brahma.

"I love teaching girls because they are so uninhibited at that age," she says.

"Breaking isn't just about strength, whatever some guys might think... it's also about flexibility and patience. "Being a b-girl is my way of redefining femininity, by combining masculine and feminine elements which are part of all of us." And, because the sport is intrinsically a freestyle form where dancers improvise to the music, Rodrigues says aspiring breakers who can't afford classes can get tips from social media such as YouTube videos. "Breaking is innately cool and accessible," she says. "You don't need fancy gear, you don't even need shoes, you can do it anywhere." — AFP



Vienna orchestra celebrates 50th birthday with new woman chief

When Vienna's ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra marks its 50th anniversary with a special concert on Wednesday, it will be under the baton of its new chief conductor who, for the first time in Austria, is a woman. Top-tier orchestras in Vienna—arguably the world capital of classical music—are traditionally a predominantly male preserve. But industry observers see the arrival in September of US conductor Marin Alsop at the helm of the ensemble as a sign that even deeply conservative Vienna is beginning to change with the times.

The 63-year-old American—who has previously been chief conductor of orchestras in Bournemouth in Britain, Baltimore in the United States and Sao Paulo in Brazil—said her reception in the Austrian capital has been "very

warm". "I haven't felt this kind of welcome in a long time," she told AFP after a recent rehearsal. Globally, only four percent of conductors are women and the situation is no different in Vienna.

The city's world-famous Vienna Philharmonic, whose New Year concert is broadcast to more than 90 countries across the globe, started admitting women only in 1997. And men still vastly outnumber women on the podium of that orchestra's home, the legendary Musikverein concert hall. More than half of Vienna's music students are female, but they are still a relatively rare sight in conducting classes.

In the rarefied world of conducting, sexist stereotypes—that women lack the necessary strength and authority to lead an orchestra—are deep-seated. In 2017, the renowned Latvian maestro Mariss Jansons caused a storm when he said in a newspaper interview that seeing a woman on the podium was not "my cup of tea", a remark he quickly apologized for. Alsop said that at the outset of her career concert promoters tended to hire her because they mistakenly thought her name was that of a man.

But that was not the case for the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra. "When Marin was suggested to me, I was electrified," the orchestra's director Christoph Becher said at a recent symposium on gender equality organized by Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts. "I proposed her name to my musicians and they were enthusiastic," he said.

Patricio Canete-Schreger, head of music at the city council's culture department, is convinced that Alsop's presence will help speed up change in the sector. He noted that the music university has just appointed a woman as its head for the first time in its 200-year history and has also introduced diversity targets for its conducting program. "These are all excellent signs," Canete-Schreger said. For the students, however, gender is not an issue. "Whether you're a man or a woman, the technique in leading us doesn't change," said one young trombonist, 22-year-old Tobias Grabher. — AFP



New Chief Conductor of the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra (RSO) Marin Alsop leads the musicians during a public rehearsal in the Great Broadcasting Room of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) in Vienna. — AFP photos



Sports

Japan's Joseph among 26 invited to apply for All Blacks coach role

New coaching team will be named before Christmas

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Rugby bosses have ruled out a foreign coach for the All Blacks, revealing yesterday they have asked 26 New Zealanders to apply including Jamie Joseph, who recently guided Japan to a historic first World Cup quarter-final.

Chairman Brent Impey said it was "a luxury" to have such coaching depth to call on after Steve Hansen stepped down at the end of the Rugby World Cup last weekend. The new coaching team will be named before Christmas, but Joseph is yet to say whether he will seek the All Blacks post or remain with Japan.

"If you look at what we've seen with the World Cup, many of those best coaches come from (New Zealand)," Impey said. "We believe we have covered the field in terms of those coaches who would have the skillset to do the job. This is a specialist job."

The announcement came as Japan's assistant coach Tony Brown revealed he would stay loyal to Joseph and had rejected approaches to join the coaching teams of two leading contenders, Ian Foster and Scott Robertson.

"I made a decision I'm going to stay with Jamie. If he applies for the All Blacks, I'm in. If he stays with Japan, I'm in," Brown said. Brown, a former All Blacks fly-half, has formed a close bond with Joseph since the pair rebuilt an ailing Otago Highlanders into Super Rugby champions in 2015.

The pair elevated World Cup hosts Japan into a top-10 nation with victories over Ireland and Scotland in the just-concluded showpiece.

"It felt right to stick with Jamie and what we've been doing for the last eight years," Brown said. "It was a massive decision. One hundred per cent I want to coach the All Blacks tomorrow. But it didn't feel right floating between three different coaching teams where I don't get a say."

"Jamie puts together a great team and we're all trying to make the team better. That's what I like about Jamie... Everyone's trying to make the team better. "We both want to coach the All Blacks but we both want to do it at the right time. Whether the right time is now, I hope it is or it may not be, it may be in four years."

Impey said the selection panel, which includes former World Cup-winning All Blacks coach Graham Henry, expected applicants to have their coaching support team ready when interviewed. "Whether it's your scrum coach, your backs coach, your defence coach, whatever it is we want to see a team going forward," he said.

"Those 26 candidates know what we've been saying so we're expecting that in the applications. "This is high performance. You've got to get the best, the very, very best. Our standards are very high. We believe our team has to be the best it possibly can."

Former Waikato Chiefs coach Dave Rennie, now with the Glasgow Warriors, said last week he had been asked to apply for the post. Another prominent name believed to be in the mix is Warren Gatland, although the outgoing Wales coach has been told he could not be the All Blacks coach and also keep his contract as the 2021 British and Irish Lions coach. Impey said former Ireland mentor Joe Schmidt was not available for consideration as he is taking a break from the game for family reasons. — AFP



TOKYO: Japan head coach Jamie Joseph arrives for the World Rugby Awards 2019 ceremony in Tokyo. — AFP

Finals of Bowling World Tour today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The finals of the Bowling World Tour will be played today with the participation of 12 top players from both genders from around the world. The finals with a total prizes of \$32,500 will be played at Kuwait Bowling Center, with the top winner bagging \$12,500. This one-day event, comes on the heels of the great success the 25th Asian Championship and Kuwait Open enjoyed, making Kuwait the focus of bowling sport lovers.

