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Iran finds massive oilfield with 53bn barrels of crude

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Amir receives pardoned ex-MP, activist



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives pardoned former MP Fahd Al-Khannah (left) and activist Hejab Al-Hajeri (right) at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received ex-MP Fahd Al-Khannah and activist Hejab Al-Hajeri after they were pardoned and released from prison. The two were among 15 opposition activists, including several ex-MPs, who were sentenced to over three years in jail for storming the National Assembly building in Nov 2011 following an

opposition-sponsored demonstration against corruption. Most of the convicts left the country before the ruling was issued and have since been living in Turkey. Khannah decided to return about two weeks ago and was pardoned by HH the Amir after spending a few days in jail. Hajeri decided to stay in the country and served around one year in jail before benefiting from the Amiri pardon. Khannah and Hajeri both thanked HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince for the pardon.

TEHRAN: Iran has discovered a massive new oilfield, President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday, a find that would boost its proven reserves by about a third in a rare piece of "good news" for an economy battered by US sanctions. In a speech aired on state TV, Rouhani said the country's economy had stabilized despite punishing US measures against its senior leaders, banking and finance sectors. The vast field in the southwestern province of Khuzestan holds an estimated 53 billion barrels of crude, he said.

The 80-m deep reservoir stretches nearly 200 km from Khuzestan's border with Iraq to the city of Omidyeh. "This is a small gift by the government to the people of Iran," he said in a speech from the central city of Yazd. "We announce to America today that we are a rich nation, and despite your enmity and cruel sanctions, Iranian oil industry workers and engineers discovered this great oil field."

The find would add around 34 percent to the OPEC member's current proven reserves, estimated by energy giant BP at 155.6 billion barrels. Iran, a founding member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, sits on what were already the world's fourth-biggest oil reserves. The new reserves, if proven, would lift it to third place, just before regional archrival Saudi Arabia.

But it remains to be seen how much the country can benefit from the new field. Iran has struggled to sell its oil since US President Donald Trump withdrew from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal last year and reimposed unilateral sanctions. In May, Washington ended temporary sanctions waivers it had granted to the eight main buyers of Iranian oil, ratcheting up the pressure on holdouts China, India and Turkey to find other suppliers. Tehran does not report exact figures, but says some crude is still exported via "unconventional" means.

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UK suspends assets of ex-head of Kuwait social security body

KUWAIT: Head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department Justice Salah Al-Masaad announced yesterday that the supreme court of the United Kingdom has ordered the worldwide suspension of all assets belonging to former director general of the Public Institution for Social Security Fahd Al-Rajaan. Masaad said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency that the verdict issued by the British court compels the Rajaan to disclose all his assets throughout the world.

The verdict was issued on Oct 16, pending proceedings of a civil lawsuit filed against the former head of the Kuwaiti institution and others, he said, adding that the sentence was based on documents and "presented arguments". Masaad added that the sentence to freeze the assets has been effective since the issuance of the verdict. Moreover, the British tribunal has accepted a request from the social institution to reveal Rajaan's assets, where he is compelled to do this regarding all his assets worldwide.

A Kuwaiti team of elite experts from the legislation department coordinated with specialized foreign bureaus to follow up and prepare the case against Rajaan, he said, affirming the determination to track down and bring to account all manipulators of public funds and bring back "the funds that have been illegally seized". He indicated that during the two-day hearing, the court rejected Rajaan's arguments. — KUNA

Tunisia #MeToo breaking taboos

TUNIS: Viral images of a Tunisian lawmaker outside a high school have sparked the country's own #MeToo moment, with sex abuse victims breaking taboos under the hashtag #EnaZeda. Discussion of sexual harassment had previously been limited to a few edgy TV shows, but now thousands of women in the North African nation are sharing their experiences from lecherous remarks to pedophilia.

A video showing the mustachioed politician sitting in a car with his trousers dropped to his knees was shot last month by a student who shared it online alongside accusations of harassment. The newly elected lawmaker denies inappropriate conduct and has said he was urinating due to a medical condition - even threatening his accuser when pursued by prosecutors.

#EnaZeda - Tunisian Arabic for #MeToo - was inspired by the huge global movement that bloomed in 2017 in the wake of sexual assault allegations by multiple women against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein. It has given some in Tunisia the confidence to confront their harassers face-to-face. "Tonight, I have cried all the tears from my body. Tonight, I was harassed and nobody took the trouble to react," wrote one Internet user Lina Kaboudi. But "unlike all the other nights, I dared to respond to the perpetrator. I did not keep walking, pretending I had not heard. I stopped, and I held him to account".

Tunisia is considered a pioneer on women's rights in the Arab world and was the first predominantly Muslim country to abolish polygamy in 1956. But the taboo on confronting sexual misconduct remains strong, especially within the family. It is rare for victims to pursue formal complaints, despite sexual harassment in public places being punishable by a one-year prison term and a fine of 3,000 dinar (around \$1,000) since July 2017.

To catalogue the avalanche of testimony, Tunisian activists have set up private Facebook groups including one simply named #EnaZeda, which has more than 20,000 members. Poignant accounts, some anonymous, are shared daily in the group - ranging from rape and incest to inappropriate behavior by teachers or celebrities and molestation on public transport. Activists say they have been surprised by the volume and variety of the stories, and NGO Aswat Nissa (Voice of Women) says it has collected more than 70,000 testimonies.

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Israeli farmers shut out as Jordan enclave deal expires

NAHARAYIM: Israeli farmers were shut out from two Jordanian border enclaves yesterday after a 25-year-old deal allowing them to work the land there expired amid souring ties with Amman. Israelis who long grew watermelon, wheat and other crops there braced for financial losses after Jordan declined to renew a clause on the parcels that was part of their 1994 peace agreement.

For a quarter-century, Jordan had allowed the Israeli farmers access to the territories of Baqoura - also dubbed "the Island of Peace" - in the north as well as Ghumar in the Negev desert south. But a year ago, Jordan's King Abdullah said his country had notified Israel that it wants the two parcels back. And yesterday, in a speech opening par-

liament, he declared Jordan would reclaim "full sovereignty over every inch of those lands" and announced "the expiration of the Peace Treaty annexes" referring to the two territories.

"Israel regrets Jordan's decision to terminate the annexes," Israel's foreign ministry said in an English-language statement later in the day. Baqoura - known in Hebrew as Naharayim, an area that also extends into Israel - lies on a spit of land where the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers meet, in a region of sun-baked brown and yellow hills.

Yesterday, two yellow gates leading to the Jordanian checkpoint were locked with chains. Local officials said Israeli soldiers had shuttered them around 5:00 pm (1500 GMT) the previous day.

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Aramco to launch IPO on Nov 17

RIYADH: Saudi Aramco said it would start taking bids from investors on Nov 17 in a highly anticipated stock offering, as it released a prospectus that did not disclose the size of the sale or the pricing range. The 658-page document said the final share price would be determined on Dec 5, a day after subscriptions close, in what is expected to be the world's biggest initial public offering. After years of delays and false starts, Aramco officials last week announced a share sale on the Riyadh stock market for the world's most profitable company, which pumps 10 percent of global oil supply.

The prospectus, released just before midnight Saturday, said the state giant would sell up to 0.5 percent of its shares to individual retail investors but that it had still not decided on the percentage for larger institutional buyers. Saudi investors appear keen on the prospect of owning a piece of the company, seen as the kingdom's economic crown jewel, despite concerns over the future of oil and the firm's valuation and governance.

The company said it had hired a host of international banking giants including Citibank, Credit Suisse and HSBC as financial advisors and book-runners. In its push for transparency, the secretive company's prospectus also highlighted risks including the potential for "terrorist" attacks and the possibility of antitrust



RIYADH: A billboard displaying an advert for Aramco is pictured in the Saudi capital yesterday. — AFP

legislation. It also acknowledged that climate change concerns could reduce demand for hydrocarbons.

"Disclosure (and) transparency combined with the global research and analysis that it will provoke is in itself of major value to the kingdom and the company,"

said Ali Shihabi, a Saudi analyst. However key details were missing from the prospectus, including the company's valuation and how much Aramco expects to raise from the IPO.

Continued on Page 24



NAHARAYIM: A picture taken from the Israeli side of the border shows Jordanian soldiers raising the national flag yesterday ahead of a ceremony at this Jordan Valley site. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's Amir receives senior state officials, pardoned citizens

Sheikh Sabah extends condolences to Bangladesh President, Australia's General Governor



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with members of Al-Khanna family, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Moreover, His Highness Sheikh Sabah received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness also received President of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Constitutional Court and President of the Cassation Court Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.

To that, His Highness the Amir received members of Al-Khanna family, including Hamad Al-Khanna, Mohammad Al-Khanna, Saad Al-Khanna, Fahad Al-Khanna and Jaber Al-Khanna, in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad. Al-Khanna family expressed deep appreciation for the Amiri pardon granted to Fahad Al-Khanna in relation to the National Assembly break-in case. His Highness also received members of Al-Hajri family, including Oweidha Al-Hajri, Azem Al-Hajri, Bader Al-Hajri and Hijab Al-Hajri. They expressed deep gratitude to His Highness the Amir for granting Hijab Al-Hajri the Amiri pardon. The receptions were attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, and Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. He also hosted Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with members of Al-Hajri family, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and Al-Assima (Capital) Governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a cable of congratulations from South Sudan's President Salva Kiir Mayardit. In the cable, the President expressed his sincere joy on the return of His Highness the Amir to Kuwait after completing medical examinations. His Highness the Amir in return sent a letter of gratitude to the South Sudanese President expressing his apprecia-

tion for cable and wished him good health and prosperity.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir received a cable of thanks from Chairman of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, in which he expressed gratitude on behalf of himself and heads of delegations that participated in the fifth meeting of the presidents and directors of the civil aviation authorities in the Middle East, hosted by Kuwait. The delegations' chiefs showed gratitude for Kuwait's hospitality, admiring the country's efforts in developing its transport sector and improving the



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

Arab and international civil aviation sector, along with wishing His Highness the Amir excellent health.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to President of Bangladesh Mohammad Abdul Hamid, offering his condolences over the victims of Cyclone Bulbul that swept different parts of the country. His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the dead and wished a speedy recovery for the injured, as well as voicing confidence that officials in the friendly country are able to overcome impact of such natural disaster. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister

sent similar cables to President Abdul Hamid.

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to General David Hurley, General Governor of Australia, offering his condolences over the victims of bushfires that tore through eastern Australia. His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the dead and wished a speedy recovery for the injured, as well as voicing confidence that officials in the friendly country are able to overcome impact of such a natural disaster. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to General Hurley. — KUNA

485 fresh graduates welcomed to join NBK family



KUWAIT: NBK staff in a group photo.

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) will welcome more than 485 fresh university graduates to join the NBK family and start their career on one of the top recruiters in the private sector. "The bank boasts being one of the private sector's top recruiters of nationals, where they receive training in line with the highest professional academic programs," said Emad Ahmed Al-Ablani, General Manager - Group Human Resources, National Bank of Kuwait.

NBK is amongst the top job providers in Kuwait, thanks to having a specialized talent-management department tailored to recruit, hire, retain, train and develop the most talented and superior employees. NBK provides its staff with various training courses in several business segments including products, systems, personal skills, and leadership capabilities in a bid to boost the bank's products and offer the highest and best in class services to its clientele. The bank will continue its pursuit of luring new human talents, providing them with professional training to expand its staff base,

Ablani added.

NBK is deemed the best place where fresh graduates can find job opportunities in addition to those candidates looking for promising career growth, given NBK's large pool of resources that inspire youth skills and efficiency, he noted. "We care most about the talented candidates, seeking to catalyze and support them. Our annual Elite Awards ceremony - honoring outstanding employees - is recognizing employees' positive aspects, excellence, teamwork performance, productivity, sharing and responsibility," said Ablani.

Joining hands with the most prestigious global educational entities, NBK continuously strives to support and empower fresh graduates by providing professional training, workshops, and development programs, led by NBK Shabab training program - the first of its kind initiative oriented to develop banking leaderships, of highly qualified young cadres. Other programs include the annual summer training program for school and college students, and NBK Academy, the high fliers program.

Amir's envoy hands letter to Saudi King



RIYADH: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah delivers a letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. — Amiri Diwan photo

RIYADH: Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah delivered a letter from His Highness to Saudi King

Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud yesterday on boosting relations on all levels. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was received by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Bin Abdullah Al-Saud upon arrival earlier yesterday. — KUNA

CERN exhibition begins in Kuwait today

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science (KFAS) announced yesterday that Kuwait CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) Exhibition would kick off in the country today. KFAS

Director General Dr Adnan Shehabeddine said in a press release that the exhibition, organized in coordination with Kuwait University, CERN and Sheikh Ibrahim bin Mohammad Al-Khalifa Center for Culture and Research, would proceed till November 18. The exhibition is aimed at educating visitors about CERN's activities, he said. Meanwhile, KU Rector Dr Hussein Al-Ansari said the event is also designed to encourage teaching modern physics at schools. CERN is a European research organization that operates the largest particle physics laboratory in the world. Established in 1954, the organization is based in a north-west suburb of Geneva has 23 member states. — KUNA

Local

Constitution spared Kuwait political volatility plaguing other countries: Chief lawmaker

Kuwait marks 57th anniversary of constitution's ratification

KUWAIT: Embracing the Constitution spared Kuwait much of the political volatility that plagues other countries, the Gulf state's top lawmaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem said yesterday, some 57 years after the Kuwaiti constitution was ratified. "On November 11 of every year, we honor the sacrifices of Kuwaitis at a time when the relationship between people and states remained fledgling," Ghanem said in a statement. He urged his fellow compatriots to forever remember this "epoch" in Kuwait's political history, wishing the country continued peace and prosperity.

Kuwait celebrates today the 57th anniversary of ratification of the Constitution, which regulates relationship between the ruler and citizens, protects freedom, and achieves justice and equality. It was Monday, November 11, 1962, when late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the 11th ruler of Kuwait, fondly known as the 'Father of the Constitution,' approved the Constitution. Kuwait's Constitution is the first of its kind in the Arabian Gulf region. It contributed to a qualitative leap towards building a modern state based on constitutional institutions and a system founded on principles of rights and duties. The Constitution is an expression of the will of the ruler and the citizen to live within framework of an active constitutional democracy and build the state of law. It is also a document determining the system of the state, regulates relationship between the executive, legislative and judicial authorities.

Constituent Assembly

Prior to the issuance of the Constitution, Kuwaitis elected the Constituent Assembly in January 1962 to draft the first constitution of the nation. The Assembly formed a five-member committee to oversee the wording of the draft that defines the entity of the State of Kuwait,

regulate relations among authorities and freedoms. The final document was presented to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem delivered a speech at the inauguration of the Constituent Assembly in which he said: "In the name of Allah ... We start the sessions of the Constituent Assembly which is entrusted with laying the foundations of the future ruling system." Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem called for unity so as to best serve the interests of the country and its people. He ended his speech by asking Allah the Almighty to guide them.

Abdullatif Thunayyan Al-Ghanem was elected as a Chairman of the Assembly and Dr Ahmad Al-Khateeb as Vice-Chairman. The five-member committee consisted of Ghanem, then Interior Minister Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Justice Minister Hamoud Zaid Al-Khaled, Constituent Assembly member and Committee's Secretary Yaqoob Yusuf Al-Humaidhi, and Assembly member late Saud Abdulaziz Al-Abdulrazzaq. Assembly's Secretary General Ali Mohammad Al-Radhwan handled secretariat of the Committee. Meetings of the Committee were attended by legal expert Mohsen Abdulhafedh and constitutional law specialist Dr Othman Khalil Othman.

The participation of Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem was politically significant because he represented the ruling family, a prelude since Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem presided over the Legislative Council in 1938. The constitutional committee, which held 23 sessions, met for the first time on Saturday, March 17, 1962, and the last was on October 27, 1962. Then the committee tabled the draft constitution to the Assembly for discussion. The Constituent Assembly began deliberating the draft Constitution on August 12, 1962. In its meeting held on October 30, the articles of the draft were read and the constitution was adopted unanimously in a session held

on November 3, 1962. The Chairman of the Constituent Assembly presented the new constitution to the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem at Sief Palace on November 8, 1962. "It is a great honor for my colleagues, members of the Constitution Committee; and myself to present to Your Highness on this historic day, and on behalf of the Constituent Assembly, a draft of the constitution, based on your decision to form the basis of democratic principles" Ghanem said in his speech.

The late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem ratified the constitution three days after submission and published in the official gazette the day after its approval. Only 72 days after the constitution was approved, the first parliamentary elections were held in Kuwait on January 23, 1963, which officially marked the start of political practice under the new constitution. It was the gateway of the constitutional beginning of the three main authorities: legislative, executive and judicial. Kuwait's Constitution consists of 183 articles distributed to five chapters: the first is about the State and the System of Government. Second is about fundamentals of the Kuwaiti Society. Third is dedicated to public rights and duties, and fourth is about authorities and the fifth is about general and transitional provisions.

On February 10, 1980, the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah formed a committee that consisted of 35 members to revise and amend the Constitution. The late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah attended the Constitutional Revision Committee which held its first meeting on February 19, 1980. He called on members to preserve the constitution and safeguard its basic principles, stressing the responsibility of the Committee to serve the people of Kuwait and achieve their security, prosperity and stability. The Constitutional Revision Committee met for 18 weeks and

discussed many views. Meetings ended on June 22, 1980.

Iraqi invasion

During the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the citizens showed genuine unity vis-a-vis the constitution. A popular conference was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in October 1990, where Kuwaiti leaders and people announced full commitment to the constitution. The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, addressing the conference, said "Kuwaitis have long lived in an atmosphere of freedom, adhered to shura (consultations) and exercised democracy within the framework of our constitution." Abdulaziz Al-Saqer confirmed at the conference that Kuwait's constitution was based on experiences of other countries which has thus strengthened its genuine Kuwaiti identity.

After the liberation of Kuwait, the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad addressed the nation in the last 10 days of Ramadan, corresponding April 7, 1991. He said: "consultation about, and popular participation in, affairs of the country was the nature of life in our country, but the restoration of parliamentary life is what we agreed to at the Popular Conference in Jeddah. In keeping with this promise, we have decided that after the situation stabilizes, restoration of normal life and reuniting of the people of Kuwait with their families, parliamentary elections will be held next year as stipulated in our constitution."

Since the ratification of the constitution 57 years ago, Kuwaiti National Assembly held 15 legislative terms and 34 governments formed. Kuwait, as it celebrates the anniversary of its constitution, recalls an honorable history of democratic achievements and promotion of human rights under leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Omani Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Dr Adnan bin Ahmad Al-Ansari on the occasion of ending his tenure in the country. — Amiri Diwan photo

Chief Arab auditors convene in Doha



DOHA: Chief Arab auditors pose for a group photo on the sidelines of their meeting in Doha yesterday. — KUNA

DOHA: The 58th meeting of the Executive Board of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI) kicked off in the Qatari capital yesterday, with Kuwait's State Audit Bureau partaking. In a keynote speech, Chairman of the Qatari Audit Bureau Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammad Al Thani said today's meeting is a significant opportunity for the conferees to weigh the body's achievements made so far, along with future plans and vistas. Sheikh Bandar, who is the second deputy chairman of the ARABOSAI, said the organization has made much progress in its performance over the last few years thanks to a set of factors, chiefly growing opening up to regional and international agencies and the willingness of the organization's leadership to keep abreast of global advancement.

The ARABOSAI's Secretary-

General Najeeb Al-Qatari considered the gathering a renewed platform for the participants to evaluate relevant programs in Arab, regional and international domains. Addressing the event, he said it is necessary to make use of these programs to put future Arab activities in place. Speaking on the sidelines of the meeting, the Kuwaiti State Audit Bureau's Public Relations Manager Saud Al-Zamanan said the board was informed about a host of reports mainly on institutional capabilities, professional criteria, environmental control and strategic planning. The board also looked into the outcomes of the team entrusted with the revision of the organization's statutes, and approved the budget for 2020-2022. The annual meeting winds up today, producing a set of recommendations and resolutions purposed to promote audit and financial control regulations in the Arab world. — KUNA



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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A general view of high rise buildings in Kuwait City. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shalkh

AUB hosts Abdul Latif Thunian Al-Ghanem Secondary School students at head office

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Tareq Muhmood and Sahar Dashti with the students during their visit to the bank.

KUWAIT: In its continuous support for youth and its deep belief in the importance of effective communication with tomorrow's generation, Ahli United Bank (AUB) has recently hosted a group of students from Abdul Latif Thunian Al-Ghanem Secondary School for Boys on a field visit at the bank's head office to learn more about the nature of banking business and the modus operandi of a number of the bank's departments. This visit comes as part of the bank's corporate social responsibility program, which includes hosting students from various schools in Kuwait with the aim to open channels of communication with young people, raise their banking awareness and identify their concerns, and to inform them about the mechanism of banking business, highlight the importance of saving and its value in economic and community life and to familiarize them with different banking concepts and terminology, which helps them determine their specialities at the university.

The program started with an introductory tour for students, which included a visit to a number of the bank's departments, with an explanation of the nature of business of each department. The students also had the opportunity to meet AUB's Acting CEO Tareq Muhmood. He had an open discussion with them about the nature of banking business and enquired about their preferred fields of specialization in their future studies and their career choices, affirming that such activities are complementary to the educational process, allowing young people at this early stage to know first-hand the mechanisms of business in the private sector in general and the banking industry in particular, which promotes their expertise and knowledge.

The visit ended with an interesting competition among the students to find out what do young people really think and what their opinions about the banking services are. Prizes were awarded to the winners of the competition and gifts were distributed to all the students who expressed

their happiness with the visit and thanked the bank for hosting them. Muhmood emphasized that AUB is keen to communicate with students at various educational levels through such activities, as AUB organizes these visits based on its belief in its responsibility towards the community, and its keenness to spread financial awareness among young people.