This is the history of world open tournaments, supervised by the International Bowling



Federation headed by Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad, the tour will witness a championship as the "finals" with the participation of an elite group of bowlers, where the best three ranked players in 2019 of both genders will find themselves facing a player from the Asian, European and the Americas bowling federations. The continental federations selected Malaysia's Rafiq Ismail and Singapore's Cherie Tan from Asia, Iceland's Arnar Johnson and Sweden's Ana Anderson from Erupe, American Nick Pate and Colombian Clara Guerrero from the Americas to participate in the final.

Today's rounds will be played in two stages the first is a preliminary in the morning, where each player must go through six rounds where the top three quali-

fy to the final, which will take place in the evening.

Meanwhile, 16 players competed in the 13-round final of Kuwait Open which concluded yesterday, they are Australia's Sam Cooley, Iceland's Arnar Johnson, Hong Kong's Michael Mak, Danish Thomas Larsen, England's Stewart Williams, America's Nick Pate, America's Danielle McEwan, Kuwait's Mustafa Al-Mousawi, America's Brad Miller, America's Tommy Jones, Canada's Mitch Hope, Sweden's Martin Larson, England's Dom Barrett, Venezuela's Ildemaro Ruiz, America's AJ Johnson and Finland's Osku Palermaa.

America's AJ Chapman said this is the first time he competed in the Middle East in the open, and he lauded the organization and high level and this what will make him come again to compete here.

Gulf Bank holds press conference announcing Gulf Bank 642 Marathon

KUWAIT: Yesterday, Gulf Bank held a press conference in anticipation of one of its biggest events of the year, the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon. The much anticipated sporting event is scheduled to take place in less than ten days, on November 16, 2019, and invites challenge-seeking athletes as well as beginners to participate in one of Kuwait's biggest community events of the year. Last year's marathon was an unprecedented success with over 7,500 attendees representing over 66 nationalities competing at the event.

"Every year, we are proud to partner with local organizations that believe in our mission to spread awareness on the importance of health and fitness, and to take the lead in initiatives that benefit the Kuwaiti community. At Gulf Bank, we make it a point to welcome and support all members of our community, which is why the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon is open to participants of all levels," said Ahmad Al Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank. "Health and fitness are among the most important aspects of our corporate social responsibility program. According to the World Health Organization, the rate of obesity in Kuwait is 73.7%, and diabetics constitute 14.7% of the population, making events like this marathon more crucial than ever. Thanks to our combined efforts, the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon has become one of the biggest community events of the year and a fantastic day of fun for the whole family."

For the fifth year in a row, Gulf Bank is launching the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon in partnership with Pro-Vision Sports Management. The race consists of four categories open to runners of all abilities, including: the 5K Family Fun Walk/Run, the 10K Souq Run, the 21K Half Marathon, and 42K Full Marathon. The 5K is open to runners aged 11 and above, the 10K to runners aged 16 and above, and the 21K to runners aged 18 and above. The race takes runners through beautiful landmarks in Kuwait, starting at the entrance bridge of Souq Sharq, and heading in and out of Souq



AlMubarakiya. The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon is the only marathon in Kuwait that has the AbbottWMM accreditation. The AbbottWMM Wanda Age Group World Rankings, a global age group marathon ranking system. Runners participating in the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon 2019 will get a chance to qualify for the age group ranking program, earning points according to their age, time and gender, aligned with the following age groups for men and women: 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80+.

Gulf Bank will also be hosting the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon Exhibition prior to the race. The three-day health and fitness event is scheduled to take place from November 12-14 at Kuwait International Fairgrounds (Hall 4A). This year's main sponsors include Kuwait Airways, Lincoln Alghanim, Extreme Sports, and Intersport. The exhibition will include a number of health and fitness-related discussions, as well as activi-

ties for participants to enjoy. Participants will also be able to collect their race kits at the exhibition.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust corporate social responsibility program. Every year, Gulf Bank extends its support to local youth initiatives, proudly advocating for women empowerment, sustainability, health and fitness, and building on the legacy of Kuwait's heritage and history. This year, Gulf Bank 642 Marathon has partnered with Kuwait Red Crescent Society to bring medical aid to those who are unable to afford medical treatment, providing support in covering the provision of medical devices including pacemakers, cochlear devices, hearing aids, electric wheelchairs, and stents. For event registration and more information, please visit www.gulfbank642marathon.com or access the Instagram account @GulfBank642. Registration closes on November 15, 2019.

Women's boxing icon Adams retires due to medical advice

LONDON: Two-time Olympic champion Nicola Adams, regarded as the pathfinder for women's boxing, is to retire because of fears about her sight, the Briton announced yesterday. The 37-year-old, who became the first ever women's Olympic boxing champion at London 2012 when she took the flyweight crown, said she was abandoning her hopes of winning a third gold next year in Tokyo.

In an open letter to her local newspaper the Yorkshire Evening Post, Adams said she had decided to hang up her gloves because doctors had warned her sight would be permanently damaged if she continued to box.

Adams, who successfully defended her title in Rio, had embarked on a successful professional career and in 2018, within 18 months of doing so, had won a world title — the vacant WBO flyweight belt. "I've been advised that any further impact to my eye would most likely lead to irreparable damage and permanent vision loss," said Adams.

"I'm immensely honoured to have represented our country — to win double Olympic gold medals and then the WBO championship belt is a dream come true... But it's not without taking its toll on my body."

"To my wonderful team, I would not be the fighter I am today without your encouragement and understanding — what you have taught me goes beyond the ring. "Hanging up my gloves was always going to hard, but I have never felt luckier. And I'm so immensely proud of how far the sport has come."

Adams nicknamed herself the 'comeback kid' after returning from shoulder surgery in 2015 to win the inaugural European Games title. She had raised the profile of women's boxing in Britain both in and out of the ring, partly because of her dog, a Doberman called Dexter.

Aged 10 months he had been photographed watching her title fight at the Olympics on a television that had been installed in his kennels and was photographed apparently staring attentively at the screen. — AFP

Former cricket chief on panel to review Wallabies WCup flop

SYDNEY: Former cricket administrator Pat Howard was yesterday named as part of a three-man panel to review the Wallabies 2019 season which culminated in their World Cup flop.

Australia, under Michael Cheika, crashed out of the tournament in Japan at the quarter-final stage to England, sparking stinging criticism of not only his tactics, but his Rugby Australia bosses by domestic media.

Howard, an ex-Wallaby and team performance chief at Cricket Australia, will join four-time Olympic rower Bo Hanson and Australian Test centurion Nathan Sharpe in determining what went wrong. They will work alongside director of rugby Scott Johnson to deliver the review over the next month.

"Having these three individuals leading the process will provide a well-rounded perspective on the Wallabies programme," said Rugby Australia chief Raelene Castle. "It will enable us to take forward any key learnings for delivery into the major tournament preparations of all of our national teams over the next four-year cycle."

All 2019 Wallabies squad members and team staff will be interviewed. It is a continuation of a review process conducted in 2018 that saw the introduction of a three-person Wallabies selection panel and closer working arrangements with Super Rugby clubs.

The review will run separately to the process of appointing a new Wallabies coach after Cheika stepped down. Castle has previously said she hopes to make an announcement on the new coach before Christmas, with New Zealander Dave Rennie the favourite with bookmakers. — AFP

Sports

Cole scores as Islanders top Senators, stretch winning streak to 10 games

Maple Leafs stun Kings on third-period goals

NEW YORK: Cole Bardreau scored his first NHL goal — on a penalty shot — to give the red-hot New York Islanders the lead for good Tuesday night, when the Islanders ran their winning streak to 10 games with a 4-1 victory over the visiting Ottawa Senators. Cal Clutterbuck, Casey Cizikas and Josh Bailey also scored for the Islanders, whose winning streak is the second-longest in team history behind only a 15-game run during the 1981-82 season, when New York won the third of four straight Stanley Cups. It is also the longest winning streak in the NHL since the Tampa Bay Lightning won 10 in a row from Feb. 9-27, 2019. Islanders goalie Thomas Greiss recorded 27 saves. Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored for the Senators, who have alternated losses with wins over the last seven games. Ottawa's Craig Anderson made 28 saves.

CANADIENS 5, BRUINS 4

Ben Chiarot scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period as host Montreal snapped Boston's six-game winning streak. Victor Mete scored twice, Tomas Tatar posted a goal and an assist, and Paul Byron also tallied for the Canadiens, who won for the fourth time in five games. Jeff Petry recorded two assists, Chiarot added an assist for a two-point night, and Canadiens goalie Carey Price made 21 saves. Boston's David Pastrnak extended his career-best point streak to 13 games with his NHL-leading 15th goal. Torey Krug notched an assist on the goal for his 300th career point. Connor Clifton, Anders Bjork and Sean Kuraly scored for the Bruins, and Rask (26 saves) fell to 7-1-1.

SHARKS 4, BLACKHAWKS 2

Patrick Marleau scored a goal while becoming the sixth player in NHL history to play in 800 consecutive games and Timo Meier and Tomas Hertl both had a goal and an assist to lead host San Jose past Chicago. Marleau joined Doug Jarvis (964), Garry Unger (914), Steve Larmer (884), Andrew Cogliano (830) and Keith Yandle (811) as the only players in NHL history to play in 800 consecutive games.

India's Pant currently 'one-trick pony': Jones

MUMBAI: India batsman Rishabh Pant needs to improve his off-side game if he wants to graduate from being a one-trick pony, former Australia batsman Dean Jones has told Reuters. The young stumper-batsman is perceived as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's natural successor in limited overs cricket for India when the former captain eventually hangs up his gloves.

But the 22-year-old has received lots of flak lately from India's coaching staff, pundits and the media after losing his wicket through loose shots and his position in the India test side has been taken by fit-again Wriddhiman Saha. "He's still a young kid, still learning his craft, still doesn't know what's going on a little bit," Jones, who now works as a television media pundit, said in an interview. "He needs to work more on his strokeplay through the offside. At the moment, he's just a bit of a one-trick pony."

"We know he's got an off-side game, he's just got to work more. It wouldn't take long to change but he needs to be very specific in his training programme right now," Jones, an expert for Star Sports' Select Dugout, cited the example of South Africa stumper-batsman Quinton de Kock, who top-scored for them in the recent Twenty20

series in India.

"Quinton de Kock changed his game, that was very evident in the last T20 series against India," said Jones, who played 52 tests and 164 one-day internationals for Australia. "Everyone thought he struggled to hit the ball between point and mid-off and they bowled there. But through lots of net practice and good technique work, he hit a lot of boundaries. "And all of a sudden they couldn't line him up properly because he had other options to score."

Pant played 11 Tests in the absence of the injured Saha and used his chances well, hitting a century in an Oval Test against England last year while smashing an unbeaten 159 versus Australia in Sydney in January.

His six-hitting ability makes him a limited-overs asset, but India head coach Ravi Shastri and batting coach Vikram Rahour have said in recent interviews that the left-hander's shot selection has occasionally let the team down.

Pant played within himself and seemed to curb his natural instincts in his 26-ball knock of 27 during India's loss to Bangladesh in the first T20 in Delhi on Sunday. "When you are going through a bad phase you start doubting your strokeplay," Jones said. "Ultimately you've got to go with the gut feel when you play T20 cricket. And at the moment I think he's second guessing his talents. "We want him to be a 360 degree style player but at the moment he feels to me that he's only 180. He only scores down the ground or on the leg side and once you get a player doing that, you can control them and shut them down."