Commenting on this visit, Sahar Dashti, General Manager Customer Protection, the Head of AUB Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) said: "We are pleased to host school students from all educational levels, to make them aware of the nature of banking business since young people are the corner stone and the future of our beloved country Kuwait. We are keen to sponsor the initiatives that give students the opportunity to learn about the mechanism of banking business and to communicate with our employees who shared their work experience with them, as well as encouraging Kuwaiti students to be closely acquainted with the practical aspects of the banking sector, which helps them identify their future career."

Dashti added: "This host confirms the bank's belief in the importance of the role of youth in society, which is one of the main strategies adopted by the AUB's CSR program in line with His Highness's vision "New Kuwait 2035", in which, youth are one of its pillars. This step also comes as part of the bank's keenness to provide to its employees the opportunity to interact with and transfer their professional skills to the youth generation, to help them improve their readiness and willingness to take charge in the future."

At the end of the visit, the Administration of Abdul Latif Thunian Al-Ghanem Secondary School for Boys expressed their thanks and appreciation to AUB's administration for their kind hosting of the school students, and the opportunity it provided them to see and know about the banking operations carried out by the bank and enhance their knowledge of such activities, wishing more progress and prosperity for the bank's administration.



KUWAIT: Naqeeb Amin, General Manager, Human Resources at AUB in an interactive conversation with the students.

Local

Co-op baggers not paid salaries, must pay employers fees from tips

Plan to terminate handling, cleaning workers at co-ops as part of 'Kuwaitization'

By A Saleh and Agencies

KUWAIT: A report was published yesterday suggesting violations to the labor law in which some co-op society baggers have fallen victims of malpractices committed by their third-party employers. According to a report published by Al-Qabas yesterday, some porters hired to work at co-ops through contractors do not receive monthly salaries, but instead live off tips they receive from customers. Not only that, but companies also force each worker to pay KD 60 a month as a 'fee' from the tips they collect, according to the report, which in many cases leaves them with little to no cash by the end of the month.

"It is only realistic for an employer to pay his employees their salaries, yet there are expat workers in Kuwait who are forced to pay 'salaries' to their employers," the newspaper wrote, noting that Asian baggers who take trolleys from co-op cashiers to customers' cars to help load goods receive a tip which varies from 50 fils to KD 1 per trip at most. "The strange thing is that these laborers pay their employer, because he believes they receive

large amounts of money in tips," the newspaper argued.

A worker named Mohammad from Bangladesh is quoted in the report saying that he pays KD 60 to his company every month and keeps the rest of the tips, and this applies to hundreds like him. He said he is OK with this arrangement to a certain extent, but plans to move to another job in a year's time when his current contract expires.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Manpower and the Ministry of Social Affairs will jointly commence a new set of procedures this month to terminate the contracts of expatriates working in various co-op societies around Kuwait in a bid to resolve the demographic imbalance, said informed sources, noting that both sides will start with handling and cleaning workers to terminate their contracts and deport them.

Kuwait University campus

Minister of Education and chairman of the universities supreme council Hamed Al-Azmi stressed Kuwait University will hand over its current campus to a new

government university once it moves into the new campus of Sabah Al-Salem university in Shadadiya. Azmi added that according to article 40 of law number 76 pertaining government universities, Kuwait University, its colleges, centers, management, buildings and facilities will all be transferred to the new campus built under law number 30/2004.

"Once this is done, a new government university will be built in its place under the name of Abdullah Al-Salem University," Azmi said, pointing out that the current campuses cannot be relinquished except to a government university and after the universities supreme council's approval, which strongly denied social media reports about plans to allocate Kaifan or any other campus to any private university.

Fish auctions

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Services Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan yesterday issued new regulations for fish auctions. According to the new regulations, fish and shrimp cannot be auctioned



except by a broker licensed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) and registered to operate in a certain location. The regulations also conditioned that auctioneers must be Kuwaitis (GCC nationals exempted) having good conduct, clean criminal records, not be removed from MoCI registers in the past five years and have valid health certificates.

Nurse dead, four injured in accident

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A bus carrying nurses collided with a vehicle yesterday, killing a nurse and causing injuries to three others - two are critical and one is in stable condition. The driver of the vehicle was also injured but her condition was described to be in stable condition. The body was recovered by the coroner. The injured were taken to Adan Hospital. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to reveal the circumstances behind the accident.

Drug seizures

The Interior Ministry released yesterday statistics of the third quarter of 2019 by the criminal security sector with regards to drug seizures, which show the following: 455 kg of hashish, 48 kg of shabu, 1.7 kg of heroin, 4.5 kg of marijuana, 1.7 kg of chemical (synthetic marijuana), 265 g of cocaine, 3,328,883 Psychoactive tablets, and 2,613 liquor bottles.

Immoral acts

Criminal security was able to identify and arrest a person who appeared in a social media video committing immoral acts, and faces legal action.

Campaign against 'bachelors' continues

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's public relations department stressed on the continuation of inspection tours against 'bachelors' residing in private residential areas. The campaign has so far resulted in tracking 22 violating houses, filing nine citations, evicting bachelors from six houses and disconnecting power from 16 others, Deputy director for Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer affairs Ammar Al-Ammar said. The tours made in collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity and Water, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Public Authority for Civil Information were going according to schedule, Ammar added.

'Exit' approved

The Farwaniya committee at the Municipal Council yesterday approved a request by the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation to build a new exit for Kuwait Airways in Dajeej, said the committee rapporteur Fahd Al-Muwaizri, adding that a request to build a cultural center for the Bohra community was referred to the Municipality's executive body.

Biker killed in Abu Halifa accident

KUWAIT: A 21-year-old Kuwaiti man was killed after his motorcycle flipped over in Abu Halifa, Al-Rai reported yesterday. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances which led to the accident.

Reckless drivers

Traffic detectives arrested several reckless drivers who turned the "Yellow Line" street in Kabd into a show arena with a large crowd watching, in total disregard of the law, reported Al-Rai. Four vehicles were also impounded. Some citizens called police, so traffic detectives responded. They chased the suspects and were able to apprehend some of them.

Surprise campaign

Khairan police carried out a sudden campaign resulting in the arrest of eight reckless motorcyclists, Al-Rai reported. The campaign was launched following several calls from chalet owners about the bikers' behavior. A police source added their bikes were impounded.

MP questions banned housing companies

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Yousef Al-Fadhlah yesterday demanded in a question to Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri names of companies who carried out projects in Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, Sabah Al-Ahmad and Northwest Sulaibkhat and some problems were discovered in the projects. The lawmaker asked about the names of companies that have been barred from taking part in ministry housing projects, the reasons and date of exclusion and when the penalty will end.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and acting finance minister Mariam Al-Aqeel said yesterday that she discussed five issues with the assembly financial and economic affairs committee and all the issues have been delayed for further study.

The issues included a proposal to pay social and children allowances to Kuwaiti female employees if their husbands do not get them, granting one of the employed



MP Yousef Al-Fadhlah

parents time to look after their children and granting widow, divorced and married Kuwaiti female employees an extended leave to take care of their children.

A fourth proposal calling to allow Kuwaiti government employees to work in commercial or industrial activity outside working hours and barring the appointment of senior employees at a status of ministers in the government was also discussed. The proposals will be debated at a future meeting, the minister said.



KUWAIT: Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah instructed the honoring of several policemen of the border security sector. Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham, in the presence of concerned leaders, honored officers who arrested a man with a firearm at the airport.

— By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Youth Voluntary Forum honors winning initiatives

KUWAIT: In its fourth edition, the Youth Voluntary and Humanitarian Initiatives Forum honored several winners on Saturday, in recognition of the role of Arab youth in the field of volunteering and serving humanity. The organizing committee of the Arab Media Forum announced the winning initiatives during the honoring ceremony held at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, where it won 15 initiatives selected by the jury and three other initiatives through the presentation by the initiators in the morning session entitled 'My Life in Volunteer Work.' Kuwait won the initiative of 'automatic accounting tools,' 'sensory gardens in special education schools,' 'lifting waste and neg-

lected fishing nets and the extraction of boats in the marine environment,' 'Iksab' and 'by reference.'

In a press statement on the sidelines of the ceremony, the Secretary-General of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Al-Khamees said that the forum aims to support the largest number of community initiatives to highlight the role of voluntary work in the service of civil society. Khamees stressed the importance of volunteer work, which helps in strengthening the personality of the volunteer, and refine his skills as well as acquire new skills and variety and it is a means for the renaissance of society praising the efforts of all parties that helped and supported the establishment of this event. Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Dr Meshaal Al-Shaheen stressed the role of youth in the advancement service of societies as the pillar of society and its future in development. More than 120 initiatives took part in the competition, 15 of which won, receiving media attention and sponsorship and participating in many activities and events by the Arab Media Forum throughout the year. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A winner from Algeria is awarded. — KUNA

In my view

Disorder in the (traffic) court

By Dr Fatemah Al-Bader

"Police are looking for a hit-and-run motorist for running over an Egyptian while crossing a motorway... It is reported that the motorist was driving at a very high speed and the victim's body was dismembered." "An Egyptian child died in a hit-and-run accident that occurred... They found the young girl lying in a pool of her blood and checked her to realize she was dead." "A Kuwaiti police officer was killed and five others wounded... when a hit-and-run driver collided with them at a checkpoint in the capital, Kuwait City."

These are but a few of many more excerpts from official Kuwaiti news outlets, detailing the severity of hit-and-runs this country faces when compared to others. Almost daily, one can find an article relaying a car accident occurring somewhere in the State of Kuwait, in mass numbers. It is no wonder that Kuwait witnesses an accident every 10 minutes. The amount of reckless driving in this country is abysmal. What is to blame, then, for the surge in car accidents and the disrespect for the rule of law in Kuwait?

The answer seems to lie within the Kuwaiti Traffic Laws, namely Law No. 76/1976. While educating the Kuwaiti people on the traffic laws is important, so long as the laws are not strict enough to deter drivers from violating the law, no amount of education will suffice, thereby defeating the purpose of why we have laws to begin with.

Law No. 76/1976 is too lenient to deter any driver from violating traffic laws. Take, for instance, the laws related to minor hit-and-runs. Even where major hit-and-runs occur, like those described above, people still flee the scene of a crime, resulting in a society where laws are not respected. Specific to minor hit-and-runs, the Kuwaiti traffic laws do provide that drivers must stop at the scene of a crime and inform police immediately upon causing an accident. If drivers do not stop, they face a penalty of imprisonment not exceeding six months and/or a fine not exceeding KD 500 (about \$1,700). At first glance, this sounds reasonable and to the standards expected from a democratic society that respects the rule of law. However, the loophole comes in the form of Article 41, which would allow the driver to avoid the aforementioned penalties stemming from minor hit-and-runs with a mere payment of KD 30 (about \$100). The contradiction in Article 41 applies equally for all other minor traffic incidents. Herein lies the problem with the Kuwaiti Traffic Laws. In essence, what the Kuwaiti Traffic Law does is allow Kuwaiti drivers charged with violating a minor traffic offense, such as a minor hit-and-run causing no injury to a person, to avoid criminal charges with a mere settlement of KD 30 (about \$100).

The time has come to advocate for respect for the rule of law. Such leniency in the legal system will result in corruption and chaos. Without respect for the rule of law, there can be no proper justice system. Laws, such as Article 41, need to be repealed. Instead, Kuwait should focus on laws that would criminalize those who flee the scene of a hit-and-run, no matter how minor, in order to guarantee that the people of Kuwait understand that they will be held accountable for their actions. Consequences should result in proper punishment, rather than a slap-on-the-wrist in the form of a KD 30 fine. As such, I ask that Article 41 be repealed, in order to ensure that the victim does not suffer the consequences of allowing the alleged perpetrator to get off without punishment.



Cheering crowds greet Japanese new emperor

Russia's Napoleon expert confesses to chopping up lover

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NAMKHANA, India: A woman cleans her house damaged by Cyclone Bulbul in Bakkhali yesterday. — AFP

Bulbul smashes into India, Bangladesh

Cyclone kills 20 people • More than two million spend night in storm shelters

KHULNA, Bangladesh: Twenty people died and more than two million others spent a night huddled in storm shelters as Cyclone Bulbul smashed into the coasts of India and Bangladesh with fierce gales and torrential rains, officials said yesterday. The cyclone packed winds of up to 120 km per hour when it hit late Saturday, forcing the closure of ports and airports in both countries.

Ten people were killed in India's West Bengal state, the Press Trust of India reported, including two after uprooted trees fell on their homes and another after being struck by falling branches in Kolkata. Two others died in nearby Odisha state, PTI reported. In Bangladesh, eight people were killed - five by falling trees - and at least 20 people were injured. Five others are missing after a fishing trawler sank in squally weather on Meghna river near the southern island of Bhola,

district administrator Masud Alam Siddiqui told AFP. The cyclone also damaged some 4,000 mostly mud and tin-built houses, disaster management secretary Shah Kamal told AFP. In coastal Khulna, the worst-hit district in Bangladesh, trees swayed violently and were ripped from the ground in the fierce storm, blocking roads and hampering access to the area. Some low-lying parts of the district were flooded, disaster management minister Enamur Rahman told AFP.

Authorities said the cyclone was weakening as it moved inland. "It has turned into a deep depression, causing heavy rainfall," Bangladesh weather bureau deputy chief Ayesha Khatun told AFP. Bulbul hit the coast at the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest which straddles Bangladesh and India, and is home to endangered species including Bengal tigers and Irrawaddy dolphins. The mangroves shielded the

coast from the storm's full impact, Khatun said.

'Trail of destruction'

Some 2.1 million people across Bangladesh were relocated to cyclone shelters. Troops were sent to coastal districts while tens of thousands of volunteers went door-to-door and used loudspeakers to urge people to evacuate their villages. "We spent the night with another 400 people," said Ambia Begum, who arrived at a shelter in the port town of Mongla late Saturday along with her family. "I am worried about my cattle and the straw roof of my house. I could not bring them here. Allah knows what is happening there," the 30-year-old mother of three told AFP. Around 1,500 tourists were stranded on St Martin's island off south-eastern Bangladesh after boat services were cancelled. In India, nearly 120,000 people who were evacuated

started to return home as the cyclone weakened, authorities said. "The storm has left a trail of destruction as it's crossed the coastline of West Bengal," the state's Urban Development Minister Firhad Hakim said. In Odisha, crops in coastal regions were extensively damaged by the cyclone, officials told AFP.

Bangladesh's low-lying coast, home to 30 million people, and India's east are regularly battered by cyclones. Hundreds of thousands of people living around the Bay of Bengal have been killed in cyclones in recent decades. While the frequency and intensity of the storms have increased, partly due to climate change, the death tolls have come down because of faster evacuations and the building of thousands of coastal shelters. Cyclone Fani was the most powerful storm to hit the area in years when it struck in May, killing 12 people. — AFP

Australians warned worst bushfires yet to come

TAREE, Australia: Sydney is facing a "catastrophic" fire threat, authorities said yesterday, as firefighters in eastern Australia raced to prepare for worsening conditions after ferocious bushfires devastated communities. Fires have killed three people and razed more than 150 homes since Friday, but cooler weather overnight provided a welcome reprieve for firefighters and residents. Authorities were assessing the damage yesterday, with more than 100 fires still burning across New South Wales and Queensland, including several blazes that remained out of control.

Wider swathes of the states - including greater Sydney - are now bracing for perilous fire conditions predicted for the coming days, as is Western Australia state. It is the first time Sydney has been warned of a

"catastrophic" fire danger, the highest possible level, since the grading system was introduced in 2009. Massive fires tore through several towns on Friday and Saturday.

The mayor of Glen Innes, where two people died, said residents were traumatized and still coming to terms with their losses. "The fire was as high as 20 foot (six metres) and raging with 80 kilometres-an-hour winds," Carol Sparks told national broadcaster ABC. Five people reported missing have been found, but the unpredictable nature of the disaster means officials have not ruled out the possibility that others could still be missing. NSW Rural Fire Service spokesman Greg Allan told AFP.

In Old Bar, which was spared the worst when the wind changed direc-

tion, hectares of bushland had turned charcoal and small pockets of flames continued to smolder. Peter McKellar, 75, was clearing debris from his property as his neighbor's home sat in ruins. "The fires (firefighters) saved ours," he told AFP. "They are doing a wonderful job. They're angels."

High temperatures, low humidity and strong winds forecast from the middle of the week are predicted to fuel blazes that authorities have warned they will be unable to contain ahead of time. "We are ramping up for probably another 50 trucks full of crews to be deployed into New South Wales on Monday night ahead of conditions on Tuesday," NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shan Fitzsimmons told reporters in Taree, one of the worst-hit areas. "We have seen the gravity of the situation unfold... What we can expect is those sorts of conditions to prevail across a much broader geographic area as we head into Tuesday." — AFP



OLD BAR, Australia: A vintage Jaguar car sits in ruins yesterday after a bushfire destroyed a property. — AFP

Brazil's freed leftist leader Lula rallies supporters

SÃO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, Brazil: Brazil's left-wing leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva returned to his trade union stronghold on Saturday, delivering a fiery speech to throngs of celebrating supporters a day after walking free from jail. Reveling in the adoration of his followers at the metalworkers' union he once led, Lula attacked his arch-nemesis President Jair Bolsonaro, who hours earlier had called him a "scoundrel," and those who jailed him last year for corruption.

"He (Bolsonaro) was elected to govern for the Brazilian people and not to govern for the militias in Rio de Janeiro," said Lula, his face flushed as he ranted for nearly an hour in the heat. Lula was mobbed when he arrived at the union in Sao Bernardo do Campo, near Brazil's biggest city of Sao Paulo, as people jostled to hug and shake hands with the former shoeshine boy who rose to become one of Brazil's most popular presidents. The compound was decorated with a huge banner of Lula's image and surrounded by a sea of supporters wearing red T-shirts and waving "Free Lula" flags.

"I am grateful that they released him from an unjust imprisonment, from a fraud," Roque Enrique, 24, told AFP as she stood for hours waiting for Lula to arrive. Tamara Blanco, 38, said Lula was the "best president Brazil has had... I always believed he would get out (of jail)." Lula's release came after a politically sensitive Supreme Court ruling



SÃO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, Brazil: Brazilian former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva gives a thumbs up at supporters as he is hoisted through the crowd during a gathering outside the metalworkers' union building on Saturday. — AFP

on Thursday that could free thousands of convicts.

A 6-5 decision overturned a rule requiring convicted criminals to go to jail after losing their first appeal. Those convicts would remain free until they had exhausted their rights to appeal - a process critics say could take years in cases involving people able to afford expensive lawyers. Bolsonaro, who said on last year's election campaign trail that he hoped Lula would "rot in prison", told his Twitter followers Saturday that Lula was "momentarily free, but guilty". The Supreme Court's decision and Lula's release provoked thousands of pro-government protesters to take to the streets in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo on Saturday in opposition of the court's ruling.

A reinvigorated left?
Lula's criminal record prevents

him from running for political office, at least for now. But his freedom is likely to reinvigorate the rudderless left that has floundered since the charismatic 74-year-old was jailed in April 2018. It also threatens to deepen political divisions in the country as the tough-talking Bolsonaro, who was swept to power last year on a wave of anti-left sentiment, goes on the offensive.

The court decision undermines a sprawling corruption investigation called Car Wash that has put dozens of political and business leaders behind bars, including Lula - a probe supported by many ordinary Brazilians fed up with white-collar crime. In an impassioned address on Friday to hundreds of supporters who greeted him as he walked out of the federal police headquarters in the southern city of Curitiba, Lula vowed to keep fighting for poor people. — AFP

International

Iraqis struggling to maintain sit-ins after deadly crackdown

Amnesty warns of 'bloodbath' as political forces close ranks

BAGHDAD: Iraqi protesters clashed with security forces in Baghdad yesterday, following a deadly crackdown that Amnesty International warned could turn into a "bloodbath". Demonstrators across the south fought to maintain anti-government sit-ins, as security forces fired tear gas to try to keep them at bay. Mass rallies calling for an overhaul of the ruling system have rocked Iraq's capital and Shiite-majority south since early October, but political forces closed ranks this week to defend the government as the death toll topped 300.

The consensus seems to have paved the way for a crackdown, and 12 protesters were killed on Saturday when security forces cleared out protest sites, medical sources said. Nine were killed in Baghdad, most struck in the head by tear gas canisters, and three died in Basra. "This is turning into nothing short of a bloodbath," said rights group Amnesty International, calling on authorities to "immediately rein in security forces". "All government promises of reforms or investigations ring hollow while security forces continue to shoot and kill protesters," said its regional director Heba Morayef.

The parliament's human rights committee said it had documented sniper shots and the use of hunting rifles and "sound bombs" - large stun grenades that are planted, not thrown - near protest sites. Despite the violence, demonstrators tried to regroup in the capital's main protest camp of Tahrir (Liberation) Square on Sunday, but crowds were smaller than previously. "Since last night, security forces have been trying to advance into Tahrir to empty it," said one protester, an Iraqi flag draped around his shoulders. A volunteer

medic, Azhar Qassem, said doctors would stay to treat any wounded. "We won't pull out," he insisted.

'Climate of fear'

Security forces erected concrete barriers to seal off Tahrir from the nearby Khallani Square, where the air was thick with tear gas. In Basra, around 30 people marched towards their usual protest site outside the port city's provincial headquarters but police kept them hundreds of metres away. Security forces fired tear gas in Nasiriyah to keep back a crowd trying to shut down the education directorate, and blocked school children in Diwaniyah from leaving class to join striking university students. Protesters in Hillah and Kut continued demonstrating, with government offices and schools still shuttered.