Guardiola says he did not mean to brand Mane a diver

LONDON: Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola said on Tuesday that he had no intention of branding Liverpool's Sadio Mane a diver, after comments to that effect at the weekend that angered Reds manager Jurgen Klopp.

The two teams meet in a top-of-the-table clash on Sunday, with league leaders Liverpool six points ahead of City. Guardiola said last weekend that Mane dived sometimes, after the forward was booked in the first half against Aston Villa for simulation. Klopp responded by taking a dig at City's "tactical fouling".

Guardiola said on Tuesday that his comments had been taken out of context. "What Liverpool has done this season and last season many times is

because they have this incredible quality to fight until the end... Sometimes at 94 minutes against Leicester (City) with the penalty (in the 2-1 win) it was like 'wow,' he told reporters ahead of City's Champions League group stage match at Atlanta.

"But it was far from my intention to say that Sadio Mane is that type of player. Even with that, the ref and the VAR said penalty. Maybe I was wrong to think it wasn't a penalty." "Jurgen says he knows Sadio better than me," Guardiola added. "With Jurgen he tries to be positive, when he says it's not like this."

City have a perfect record in the Champions League with three wins in Group C and they face an Atlanta side that have lost all

Brandon Saad and Duncan Keith scored goals for Chicago, which wrapped up its four-game road trip with a 1-2-1 record. Robin Lehner finished with 28 saves.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2, BLUE JACKETS 1

Reilly Smith scored two goals and Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots for his league-leading ninth victory as visiting Vegas snapped a two-game losing streak with a win at Columbus. It was the 15th career two-goal game for Smith, who has now scored against every team in the National Hockey League. William Karlsson added two assists to extend his points streak to five games and also reach 200 career points. Boone Jenner scored for Columbus, which had its winless streak extended to five games (0-4-1). Joonas Korpisalo finished with 23 saves as the Blue Jackets fell to 0-7-3 when not scoring the game's first goal.

FLYERS 4, HURRICANES 1

Sean Couturier and Claude Giroux each had a goal and an assist as Philadelphia cruised past Carolina to improve to 5-1-1- at home in the early season. Travis Konecny and Joel Farabee each had one goal while Matt Niskanen registered two assists for the victorious Flyers, who got 33 saves from goaltender Carter Hart. Lucas Wallmark scored the lone goal for the Hurricanes, who dropped their second in a row immediately following a three-game winning streak. Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek stopped 24 shots.

STARS 4, AVALANCHE 1

Radek Faksa scored two goals and red-hot Dallas extended its winning streak to four with an easy win over visiting Colorado. With a 7-1-0 record in their past eight games, the Stars have recovered from an ugly 1-7-1 start to the season. Two of the wins in Dallas' current four-game run have come against Colorado in the last five days. The Avalanche are on the opposite track from their Central Division rivals. Colorado is now winless in



NEW YORK: Thomas Greiss #1 of the New York Islanders makes a save against the Ottawa Senators during their game at Barclays Center in New York City. — AFP

five games (0-4-1) after posting an 8-1-1 record over its first 10 outings.

FLAMES 4, COYOTES 3 (OT)

Matthew Tkachuk scored twice, including the game winner, and added an assist as Calgary erased a late two-goal deficit and beat Arizona at home. With 33.9 seconds remaining in overtime, Tkachuk appeared poised to send a pass across the crease, but instead ripped home a five-hole shot for the winning tally. Flames goalie David Rittich stopped 34 shots, including five in overtime, in the comeback victory. Goalie Antti Raanta stopped 39 shots for the Coyotes, who were on

the verge of sweeping Alberta after beating the Edmonton Oilers in overtime the night before.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, KINGS 1

Auston Matthews and William Nylander scored goals 30 seconds apart in the third period and Toronto defeated visiting Los Angeles. Matthews jammed in his 12th goal of the season from the edge of the crease at 12:36 of the third period to snap a tie. Nylander and Andreas Johnsson earned the assists. Nylander took advantage of a Kings turnover, worked a give-and-go with Matthews and scored his fourth goal of the season on the backhand at 13:06. — Reuters



Rishabh Pant

India's quest for the perfect number four batsman dominated the headlines in the lead-up to this year's 50-over World Cup in England, where they went out in the semi-finals to New Zealand, and they continue to fret over the position in T20s too.

With India boasting a top three of Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan and talisman Virat Kohli, Jones

thinks the number four batsman should be one who can hold the innings together when the side suffer an early loss of wickets. "He's a very important player, the number four has to come in at 10-2 or 100-2," he said. "(India) probably didn't have a glue player — to be able to work singles, still hit boundaries and be able to put on a good score — coming in at 10-2. — Reuters

T20 right format to groom young stars: Rohit

RAJKOT: The Twenty20 format can be used to groom young talent and prepare them for one-dayers and Tests while not distracting players from winning games, stand-in India skipper Rohit Sharma said yesterday.

Sharma, who is captaining the side in the second T20 against Bangladesh in Rajkot today with Virat Kohli rested for the series, is leading a young Indian side with several veterans rested. The hosts need to win to keep the three-match series alive after going down in the opening game by seven wickets.

"We want to try a lot of players to make them ready for the other formats," Sharma told a press conference. "Because this is the format where these

individuals can come out and express themselves so that they are ready for ODI and Test cricket."

Sharma has been one of India's brightest stars in limited-overs cricket, but also proved his mettle in the Test format after making a successful debut as opener in during his team's 3-0 sweep of South Africa. Nicknamed "hitman" for his attacking style of play, Sharma — who made his Test debut in 2013, six years after his first ODI match — scored 529 runs with two centuries and a double ton in the three matches.