The mass rallies, which first erupted on Oct 1, are the largest and deadliest grassroots protests in Iraq in decades. More than 300 people have been killed, according to a toll compiled by AFP in the absence of updated or precise numbers from officials. Yesterday, the Iraqi Human Rights Commission and the parliament's human rights committee complained of a "lack of cooperation" from government bodies meant to provide casualty figures. The government in recent weeks has placed a gag order on any official casualty figures, and medics and activists say they fear being followed or arrested for their involvement in protests.

The United Nations said it was fielding "daily reports of killings, kidnappings, arbitrary arrests, beatings and intimidation of protesters". Its top official in Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, said a "climate of fear" was descending.



BAGHDAD: Iraqi protesters run for cover from teargas fired by security forces in Al-Khalani Square yesterday. — AFP

Closing rank

Public anger erupted early last month over rampant corruption and lack of jobs but has since spiralled into calls to overthrow the regime, widely blamed for perpetuating graft and clientelism. Oil-rich Iraq is OPEC's second biggest producer, but one in five people live in poverty and youth unemployment stands at 25 percent, the World Bank says. The government has suggested a series of reforms, from hiring drives and welfare plans to a revamp of the elec-

toral law and constitutional amendments. But it has resisted calls to overhaul the ruling system, with rival political forces rallying around embattled Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi this week. Abdel Mahdi, 77, came to power last year through a shaky alliance between populist cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr and Hadi Al-Ameri, a leader of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary network. When the protests started in October, Sadr threw his weight behind them while the Hashed backed the government. —AFP

Bolivia president says will call new elections

LA PAZ, Bolivia: Bolivian President Evo Morales called new elections yesterday, bowing to demands to do so after three weeks of deadly protests amid charges he had won a fourth consecutive term through fraud. In a television address, Morales said he would "call for new national elections, which, by voting, allow the Bolivian people to democratically elect new authorities."

The country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal would be replaced, he said, meeting a key demand of opposition leaders who had accused its members of rigging the vote count in Morales' favor. Morales, Bolivia's first president of indigenous descent, did not say whether he would run again. His decision came shortly after the Organization of

American States said it could not validate the results of the Oct 20 elections, after an independent audit found a range of "irregularities". It said the results "must be annulled and the electoral process must begin again".

The OAS added that the first round of the elections should take place as soon as a new electoral tribunal is in place. The development came a day after police in three cities joined anti-government protests and the opposition rejected Morales' appeal for urgent, open-ended dialogue. Three people have died and hundreds injured in often violent protests since Morales claimed to have won a fourth consecutive term in a first round victory in last month's poll.

The results from that election gave Morales just over a 10 point margin of victory over his nearest rival, centrist Carlos Mesa, just enough for a first round win. Morales said that in the new elections "the Bolivian people will be able to democratically elect new authorities, incorporating new political actors."

That begged the question whether



EL ALTO, Bolivia: Bolivian President Evo Morales speaks during a press conference next to Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera (left) and Foreign Minister Diego Pary on Saturday. — AFP

Morales himself would stand again for re-election, a source of controversy because Bolivia's constitution, which he promulgated himself a decade ago, limits presidents to two terms. The civic committees that helped propel the protests had called on both Morales and Mesa to step aside in new elections.

Morales said Bolivia's bicameral legislature, which his party controls, would meet in the coming hours for the parties to work out procedures for changing out the electoral tribunal. "After this decision, I want to lower the tension. Everyone has an obligation to bring peace to Bolivia," he said. — AFP

Mexico massacre unites Mormon sects, even exiles

SEATTLE: WhatsApp messages flooded Amber Bostwick's phone last Tuesday as relatives sent harrowing accounts of the slaughter of nine women and children by drug cartel gunmen in northern Mexico. The 35-year-old Seattle homemaker had spent much of her life trying to keep away from her parents' self-described fundamentalist branch of the Mormon faith and Colonia LeBaron - her polygamist father's Mexico community where some of the massacre victims were from.

But as she listened to the terror of relatives, she realized this threatened her Mexican-American half-siblings who live in Colonia LeBaron and nearby Mormon offshoot communities. So she got online and started posting news of the killings and promoting a GoFundMe page set up by her brother for victims. "The massacre has simply allowed me to support and love family," said Bostwick, a convert to Christianity,

whose mother was 15 when she gave birth to her, and who was later adopted by her US grandparents.

The Nov 4 killings have traumatized northern Mexico's breakaway Mormon communities. Some dual-nationality families headed for the safety of the United States on Saturday after the last of their dead were buried. But the deaths also brought together different Mormon groups, and even those who fled them, to demand that not only Mexico or the United States but an international task-force intervene in the country's endemic violence. "They need to send experts in building a state of law," said Adrian LeBaron, 58, of Colonia LeBaron, who lost his daughter Rhonita and four grandchildren in the attack. "I don't want snipers, I want educators."

'Whatever it takes'

Most of the victims of Monday's massacre were from La Mora, a remote Mormon-linked farming village in Sonora around 130 km south of the US-Mexico border. Lafa Langford of La Mora, a relative of those killed, said many of his community are lapsed Mormons, few are in polygamous relationships and residents do not tolerate the kind of Mormon prophets Colonia



BAVISPE, Mexico: Relatives and friends mourn during the funeral service of Dawna Ray Langford, 43, and her sons Trevor and Rogan, at La Mora Ranch on Nov 7, 2019. — AFP

LeBaron has a history of.

Both La Mora and Colonia LeBaron were formed last century by "outcast" Mormons whose polygamist beliefs were rejected by the mainstream Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. "We're

going to have to put aside our religious differences and focus on basic rights like liberty and justice," said LeBaron, whose father was a prophet, and who has four wives, and until Monday, 39 children and 79 grandchildren. — Reuters

US-born IS bride appeals to come home from Syria

WASHINGTON: A US-born woman who says she regrets having joined the Islamic State group has appealed again to come home from the refugee camp where she lives with her small son in Syria. The government is refusing to let Hoda Muthana return to the US, arguing that she is not an American citizen. In an interview with NBC News published Saturday, Muthana said she "regrets every single thing" done by IS, which she joined in 2014 after embracing extremist ideology while living with her family in Alabama.

"Anyone that believes in God believes that everyone deserves a second chance, no matter how harmful their sins were," Muthana said. The interview was

conducted in northeast Syria at the Al-Roj refugee camp, controlled by Kurdish forces, where Muthana lives with her two-year-old son Adam. Muthana said she fears for her life because she could be targeted by people at the camp who have not renounced IS. "I did not support the beheadings from (IS) from day 1, until now I do not support any of their crimes and suicide attacks," Muthana said.

The US government has repatriated several American women linked to the group, along with their children, but not Muthana. Washington argues she is not a US citizen even though she was born in the US because she is the daughter of a diplomat serving for the Yemeni government at the time. The children of US-based foreign diplomats do not enjoy citizenship by birthright.

Muthana has filed suit to try to return to the US. She had traveled to Syria on a US passport. "I am a citizen and I have papers to prove it. I am as American as a blond-haired blue-eyed girl and I would like to stay in my country and do American things," Muthana told NBC. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called her a terrorist. — AFP

French IS suspects want to go home, 'go on with life'

SULUK, Syria: Three French women who escaped from a camp for suspected jihadists in northern Syria say they want to go home and face whatever legal action France requires over their alleged links to the Islamic State (IS) militant group. The three, interviewed in Syria's Suluk town, controlled by Syrian rebels backed by Turkey, said they had fled during the chaos of Turkey's incursion into Syria last month and turned themselves over to Turkish forces in hopes of returning home.

The women, who declined to give their names, suggested they were prepared to go France for the sake of their children, adding that conditions in the camp in Ain Issa, run by the US-backed Syrian

Democratic Forces (SDF), had been very hard. The women gave no details of their life before detention. They are believed to be among the wives and children of former IS fighters killed or detained after the group was expelled from its strongholds in Iraq and Syria.

Ankara's unilateral offensive angered Washington and Turkey's main European NATO allies, who fear a return of IS in the region. European countries are especially concerned about foreign Islamic State fighters and adult relatives returning to Europe. France has said citizens who joined the militant group, which operated in both Syria and Iraq, should be tried near where crimes were committed.

However Turkey says it will start repatriating IS detainees to their own countries on Monday, sending them back even if their citizenships have been revoked. The women's preferred destination was France. "We want to go back for our children to go on with their lives," said one of the women, who like the others wore the niqab or full face veil. "I've been here for five years and I want to go back and go on with my life, go back to the time I lost. That's it." — Reuters

News in brief

Israel court rejects 'hacker' appeal

JERUSALEM: Israel's top court upheld yesterday an extradition order of a Russian alleged hacker to the United States, where he is wanted for fraud. The justice ministry had last month finalized the extradition of Aleksey Burkov, who has been held in Israeli custody since 2015, without providing a date. Burkov appealed the decision to the supreme court, asking that he be sent to Moscow, or that his extradition to the US be conditioned on him serving any future prison term in Russia. "The appeal is rejected," a panel of three supreme court justices wrote in their ruling yesterday. Burkov's name has been mentioned several times by Russian and Israeli media in connection with a possible prisoner swap with Naama Issachar, an Israeli-American convicted in Russia on cannabis charges. — AFP

Body of Salvadoran activist found

SAN SALVADOR: The body of a Salvadoran trans activist missing since Tuesday has been found in the northeast of the country, authorities confirmed. Jade Camila Diaz, 27, is the second transgender woman killed in the country in the past 15 days, according to the advocacy group Comcavis Trans, who told local media there have been at least seven LGBT-related murders in 2019. "We regret to inform you that Jade Diaz's body was found in the waters of the Torola River," the Attorney General's Office (FGR) tweeted Saturday. Diaz had been dead for three or four days, the office for the attorney general said. The body of Diaz, born Ricardo Manrique Diaz, was found with her "hands tied and weighted with a bag of stones," said Bianka Rodriguez, president of Comcavis Trans. — AFP

Mauritius PM tightens hold

PORT LOUIS, Mauritius: Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth's coalition has strengthened its grip on parliament after Mauritius' electoral commission finalized the outcome of the election in the Indian Ocean nation. Jugnauth's centre-right Morisian Alliance won four more seats in the final allocation to hold 42 of 70 seats following Thursday's vote, the commission said late Saturday. Mauritius is predominantly Hindu and is divided into ethnic groups under the 1968 independence constitution to also reflect the sizeable Muslim minority, the Chinese and the "general population", those of creole backgrounds or European origin. While voters choose 62 MPs, the commission appoints eight others from those who attained the highest scores but were not elected directly. — AFP

International

Britain's top general warns of 'reckless' Russia threat

Russia marks Kalashnikov's centenary

LONDON: Britain's top military adviser accused Russia yesterday of "reckless" behavior that violated international norms and risked sparking a war. Chief of Defense Staff General Nick Carter said Moscow was operating in a "grey zone" that weaponized information and used unattributable proxies in conflicts. He pointed to covert operations by the Wagner Group - a private army the Kremlin denies funding - in Syria and Africa as well as disinformation campaigns as two types of new threats. "Russia is much more assertive than it was 10 years ago. It's got some self-confidence now as it reasserts itself as a global power," Carter told BBC television.

"Cyber is part of that, what happens in space is part of that, disinformation, subversion, manipulation, assassinations, and of course the use of mercenaries, which are very easily undeclared and non-attributable," he said. "Reckless behavior and the lack of respect for international law relating to these new types of 'weapons' risks escalation that could easily lead to inadvertent miscalculation," Carter separately wrote in The Sunday Telegraph.

Russian President Vladimir Putin flatly denies the Kremlin's involvement in cyber and ground operations that Western intelligence agencies and analysts pin on Moscow. But Carter said this "deniability" is a tactic now being perfected by Britain's main foes. His media appearances are timed to remind Britons of the challenges they still face on Remembrance Sunday - the day the country honors those who fought and died in World War I and subsequent conflicts.

It also comes with US President Donald Trump wavering on Washington's commitment to the NATO military alliance and French President Emmanuel Macron promoting the idea of a European army. Britain wants to preserve NATO as it prepares to leave the European

Union after nearly 50 years. "I have seen absolutely no evidence of any military planning to suggest that we are going to have a European army, and no declaration to that end has been made," Carter told the BBC.

Kalashnikov's centenary

In another development, more than a hundred Russian schoolchildren were taught to assemble AK-47s in a Moscow park on Saturday as the country this weekend celebrates the centenary of the birth of Mikhail Kalashnikov, inventor of the legendary rifle.



Pupils learn to assemble AK-47 rifles

Yesterday, the 100th anniversary of Kalashnikov's birth is to be marked by a number of events, including museum display, a biopic and patriotic lessons. On Saturday, dozens of boys and girls, some clad in camouflage fatigues, took part in a competition that saw them play paintball and assemble mock-up Kalashnikov rifles in a park in southern Moscow.

"At least 100 people took apart the Kalashnikovs today," Andrei Starykh, a director at the youth organization that organized the competition, Gvardia, proudly said. He said Gvardia regularly organizes sim-



MOSCOW: Russian cadets lay flowers during a wreath laying ceremony at a statue of Mikhail Kalashnikov - the Russian inventor of the AK-47 assault rifle, in downtown Moscow yesterday. The 100th anniversary of Kalashnikov's birth is to be marked yesterday by a number of events, including museum display, a biopic and patriotic lessons as the country celebrates the centenary of the birth of Mikhail Kalashnikov, inventor of the legendary rifle. — AFP

ilar events and Saturday's get-together was not directly linked to Kalashnikov's anniversary. He insisted however that children in Russia need to know "real life" and therefore have to know how to assemble the

celebrated weapon. "How can one not know?" asked instructor Roman Kuzmin. "So much is happening around the country," he said, adding that boys are often mesmerized by the gun. — Agencies

News in brief

Jewish graves desecrated

COPENHAGEN: Vandals desecrated more than 80 graves at a Jewish cemetery in the western Danish town of Randers, police said yesterday. "More than 80 gravestones were daubed with green graffiti and some were overturned" at the Ostre Kirkegaard cemetery, a statement said. "There are no symbols or words written on the gravestones but paint has been daubed on them," the Ritzau news agency quoted police spokesman Bo Christensen as saying. Police said a complaint had been made Saturday but they did not know when the vandalism had occurred. The Randers burial ground dates back to the early 19th century when the town's 200-strong Jewish community was Denmark's largest outside the capital Copenhagen, which is today home to most of the country's 6,000 Jews. — AFP

IS 'defeated' in key province

JALALABAD: The Islamic State group's Afghan branch has been "defeated" in one of the key eastern provinces where it first sought to establish a stronghold, a top Afghan security official said yesterday. The claim comes after the jihadists first burst into Afghanistan's conflict in 2015, when they overran large parts of Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, near the Pakistan border. In the years since, they have claimed responsibility for a string of horrific bombings across Afghanistan, including at a wedding hall in Kabul, and have been continually attacked by US, Afghan and even Taliban forces. IS "were defeated in Nangarhar, their centres were destroyed", acting interior minister Massoud Andarabi told reporters in Jalalabad, the Nangarhar provincial capital, amid ongoing operations against the jihadists. — AFP

Romania votes for president

BUCHAREST: Romania voted in the first round of a presidential election yesterday, with pro-European incumbent Klaus Iohannis the favorite to win, potentially adding to a liberal fightback against the region's prevailing nationalism. Iohannis of the centre-right National Liberal Party (PNL) repeatedly clashed with the beleaguered government of the left-wing Social Democrat (PSD) party, which collapsed last month. His main rival in the presidential vote, the PSD's Viorica Dancila, served as prime minister for the government, which took power in 2016. The PSD's government had engaged in a long battle with Brussels and Iohannis-over allegations it was trying to push through controversial judicial reforms in order to neuter the judiciary and benefit PSD politicians. — AFP

Sharif 'fighting for his life'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will allow ailing former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to travel abroad for urgent medical treatment, the country's foreign minister said yesterday. Sharif, Pakistan's longest-serving premier, was ousted from his third term in office in 2017 and later jailed on corruption charges. His health deteriorated while in prison and he suffered a minor heart attack last month, his party said, while his doctor claimed on Twitter that the ex-leader was "fighting for his life". Sharif was bailed for health reasons and remains at a hospital in the eastern city of Lahore, but a travel ban prevented him from leaving the country. Foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said Sunday that "legal obstacles" to Sharif's departure were being removed as doctors had said that medical treatment abroad was needed to save his life. — AFP

Russia's Napoleon expert confesses to chopping up lover

SAINT PETERSBURG: A prominent Saint Petersburg-based Napoleon expert has confessed to murdering his young lover and former student and dismembering her body in a grisly crime that sent shock waves across Russia. Oleg Sokolov, a 63-year-old history lecturer who received France's Legion d'Honneur in 2003, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of murder after he was hauled out of the icy Moika River with a backpack containing a woman's arms.

"He has admitted his guilt," Sokolov's lawyer Alexander Pochuev said, adding he regretted what he had done and was now cooperating. Sokolov was reportedly drunk and fell in as he tried to dispose of body parts. After disposing of the corpse he reportedly planned to commit suicide at the Peter and Paul Fortress, one of the former imperial capital's most famous landmarks, dressed as Napoleon. Sokolov teaches history at Saint Petersburg State University, President Vladimir Putin's alma mater, and was close to the Russian authorities.

He told investigators that he shot and killed his lover during an argument and then sawed off her head, arms and legs, local media reported. Pochuev suggested Sokolov may have been under stress or emotionally disturbed. "He is an elderly person," he said, adding he was being treated for hypothermia in a hospital. Police discovered the decapitated body of Anastasia Yeshchenko, 24, with whom Sokolov had co-authored a number of works, and a blood-stained saw at his home.

Vote-weary Spain holds election to break stalemate

MADRID: Spain held its second parliamentary election in just over six months yesterday, with voters likely to deliver an even more fragmented parliament with no clear winner and a sizeable showing by the far-right. Opinion polls show the Socialists in the lead but likely to win slightly fewer seats than in April's vote, while the conservative People's Party (PP) could gain strength and the far-right Vox could become the country's third-largest party, just months after winning its first parliamentary seats.

Spain has been struggling to put stable governments together since 2015, when new parties emerged from the financial crisis following decades during which power oscillated between the Socialists and the PP. Acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called the election - the fourth in four years - betting that a new vote would strengthen his hand after his Socialist Party won in April but then failed to forge the alliances needed to form a government.

Sanchez avoided questions yesterday about a likely political stalemate. "Democracy is the best heritage of our parents and we must make the most of it ... I encourage Spaniards to vote and strengthen democracy with our vote," he said after voting in the town of Pozuelo de Alarcon, just west of Madrid. Voting will end at 8 pm in mainland Spain. Results should begin emerging in the early evening, with almost all votes counted by midnight.

Esperanza de Antonio, a 64-year old retired history teacher voting in Madrid, said she had changed her vote from the centre-right Ciudadanos to the Socialists after the disappointment of seeing no political deal reached after April's ballot. "In the last election I voted for Ciudadanos because I thought it would be kingmaker, but ... Ciudadanos did not abstain to facilitate a government," she told Reuters.

"The rise of Vox is a danger to democracy. I'm saying this because I've taught about fascism for 30 years," she added. Older Spaniards still remember first-hand the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, who ruled from 1939 to 1975. A minority government led by the Socialists appears the most likely outcome, opinion polls show, but an even bigger question is who the Socialists may ally with and how long any government can last with a very fragmented parliament. Many voters were still undecided days before the vote, meaning other scenarios are also possible.

Too many elections

One thing was certain yesterday: voters are tired of being called to the polls - there were also regional and European Union elections this year. That alone increases the chances that parties will make more of an effort this time to reach a deal over governing and shy away from a repeat ballot. "I'm not sure I'll vote again, I was already in doubt this time



MOSCOW: Russian Emergency rescuers and police investigators conduct searches on the Moika River, in Saint Petersburg yesterday, following the murder of a woman that implicates Russian historian Oleg Sokolov. — AFP

'Simply monstrous'

The historian, who also taught at Sorbonne University, is the author of books on French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. He acted as a historical consultant on several films and took part in historical re-enactments of Napoleonic wars. Both he and his lover studied French history and liked to wear period costumes, with Sokolov dressing up as Napoleon. Students described Sokolov as both a talented lecturer who could impersonate the French emperor and his generals and a "freak" who called his lover "Josephine" and liked to be addressed as "Sire".

"What happened is simply monstrous," a Saint Petersburg State University lecturer said. Speaking on condition of anonymity, he said Sokolov was dedicated to his work but was also emotionally unstable and

abused alcohol. His former student, Fyodor Danilov, said Sokolov was regarded as one of the university's best lecturers but an eccentric man who at times yelled in French. His relationship with Yeshchenko was an open secret, he said. "But everyone was fine with that, it was her own business," he told AFP.

'Hushing things up'

Many expressed dismay, saying Sokolov had long been known for his hostile behavior but officials had ignored complaints. Vasily Kunin, who studied with the victim, blamed the university management. "They did not pay attention to certain things," he said. "There was a certain policy of hushing things up." Media reports said that Sokolov also beat up and threatened to kill another woman in 2008 but was never charged. — AFP



MADRID: Spanish conservative People's Party (PP) candidate for Prime Minister, Pablo Casado, casts his ballot under the eyes of his wife Isabel Torres at a polling station in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

around," said Jose Antonio Fernandez Cela, a 51-year-old farm manager voting for the PP. Referring to the likely rise of

Vox, he added: "I think it's normal because discontent takes people to the extremes." — Reuters

International

India detains dozens over inflammatory social media posts on social media

Tensions after court ruling on disputed religious site

LUCKNOW: Dozens of people in India have been detained on suspicion of publishing inflammatory social media posts and setting off celebratory firecrackers after the Supreme Court ruled to give a disputed religious site to Hindus, police said yesterday. The Supreme Court awarded the bitterly contested site in the northern town of Ayodhya to Hindus on Saturday, dealing a defeat to Muslims who also claim the land that has sparked some of the country's bloodiest riots since independence.