"We have seen a lot of players who have emerged from this format," Sharma said, adding players would learn valuable lessons even in defeat. "But having said that, winning games is the first priority," he said.

Paceman Khaleel Ahmed and all-rounder Shivam Dube — who made his debut in Delhi on Sunday — are just some of the players being trialed by the team's management with an eye on the T20 World Cup in Australia next year.

Sharma, 32, said the hosts could adopt a "different" approach with the bat and ball in the second match if they get a good pitch. — AFP

Australia's women footballers get landmark equal pay deal

SYDNEY: Women footballers playing for Australia's national team will earn the same as their male counterparts under a deal unveiled yesterday and hailed as landmark for gender equality in sport. Under a new centralised contract system announced by Football Federation Australia (FFA), Matildas stars such as Sam Kerr and Ellie Carpenter will be paid an equal amount as big-name Socceroos like Aaron Mooy and Mat Ryan.

They will also be afforded business class flights to international fixtures and tournaments, like the men. The breakthrough will be a big boost for America's women footballers, who have filed an equal pay lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation due to be heard in May next year.

The United States triumphed at the Women's World Cup in France this year with chants of "equal pay" ringing out after they defeated the Netherlands in the final. "Football is the game for everyone, and this new collective bargaining agreement is another huge step toward ensuring that we live the values of equality, inclusivity and opportunity," said FFA chairman Chris Nikou.

Under the four-year deal, through the next World Cup cycles, the Socceroos and Matildas will receive a 24 percent share of national team revenues, rising by one percent each year. In other words, the better they do, the more they get paid.

FFA chief David Gallop said it was the "Socceroos' choice to share the revenue", and national captain Mark Milligan said women were getting "what they deserve". "It's been clear for everybody how much

the women's game has grown over the past few years and how well our Matildas have been doing," he said, adding that the success of the World Cup in France, where the Matildas were knocked out on penalties in the last 16, underscored this.

"It really drove home for me in these negotiations that they got what they deserved. Going forward, what a value they are to the Australian football community." From the national revenues, the players have agreed to plough five percent back into Australian youth national teams, guaranteeing a minimum level of investment for future generations.

There has also been an increase from 30 to 40 percent in players' share of prize money earned on qualifying for a World Cup. Matildas midfielder Elise Kellond-Knight said the deal showed "respect" towards women.

"As a female footballer, it's kind of what we always dreamed of," she said. It follows a more general deal struck earlier this year that will see all professional female footballers in Australia receive the same minimum wage as their male counterparts.

Professional Footballers Australia chief John Didulica called the agreement "unique" in world football. "We believe it sets the model for where all federations and players — male and female — can take the game to unlock the incredible social and commercial opportunity that, in particular, women's football presents," he said. Australia has emerged as a champion for equality in the sports arena with netballers and women cricketers also winning better pay deals in recent years. — AFP



Pep Guardiola

their games so far. With a five-point lead over Dinamo Zagreb and Shakhtar Donetsk, a win for City would guarantee progress to the knockout stages. Guardiola said he would pick a strong squad to wrap up qualification.

"I'm wanting to qualify as

soon as possible, if not tomorrow then in one of the others," the Spaniard said. "I'm not thinking of rotating my squad. I go game by game, (we) will try to win tomorrow... But if not we have Shakhtar and Zagreb and we will see then." — Reuters

Sports

Chelsea, Ajax draw European thriller as Liverpool win and Barca stumble

Hakimi double seals stunning Dortmund win over Inter

PARIS: Jorginho scored two penalties as Chelsea came roaring back from 4-1 down to draw 4-4 with nine-man Ajax in a Champions League classic on Tuesday, while holders Liverpool claimed a narrow victory and a stuttering Barcelona were held.

There was also a rousing comeback win for Borussia Dortmund over Inter Milan and a big success for Valencia, but the greatest drama came at Stamford Bridge. Ajax appeared to be heading for a stunning victory when Hakim Ziyech set up Donny van de Beek to put them 4-1 ahead 10 minutes into the second half.

Before that, Jorginho quickly levelled from the spot after Tammy Abraham's own goal gave the Dutch champions a second-minute lead, but a Quincy Promes header and a Kepa Arrizabalaga own goal made it 3-1 at the break.

After conceding again, Cesar Azpilicueta poked in from close range for Chelsea to pull it back to 4-2, and then came the crazy moment midway through the second half which really gave them hope.

In one fell swoop, Italian referee Gianluca Rocchi sent off Ajax's Daley Blind and dismissed Joel Veltman for a second caution for a handball in the box seconds later. Jorginho then converted the resulting penalty.

Teenager Reece James made it 4-4, and Chelsea thought they had gone in front when Azpilicueta fired in, but that goal was disallowed for an Abraham handball. "I can't explain the game. For all the things we might analyse back, the madness of the game, we are here for entertainment I suppose and anyone who watched that has to say what a game of football. Respect to Ajax, what a spectacle," Chelsea boss Frank Lampard told BT Sport.

The result means Ajax, Chelsea and Valencia are level on seven points atop Group H, with the Spaniards coming from behind to beat Lille 4-1. Nigerian striker Victor Osimhen put Lille ahead at half-time, but Dani Parejo's penalty restored parity and Valencia then scored three times in the last eight minutes.

Adama Soumaoro's own goal was followed by a stunning Geoffrey Kondogbia strike and a Ferran Torres effort. Lille are eliminated.

'JOB DONE' FOR KLOPP

Liverpool won 4-1 in Genk two weeks ago and looked on course for another comfortable victory against the Belgians when Georginio Wijnaldum gave them the lead at Anfield. However, with manager Jurgen Klopp resting several players ahead of this weekend's clash with Manchester City, the reigning European champions were pegged back.

Tanzanian striker Mbwana Ally Samatta headed Genk level before the interval, and it took a fine strike by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain to win the game. "The plan was to win the game and we did that, so job done," admitted Klopp.