In 1992, a Hindu mob destroyed the 16th-century Babri Mosque on the site, triggering riots in which about 2,000 people, most of them Muslims, were killed, but no major violence was reported after the court ruling yesterday. About 37 people were arrested and 12 cases were registered in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state and the site of the contested land, state police said.

At least one person was arrested in the state capital of Lucknow for making "inappropriate remarks" on social media and using threatening language. "Police are appealing to residents to not misuse social media," Kalanidhi Naitani, senior superintendent of police in Lucknow, said late on Saturday.

In another part of the state, at least seven men were arrested for setting off firecrackers or creating disturbances while distributing sweets in celebration, police said. The Home Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for information on arrests. Before Saturday's verdict, the government deployed thousands of mem-

bers of paramilitary forces and police in Ayodhya and other sensitive places. Hindu groups told members not to celebrate publicly.

The court's decision paves the way for the construction of a Hindu temple on the site, a proposal long supported by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Hindu-nationalist party. Hindus believe the site is the birthplace of Lord Ram, a physical incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, and say the site was holy for Hindus long before the Muslim Mughals, India's most prominent Islamic rulers, built the Babri mosque there in 1528.

The Supreme Court called the 1992 demolition of the mosque illegal but handed the plot of 2.77 acres (1.1 hectares), about the size of a soccer field, to a Hindu group. It directed that another plot of five acres in Ayodhya be provided to a Muslim group that contested the case. Some legal scholars and Muslim activists saw the judgment as unfair, particularly given that the 1992 razing of the mosque was deemed illegal.

"Why has the 2.77 acres been gifted to the very elements who were party to this?," Syeda Hameed, the president of the Muslim Women's Forum, wrote in the Hindustan Times, referring to the mosque's destruction. Muslim leaders have called for peace between majority Hindus and Muslims, who constitute 14% of its 1.3 billion people. Some seemed to have resigned themselves to the decision. "I am disheartened with the verdict and leaving it to Allah," said Mohammad Azam Qadri, a community leader in Ayodhya. — Reuters



AHMEDABAD: Supporters of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) militant organization celebrate the Indian Supreme Court's verdict on disputed religious site in Ayodhya awarded to Hindus in Ahmedabad. — AFP

Cambodia lifts house arrest restrictions on opposition figure

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia has freed a prominent opposition figure from house arrest more than two years after he was charged with treason, a court spokesperson said yesterday, after attempts by his colleagues to return to the country were thwarted. Kem Sokha was arrested in 2017 and accused of plotting to overthrow the government of strongman Hun Sen, who has ruled since 1985.

He was sent to a remote prison, then confined to his house and the surrounding block and prohibited from talking to the media. But "he can travel nationwide now", Y Rin, a Phnom Penh municipal court spokesman, told AFP. Sokha is the co-founder of the banned Cambodia National Rescue Party, which was dissolved ahead of controversial elections swept by Hun Sen last year. The new court ruling, which cited health concerns, forbids the 66-year-old from leaving Cambodia or joining political activities.

Rights groups say Cambodia's legal system is controlled by Hun Sen's government. Sokha said yesterday that he was innocent and demanded the charges be dropped. "I miss Khmer people so much and I will visit people in the very near future," he wrote on Facebook, adding he would give more details on his plans later. The decision comes as Sokha's political partner Sam Rainsy is waylaid in Malaysia with other CNRP officials after attempting a highly-publicised comeback on November 9, Cambodia's independence day.

Rainsy, who has lived in France since 2015 to avoid jail for convictions he says are politically motivated, had promised a dramatic return. But after being barred in Paris on Thursday from getting on a flight to Thailand, Rainsy boarded a plane a day later and arrived in Kuala Lumpur. It is unclear how he will get back to the country and for now he plans to meet with Malaysian MPs this week.

Cheering crowds greet Japan's new emperor in rare parade

TOKYO: Tens of thousands of flag-waving spectators cheered Japan's new Emperor Naruhito yesterday during a rare open-top car imperial parade that was rescheduled after a deadly typhoon. Some in the crowd camped overnight to nab a prime stop by the palace for the 30-minute parade featuring the emperor and his wife Empress Masako. The event was one of the final events marking Naruhito's ascension to the throne after his father Akihito earlier this year became the first Japanese emperor in two centuries to abdicate.

The royal couple emerged from the palace moments before 3:00 pm, with the Emperor wearing formal Western clothing and the Empress dressed in a long cream gown and jacket, wearing a tiara passed down by her predecessor. Security was high for the event, with long lines forming hours ahead of the parade and thousands of police deployed to search bags and move spectators through metal detectors.

Security forces lined the entire length of the route in double rows, keeping close watch as the slow-moving parade passed, flanked by police on motorbikes. In the minutes before the parade began, police at one checkpoint warned would-be attendees that the area was full. "We're at Disneyland levels of crowding. The security check won't finish in time for you to see the parade," one policeman with a loudspeaker warned those still in line.

'Once in a lifetime'

Yoko Mori, 64, lined up from 10:00 am to secure a spot, travelling from Saitama outside Tokyo. "We came here because it's a once in a lifetime opportunity and we wanted to celebrate this event," she told AFP, flanked by her friend Chiyo Ito, 70. "But it's regrettable that we just had a glimpse of the car. I concentrated so much on taking a photo, I barely looked with my own eyes."

Yoko Yokota, 84, was in tears with excitement at the chance to spot the emperor up close. "I am so happy to see him," she said. Hours before the parade, Yukari Oshita told AFP she felt a closeness to Naruhito, the first emperor born in post-war Japan. "The Emperor is a few years younger than me but belongs to the same generation, and I



PHNOM PENH: A Cambodian man walks past former opposition leader Kem Sokha's house in Phnom Penh yesterday. — AFP

Rainsy told AFP that the release of Sokha from house arrest was a small step in the right direction but also called for the treason charge against his opposition colleague to be dismissed.

Activists detained

Dozens of activists have been rounded up in recent weeks in Cambodia, while Hun Sen has called on fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to arrest Rainsy in what the strongman has

described as an attempted coup. But Hun Sen is also under international pressure to ease restrictions on dissent as the European Union considers revoking a duty-free tariff scheme for Cambodia's lucrative garment sector. ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights board member and former Philippines MP Teddy Baguilat called the court ruling misleading and an attempt to ward off sanction. "This is just another cynical move by Hun Sen to try and hoodwink the international community", he said. — AFP

'A memorable moment'

The royal couple is popular, and so many people gathered to line the route that some were unable to make it through checkpoints. Shigeo Kawamura, 68, lined up at one checkpoint from noon but couldn't get close. "I couldn't see the parade at all," she said mournfully, but pro-



TOKYO: Japan's Emperor Naruhito (left) and Empress Masako wave during a royal parade in Tokyo yesterday. Thousands of people gathered in Tokyo for a rare open-top car parade featuring newly enthroned Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, with heavy security in place for the event. — AFP

Afghan chief executive calls for halt to recount

KABUL: Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah called yesterday for a halt to a recount of the recent presidential election, saying he would not accept "fraud-marked" results. The move adds a fresh layer of uncertainty following the September 28 poll, which already has been marred by record-low turnout and continued bickering between Abdullah and his rival, President Ashraf Ghani. "The recounting should be stopped. We are trying to save the process from fraudsters," Abdullah said at a rally of his supporters in Kabul.

"A fraud-marred election will not be accepted. The result should be based on the clean votes of our people," he added. Abdullah, who unsuccessfully ran in the previous two presidential elections and is fighting for his political future, has repeatedly raised questions about the validity of hundreds of thousands of votes. The election was meant to be the cleanest yet in Afghanistan's young democracy, with a German firm supplying biometric machines that were supposed to stop people from voting more than once.

But nearly a million of the initial votes were purged owing to irregularities, meaning the election saw by far the lowest turnout of any Afghan poll, with only about 1.8 million votes from a total of 9.6 million registered voters in a population of around 37 million people. Abdullah has said problems remain with about 300,000 of these high-tech votes, claiming various issues including that photos attached to some ballots had been taken from fake identity cards, and not actual voters.

He said his observers would be boycotting the recount, a move that will only fuel further claims of problems with the electoral process. The ongoing uncertainty raises the possibility Afghanistan is headed for a repeat of the crisis that followed the last presidential election in 2014. Then, Ghani and Abdullah fought a close and angry race that sparked widespread allegations of fraud and saw the US step in to broker an awkward power-sharing agreement between the rivals under a unity government. — AFP



KABUL: Afghan presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah gestures as he speaks during an interview with AFP at the Sapedar Palace in Kabul. — AFP

Outrage as Sri Lanka president pardons Swedish teen killer

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's president has pardoned a death-row prisoner who murdered a Swedish teenager just a week before he leaves office, officials said yesterday, in a move that sparked national outrage. Convicted killer Jude Jayamaha, from a wealthy, high-profile family, walked out of Welikada prison Saturday following the highly unusual amnesty granted by President Maithripala Sirisena.

Sirisena, who is stepping down after Saturday's presidential election at which he is not a candidate, announced last month he was considering a request to grant Jayamaha a pardon. Victim Yvonne Jonsson, who was holidaying in Sri Lanka, was beaten to death at a high-rise apartment in Colombo in 2005 after she and Jayamaha had an argument. The court had been told her skull was fractured into 64 pieces. Jayamaha was initially sentenced to 12 years in prison. He appealed to a higher court, which rejected his plea and instead sentenced him to death, which was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in 2014. Jonsson's sister Caroline wrote in a Facebook post about her concerns over Jayamaha's pardon before the amnesty announcement. — AFP

Analysis

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Why are Republicans hell-bent on exposing Trump whistleblower?

An aggressive push by President Donald Trump's Republican allies to unmask an anonymous whistleblower who ignited the impeachment inquiry could help shore up voter support for Trump, as Congress enters a critical new phase of televised hearings, party officials and strategists say. The whistleblower, a US intelligence official who complained about Trump's July 25 telephone call with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has in recent days increasingly become a target of noisy attacks by Trump, his allies in Congress and the conservative media, all of whom have pushed for the whistleblower to be named.

Trump has suggested the whistleblower committed treason. Lawyers for the whistleblower have refused to disclose their client's identity and have expressed fears for the person's safety. They say Trump is violating federal laws. "Let me be clear: Should any harm befall any suspected named whistleblower or their family, the blame will rest squarely with your client," whistleblower lawyer Andrew Bakaj said in a Nov 7 cease-and-desist letter to White House Counsel Pat Cipollone.

The whistleblower was initially considered a star witness of the impeachment inquiry. But the Democratic-led investigation, now in its sixth week, has heard from a parade of current and former US officials who have largely corroborated the whistleblower's account of the call in which Trump pressed Zelenskyy to open an investigation into former US Vice President Joe Biden and his businessman son Hunter Biden.

Democratic lawmakers say they no longer need to hear from the whistleblower to make their case that Trump abused his office for personal political gain. The president has denied any wrongdoing and accused his opponents of a witch hunt. As Democratic interest in the whistleblower has waned, the Republican push to unmask the person has ratcheted up, raising questions about what Republicans hope to gain.

Trump's allies want to try to counter potentially damaging testimony by US diplomats during next week's public hearings by presenting the whistleblower as a partisan figure who helped Democrats launch an impeachment inquiry that had long been considered, according to House of Representatives Republican aides and strategists. "The Republican issue with the whistleblower is that there seems to be an inherently political motive behind what he said and did and presented," said a Republican Party official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "It fits in the larger narrative that this has been a partisan effort from the beginning," the official said.

A spokesman for House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy did not immediately respond to a Reuters query about the Republican focus on the whistleblower. Conservative news articles purporting to identify the whistleblower have sought to link the person with Joe Biden and "deep state" conspirators within the Obama administration who some Republicans say were determined to undermine Trump's candidacy when he was running for office and later his presidency.

"They're trying to define the impeachment hearings as political before they begin. It helps fire up the base and tries to tint the testimony before it actually takes place," said Republican strategist Ron Bonjean. Republican Senator Rand Paul told reporters this week that he would view the whistleblower as "a material witness" who could support Trump's allegations of corruption against Biden, should the House impeachment drive lead to a Senate trial. "They absolutely need to testify," Paul said. "He could well have firsthand knowledge."

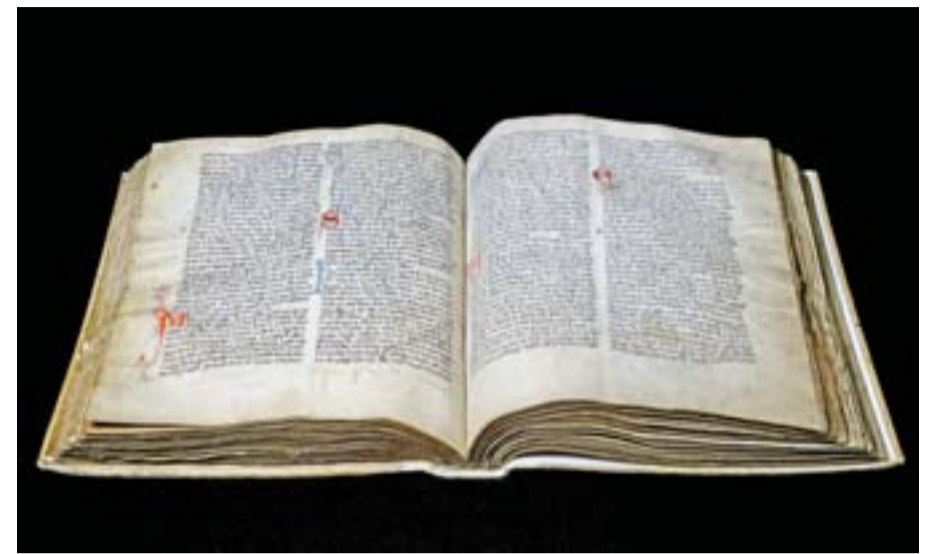
Deflection

Aides and strategists say the aim of the push to unmask the whistleblower is to deflect voter attention away from impeachment testimony and cast doubt on the Democratic-led proceedings. "Republican voters want to stick with their tribe and defend the president, and they need something to go on. This gives strong Trump voters something to say when the actual request to Ukraine is indefensible," said Republican strategist Rory Cooper, who was a top aide to former House Majority Leader Eric Cantor. The Republican Party official said internal polling shows that large numbers of voters view the impeachment investigation as politically motivated. Representative Jim Jordan, a staunch Trump ally and leading Republican opponent of the inquiry, said on Thursday that Republicans intend to subpoena the whistleblower to testify in public. House Democrats have accused Republican lawmakers of using closed-door testimony to try to learn the whistleblower's identity from witnesses. The president's son, Donald Trump Jr, posted on Twitter this week a link to an article containing the purported name of the whistleblower, while Senator Paul urged US media to report on the whistleblower's identity and said he could announce it himself. — Reuters

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



These handout photos from June 23, 2005 and made available on Nov 8, 2019 show Icelandic medieval manuscripts of the Arnarnagaeon Collection at the University of Copenhagen. — AFP photos



Denmark, Iceland clash over priceless manuscripts

They recount tales of Viking raids, Norse history, kings and gods: A priceless collection of mediaeval manuscripts, bequeathed by an Icelandic scholar to the University of Copenhagen in the 18th century, that Iceland now wants back. The UN cultural organization UNESCO has called them "the single most important collection of early Scandinavian manuscripts in existence", with the earliest one dating from the 12th century.

Some of the texts - known as the Arnarnagaeon Collection - have already been returned to Reykjavik, but 1,400 documents are still locked away in Copenhagen. The jewel of the collection is an almost complete early 15th century copy of "Heimskringla" - the best known of the Old Norse kings' sagas, originally written in the 13th century by Icelandic poet and historian Snorri Sturluson. Unlike many Icelandic mediaeval manuscripts, which have few decorative flourishes, this version of the Heimskringla is richly illustrated with intricate red lettering on each page.

The Arnarnagaeon Collection is named after scholar Arni Magnusson, a historian and literature and language expert who was born in Iceland but died in 1730 in Copenhagen, where he left his 3,000 or so manuscripts. Each time a document from the collection is borrowed

from the university, it is insured for up to five million kroner (\$740,000).

Joint history

Keen to ensure good relations with its former colony, Denmark granted Iceland's recurring request to return part of the collection in the 1960s. A treaty signed in 1965 divided up the goods. In line with that agreement, more than half of the manuscripts were turned over to Iceland between 1971 and 1997. The division of documents between the two nations had for years been uncontroversial, but Iceland's Culture and Education Minister Lilja Alfreðsdóttir now wants more of the collection given back.

She has raised the profile of the issue and linked it to the construction of a new institute dedicated to Magnusson, which will hold an exhibition of mediaeval documents. "We think it's important that the manuscripts be located in Iceland to a greater extent," Alfreðsdóttir told AFP.

Matthew Driscoll, the professor in charge of the collection at the University of Copenhagen, is opposed to the idea, arguing that the remaining manuscripts are part of Denmark's cultural heritage. The two nations have an

intertwined history, Iceland having been under Danish rule from the 1600s until it declared independence in 1944. Driscoll says the University of Copenhagen has cooperated closely with Reykjavik, digitizing all of the works and making them available to researchers.

"These are not things that have been acquired illegally or stolen... Arni owned those manuscripts himself, he was given them or he bought them, and then he left them in a completely legal way to the University of Copenhagen," Driscoll said.

And even in Iceland, there are mixed opinions about whether the texts should be returned. Haraldur Bernharðsson, a professor of mediaeval studies at the University of Iceland, said he fully agreed with the need to make cultural heritage visible for future generations. But he added: "I think we can do that in collaboration with the Arnarnagaeon Collection in Copenhagen."

Keeping all the Icelandic works in Reykjavik would actually limit the number of scholars and academics who study them, some academics say. "If you really wanted to request Icelandic manuscripts from abroad, you should perhaps prioritize manuscripts that are not currently being studied, which is obviously not the case with the Arni Magnusson collection," said Bernharðsson. — AFP

Salvadoran massacre victims still hunting 'truth and justice'

Fidel Perez has abandoned his farm for the day to look on as investigators work in a remote cemetery in this Central American country, seeking answers to one of many tragedies in the Salvadoran civil war - and the remains of his mother and sister. For Perez, now 43, the investigation marks a return to a dark day when he was seven years old, huddled in a cave with his family and neighbors. Then soldiers threw in a grenade.

It was Dec 1981, during a military operation in Morazan, at the dawn of the long and bloody civil war that claimed tens of thousands of lives. Perez fainted in the explosion. When he regained consciousness, he saw that his mother and sister had been killed in the attack, along with 10 others. Fearful of the soldiers' return, the

eight survivors fled after burying their loved ones on the spot. This week, the remains are being exhumed from a nearby cemetery on the orders of Salvadoran Judge Jorge Guzman, who is looking for new evidence about the so-called El Mozote massacre.

According to a UN report, soldiers tortured and executed more than a thousand residents of El Mozote and surrounding hamlets in the Morazan department, 180 km northeast of San Salvador, as they searched for guerrillas in Dec 1981. "Our struggle is to know the truth, for justice to be done," said Perez, who escaped the cave with his father and brother, as he watched the forensic experts work at the graves. "The hardest part is the imprint in the mind, in one's heart, of leaving a relative behind." Sixteen retired military personnel, including former Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia, are accused of planning and ordering the massacre. Garcia did not immediately respond to a request for comment through his lawyer.

Mockery

However, none of the accused would go to jail if Congress passes a new law giving amnesty to those responsible for crimes during the war. The initiative is

part of the so-called "Reconciliation Law," which seeks to secure reparations for the victims and to put an end to the aftermath of the civil war, which left some 75,000 dead and 8,000 missing. Human rights specialists say the law, expected to be passed in the next few days, would not prevent those responsible from being convicted, but they would face sentences such as community service or house arrest.

"It is a mockery for the thousands of crimes and specifically, in the case of El Mozote, a mockery after having killed more than a thousand peasants, mostly children," Wilfredo Medrano, a lawyer representing 60 families of the victims, told reporters as the bodies were exhumed. In 1994, relatives returned for the remains and buried them in Cacaopera, a predominantly indigenous community where they settled after the war.

"Hopefully justice will be done," said Maria Nunez de Marquez, a 61-year-old housewife whose parents-in-law and five of her husband's brothers were killed in El Mozote. Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, who took office in June, met with relatives of the victims this summer and reiterated his commitment not to support an amnesty law, according to his office. — Reuters

Iceland students see chilling reality of melting glacier

Icelandic seventh-grader Lilja Einarsson is on an unusual field trip with her class: They're measuring the Solheimajokull glacier to see how much it has shrunk in the past year, witnessing climate change first-hand. "It is very beautiful but at the same time it is very sad to see how much it has melted," says Lilja, bundled up against the autumn chill in a blue pom-pom hat.

Each October since 2010, now-retired schoolteacher Jon Stefansson has brought students aged around 13 from a school in Hvolsvollur - a village about 60 km away - to the glacier to record its evolution. The results are chilling: nestled between two moss-covered mountain slopes, Solheimajokull has shrunk by an average of 40 metres (130 feet) per year in the past decade, according to the students' measurements.

On this blustery October day, the youngsters - armed with a GPS, a measuring tape and two yellow flags - calculate the distances on foot from various spots, struggling against strong winds. Once done, some of the students hop in a dinghy and cross a lake of brown meltwater to reach an imposing wall of ice, the so-called terminus, or front of the glacier. Here, they determine the gap between the terminus and a hand-painted sign at the end of a footpath, where previous students have recorded their measurements over the

years. The numbers on the sign, pitched in black sand and steadied at the base by a pile of stones, indicate how many metres of ice have disappeared over the past years: "24", "50", "110". "When (the first students) started here, you couldn't see any water. So it (the glacier) was very big at first," says Lilja.