Liverpool are top of Group E, a point above Napoli, who could have qualified for the last 16 with a win against Salzburg but were held to a 1-1 draw.

HAALAND SCORES AGAIN

Erling Braut Haaland's early penalty — the 19-year-old's seventh Champions League goal this season — gave Salzburg the lead, before Hirving Lozano equalised. In Germany, Inter looked to be heading for a second straight win against Dortmund as they raced into a 2-0 half-time lead with Lautaro Martinez and Matias Vecino scoring.

Yet Dortmund fought back in the second half to win the game as Achraf Hakimi grabbed a brace either side of a Julian Brandt goal. It is a result that leaves Dortmund second in Group F, three points ahead of Inter and one behind Barcelona, who are still top despite a 0-0 draw at home to Slavia Prague.

MESSI DENIED

Lionel Messi almost scored one of his finest goals, hitting the woodwork at the end of an exhilarating run

one ahead of Sevilla in fifth, albeit having played a game less due to last month's postponed Clasico.

"In football today, and in a team like ours, it's all about winning," said Valverde. "And if it can be emphatic, even better. It is never enough. "At the start of the season, it's not about winning one title, it's about winning three or four. So the frustration when you don't win a game is high."

When Valverde arrived in 2017, he took over a team in crisis, stunned by the departure of Neymar and stung by consecutive defeats to Real Madrid in the Super Cup. He brought stability and calm, and the team, steadied by his belief in discipline and hard work, won the league. A year later, they did it again, this time by 11 points.

But while initially some of the aesthetics, and players, remained, Barcelona's sense of identity fizzled. The reliance on Messi has grown heavier while success in Spain no longer excuses failure in Europe, particularly the kind seen against Roma and Liverpool.

"Barcelona have a history of fantastic collective play and then on top of that Messi made the difference," Arsene Wenger told beinSports on Tuesday night. "Today it looks like they wait for Messi to do something and the strength of the team-play has gone. It looks like they have lost their charisma."

Without the likes of Xavi and Andres Iniesta, Valverde may not be able to replicate the style of Pep Guardiola but he has Messi, Antoine Griezmann, Ousmane Dembele and Frenkie de Jong. The feeling is the style should be better than this.

"I would ask for patience," said Pique. "We are not playing at the level we expect. The results are not bad, but they could be better. We have to improve." But without a sense of direction, supporters are also less eager to wait.

"Pique asks for patience and we have it," wrote



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah attempts a shot during the UEFA Champions League group E football match between Liverpool and RC Genk at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England.—AFP

in the first half. Barcelona had not failed to score in a home Champions League group game in seven years and this result followed a shock weekend defeat at Levante. "We haven't been convincing, either on Saturday or today, and we know there is a lot of pressure now on the team. We have to respond," said coach Ernesto Valverde.

RB Leipzig top Group G after goals by Diego

Demme and Marcel Sabitzer gave the Germans a 2-0 win at Zenit Saint Petersburg. Lyon are two points behind them in second following a 3-1 defeat of Benfica.

Joachim Andersen and Bertrand Traore scored for Lyon either side of a goal from Memphis Depay, who has now netted in all four Champions League games this season. Haris Seferovic scored for Benfica. —AFP

Barca need fixing fast as patience with Valverde wears thin

BARCELONA: Ernesto Valverde tried to put the criticism down to high demands and snap reactions but Barcelona's malaise, underlined by a goalless draw at home to Slavia Prague on Tuesday, will be laid at the feet of their coach.

After losing 3-1 at Levante in La Liga on Saturday, Barca produced a performance that offered few assurances and even less encouragement this will be the year they, and Lionel Messi, win the Champions League again.

Messi hit the crossbar but was unable to deliver the goal at a restless Camp Nou that might have papered over the cracks and, at least, quietened the whistles at the finish. Gerard Pique and Valverde both pointed to the tables in the team's defence, with Barcelona sitting top of La Liga and first in Group F, still more than likely to go through, although with first place now up for grabs.

If they fail to win at home to Borussia Dortmund later this month, it could well be that Barca, Dortmund and Inter Milan are all within three points of each other going into the final round, when Valverde's side are away at the San Siro.

And in the league, they lead, but not with conviction. Level on points with Real Madrid, Barcelona are only



Ernesto Valverde

Mundo Deportivo on Wednesday. "But that doesn't mean continuing while wearing a blindfold," Valverde's contract ends next summer and although it contains an option to extend for another year, there might be an opportunity for an amicable conclusion.

Erik ten Hag, Xavi and Ronald Koeman could be possible successors. To stay longer, Valverde will likely have to win the Champions League but crash out early or fall away in La Liga, and he could go sooner too.

"Three days ago we were enjoying a winning streak and now everything has unravelled in a flash," said Valverde. "If you can fall into a hole in three days, in three days you can also climb out of it." But the whistles on Tuesday suggest the dip goes deeper. Barcelona need fixing and Valverde knows time is running out. —AFP

Salzburg make Napoli wait for Champions League last 16 spot

NAPLES: Salzburg prevented Napoli from becoming the first team to qualify for the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday as the Italian side settled for a 1-1 draw in Naples. Norwegian teenage striker Erling Haaland put the Austrians ahead from the spot after 11 minutes before Mexican Hirving Lozano grabbed an equaliser just before the break with his first goal at the San Paolo stadium.

Liverpool's win over Genk at Anfield ensures the reigning European champions go top of Group E at the expense of the Italians, with nine points from four games. Napoli are still well on course to qualify as they are second with eight points, four points ahead of Salzburg, with Belgian side Genk on one point, with two games to play.

"It's a bit of an unlucky time for us," said Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne. "We tried everything. It's a great performance but we didn't manage to score enough. "We have to look up and keep working. If we play like tonight soon the success will return."

Carlo Ancelotti's side have been struggling in the league, slipping to seventh in Serie A after taking only two points from their last three games. Club president Aurelio De Laurentiis had ordered the team to be confined to their training camp this week after last weekend's 2-1 defeat to Roma.

Napoli had won 3-2 in Austria and could have qualified for the knockout stages if they had claimed all three points as Genk failed to beat Liverpool. But despite dominating for long periods the hosts proved wasteful in front of goal, with the stalemate a missed opportunity.

A clumsy Kalidou Koulibaly foul on South Korean forward Hwang Hee-chan earned the visitors an early penalty with Haaland, 19, slotting in for his seventh European goal this season.

Jose Callejon hit the post with a header and Lorenzo Insigne spurned a series of chances, with Piotr Zielinski and Fabian Ruiz also misfiring in front of goal. Napoli could thank Lozano who was their best player on the night and latched onto an Insigne cross for the equaliser.

But back after the break, despite changes made by both coaches there was more of the same with Napoli failing to take advantage of Salzburg's loss of momentum. Lozano went off to a standing ovation and was substituted by Fernando Llorente late with Arkadiusz Milik coming on for Dries Mertens.

Insigne clipped the bar with a long-range effort on 73 minutes, with Llorente also nodding wide just before the final whistle. Napoli next travel to Liverpool, who they beat 2-0 in Naples in September, but could now have to wait until the final round before sealing their berth at home against Genk in December. —AFP

FIFA asks Iraq to host qualifiers elsewhere after protests

BAGHDAD: Iraq has been told to find neutral venues for this month's home qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asia Cup because of ongoing protests, officials said yesterday.

Iraq had been due to play the two games in Basra — against Iran on November 14 and Bahrain on November 19 — but the southern port city has been caught up in the anti-government demonstrations that have swept Baghdad and the south.

"FIFA informed us late Tuesday night that we must choose a new place, an alternative outside Iraq, for the scheduled match with Iran by Wednesday," the deputy head of the Iraqi football federation, Ali Jabbar, told AFP. The Iraqi federation has received a formal letter from FIFA and is "following up on the issue," another member of the federation confirmed.

A statement from FIFA said it had assessed "the current security situation in Iraq" and informed the local federation that upcoming matches "must be played on neutral ground."

"The Iraqi Football Association has been requested to nominate a neutral venue for the said matches, which is subject to confirmation by FIFA and the AFC," it said.

The decision is a major disappointment for Iraq, which had lobbied FIFA for years to reverse a ban on hosting home internationals because of instability. Following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the country was plunged into years of violence and no international games were hosted there. —AFP

Lin Dan vows to plough on in pursuit of fading Olympic dream

SHANGHAI: Lin Dan yesterday scotched reports that he is set to retire and said he will not give up on his unlikely bid for a third Olympic gold.

The 36-year-old, arguably the greatest badminton player of all time, went out in the first round of the Fuzhou China Open to his fellow Chinese Chen Long.

It was another blow to his fading chances of reaching next summer's Tokyo Olympics, but Lin vowed afterwards to carry on despite Chinese media saying Fuzhou could be his farewell tournament.

"I didn't know about the rumours, I think it's too early to talk about retirement," Lin was quoted as saying by the Xinhua news agency.

"I won't give up trying to qualify for the 2020 Olympics until the last minute."

Lin, a five-time world champion and the 2008 and 2012 Olympic champion, won the first game against Chen, 21-19.

But Chen, the 2016 Rio Olympics gold medallist, came back to win the next two 21-12, 21-12 and send a wilting Lin home early.

Lin has now lost eight times in the first round of tournaments this year.

Once the world number one, his ranking has fallen to 18th. Chen and Shi Yuqi are third and fourth respectively and in pole position to represent China next summer in Tokyo, as long as they remain ahead of Lin at the April 2020 cut-off.

Shi is coming back from an ankle problem and more injuries for him could be Lin's best hope for making the



Lin Dan

China team for Tokyo.

Shi, the third seed, defeated South Korea's Son Wan-Ho 21-17, 21-17.

Lin, who earned the nickname "Super Dan" during his pomp, has always said that he wanted to end his career with another tilt at Games gold.

With that prospect looking increasingly remote, Chinese media had speculated that he could announce his retirement imminently.

On Tuesday, defending Fuzhou champion Kento Momota, the world number one from Japan, defeated Daren Liew when the Malaysian retired. —AFP

25 Japan's Joseph among 26 invited to apply for All Blacks coach role

26 India's Pant currently 'one-trick pony': Jones

27 Lin Dan vows to plough on in pursuit of fading Olympic dream



LeBron sparks Lakers in comeback triumph

Nuggets' Harris, Millsap exit in win over Heat



CHICAGO: Wendell Carter Jr. #34 of the Chicago Bulls fights for the rebound against the Los Angeles Lakers at United Center in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

CHICAGO: LeBron James registered a triple-double with 30 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists, and the Los Angeles Lakers stormed back from a 19-point second-half deficit for a 118-112 win over the host Chicago Bulls on Tuesday night. Quinn Cook added 17 points off the bench for Los Angeles, which won its sixth game in a row. Anthony Davis finished with 15 points, seven rebounds and three blocked shots in his return to his hometown. The Lakers outscored the Bulls 38-19 during the fourth quarter. Zach LaVine led the Bulls with 26 points on 9-for-18 shooting, adding seven rebounds and seven assists. Otto Porter Jr. and Coby White had 18 points apiece, and Wendell Carter Jr. posted a double-double with 11 points and 11 rebounds. Cook drained a 3-pointer from near the left corner to wipe out the huge second-half deficit as part of a 16-0 run that put the Lakers on top

96-93 with 8:12 to go in the fourth quarter.