400 glaciers under threat

Glaciers cover about 11 percent of Iceland's surface, including Vatnajokull, the largest ice cap in Europe. But they have lost about 250 cubic kilometres of ice in the past 25 years, or the equivalent of seven percent of their total volume. "Now we have lakes that are forming in front of many of them," says glaciologist Hrafnhildur Hannesdottir of the Icelandic Meteorological Office.

Iceland in August unveiled a plaque commemorating the country's Okjokull glacier, the first to be stripped of its glacier status in 2014. The plaque was meant as a wake-up call on the effects of global warming as scientists fear the island's 400-plus glaciers could be gone by 2200. Solheimajokull, where the students go, is a popular tourist spot as it is one of the closest to Reykjavik, only 150 km away. Icelandic Mountain Guides, one of three operators that runs year-round visits, had 27,000 clients in 2018.

Solheimajokull, about 10 km long and two kilometres wide, is an outlet glacier of Myrdalsjokull, the country's fourth-biggest ice cap. Under the ice here lies Katla, one of Iceland's most powerful volcanoes, which last erupted in 1901 and is long overdue to do so again, scientists say. The glacier receded by 11 m in 2019, a significant amount but far from the record 110 m



This file photo taken on Oct 16, 2015 shows tourists walking on the Solheimajokull glacier, where the ice is retreating. — AFP

registered last year. "It depends more or less on the weather (and) how the glacier is breaking," explains teacher Stefansson. "Sometimes you get a big cliff falling into the water and then you get a very, very big measurement."

Global warming 'proof'

Since the school started its measurements, the glacier has shrunk by 380 m in almost a decade. "When we see this, it's like proof (of global warming). If we thought that we were maybe wrong, this is proof we weren't," says 12-year-old Birna Bjornsdottir. The measurements are neither scientifically exact nor official but they do indicate the changes under-

way and their acceleration in recent years. Official measurements from the Iceland Geological Society show Solheimajokull shrank by around 200 m in 2018, putting it among the country's top three glacier shrinkages. It has been receding every summer since 1996. The melting can be observed with the naked eye, with drops of water dripping from the ice, sometimes running into little streams. "I see a large change in the glacier's volume: it's a lot lower than it used to be," says Daniel Saulite, a Scottish guide who has worked on the glacier for five years. "In the front, there is also a lot more crevassing, and also the access becomes increasingly difficult." — AFP

Business

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2019

13 Fuel shortage and price hikes squeeze protest-hit Lebanon**13** Nigeria targets oil firms for a greater share of profits**14** Russian e-commerce booms despite economic doldrums

DHAHRAN: Photo shows Aramco's Dhahran Research and Development Center in Saudi Arabia's eastern region of Dhahran. From robots to sniffer drones, Saudi Aramco has ramped up spending on technological innovation while its rivals cut back amid soft oil prices, but the energy giant risks losing its edge after its much-anticipated IPO. — AFP

Aramco faces new test: Shareholders

Tech juggernaut ramping up spending on innovation

DHAHRAN: From robots to sniffer drones, Saudi Aramco has ramped up spending on technological innovation while its rivals cut back amid soft oil prices, but the energy giant risks losing its edge after its much-anticipated IPO. Saudi Arabia is offering a sliver of the company, touted as the kingdom's crown jewel, in its upcoming initial public offering that is the bedrock of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's ambitious strategy to overhaul the oil-reliant economy. Its market debut on the Riyadh stock exchange will raise pressure for higher profit margins on a company that so far has been answerable to no one except the government.

"Aramco has never had to answer to investors looking at the company's quarterly results," Ellen Wald, author of the book "Saudi Inc", told AFP. "When it goes public, that will change." In recent years the world's most profitable company, billed as a juggernaut of innovation, increased spending on research and development as most of its competitors scaled back. Aramco said it incurred R&D expenses of \$591 million in 2018, up from \$507 million in the previous year.

Its technological prowess was on display in a recent

media tour of its sprawling Dhahran headquarters in eastern Saudi Arabia, akin to a manicured American suburb with quaint houses, shopping plazas and schools for its 15,000-strong workforce. Engineers hunched over computers in an air-conditioned command centre with giant screens tracking the flow of crude from oil fields, through a complex web of pipelines and refineries, to tankers dispatched around the world.

Workers displayed innovations, from production-boosting drilling technology to nimble robots that crawl over pipes to carry out repairs and drones fitted with "sniffers" to detect leaks and inspect flare tips. "Over the past five years, our R&D spending has more than doubled," said Ahmad Al-Khowaiter, Aramco's chief technology officer. "That has enabled investment in world class talent and research centers."

'Pressure to scale back'

Aramco says its 1,300 scientists and engineers at 12 research centers around the world - from Beijing to Detroit - help it file new patents every year. Officials say the large-scale investments have helped it pump

crude at a fraction of the cost of its rivals from beneath its rolling sand dunes and seas.

But an expensive R&D effort may not appeal to investors as profits slip. In the first nine months of this year, Aramco said its net profit dropped 18 percent to \$68.2 billion. As it remains vulnerable to oil price fluctuations, some Saudis fear the IPO will force the company to pander to shorter-term preferences of shareholders. "The R&D creates useful technology for Aramco... (but) some of the projects may or may not ever be commercially viable," Wald said.

"It is understandable that some in the company are concerned that there could be pressure to scale back or change its R&D strategy," analysts say. Aramco could announce an intention to list two or three percent of the company on Riyadh's Tadawul exchange, with its valuation likely to fall short of the hoped-for \$2 trillion. Its prospectus said it would start taking bids from investors on November 17, but it did not disclose the size of the sale or the pricing range.

'Ultimate cash cow'

Given the size of the company, even a scaled-down

valuation could still make the offering the world's largest - generating funds to develop non-energy sectors deemed important for employment generation - from tourism to entertainment. But analysts are left asking whether the IPO will be constructive for Aramco, the front engine of an economy strongly tethered to oil.

"Aramco is the workhorse behind the Saudi economy," the Energy Intelligence group said in a report. "It reflects superior governance, corporate culture and competence at the company, which is recognized as best-in-class in the Middle East. By taking Aramco public, Riyadh risks disrupting the formula that's produced its ultimate cash cow."

Minority shareholders are unlikely to force a radical shift in the company's strategy but there could be pressure if the stock price underperforms, analysts say. "Aramco's past success was partly due to its closed model, where it answered only to Riyadh," the Energy Intelligence report said. "Tension seems bound to emerge between the interests of the Saudi state in securing stable oil revenues, the commercial aspirations of a listed Aramco, and the crown prince's vision that must somehow satisfy both." — AFP

Central Bank of Kuwait unveils liquidity management and forecasting dashboard

KUWAIT: The Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel announced CBK's live and consolidated "Liquidity Management and Forecasting Dashboard", which enhances the ability to forecast liquidity conditions more accurately and at an earlier point in time, in turn leading to more efficient utilization of monetary policy instruments. Unveiling the dashboard, the Governor noted that "Liquidity management is of utmost importance to the economies of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), due to multiple factors affecting liquidity levels.

Being oil-producing states, their currencies are pegged to foreign currencies so not only are their revenues susceptible to fluctuations in oil prices, but also to fluctuations in foreign exchange rates brought about by global economic and geopolitical developments." The Governor pointed out that "Any change in liquidity levels or volume of demand for

the Kuwaiti Dinar could effect the rate of return in the monetary market.

Therefore, forecasting liquidity conditions can help the CBK decide if intervention is required, through the utilization of monetary policy instruments, and can indicate the volume of liquidity to be injected into or pulled out of the market." Dr. Al-Hashel stressed that predicting liquidity conditions allows the CBK to manage future changes in these factors to stabilize liquidity conditions. It also helps the Bank to establish indicators for the rate of return in the monetary market.

The "Liquidity Management and Forecasting Dashboard" relies mainly on the trends indicated by historical data to come up with more accurate forecasts. This requires the gathering and inputting of relevant information and data that indicate the future liquidity position of the whole banking system. Then several reference econom-

ic models are constructed incorporating a number of economic variables and time series data for each factor affecting liquidity, so that the resultant forecast value is the mean value of the several models' forecasts.

On the process of developing the dashboard, the Governor noted that several challenges had been overcome, most importantly the consolidation of data gathered from multiple sources, as well as technical difficulties related to maintaining such massive databases. Dr Al-Hashel commended the technical assistance extended to the CBK by both the Gulf Monetary Council (GMC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) towards this project.

Wrapping up his statement, CBK Governor Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel stressed the Liquidity Management and Forecasting Dashboard, which utilizes state of the art technology, is the first of its kind in the GCC region, and one that would be developed even further with machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to enhance accuracy and efficiency. He stressed the CBK is ever keen to stay abreast of global developments in all areas of banking and finance and to implement international best practices to work towards the growth and development of the national economy. The Liquidity Management and Forecasting Dashboard had been announced during a liquidity management and forecast workshop the bank had organized with the GMC in Kuwait.

KIPCO announces net profit increase of 12%

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - has announced a 12 per cent increase in its net profit for the first nine months of 2019, standing at KD 22.8million (\$75 million) from the KD 20.4 million (\$67.1million) reported for the same period last year. Earnings per share came to 7.5 fils per share (\$2.5 cents), compared to 9.3 fils per share (\$3.1 cents) reported for the same period last year.

This is owed mainly to the company's capital increase, as well as the one time increase in interest and other payments on perpetual capital securities held by a Group bank. KIPCO's net profit for the three months ended September 30, 2019 increased 10 per cent to reach KD 9.18million (\$30.2million) from the KD 8.32 million (\$27.4 million) reported for the same period last year. The company's consolidated assets came to KD 9.8billion (\$32billion), compared to KD 10.4 billion (\$34 billion) reported at year-end 2018.

Faisal Al Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said: "The results we achieved in the first nine months of 2019 continue to be



Faisal Al Ayyar

promising and indicate that we are on the right growth trajectory. While we have been guarded in our expectations since the beginning of the year, given the continued geopolitical tension in the region, these positive results are a testament of the effectiveness of our long-term strategy, internal streamlining and the positive performance and growth our core companies have been able to achieve." He added: "Our prudent business model, long-term debt management and transparency have earned KIPCO the great

respect and confidence of investors and international markets. This is reflected in the oversubscription of the company's share capital increase, which was completed successfully in the first half of this year. Last month, we also successfully completed the issuance of a US\$ 500 million bond that saw a demand of \$3.6 billion on the order book, making it KIPCO's largest ever in international debt capital markets and representing a seven-fold oversubscription. These achievements, together with the positive growth we continue to achieve, reaffirm KIPCO's position as a role model for the MENA region's private sector."

Business

NBK Weekly Money Market Report

US dollar climbs as trade tensions recede; US-China truce in horizon

KUWAIT: In what was seen as a shift in the tone of a 16-month trade war between the world's two largest economies, China and the US have agreed in principle to remove some tariffs. The announcement came from Beijing on Thursday when officials announced that negotiators from both sides had agreed "to remove some of the additional tariffs in phases." The announcement came from the Chinese Commerce Ministry who said that the two countries had agreed to cancel the tariffs in phases, without laying out a timetable.

It appears that officials from the two economies are working on the terms of the trade ceasefire to be signed in the coming weeks by Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. The "phase one" move was taken positively by the markets as it marks the first time where the US offers a compromise on tariffs, and China moving back from its statement that trade tensions would only end when all tariffs were lifted from Chinese products.

Reports are showing that the plan is to remove the tariffs that the US imposed on \$112 billion of Chinese goods in September. Some economists are suggesting that Beijing might not be satisfied with Washington's offer to only lift on the latest duties it has imposed. But it is obvious that both Beijing and Washington are eager to reach an interim deal. Donald Trump would like to show US voters that his confrontational approach to China has succeeded ahead of presidential elections next year, while Beijing is suffering from an economic slowdown.

White house spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham stated that the US is "very, very optimistic" about completing a deal that would defuse the trade war. But it's worth noting that not all of the White House carry the same positive sentiment, where trade advisor Peter Navarro said in an interview "There is no agreement at this time to remove any of the existing tariffs as a condition of the phase one deal," he then continued to say "They're just negotiating in public, trying to push this in a direction."

Experts are warning that the pact could still fall apart while US officials said that a lot of work remained to be done when Trump announced the outlines of an interim deal last month. The announcement on Thursday saw a rally in US stocks, with three of Wall Street's main indices closing at simultaneous record highs. The S&P 500 closed the day 0.3% higher at \$3,085.18, at around seven index points higher than its previous peak close on Monday.

The Nasdaq Composite rose 0.3% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average advanced 0.66% to have them extend their record run. Bond markets also saw a selloff driving yields higher, as investors became optimistic that a resolution to the trade deal would revive global economic growth. The yield on the benchmark 10-year US Treasury

rocketed 10.7bp higher to 1.919%, while that on the policy sensitive two-year was up 6.6bp to 1.6753%.

European and Asian markets were also buoyed by the reports of tariff removal. Though this was not carried on to Friday trading, where the US, Asian, and European Equities retreated from their Thursday highs. The drop was due to markets running to profit taking on worries that the pact could still fall apart. The Greenback also benefited from the overall positivity, where the US dollar index closed the week at 98.401, up 1.21% from the start of the week.

Services Sector on the rise

The non-manufacturing sector in the US revealed optimistic figures as the headline figure came in at 54.7, up from last month's reading of 52.6. Markets reacted positively to the report as fears of the recent slowdown in manufacturing spilling into other sectors have increased. The manufacturing sector is now in its third month of contraction as investment continues to be vulnerable due to uncertainties in the global economic environment.

BoE maintains its rate

In its monetary policy summary, the Bank of England showed that it has cut its forecast for the UK economy. The regulator has said that growth will be limited by a weaker global environment and by the new trade barriers that would take effect immediately after Boris Johnson's Brexit deal materializes. The central bank noted that underlying UK growth has "slowed materially" in 2019, with quarterly growth rate at only half the previous three-year average, affected by Brexit uncertainties and global trade wars.

Given that inflation is likely to fall sharply in the near term while some leeway is appearing to show in the economy, a majority on the monetary policy committee had voted to leave the key interest rate unchanged at 0.75%. It is however worth noting that there was a split in the vote, with two members voting for an immediate 25 basis point cut on the grounds that Brexit uncertainties would persist and the labor market being at what appears to be a turning point. The BoE is still expecting a pickup in growth from next year, in an assumption that a Brexit deal makes progress and hoping that lessening uncertainty boosts business investment along with consumer confidence. With that being said, the recovery is not as strong as shown in its previous quarterly forecasts. The regulator now expects the level of GDP to be 1% lower by the end of 2022 than its August forecasts showed. The drop is partly due to changes in the global outlook and in market prices underlying its forecast, with a quarter of the difference being due to changes in government policy.

Rates -10th November, 2019

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1168	1.1015	1.1174	1.1018	1.0815	1.1115	1.1087
GBP	1.2931	1.2769	1.2942	1.2770	1.2575	1.2875	1.2808
JPY	108.22	108.19	109.47	109.26	107.30	110.30	108.62
CHF	0.9860	0.9850	0.9978	0.9971	0.9775	1.0175	0.9903

The monetary policy committee has kept its options open on the likely path of interest rates, making sure to be clear that interest rates could move in either direction depending on both external and political developments. The UK is now in its pre-election phase. Political parties are starting to announce their plans ahead of the election date of December 12. Boris Johnson has announced that if he wins the election, he will take Britain out of the EU "by the end of January."

While Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn insisted that the party plans to hold a second referendum. Liberal Democrats, Greens, and Plaid Cymru who are all committed to Britain remaining in the EU, announced a pact to maximize their chances of winning seats at the general election. The BoE's announcement combined with the election promises took their toll on the Sterling during past week's trading; the cable dropped 1.33% from its weekly high and closed its Friday session at 1.2770.

German manufacturing rebounds

In a signal that the Euro-zone economy's manufacturing power house could be stabilizing, German industry saw a rebound in orders in September, breaking a long downswing in activity. Provisional figures showed that new German manufacturing orders increased by 1.3% in September compared to August, defeating a poll of a mere 0.1% increase. The positive uptick in factory orders reflected a 1.6% rise in domestic orders and a 1.1% jump in foreign orders. Although demand from other Euro-zone countries fell, this was offset by orders from elsewhere.

Germany's economic output shrank in the second quar-

ter and its central bank has warned that it may also decline in the July-to-September quarter. This is due to the country's export-focused economy being hit by the US-China trade war, Brexit uncertainty and a sharp decline in the car industry, with the latter being disrupted by new emissions rules and the shift to electric vehicles. The response from the European Central Bank was to inject more cheap money into the economy, with a cut in interest rates and a restart of its bond buying program.

Australia's Central Bank

Australia's central bank held its interest rates steady at 0.75% in its latest meeting and made small changes to its economic forecasts, trimming both growth and unemployment. "Given global developments and the evidence of the spare capacity in the Australian economy, it is reasonable to expect that an extended period of low interest rates will be required," RBA Governor Philip Lowe said in a brief statement. The cuts have been effective in improving housing market conditions, though consumer spending continues to suffer. On Monday, data revealed retail sales had slumped to its weakest level since the 1990s.

Core inflation remains stuck below the 2-3% target as it has for four complete years, implying stubborn unemployment needs to fall from its current 5.2% level to revive wages and inflation. Hence, the central bank downgraded its economic growth forecast for this year to 2.25% from 2.5%, though expects a pick up to 3% by 2021. The Australian dollar has been rallying for some time now, most recently breaking the 0.69 level and is currently trading at an over 3-month high.

Murder of palm oil activists shows growing threat

JAKARTA: The murder of two Indonesian activists, which police say was ordered by a palm oil businessman, highlights the escalating violence and threats faced by environmentalists who challenge the industry, rights groups say. Martua Parasian Siregar, 55, and Maraden Sianipar, 42, were found dead 10 days ago with multiple stab wounds near a palm plantation in the island of North Sumatra.

Environmental campaigners and media watchdogs say the two men were former journalists who had got involved in a dispute between the palm oil company that operated the land and local residents. Police said on Friday they had arrested the head of the Amelia palm oil company, who they identified only as "H" or "Harry", on suspicion of having paid several men about \$3,000 to kill the two activists.

"This strengthens our suspicion that human rights violations in palm oil companies are rampant," said Dana Prima Tarigan, who heads green group the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI), which had met with the men prior to the deaths. "This is a threat to activists and journalists," he told Reuters. Police said the palm oil concession where the men's bodies were found was closed by the government in 2018 for illegally

clearing hectares of forest area. The two activists had been working with local farmers to gain control of the palm crop there, police said.

"The motive of the incident revolves around a land conflict case," North Sumatra Police Chief Agus Andrianto told reporters, adding that four other suspects had been arrested in the case, with another three still at large. "We highly believe that H instructed someone to get rid of the men ... or slaughter them when they came to the property," Andrianto said, adding that "H" had denied the allegations. Local media reports said "H" was businessman Wibharry "Harry" Padmoasmolo, who ran Amelia. Reuters was not able to immediately reach him for comment. — Reuters

For civil society groups, the killings show that rights abuses in the \$60-billion global palm oil trade remain widespread, with growing intimidation against those who investigate them. The murders come weeks after the death of WALHI environmental lawyer Golfrid Siregar in North Sumatra. Although police have said his death was a road accident, rights groups say the circumstances were mysterious and have called for further investigation.

Palm oil, the world's most widely used edible oil, is found in everything from margarine to biscuits and soaps, but has faced growing scrutiny in recent years from critics who blame its production for forest loss, fires and worker exploitation. Indonesia and Malaysia produce 85% of global palm oil. "Our palm oil industry was, and is, built upon the smeared blood and suffering of residents," Greenpeace campaigner Annisa Rahmawati said when asked about the two activists' murders. — Reuters



Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor releases a coffee table book chronicling the journey of Malabar Gold & Diamonds into its current success. M P Ahammed, Chairman - Malabar Group; Abdul Salam KP, Group executive director - Malabar Group, Prakash D' Sooja and Asher O, Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds were present during the event.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.650
Euro	339.680
Sterling Pound	393.610
Canadian dollar	233.000
Turkish lira	54.020
Swiss Franc	308.660
US Dollar Buying	297.200

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.784
Indian Rupees	4.285
Pakistani Rupees	1.977
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.681
Nepali Rupees	2.666
Singapore Dollar	226.250
Hongkong Dollar	38.928
Bangladesh Taka	3.548
Philippine Peso	6.044
Thai Baht	10.117
Malaysian Ringgit	77.916

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.294
Qatari Riyal	83.730
Omani Riyal	791.813
Bahraini Dinar	809.490
UAE Dirham	83.000

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.500
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Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.894
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.224
Tunisian Dinar	111.190
Jordanian Dinar	430.020
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.204

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr Selling Rate

US Dollar	303.890
Canadian Dollar	231.765
Sterling Pound	392.910
Euro	339.610
Swiss Frank	303.010
Bahrain Dinar	808.155
UAE Dirhams	83.140
Qatari Riyals	84.380
Saudi Riyals	81.935
Jordanian Dinar	429.905
Egyptian Pound	18.870
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.688
Indian Rupees	4.297
Pakistani Rupees	1.951
Bangladesh Taka	3.535
Philippines Peso	6.026
Cyprus pound	18.080
Japanese Yen	3.790
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.688
Malaysian Ringgit	74.130
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	43.735

Thai Bhat	11.050
Turkish Lira	53.375
Singapore dollars	223.154

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

EUROPE	British Pound	0.382708	0.396608	
	Czech Korune	0.005179	0.014479	
	Danish Krone	0.040974	0.045974	
	Euro	0.328713	0.342413	
	Georgian Lari	0.121580	0.121580	
	Hungarian	0.001148	0.001338	
	Norwegian Krone	0.029390	0.034590	
	Romanian Leu	0.065299	0.082149	
	Russian ruble	0.004794	0.004794	
	Slovakia	0.009111	0.019111	
	Swedish Krona	0.027589	0.032589	
	Swiss Franc	0.299477	0.310477	
	Australasia	Australian Dollar	0.201118	0.213118
		New Zealand Dollar	0.187160	0.196660
America	Canadian Dollar	0.225091	0.234091	
	US Dollars	0.300550	0.305850	
	US Dollars Mint	0.301050	0.305850	
	Asia	Bangladesh Taka	0.003003	0.003804

Chinese Yuan	0.042171	0.045671
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036968	0.039718
Indian Rupee	0.003671	0.004443
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002707	0.002887
Korean Won	0.000253	0.000268
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069774	0.075774
Nepalese Rupee	0.002627	0.002967
Pakistan Rupee	0.001311	0.002081
Philippine Peso	0.005757	0.006057
Singapore Dollar	0.219086	0.229086
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001320	0.001900
Taiwan	0.009998	0.010178
Thai Baht	0.009699	0.010249
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.801941	0.809995
Egyptian Pound	0.018653	0.021393
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000214	0.000274
Jordanian Dinar	0.424785	0.433785
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021019	0.045219
Omani Riyal	0.786171	0.794066
Qatar Riyal	0.083024	0.083858
Saudi Riyal	0.080153	0.081453
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.103071	0.111071
Turkish Lira	0.046138	0.055983
UAE Dirhams	0.082312	0.083138
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

Fuel shortage and price hikes squeeze protest-hit Lebanon

Rationing of dollars by banks sparks growing alarm

BEIRUT: A rationing of dollars by banks in protest-hit Lebanon sparked growing alarm yesterday as some petrol pumps ran dry and grocery stores hiked prices. The president and banking officials responded by pledging to take steps to improve the situation and help businesses to stay open. For two decades, the Lebanese pound has been pegged to the greenback and the currencies are used interchangeably in daily life.

But banks have been reducing access to dollars since the end of the summer, following fears of declining central bank reserves. Access was further limited this week after banks reopened for the first time since an unprecedented popular uprising began on October 17. On Saturday, several petrol stations ran out of fuel because of a shortage of dollars needed to pay for imports, a syndicate head said.

"The petrol stations that opened today are the ones that still have reserves. They will close down as soon as supply runs out," said Sami Brax, the head of the Syndicate of Gas Station Owners. He said if officials do not facilitate access to dollars by Tuesday, "we will be forced to stop imports and close down all petrol stations". His warning came a day after hospitals threatened to stop receiving patients because of a lack of dollars to pay for medical imports. Current medical stocks in the country "will not last more than a month", hospital syndicate head Suleiman Haroun said.

Price hikes

Grievances driving Lebanon's protests range from power cuts and poor social security to alleged state corruption. The government yielded to popular pressure and stepped down last month, with the World Bank urging the quick formation of a new cabinet to prevent the economy from deteriorating further.

But the economic crisis continued to deepen this

week as banks further limited dollar supplies upon reopening. Banks halted all ATM withdrawals in dollars, introduced an additional charge on dollar withdrawals made at branches, and severely restricted conversions from Lebanese pounds. This has forced people to change money on the black market where they are charged higher exchange rates, in what amounts to a de-facto devaluation of the pound.

The official exchange rate remains fixed at 1,507 Lebanese pounds to the dollar, but the rate on the parallel market has passed 1,800. According to Zouhair Berro, the head of the Lebanese Consumers Association, the dollar shortage is leading to price hikes, particularly for meat, vegetables and dairy. Suppliers are demanding payment in dollars, he said. Economist Nassib Ghobril said banks are "under pressure" due to large demand for dollars from Lebanese inside the country and abroad.

'Guarantee a future'

President Michel Aoun discussed the economic situation on Saturday with the ministers of finance and economy, the central bank governor and the head of the Association of Banks. A statement released after the meeting said deposits in banks were safe, and urged people not to panic. It said the central bank governor and the head of the Association of Banks were asked to help meet the needs of depositors, so that businesses remain operational.

The meeting came as hundreds took part in student-led demonstrations across the country to press the government to meet their demands. The rallies gained fresh momentum in recent days after pupils and university students boycotted lessons to spearhead protests. "We want to guarantee a future for ourselves," said Mohammad, an 18-year-old high-school student.

"I shouldn't be forced to leave the country after 1

near term.

The government in 2018 introduced a raft of rescue measures including easy visa terms for expatriate buyers and permanent residency permits for big investors. And in September, a top-level committee was established to rebalance the market. Emaar, the largest property firm in the Middle East, reported that over the first nine months of the year net profits rose just 2.3 percent to \$1.2 billion, from \$1.18 billion in the corresponding period of 2018.

Sales in the first three quarters of 2019 hit \$3.44 billion, a surge of 25 percent on the same period last year. The growth was attributed to the "resilient performance of the property, malls and hospitality business," the company said in a statement posted on the Dubai Financial Market website. Since 2002, Emaar has delivered some 59,000 residential units in Dubai and other global markets. Besides real estate, Emaar has a number of malls, including Dubai Mall, the world's most visited shopping centre, and several hotels.—AFP

After strike, scandal, US auto union faces reckoning

NEW YORK: All fall, as the United Auto Workers launched and ended a lengthy strike amid contract talks with Detroit's "Big Three" manufacturers, the union has been shadowed by a growing corruption probe. The scandal - which led to last week's leave of absence announcement from UAW President Gary Jones - has centered on bribes and kickbacks as well as revelations that some union officials and auto executives effectively stole money meant for worker training and spent it on golfing outings, pricey cigars and fancy meals.

From all appearances, hourly workers have set aside frustrations with UAW leadership during the crunch period of contract talks, backing a 40-day strike at General Motors that ended last month before negotiations with Ford and then Fiat Chrysler. But once the dust settles and the contracts have been ratified, the UAW will be at a crossroads, labor experts said.

"During the strike they had to ignore it and put it on the backburner," Joshua Murray, a Vanderbilt University sociologist, said of worker anger at the corruption probe. "But they recognize that the leadership has lost their confidence and there needs to be a reckoning." Just how much the UAW will change remains unknown at this point. But the upheaval is also coming at a time of flux in US politics, with leading Democratic presidential contenders like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren favoring a more muscular approach towards corporate power and wealth.

Diminished clout

The UAW, for its part, has unveiled "clean slate" reforms to lighten audits of training centers and stiffen oversight of travel expenses and credit card spending. The union's clout has diminished in the United States in recent decades as foreign automakers have built plants in anti-union southern states, mirroring a broader decline in organized labor.

The share of the auto manufacturing workers represented by a union fell to 17.3 percent in 2018 from 29.1 percent in 2005, according to Unionstats.com. Jones, who has not been indicted, was replaced by Rory Gamble as acting president. Gamble is from Ford, the only one of the Big Three not implicated in the bribery scandal.

Gamble has said corrupt labor figures should be brought to justice and he promised more reforms. He told the Detroit Free Press that he hopes the union can avoid a government intervention, such as a receivership. It is not clear whether the Department of Justice is considering such an outcome. "We intend to do everything we can to show that we can manage our business," Gamble told the newspaper. "We are setting into place new standards and things that will clean up our systems and make sure we are



BEIRUT: People gather at a shop that provides money transfer services in the Lebanese capital Beirut. For two decades, the Lebanese pound has been pegged to the US dollar, with both currencies used interchangeably in daily life. But banks have been reducing access to dollars since the end of the summer, following fears of a shortage in central bank dollar reserves. — AFP

graduate to find a job," he said, speaking at a protest in a central Beirut square. "The current political class is not capable of providing this." Even before protests erupted last month, growth in Lebanon had stalled following repeated political deadlocks in recent years, compounded by the war in Syria. Public debt stood at more than \$86 billion, over 150 percent of gross domestic product, according to the finance ministry.

Moody's ratings agency this week downgraded

Lebanon's sovereign debt, saying the anti-government protests had hit investor confidence and threatened economic stability. The World Bank had forecast a contraction of 0.2 percent before the turmoil, but has said that it now expects Lebanon's recession "to be even more significant". Without quick steps to address the crisis, about half of Lebanon's population could fall into poverty and unemployment could "rise sharply", the lender said.— AFP

Dubai's Emaar bucks downturn with profit bump

DUBAI: Dubai construction and hospitality giant Emaar Properties yesterday reported a rise in interim profit results, posting higher sales despite an economic downturn that has depressed the property industry. The company, which owns the world's tallest tower, Burj Khalifa, said it posted \$362 million in net profit in the third quarter, up 20 percent from \$302.4 million in the same period last year. Dubai is defined by its beachfront skyscrapers and man-made islands, but it is stuck in a five-year property downturn with analysts saying there will be no relief in the

CBK announces winners of Al Najma Account, 'Salary & Cash on Top' campaign

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draws on Al Najma Account and the draw on the "Salary and Cash on Top" campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Abdulaziz Ashkanani. The results of the draw were as follows:

(1) Al Najma weekly account - The prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars and was for the share of Najeyah Khudhur Abdullah. (2) The 'Salary & Cash on Top' campaign prize of 1,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars and was for the share of Ali Mahmoud Ghuloum Taqi. The Bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

As regarding "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees as well as the retirees and which is valid until 31 December 2019 and the mechanism of joining this campaign for availing its benefits, the Bank explained that Kuwaiti employees with a salary of KD 500 & above whether newly recruited or in service can transfer their salary to the Bank and avail the benefits of this campaign by getting instant cash gift of KD 250 or an interest free loan 5 times the salary up to KD 10,000, add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000.

As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD of 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift. The retirees with pension KD 1,000 & above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private & public sector as well as the retirees. Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced & unrivalled services & products the Bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.



DUBAI: Visitors take pictures with their telephones of the fountains in front of Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, in Dubai. — AFP



MICHIGAN: A banner is shown at the General Motors Warren Transmission plant in Warren, Michigan. US prosecutors has charged a former United Auto Workers official who served on the GM board with money laundering as part of a broadening criminal probe into the union's activities. — AFP

guarded in the future against any of these type of charges."

Shift in US politics

Arthur Wheaton, an expert in industrial labor relations at Cornell University, said there is still no evidence of a general scandal throughout the UAW that would require a receivership or significant government leadership. "It's an organization with 400,000 members and we're talking about 10 people," Wheaton said. "You've got a few corrupt people."

But regardless of what the government does, the UAW workers will also have a say in what comes next. Murray characterized the GM contract as a mixed bag. To end the lengthiest US auto strike in decades, workers won a generous \$11,000 signing bonus and wage increases. But the deal also cleared the way for the company to close four plants and did not go as far as the UAW wanted in terms of job security commitments at traditional plants as GM builds more electric cars.

"A lot of the contract decisions have been that sort of more immediate wage gains, benefit gains but giving up power and control over things," said Murray. Murray said that recent teacher strikes in traditionally conservative states like Kentucky and West Virginia suggest "a rising tide of radicalism" among some workers at a time when candidates like Warren and Sanders favor policies to tax wealth and reign in corporate power.

Labor historian Nelson Lichtenstein, writing on the GM strike in a September article in "Dissent," called the UAW "much diminished" from its heyday, saying the inability to make headway in newer plants has been a "crippling debility for a labor organization that seeks to raise the general wage level in its industry." Still, Lichtenstein identified a hope for organized labor amid the broader political and social outcry for measures to reign in US capitalism, such as share buybacks that exacerbate income inequality.— AFP

Nigeria targets oil firms for a greater share of profits

LAGOS: In a move Nigeria's president hailed as a "landmark moment", Africa's largest oil producer approved legislation this week to bolster its share of revenues from international majors. The authorities say the amendment - heralded as the biggest change in decades to its production sharing deals - will bring billions of dollars into state coffers as the country belatedly claims an "equitable share" of its vast natural resources.

But oil industry insiders have slammed the change as an ill-planned attempt to grab money and warn that it could prompt an exodus of investments as foreign firms turn their backs on Nigeria. The changes redraw the Deep Offshore (and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contract) Act which been in force since it was passed in 1993 when Nigeria was under military rule. The law mandated that the split of revenues between the state and the international oil firms should be reviewed if prices climbed over \$20 per barrel.

But while crude has soared far above that point over the past two decades, a revision of the formula for revenue sharing was never carried out. Buhari's government have accused previous Nigerian lawmakers of having vested interests in making sure the bulk of oil revenues remained in private hands. The new law sets a staggered "royalty rate" on crude oil sold above \$20 - rising to the highest rate of 10 percent if the price reaches more than \$150 a barrel - with the revenue due to the government increasing in line with oil price rises.

In a second revenue stream, oil companies will also pay a flat tax of 10 percent on off-shore fields and 7.5 percent on inland fields, within specified depths. Buhari's office has estimated the change will bring in at least \$1.5 billion in added revenue by 2021. But according to experts, oil companies involved in off-shore production could review their investments, reducing the revenue boost Nigeria hopes to achieve.

Fiscal crisis

As oil prices slid in recent years, meaning a drop in revenue for the government, Nigeria has been steadily increasing pressure on some of the world's biggest energy companies - Shell, Exxon Mobil, Chevron Eni, Total and CNOOC - who extract most of the crude oil in Nigeria. About half of government spending is reliant on income from oil sales. In mid-October Nigeria's government controversially claimed oil multinationals owed the country \$62 billion in back revenues, which the oil firms disputed.

"We have no idea how the government arrived at such an amount," a representative of one of the major oil firms told AFP on condition of anonymity. Since the claim, a government minister conceded the money was unlikely to be retrieved in its entirety but that a settlement could be reached.

Emerging markets expert John Ashbourne insisted that the "fiscal crisis, with the federation forced to dedicate a larger and larger share of its revenue to paying off its debts" is a factor in Nigeria changing its agreements with oil firms. The attempt and the latest changes in the law signal a more stringent economic environment for multinationals, whose response could significantly impact Nigeria's oil-reliant economy.

Major oil companies have long been accused of having a cosy relationship with lawmakers in Africa's largest economy. Despite large oil and gas reserves, the majority of people in Africa's most populous country live in extreme poverty, on less than \$1.90 a day. Since the 2000s there have been repeated calls to amend the 1993 law - but until the latest push the measures failed to get past Nigerian lawmakers.— AFP

Business

Russian e-commerce booms despite economic doldrums

Russian e-commerce market expands by 26% to \$11.3 billion

MOSCOW: Moscow photographer Galina Goryushina says that online shopping has changed her life. "I've got more time for myself," said the 30-year-old freelancer. "I don't have to haul heavy shopping bags. And I don't waste money on silly knick-knacks laid out on the store shelves," said Goryushina. The young woman began shopping online a decade ago when she could not find clothes she liked in Russia and now makes most of her purchases online.

Russia may be a latecomer to the world of online shopping but e-commerce is experiencing explosive growth in the country despite a stagnant economy weighed down by Western sanctions. Russia's economic growth stood at just 0.7 percent in the first six months of 2019. Over the same period, the Russian e-commerce market has expanded by 26 percent to 725 billion rubles (\$11.3 billion), according to a study by Data Insight, a Russian-based research agency.

The sector is developing rapidly despite numerous logistical challenges in the world's largest country including an often unreliable postal service. Long distances and low population density make e-commerce an appealing - and sometimes even the only - option in Russia. Even in affluent Moscow, where shopping malls offer a huge variety of consumer goods, many prefer to shop online to avoid the ubiquitous traffic jams.

'Transformative for the country'

One of Russia's biggest online retailers, Ozon, began as an online bookstore - much like the global giant Amazon - and later expanded into other types of merchandise. On a recent tour of Ozon's offices in Moscow's business district, chief executive Alexander Shulgin said the potential for growth in Russia was enormous. "I am absolutely confident that e-commerce will be absolutely huge in Russia, it's transformative for the country," he said, pointing to Russia's high internet penetration, with 95 million online users. In the first six months of this year, the number of online orders went up by 44 percent reaching 191 million.

Together with Russia's biggest e-commerce site, Wildberries, and the online pharmacy Apteka.ru, the top trio's business has grown by 107 percent compared to the first half of last year. Shulgin said that online shopping offered Russians living in remote locations access to millions of products at affordable prices. "It's just phenomenal how e-commerce improves quality of life for people in small villages and towns," he added. Besides its huge size, Russia's harsh climate is also seen as a boon for the business.

"When there is rain or snow or it's cold outside, people prefer to shop online, so (Russia) is an ideal country," he said. Shulgin said the e-commerce market was fragmented and accounted for just 6 percent of total retail. "So the opportunity for growth is huge," he added. In a logistics centre in the town of Tver, located around 180 kilometers northwest of Moscow, Ozon employees are busy pushing carts around aisles as they prepare to ship goods to customers across Russia. "The centre handles over 100,000 packages a day and around 2,000 people work here on a daily basis," said Ivan Popov, deputy logistics manager at Ozon. In the cities, the company relies on couriers, automated pick-up lockers and drop-off locations. To ship the packages to remote locations, Ozon has partnered up with the Russian Post. "They have a branch in every possible location, ideal for smaller villages, they can deliver anywhere," said Shulgin.

Self-made woman billionaire

Ozon's competitor Wildberries has also been growing at breakneck speed in recent years, making its founder one of the country's richest women. This year its founder, Tatyana Bakalchuk, a 44-year-old mother of four, became the second female billionaire in Russia, according to Forbes. Bakalchuk, a former English teacher, founded the company in 2004, at the age of 28, in her Moscow apartment while on maternity leave. She came up with an e-commerce business idea after trying to shop at traditional



MOSCOW: Alexander Shulgin, Chief Executive Officer at Russia's online retailer Ozon speaks during an interview with AFP in Moscow. — AFP

stores with a newborn. Initially focusing on shoes and clothing, her business has now expanded into food, books, electronics and health products, offering 15,000 brands. In March, it became the third most visited e-commerce fashion website in the world, trailing behind H&M and

Macy's, according to a study by SEMrush marketing analytics firm. Already present in ex-Soviet Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, Wildberries is now aiming for Central Europe and is building a logistics centre in Slovakia. — AFP

Goldman faces probe after entrepreneur slams Apple Card algorithm in tweets

BENGALURU: A probe into Goldman Sachs Group Inc's credit card practices has been initiated after tweets from a tech entrepreneur alleged gender discrimination in the new Apple Inc card algorithms that are used to determine credit limits. In a series of Twitter posts starting on Thursday, David Heinemeier Hansson railed against the Apple Card for giving him 20 times the credit limit that his wife got, Bloomberg reported on Saturday.

Hansson, who is the creator of web-application framework Ruby on Rails, didn't disclose any specific income-related information for himself or his wife but said they filed joint tax returns and that his wife had a better credit score, the report said. New York's Department of Financial Services confirmed that an investigation was being conducted.

Andrew Williams, a Goldman Sachs spokesman, declined to comment on whether Hansson had contacted Goldman regarding the concerns raised on Twitter because the bank does not discuss matters involving individual customers publicly. The Apple Card, launched in August, is Goldman's first credit card. The Wall Street investment bank has been offering more products to consumers, including personal loans and savings accounts through its Marcus online bank.

The Department of Financial Services "will be conducting an investigation to determine whether New York law was violated and ensure all consumers are treated equally regardless of sex," a department spokeswoman told Reuters in a statement. — Reuters

Greece speeds up the 'Golden Visa' scheme for Chinese investors

ATHENS: Chinese investor Jiang Rungong, who moved to Greece three years ago, says he and his family could not be happier in their new home on the Athens coast. "We chose Greece because of its cultural heritage, its history, the democracy, the freedom. We really like its atmosphere," Jiang says. "Since we got the visa, we've travelled to many European countries. And every time we come back to Greece, the moment we set foot in the airport, we feel like it's home." The 52-year-old from Shanghai, his wife and son took advantage of Greece's so-called Golden Visa scheme to come and live in Europe.

His 18-year-old son, Jiang Semniao, managed to learn Greek in just two years. He is attending a Greek public school and dreams of becoming a Greek citizen. Under the arrangement, non-EU citizens are given a five-year residence permit in return for investing at least 250,000 euros (\$275,000) in Greek real estate. Greece is not the only European country to operate such a scheme. Other crisis-hit EU members such as Portugal, Cyprus and Spain have been offering similar incentives for years.

Following Greece's decade-long recession, real estate prices remained at rock bottom for a long time, even if they have since started to rise again recently. So far

the program seems to be working: the number of residence permits issued to non-EU citizens was up by 46 percent last year. And some 5,300 permits have been issued since the scheme's launch in 2013, more than 3,400 to Chinese buyers, official data show.

Ever closer ties

China and Greece have been building progressively closer trade and investment ties for more than a decade, ever since two main container terminals at the port of Piraeus were sold to Chinese shipping giant Cosco in 2008. Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has just returned from a four-day visit to Shanghai, and Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives in Athens for a reciprocal three-day trip on Sunday.

Experts say the Chinese no longer regard Greece merely as a foot in the door to the EU's free-trade Schengen zone, but actually enjoy life in their new home. "They like to stay in Athens and the suburbs, forming little Chinatowns. They are buying blocks of flats, where all the owners are Chinese," said Anny Aygouli, migration policy manager for a law firm, Dedes, that has a special department for golden visas specifically for Chinese customers.

But for some, the long wait time can be off-putting. "When you tell a client that a year might be needed just to submit the request... it is like you are showing him the exit", says Dedes law investment manager Dorina Cobzaru. Applications are also being held up because they are processed in the same department that handles the asylum requests of tens of thousands of migrants. And already, a huge backlog has built up.