CELTICS 119, CAVALIERS 113

Gordon Hayward highlighted his career high-tying 39-point performance by making all nine shots he attempted in the first half as Boston recorded a road victory at Cleveland. Hayward finished 17 of 20 from the field and added eight assists and seven rebounds to propel the Celtics to their fifth straight win. Kemba Walker went 6 of 8 from 3-point range to highlight his 25-point outing. Collin Sexton scored 21 points, Tristan Thompson added 19 and 13 rebounds and Kevin Love contributed 17 points and nine rebounds for the Cavaliers, who have lost three in a row.

HORNETS 122, PACERS 120 (OT)

Devonte' Graham, fouled on a 3-point shot attempt, made two of three free throws

to break a tie with 1.7 seconds left in overtime and cap a career-best scoring effort, giving Charlotte a victory over visiting Indiana. After Indiana's Jeremy Lamb forged the fourth tie of the extra session by hitting a 19-footer with 5.2 seconds remaining, Graham drew a foul from JaKarr Sampson outside the arc and calmly produced the game-winning points. Graham finished with 35 points off the bench, easily eclipsing his previous best of 24, set earlier this season. Brogdon finished with 31 points for the Pacers, two fewer than team leader T.J. Warren, who scored a season-high 33.

NUGGETS 109, HEAT 89

Jamal Murray scored 21 points, Will Barton had 15 points and 10 rebounds in his return to the lineup, and host Denver beat Miami by 20. Denver won without Millsap and Gary Harris for most of the second half.

Harris missed the entire second half due to a left ankle injury. Millsap was cut on his forehead in a third-quarter collision. He got it wrapped, came back and hit his free throws but then went to the locker room and did not return to the game. Jimmy Butler led Miami with 16 points. Kelly Olynyk had 13, Kendrick Nunn 11 and Justise Winslow and Meyers Leonard had 10 each for the Heat, whose three-game winning streak ended.

HAWKS 108, SPURS 100

Trae Young returned from an ankle injury to score 28 of his 29 points in the second half and help Atlanta beat visiting San Antonio. Young was 5-for-10 on 3-pointers and had 13 assists in his return. He scored 16 points in the fourth quarter. The Hawks were playing without power forward John Collins, who was suspended for 25

games for violation of the NBA anti-drug policy. San Antonio got 22 points from DeMar DeRozan, 17 points from Bryn Forbes and 16 from Patty Mills. Trey Lyles had a game-high 12 rebounds. The Spurs have lost three of their last four.

THUNDER 102, MAGIC 94

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 24 points, and Chris Paul added 20 as host Oklahoma City continued its dominance of Orlando. Gilgeous-Alexander shot 9 of 14 from the field, and Paul made clutch free throws down the stretch for the Thunder, who have won 14 of their past 17 encounters with Orlando. Aaron Gordon had 15 points and four other players finished with 13 for the Magic. Orlando, which fell to 0-3 on the road, also remained the lone NBA team that has yet to score 100 points in a game this season. — Reuters

Kuwait wins Gold in Asian shooting tourney

DOHA: Kuwaiti shooter Talal Al-Rashidi yesterday won the gold medal in the trap individuals' competition of the 14th Asian shooting tournament currently held in Qatar.

His fellow national Khaled Al-Mudhaf came second and the Kuwaiti champion, Nasser Al-Muqalled ranked third in the teams' trap competition. The Indian team came second, followed by the Qataris.

President of the Kuwaiti Shooting Club Duaij Al-Otaibi, in remarks to KUNA, expressed pride for this distinguished victory in this tournament involving 34 countries represented by top notch shooters. He dedicated it to



Talal Al-Rashidi

His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the premier. The Kuwaiti shooter Al-Rashidi "won the third qualifying ticket for Kuwait for the Tokyo Olympic games after Kuwait won two tickets in previous tournaments," he added. — KUNA

France out to spoil Australian Fed Cup party

PERTH: France might be on Australian soil as they attempt to win a third Fed Cup tennis crown in Perth this weekend, but they feel right at home and brimming with confidence. Team captain Julien Benneteau has kept faith with the five women who sealed their semifinal win over Romania, led by Kristina Mladenovic, ranked 40 in the world.

She is backed by Caroline Garcia (45), Alize Cornet (60), Fiona Ferro (63) and Pauline Parmentier (122) as they target a first title since 2003. As well as an Australian team spearheaded by world number one Ashleigh Barty and veteran Sam Stosur, they will have to deal with a crowd at Perth Arena willing their home

country towards a first title since 1974. But returning to the Australian west coast city has brought back fond memories for Mladenovic and Cornet, who separately led France to Hopman Cup titles before the mixed team event was axed this year for the new ATP Cup. Mladenovic hopes that bodes well.

"From the first time I stepped on the court yesterday, I had such great memories and great vibes," Mladenovic, who partnered Richard Gasquet to win the Hopman Cup in 2017, told reporters on Wednesday.

"It's definitely an advantage when you know the court and where you've won in the past. "When you've won a tough competition somewhere it's always a great place for you where you feel confident and you feel like you can repeat the story," she added.

Cornet won the Hopman Cup with Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in 2014. Garcia also represented France at the tournament, in 2016 when Australia won. Seven-time Fed Cup champions Australia hold a 5-1 record over two-time winners France, although the French

triumphed in the most recent tie between the two nations in 2000.

While the odds might be stacked in Australia's favour, Mladenovic said her team had the advantage of playing a Fed Cup final before, in 2016, and that could prove invaluable. Mladenovic, Garcia and Cornet all featured in that tie, which they agonisingly lost 3-2 to the Czech Republic.

"Even though the last one was at home, I still think it's a big advantage to know how it feels to be up there with all the pressure," Mladenovic said. "I'm optimistic and positive about this aspect."

France, who also won the Fed Cup in 1997, qualified for the final with a thrilling 3-2 win over Romania in Rennes in spite of losing two singles matches to Simona Halep.

Garcia and Parmentier both won in the other singles to set up a deciding doubles match in which Garcia and Mladenovic beat Halep and Monica Niculescu. Benneteau has yet to indicate who will play in Perth on Saturday and Sunday. — AFP