Capital controls

To cut red tape and make investment easier, the newly elected conservative government approved a bill in late October that



ATHENS: A woman looks at buildings from a hill in Athens as the golden visa arrangement grants non-EU citizens a five-year residence permit in return for investing at least 250,000 euros (\$275,000) in Greek real estate. — AFP

would allow would-be investors to get round China's strict capital controls. This is done by using multiple bank terminal transactions to transfer the requisite sum of \$250,000. Greek development minister Adonis Georgiadis, who recently visited China, said the Bank of Greece had concluded that "the use of bank terminals does not violate Greek or European law. If it is violating the Chinese law, this is a matter for China."

Closer to home, however, Brussels is worried about such golden visa schemes. In a report earlier this year, the European Commission singled out Cyprus, Bulgaria and Malta, complaining that wealthy candidates for residency or citizenship do not face adequate security and background checks. Nevertheless, Greece is desperately seeking to attract foreign investors and says it cannot afford to lose the valuable income.

According to the Bank of Greece, the scheme appears to be stimulating the coun-

try's previously sluggish housing market. The central bank estimates it attracted 469 million euros in Chinese capital in 2018 and as much as 443 million euros in the first half of this year alone, compared with only 77 million euros in 2017. And Chinese investors have ploughed more than one billion euros in total into Greek property since the program was launched, the data showed.

Real estate is just one aspect of the closer cooperation between Athens and Beijing since Greece's economic crisis, which saw it lose around a quarter of its gross domestic product. Cosco acquired Piraeus' two main container terminals for 35 years. And in 2016, it also took over the Piraeus port authority - and the third remaining container terminal - until 2052. Greece has also signed up to China's new "Belt and Road" project, a \$1 trillion global investment program aiming to forward Chinese goods to markets further afield. — AFP

IPO prospectus lays out the main risks to Aramco operations

RIYADH: Saudi state oil giant Aramco has unveiled the prospectus for its initial public offering (IPO) - laying out the main material risks that may adversely affect the company's business or its financial position. Aramco is the world's largest oil producer, pumping 10% of global supply, and its most profitable. Weaker oil prices cut its first half net profit by 12% to \$46.9 billion this year, but the figures still overshadowed Apple Inc, the world's most profitable listed company, which made \$31.5 billion. Below are the main risks, according to the prospectus:

Operations

Operations may be affected by global oil prices, oil supply and demand, economic and geopolitical events that may affect international trade as well as the impact of climate change on the demand for, and price of, hydrocarbons. The Saudi government determines the kingdom's maximum level of oil production. State finances are highly connected to the oil and gas industry. Aramco's operations may be affected by decisions regarding output levels made by the kingdom as a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), or by other producing states. The Saudi government may direct Aramco to undertake projects or provide assistance for initiatives outside its core business. Aramco's financial position may be adversely affected if the kingdom stops pegging its currency, the riyal, to the US dollar.

Insurance

Aramco does not insure against all risks and its insurance may not protect it against liability from all potential events including major crude oil spills, environmental disasters, terrorism or acts of war.

Litigation

Aramco has been subject to significant litigation, including allegations of violations of antitrust laws partially arising from the kingdom's OPEC membership. The OPEC-related antitrust lawsuits have been dismissed on the basis of sovereign defenses under US law, but there is no assurance the firm will prevail in its assertion of these defenses in the future.

Terrorism and conflicts

Political and social instability, unrest, actual or potential armed conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and other areas may affect Aramco's operations and financial position. Terrorism and armed conflict may materially and adversely affect the market price of its shares.

Reserves

Estimates of proven hydrocarbon reserves depend on significant interpretations, assumptions and judgements. Any significant deviation in economic and operating conditions could affect the estimated quantity and value of proven reserves. Aramco retained independent petroleum consultants, DeGolyer & MacNaughton (D&M), to independently evaluate its reservoirs as of Dec 31, 2018. D&M's reserves estimation of 209.1 billion barrels of oil equivalent reserves for the reservoirs it evaluated was within 1% of the company's internal estimation for the same reservoirs for the same concession time period. There is no independent third party certification letter with respect to the balance of the kingdom's proven oil equivalent reserves.

The offering

The IPO is expected to be the largest issuance to trade on the local Tadawul stock exchange, which modernized its platform to accommodate the exceptionally high trading volume. Changes to trading mechanisms and procedures are untested and there can be no assurance they will adequately facilitate the listing. Non-qualified foreign investors will not hold legal title to the shares and will not be able to vote according to the shares in which they hold an



DHAHRAN: In an undated handout picture, Saudi Aramco staff are pictured at the Operations Coordination Center (OSPAS) in Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia. — AFP

economic benefit. All purchases and sales of shares on Tadawul will be denominated in local currency. There is no guarantee foreign investors will have the ability to obtain the riyal in amounts necessary to purchase the desired amount of shares or swap. The Saudi government will continue to own a controlling interest after the IPO and be able to control matters requiring shareholder approval. It will have veto power with respect to any shareholder action or approval requiring a majority vote.

Aramco may change its dividend policy without prior notice to its minority shareholders. Aramco said it intends to declare ordinary cash dividends of at least \$75.0 billion for calendar year 2020, in addition to any potential special dividends. Furthermore, if necessary, the government will forgo its right to receive cash dividends for the next five years starting from 2020 to enable the company to first pay the minimum quarterly amount to other shareholders. — Reuters

What's On



Arabian Gulf Cup mascot Sodeifi meets fans in Kuwait during promotional tour

Thousands of fans have met Arabian Gulf Cup mascot Sodeifi as the tournament's promotional tour gets into full swing. The beloved oyster and pearl mascot has so far visited The Gate Mall, The Avenues, Marina Mall and Murooj. He is also set to visit Souq Mubarakiya, attend the international match between Kuwait and Chinese Taipei, and visit a number of schools. Sodeifi is currently in the middle of a tour which started in Doha and will also see him visit various locations in Oman. The mascot is helping to build excitement ahead of the 24th edition

of the tournament, which will take place in Qatar from 24 November to 6 December.

Khalid Mubarak Al Kuwari, Marketing Director of the tournament's Local Organizing Committee, said: "Sodeifi's tour is really helping to build excitement for our region's premier international football event. We are delighted that so many people in Kuwait have come out to meet Sodeifi and purchase tickets for the tournament. We look forward to welcoming many fans from Kuwait, and across the region, to enjoy the event."

Sodeifi, which features the colors of the Qatari flag, first appeared in 2004 when Qatar hosted the Arabian Gulf Cup for the third time. The mascot has already visited a number of schools and public places in Qatar. This year's tournament will be contested by five nations: hosts Qatar, defending champions Oman, Kuwait, Iraq and Yemen.

All the matches will be held at Khalifa International Stadium, which reopened in May 2017 following an extensive redevelopment in preparation for the FIFA World Cup

Qatar 2022. Located in Aspire Zone, the historic venue has previously hosted the Arabian Gulf Cup, Asian Games and AFC Asian Cup. This will be the fourth time Qatar has hosted the tournament, which is organized by the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation. The Maroons have won the event three times and will be aiming for a glorious double in 2019 after lifting the AFC Asian Cup in February. Tickets for the tournament are available online from gulfcup2019.qa. They are available to buy in three categories and priced QAR 50, QAR 30 and QAR 10.



Jumeirah Messilah sponsors AWL 'Fight Like A Girl' event

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa supported breast cancer awareness month by being a golden sponsor to American Women's League's 'Fight like a Girl', where it was hosted by the resort at Kuwait's largest venue, Badriah Ballroom. To increase awareness of breast cancer and the need to conduct regular screening, the event was supported by Jumeirah Messilah Beach for the fourth consecutive year in the international Breast Cancer Awareness Month of October.

Addressing the event, Director of Sales & Marketing at

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Bahaa Malaeb, underlined the commitment of the hotel to undertake such initiatives that not only promote breast cancer awareness but also empower women to address misconceptions and encourage regular screening. Malaeb shared that the hotel's support to this event is part of its corporate social responsibility initiatives towards this imperative cause and society in general.

Several expert doctors and healthcare professionals addressed the event, highlighting the various aspects of breast cancer and different treatment options. Encouraging women in the fight against breast cancer, survivors based in Kuwait presented their inspiring personal stories on their fight against breast cancer. Amongst other highlights of the event, Talise Spa and Talise Fitness Club promoted various offers and activities. The night ended with a raffle draw, where guests indulged in a delicious dinner prepared by the talented chefs of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa.



ICSK organizes seminar on cancer awareness

In order to educate its children and staff, ICSK Senior, organized a cancer awareness program on 30th October 2019 in the school auditorium. The guest doctors for the seminar were renowned Oncologist and patron of Cochin Cancer Society and Dr Chithrathara who happens to be a gynecologist, urologist and surgical oncologist. The initiative the school had taken to spread awareness amongst the children is indeed appreciable.

VP Gangadharan, Senior Consultant of Medical and Pediatric Oncology, is a renowned Oncologist from India

who is known for his support to the poor and needy cancer patients by providing them with subsidized medicines and free counseling through Cochin Cancer Society. Dr Chithrathara the first lady Urologist of Kerala. She has specialized in Gynecological, Urological and Breast Cancer surgeries. She is the Head of the Department and Senior Consultant in surgical and Gynaec Oncology at Lakeshore Hospital Cochin, Kerala.

The program commenced with the Islamic prayer followed by a symphonious prayer song and the Kuwait and Indian national anthems sung by the school choir. The Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK Senior Dr V Binumon, introduced the eminent personalities to the large gathering that was seated in the auditorium.

The seminar turned out to be a very vital one when Dr Gangadharan explained about the causes, cures and symptoms of cancer and the reason why it is considered to be a very dreadful disease. He quite explicitly explained

the three major causes of cancer, which happened to be 1] smoking 2] consumption of liquor 3] high calorie diet. He also spoke about the highly advanced treatments to cure cancer. He shared the different sessions that he used to carry out at the Cochin Cancer Society along with the inmates of the society who happened to be cancer patients. He enlightened the gathering about how to lead a cancer free life.

In between his presentation, the fruit break that is a part of the newly initiated BIO BREAK was also enjoyed collectively, wherein people shared fruits with each other and relished too. The session was further carried forward by Dr. Chithrathara wherein she discussed about the different kinds of cancer that affects different parts of human body. She also mentioned about the different symptoms that would help people with the diagnosis at an early stage in order to begin with the effective medication. The fruitful seminar culminated with the vote of thanks.



ICG sponsors Horeca 2020

Preparations for the Horeca Kuwait 2020 exhibition are steadily progressing and attracting more companies to take part. It is an event providing a golden opportunity to scientifically exchange expertise that would match the local market needs and future expansion plans. The exhibition is organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Co at Mishref international fair grounds from January 20-22, 2020.

In this regard, a statement issued by Leaders Group stressed that the number of sponsors is annually growing to include a number of prestigious specialized companies such as the International Center Group (ICG) which has a market share covering Kuwait and the entire Middle East. "Ever since it was established by the late Shakir Al-Samman 52 year ago, ICG has come a long way in trading and food supplies", added the statement.



On his part, ICG's general Manager, Emad Shaker Al-Samman stressed that the secret behind ICG's constant growth is its attempts to achieve perfection ever since it was established 52 years ago. He added that ICG had several subsidiary companies such as Al-Mohammad for Food Stuff, Al-Jawahara Al-Sham Roastery & Mills, Asareer General Trading & Contracting Company, Universal Center for Hotel Supplies, Four at Al-Sham Company, the Universal Center for Catering and Spectrum Company.

Further, Al-Samman stressed ICG and its subsidiary companies have teams of highly talented and skilled staff who focus on providing customers' needs in a most amicable and professional manner especially since Kuwait imports over 70 per cent of its food supplies. "This requires keeping updated with the six basic food elements; vegetables, fruits, meat, cereals, milk and dairy products and energy supplements", he stressed.

In addition, Al-Samman pointed that "There are five basic factors behind the growth of food industries in Kuwait and the region. Consumers have grown more health-aware, the majority is willing to spend more on quality and freshness, they aspire to have western, oriental and global dishes and have developed a growing demand on organic food", he explained noting that the organic food market value in GCC states had grown to \$ 1.5 billion.

TIES announcement

The TIES Center cordially invites you to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) today at 7pm. In the class, we will focus on verse 24 (the last verse) of Surat Al-Hashr (The Gathering). We will learn some names and attributes of Allah (SWT), their significance, and how to act upon them, and then explore the Great Name of Allah (SWT) by which He answers our invocations. We will then discuss some scientific facts that confirm verses revealed in the Noble Quran more 1,430 years ago with regard to the creation of humans, examine the various phases of our creation and how we were sustained during each phase, and discuss why some scholars call the Quran "The Book of Signs." Finally, we will discuss our responsibilities towards Allah's names and attributes and the reward of fulfilling them sincerely. Come and learn more about the Book of Allah (SWT) in a serene, friendly and encouraging environment.

Health & Science

US identifies likely culprit of vaping illness outbreak

WASHINGTON: US health officials said Friday they had identified vitamin E acetate as the likely culprit behind a vaping-linked lung injury epidemic that has killed 39 people and sickened more than two thousand. Investigators have previously pointed to the oil, which is sometimes used as a thickening agent for vaping products that contain the psychoactive substance THC, as a possible cause of the outbreak.

But they are more certain now after it was detected in all 29 patients selected for a lung fluid study carried out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "These findings provide direct evidence of vitamin E acetate at the primary site of injury within the lungs," said Anne Schuchat, the CDC's principal deputy director, calling it a "very strong culprit of concern" and describing the new work as a breakthrough. "No other potential toxins were detected in the testing conducted so far," she added.

Vitamin E acetate is found in many foods and is also used in supplements and in cosmetics products like skin cream, but interferes with lung function when inhaled. A CDC release added that more investigation was required to definitively confirm a causal link and that it remained possible more than one toxin was responsible for the outbreak, which officials have called

"e-cigarette or vaping product use associated lung injury" or "EVALI."

Minimum age push

The announcement came as President Donald Trump said he supported raising the minimum age for the purchase of e-cigarettes from 18 to 21 as part of a plan to curtail a surge in youth vaping. But he also indicated that he was concerned about over-regulation of business, a sign the administration is considering stepping back from a previously announced ban on flavored e-juices popular among adolescents.

"We're going to be coming out with a very important position on vaping," Trump told reporters. "We have to take care of our kids, most importantly, so we're going to have an age limit of 21 or so." He added that a policy paper would be issued next week. The administration announced in September it would soon ban all flavored products, but it appeared lobbying efforts by the vaping industry may have changed that position, with potential exemptions for mint and menthol flavors mooted. "We have a lot of people to look at, including jobs, frankly," said Trump. "It has become a big industry. We're going to take care of it."

The federal minimum age for purchasing tobacco products is 18, but 18 states and the District of Columbia have set their

minimum age at 21. Raising the federal minimum age requires an act of Congress, and the cause has attracted bipartisan support, with one proposed bill co-sponsored by Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Reprieve for industry?

Vaping is increasingly popular among youth, with a 2019 government survey published this week finding that more than five million middle and high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days, an all-time high. Youth vapers overwhelmingly chose flavors like mint, mango, cream, fruit and cucumber, unlike older users trying to quit smoking, who turn more often to tobacco-flavored pods.

The proposed flavor ban has caused an outcry among vaping businesses, who argue they strictly ID their customers to confirm their age, and say their livelihoods are at risk. The administration may also be wary of a possible political backlash, with hashtags like "We vape, we vote" recently appearing on social media and protests planned against more regulation. White House advisor Kellyanne Conway told reporters earlier this week vape shops may be exempted, leaving open the possibility that outlets like gas stations and convenience stores might be the ones affected by new regulations. — AFP

US lab identifies rare HIV strain

WASHINGTON: A US healthcare company has identified a new subtype of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and said the finding showed that cutting edge genome sequencing is helping researchers stay ahead of mutations. The strain, HIV-1 Group M subtype L, has been recorded in three people from blood samples taken between the 1980s and 2001, all in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Abbott laboratories told AFP on Friday.

To classify a new subtype, three cases must be discovered independently, according to guidelines issued in 2000. Group M is the most prevalent form of the HIV-1 virus. Subtype L is now the 10th of this group and the first to be identified since the guidelines were issued. Antiretroviral drugs, which reduce the viral load of an HIV carrier to the point at which the infection is both undetectable and cannot be transmitted further, have generally performed well against a variety of subtypes, according to research. But there is also some evidence of subtype dif-

ferences in drug resistance. "Since subtype L is part of the major group of HIV, Group M, I would expect current treatments to work with it," Mary Rodgers, a principal scientist and head of the Global Viral Surveillance Program at Abbott, told AFP. She added that Abbott was making the sequence available to the research community to evaluate its impact on diagnostic testing, treatments and potential vaccines. "In an increasingly connected world, we can no longer think of viruses being contained to one location," added Carole McArthur, a professor of oral and craniofacial sciences at the University of Missouri Kansas City, who co-authored a paper on the finding in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (JAIDS).

The third sample was collected 18 years ago but was difficult to sequence given technical constraints at the time. Abbott said the breakthrough was possible thanks to next-generation sequencing technology that allowed scientists to build up an entire genome at higher speed and lower cost. "This discovery reminds us that to end the HIV pandemic, we must continue to outthink this virus and use the latest advancements in technology and resources to understand its full scope," said Rodgers. — AFP

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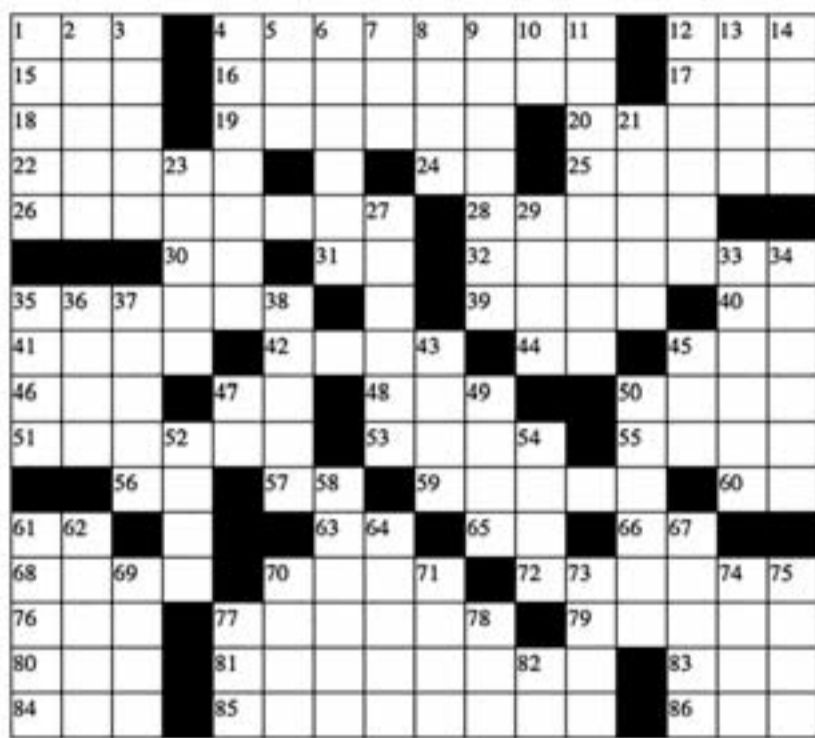
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2356



- ACROSS**
- Hormone released by the hypothalamus that controls the release of thyroid-stimulating hormone from the anterior pituitary.
 - Cut or used for cutting crosswise or across the grain.
 - Small rounded bread either plain or sweet.
 - Any of several imperial dynasties of China ruling from 220 to 265 and from 386 to 556.
 - A tranquilizer (trade name Loxitane) used to treat schizophrenia.
 - A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
 - A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
 - The sodium salt of amobarbital that is used as a barbiturate.
 - A low woody perennial plant usually having several major branches.
 - Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
 - Minor or subordinate.
 - A city in southeastern South Korea.
 - Deciduous shrubs and trees of tropical America having branches like candle-labra and fragrant white or pink flowers.
 - The capital of Cape Verde on Sao Tiago Island.
 - A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
 - Before noon.
 - Devoid of brightness or appeal.
 - A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
 - Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
 - (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
 - A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
 - Be obedient to.
 - The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
 - An American doctorate usually based on at least 3 years graduate study and a dissertation.
 - A former monetary unit in Great Britain.
 - A young eagle.
 - (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
 - According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
 - (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
 - The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
 - Austrian composer who influenced the classical form of the symphony (1732-1809).
 - An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
 - The eleventh month of the civil year.
 - A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
 - A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
 - A public promotion of some product or service.
 - A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
 - Having a woven pattern.
 - Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
 - An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
 - An enclosed space.
 - A substitution of part of speech or gender for number or tense etc. (e.g., editorial 'we' for 'I').
 - A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
 - Large northern deer with enormous flattened antlers in the male.
 - A town in southeastern New Mexico on the Pecos River near the Mexican border.
 - A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- DOWN**
- Someone who is regarded as contemptible.
 - Of or relating to the kidneys.
 - Of or relating to or supporting Hinduism.
 - Loud and clear.
 - (computer science) Memory whose contents can be accessed and read but cannot be changed.
 - Ruddy duck.
 - Be seated.
 - A thrusting blow with a knife.
 - Rare north temperate bog orchid bearing a solitary white to pink flower marked with purple at the tip of an erect reddish stalk above 1 basal leaf.
 - An organization of independent states to promote international peace and security.
 - Capable of being or liable to be subjected to judgment or test.
 - An administrative unit of government.
 - (Sumerian) Sun god.
 - (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
 - A port in northwestern Israel on the Bay of Acre.
 - The capital and largest city of Jordan.
 - Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
 - A principle or condition that customarily governs behavior.
 - An ancient musical horn made from the horn of a ram.
 - West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
 - A Loloish language.
 - An emblem (a small piece of plastic or cloth or metal) that signifies your status (rank or membership or affiliation etc.).
 - The large trunk artery that carries blood from the left ventricle of the heart to branch arteries.
 - The 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
 - A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
 - Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
 - The capital of Bahrain.
 - A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
 - Two items of the same kind.
 - An isogram connecting points having equal barometric pressure at a given time.
 - (neurology) Of or relating to the vagus nerve.
 - European food fish.
 - The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
 - Related to or located at the back.
 - (Babylonian) A goddess of the watery deep and daughter of Ea.
 - A master's degree in library science.
 - In bed.
 - Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
 - God of love and erotic desire.
 - A police officer who investigates crimes.
 - A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
 - A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are concerned with performing your job well and are stable in your ways of moving forward. You resist change and may have trouble getting started with initiating changes, but once on the move you can be unyielding. You may mistrust that which is new or untried. Given time, you will become more confident and trusting as well as understanding. You are a good employee and eventually you will be given more and more responsibility-just be a little more patient with yourself. Listen to your intuition-it is strong and can guide you accurately in making decisions.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Decisions made now may have to be rethought later; take your time with how you think you want to proceed on some project. You are a heavy-duty thinker and serious student, always ready to work an idea through, reducing it to what is essential. You enjoy mental efforts and discipline and will often work long and hard toward any project's end result. Teaching opportunities give you a way to coach others and see the positive results. You enjoy working with other people and may pour a lot of energy into helping those around you. Your home and surroundings reflect this as well. When it comes to educating young people, you are a natural and may be asked to motivate and inspire.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are able to act quickly and get things accomplished fast. You may find people coming to you for those odd jobs that nobody wants and that need to be completed and out of the way. You may like to be depended on in this way but it could cause some stressful moments in getting your own work accomplished. So that others will respect your time, you must learn to politely say no, occasionally. Your organizational abilities and sense of responsibility will be what guides you and proves successful. Your career could assume a much more determined and solid form. You naturally are a giving person, sacrificing your own interests for the sake of what you feel is right. A born psychologist, you may find yourself counseling a friend this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find yourself very appreciative of your own career and practical skills. You might enjoy solving puzzles and technical problems-finding solutions. There is a renewed appreciation for your work that may be apparent to your superiors and to everybody. Put your back into whatever needs accomplishing today. You will be pleased at the outcome of your efforts. Circumstances may stimulate and encourage an appreciation and enjoyment of your life situation. Your system of values may deepen, providing you with a better sense of discrimination and good taste. Purchasing, selecting colors, etc., are easy for you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It may be hard to organize or persevere today. Everything may seem to be falling apart and coming unglued. Do not force things. A little note-taking can bring the plans for the day back into focus. Be patient and let the chaos of others dissolve. It is time to dive into your work now-you seem to shine when it comes to practical matters or those involving work and career. You have an easy way with superiors or those in authority and can always manage to get the most out of any skill or ability you have. You may tend to fear that others find you too sense-oriented from time to time. You radiate energy and have to just accept the fact that people like to feel your warmth. Enjoy the attention you receive from your loved ones this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You enjoy working hard and being organized and you exercise skill and discipline in anything that affects your career and reputation. Today you will enjoy working in the environment where higher-ups show off their independence and originality. You could find yourself engaged in nonconformist causes, always ready to promote what is independent and innovative. You like radical approaches and may find yourself in support of whatever new-wave product or breakthrough advance is next in line. Communication, computers, electronics and everything new excite you and these are the areas in which you excel now. You may discover new ways of working with traditional materials. This is a great time to reflect. Enjoy a walk this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Someone could challenge you on a very sensitive issue this day. This could result in a very intense discussion. You may find yourself analyzing a situation. Too much time spent in serious thought could undermine your progress. Lighten up! Tell some jokes and enjoy the company of others. Soon, you will find the most sensitive issues can be put to rest. You may become very interested in research surrounding life survival, scientific research or what have you. There is a passion for searching, finding out and communicating your discoveries. This may turn out to be a very interesting day with perhaps a renewed appreciation for all that is beautiful and fine. There is a time of meditation when that first sip of wine or a little evening refreshment is quite relaxing.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Things are happening, and your career or path depends upon your own ambition and drive, which can be quite strong now. There could be some discussions over business affairs but a compromise can be reached. Learn better time management by briefly monitoring your use of time. Schedule tasks so that they serve your larger goals and are achievable in time and circumstances. Build some time for breaks and rewards into your schedule. Leave some space for regular and periodic review. Last, but not least, provide time for exercise and relaxation as well as sleep and nourishment.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your ability to work more efficiently with others eventually enables you to achieve even bigger and more encompassing goals. As a good detective or research person, you will find yourself having a passion for answers. Questioning and searching finds you in pursuit of some piece of useful information. It could only be that an accounting problem is solved. You enjoy a game of team sports this afternoon. When you are not involved in sports, create for yourself a regular period of vigorous exercise and then use exercise to drain off tension. This evening you may want to dive into some interesting philosophical ideas with a love partner.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You have a relentless drive to get at the heart of things this Monday, whatever is under the surface or behind the scenes. Your relentless pursuit of anything hidden or secret makes you a researcher or investigator bar none. Emotionally, you are also hot stuff, rushing into areas and handling subject matters that others would never come near. You may not like displays of emotion and pushy people, or at least find them challenging and thought-provoking. There is not much to slow your progress, however, and by this afternoon you are moving forward with your professional activities at full speed ahead.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

The word for today is accomplishment. If there is a job, you can do it. As a prodigious worker, you pour yourself into any task with absolute determination. You are responsible to the extreme and take on obligations as though you just cannot get enough. You enjoy discipline and limitations are seen as opportunities rather than handicaps. Home and family matters can play a big part in your life. Relatives take on greater importance than ever before. You are pleased with the results of your efforts and may busy yourself making new plans with family. This may mean a game of golf, a tennis match, camping, or some other activity.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Take a little trip, or get outside. You may want to break that routine and take a little walking exercise around the area where you work. Sometime today you may discover insights into day-to-day problems that will be of great value later. The encircling networks of friends and co-workers are crucial to your success. You are nourished in great measure by the atmosphere and conditions you are able to set up for yourself. You are happiest this afternoon as you accomplish your chores and improve your surroundings. All that is fine and luxurious may be what you enjoy most. You are very much the creature of habit and habitat as you go about making your own way and finding solutions to whatever problems may come about. Tonight is for romance.

Wordsearch Puzzle

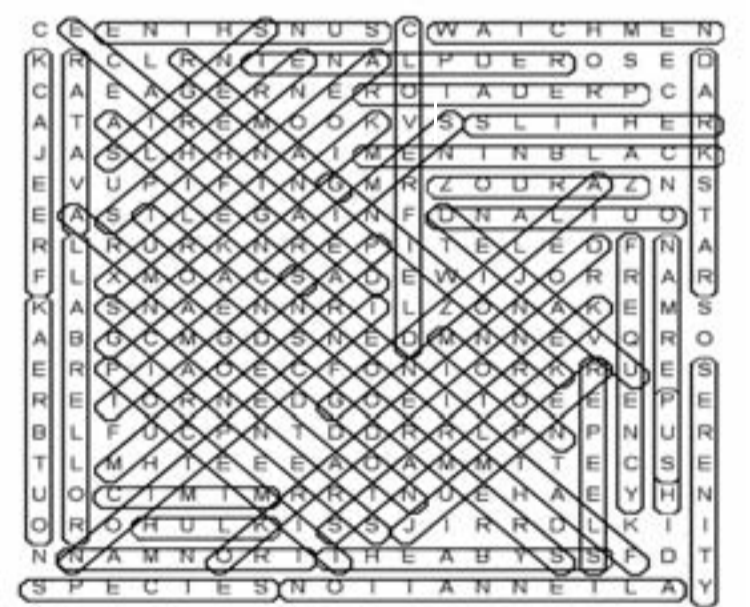
Musical Instruments 1

Find and circle all of the musical instruments that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| ACCORDION | CONGA | HURDY-GURDY | SAZ |
| BAGPIPE | CORNET | LAUTA | STAR |
| BALALAICA | COW BELL | HANDOLA | TARKA |
| BANJO | DIDGERIDOO | MARACAS | TRIANGLE |
| BASS | DRUM | MELODICA | TROMBONE |
| BODHRAN | EUPHONIUM | MIZMAR | UKULELE |
| CABASAS | FLUTE | OBOE | VEENA |
| CELLO | FRENCH HORN | OBID | VIBRAPHONE |
| CHIMES | GUITAR | PENNYWHISTLE | VIOLIN |
| CITTERN | HARP | PICCOLO | XUN |
| CLARINET | | | |

Movies: Science Fiction 2



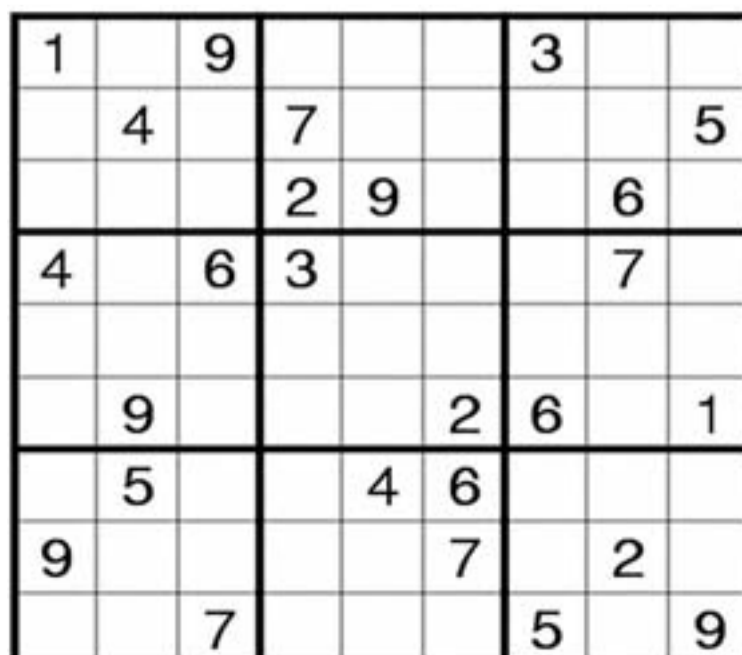
- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| AEON FLUX | FREQUENCY | OUTBREAK | SPECIES |
| ALLEN NATTON | GAMER | OUTLAND | SPHERE |
| ALIENS | GOOZILLA | PANDORUM | STAR TREK |
| ARMAGEDDON | HULK | PREDATOR | SUNSHINE |
| AVATAR | INCEPTION | PUSH | SUPERMAN |
| CLOVERFIELD | IRON MAN | RED PLANET | THE ABYSS |
| DARK STAR | JUMPER | ROLLERSBALL | TIMECOP |
| DEATH RACE | KING KONG | SCANNERS | TIMECRIMES |
| DEJA VU | KNOWING | SERENITY | TRANSFORMERS |
| DOWNHILL RACING | MEN IN BLACK | SLEEPER | WATCHMEN |
| FLATLINERS | MEMIC | ZARDOZ | |
| FREEJACK | MOON | SLITHER | |

Hidden movie: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2019



Indonesian students participate in a carnival to celebrate the country's 74th Independence Day, in Banda Aceh on August 18, 2019. — AFP

CHINA HOTTEST INVESTMENT: EXPENSIVE SNEAKERS



This photo taken on October 26, 2019 shows a man checking a newly-purchased Nike sneaker outside a Nike store in Shanghai.



This photo taken on September 15, 2019 shows sneaker and trainer collector Wang Yue showing off his collection in his home in Shanghai. — AFP photos



People wearing Nike sneakers queuing outside a Nike store to buy the newly-released Nike sneaker in Shanghai.

Forget stocks, real estate, even cryptocurrencies - China's hottest investment nowadays may be the Nike, Adidas, and Puma basketball shoes that "sneakerheads" like Hu Huaiyuan fight to get their hands on. Enthusiasts worldwide have fuelled an expanding bubble in high-priced sneakers, often limited-edition collaborations between big names in sportswear and fashion, rappers or athletes.

But in China the craze is at fever pitch, with devotees driving soaring trading volumes on online "sneaker exchange" platforms, prompting warnings from authorities about dangerous speculation as resale profits approach 5,000 percent. "The sneaker market is no longer just a game for enthusiasts. Speculators are flocking into the business now," said Hu, who travelled 300 kilometers to Shanghai for the chance to buy the latest Nike Air Jordans.

It's the 23-year-old's lucky day. After winning an online lottery for the right to even show up at a Nike store along with around 400 others vying for limited supplies, Hu secured the right to plunk down 1,299 yuan (\$186) for a pair. He plans to quickly "flip" them for double that on a bustling resale market. "If I wasn't so lucky today, it's possible I wouldn't be able to afford the shoes on the secondary market," Hu said.

The craze's appeal owes to two main factors. NBA stars like Michael Jordan have been idolised for years in China, where basketball is arguably the most followed sport, and the associated streetwear culture finds a huge and growing market. And with Chinese authorities limiting individual stock-market price movements to contain volatility, sneakers are embraced by younger investors seeking quick profits in a commodity they can relate to.

Excessive speculation warning

"If selling overpriced sneakers proves so worthwhile, why not take it as a good source of income?" said Hu. The phenomenon is spurring quick growth in Chinese sneaker-trading platforms like Poizon, whose annual volume is around 15 billion yuan, according to Chinese tech consultancy iiMedia Research.

That is more than triple the volume of StockX, a leading US platform. Platforms like Poizon and Nice also have attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in investment from foreign and domestic venture capital, according to Chinese media reports. The global market is taking notice. StockX rival GOAT launched an app-like mini-program on leading Chinese messaging platform WeChat in July. StockX executives say they also are crafting China plans.

The Shanghai branch of the central People's

Bank of China issued a warning last month about the financial risks of excessive sneaker speculation, and government-controlled media portray the phenomenon negatively. That's done little to deter people like Liu Xingfeng, a 23-year-old Chinese student at a university in Australia who collected sneakers as a hobby for years before jumping into it as a business this year.

He now has a loose network of people in the United States and Japan who, for a fee, apply on his behalf in online lotteries for new shoe releases, or queue outside stores. Focusing on only the most sought-after models such as Air

analyst with iiMedia Research. Volumes are chugging along despite a Chinese backlash against the NBA last month, triggered when a Houston Rockets executive tweeted a message supporting Hong Kong protesters.

Fear of government intervention has forced app-based platforms like Poizon and Nice to take various steps to cool excess speculation. Both also employ "sneakerheads" to inspect shoes traded on their platforms to root out counterfeits. Nice's Vice President Sun Qi told AFP only 0.01 percent of sneakers traded via Nice are found to be fake. The commodification of sneaker culture doesn't sit well with every-



A staff member taking photos for customers after they buy the newly-released Nike sneaker.

Jordans or the Adidas Yeezy, a collaboration with American rapper Kanye West, Liu estimates his monthly net profit is 50,000 yuan per month. "The sneaker market hype has benefited me a lot," said Liu. But he actually avoids China's market due to the stiff competition. "There are too many people queuing in China. Not enough shoes."

'Daily necessity'

According to data-mining company iiMedia research, China's secondary market for sneakers has passed \$1 billion this year and is one of the fastest-growing components of a \$6 billion global market led by the United States. "The stock market is risky and the property market is frothy, so investors are switching to speculation in the consumer sector," said Zhang Yi, chief

one. Wang Yue, 21, considers himself a sneaker purist, and one look at his Shanghai flat confirms it.

The tiny apartment is stacked to the ceiling with boxes of more than 200 pairs of sneakers that he estimates are worth hundreds of thousands of yuan. A basketball fanatic, sneakers are a "daily necessity" to Wang, who lavishes attention on them, including physically sucking the air out of bags containing the shoes to protect them in a sort of DIY vacuum-seal. Today's soaring prices are a nuisance. "I'm really annoyed that I have to pay more for a normal pair of basketball shoes now," he said. — AFP



Kelly Brook says her 30s were 'quite bad'

The model felt she put "a lot of pressure" on herself in all aspects of her life and things only spiraled more when she felt like everything was "failing". She said: "I breezed through my 20s and had loads of amazing experiences, but I feel my 30s ... they were quite bad. I put a lot of pressure on myself in my career, in my relationships and ... I don't know, sometimes it was like banging my head against a brick wall. I didn't feel like things worked out particularly well. It felt like everything I started failed. I was sacked from big TV shows and I'd be caught in these really turbulent relationships with boyfriends. And I wasn't able to manage those relationships very well because I was always on a plane between here and Los Angeles. I tried to juggle so much and I think the anxiety and stress of always being on the go kept my weight down."

And the 39-year-old star is grateful for her tough few years when she first started out in the industry as they have shaped her life now and made her a lot happier. Speaking about her early career, she added to The Sun on Sunday's Fabulous magazine: "She was vulnerable and naive going into this industry with no idea about the impact it was going to have on her life and her family. I don't even feel like that was me because I've learned so much since then. I think people just wanted to write me off. "They didn't want me to succeed and did everything they could to make me fail. It was pure sabotage for so many years. But I'm stronger now and I can put that negativity to bed by having a happy, healthy life. It's taken a long time to get there but I'm here."

Miley Cyrus has undergone vocal chord surgery

The 'Wrecking Ball' singer is said to have had the procedure recently and is recovering well, after an issue with her vocal chords was discovered when she was hospitalized for tonsillitis last month. A source told People magazine: "She is doing great and will be back and better than ever early next year." Miley was previously put on "vocal rest" after her hospital stay. Sharing a video of herself working out, she captioned it at the time: "On vocal rest not body." Miley's hospitalization came after an intense few weeks for the 'Malibu' hitmaker, who recently announced her split from her estranged husband Liam Hemsworth, as well as dating and breaking up with Kaitlynn Carter. And the 'Slide Away' singer recently slammed critics who claim she's moving on too quickly from 29-year-old Liam. She wrote on social media last week: "I know the public feels invested in my past relationship because they felt like they saw it thru from the beginning. I think that's why people have always felt so entitled over my life and how I live it because they've watched me grow up. "I am grown now and make choices as an adult knowing the truth/details/reality. People only 'know' what they see on the internet. [Men], they move on from one beautiful young woman to the next MOST times without consequence ... I am trying to just THRIVE/survive in a 'mans' world. If we can't beat em, join em! (sic)"



Stella McCartney wants to make veganism 'cool and sexy'

The fashion designer credits her late mother Linda McCartney for encouraging more people to turn to vegetarian food but she thinks the secret to its wider success is "educating" people and making it more accessible. She said: "She put veggie food in the frozen aisle and she made it affordable. If we want people to go veggie, we need to educate them. We need to inspire them, make it look sexy, make it look cool, and make it accessible." And her father Sir Paul McCartney says small changes have big consequences. He added to The Sunday Times magazine: "When we started Meat Free Monday, the idea was this is doable, so let's hope people can do this. If you look at the period between then and now ... it's on fire! If people start to do it on a small scale, they miss meat one day, then find that it's a bit more affordable, and they learn from it." Meanwhile, Stella previously urged the fashion industry to come together and make "systemic, sustainable changes". She wrote in an open letter: "The fashion industry is at a crossroads, and I believe that this is a moment for us to come together to achieve systemic, sustainable change in our industry. The fashion industry is one of the most polluting and damaging industries in the world. Every single second, the equivalent of one rubbish truck of textiles is sent to landfill or burnt. "The fashion industry accounts for more than a third of ocean microplastics, while textile dyeing is the second largest polluter of clean water globally. If nothing changes, by 2050 the fashion industry will be using up to a quarter of the world's carbon budget. This way of working is not sustainable. The world is crying out for change, and it is our responsibility to act now ... The science is clear, and we need to do more than just incremental shifts: keeping business as usual is no longer an option."



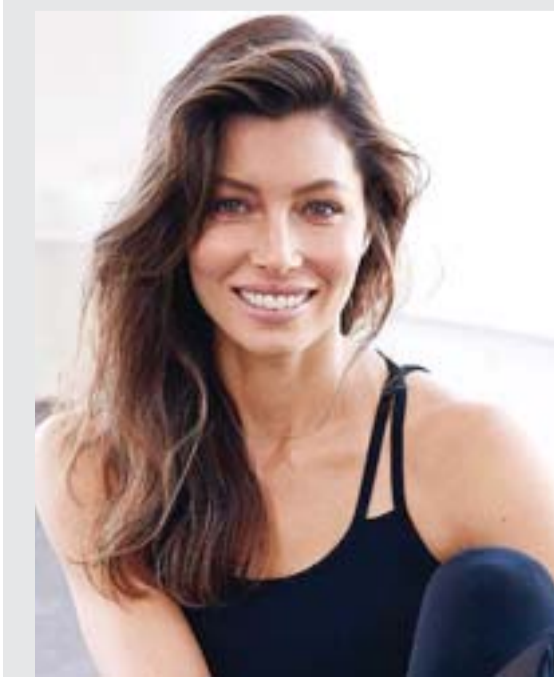
Charlize Theron says acting is a 'gift'



The 'Long Shot' star was honoured at the 33rd Annual American Cinematheque Awards and she admitted she feels overwhelmed that she gets to work in the film industry as part of her longstanding career. Speaking to Entertainment Tonight after being awarded the American Cinematheque Award, which is given to those who are making a significant contribution to the acting world, she said: "The job is such a gift. The fact that I get to do this. Things like tonight really makes you reflect on the journey and how you got here and everything that you've experienced and fought for. The amount of hard work that you put into it, but also the generosity of so many lovely people, and I feel really overwhelmed. I feel deeply overwhelmed by all of it ... "And I'm just trying not to mess my makeup up too soon. I want to at least look pretty for a little bit before I start ugly crying." It's been a fantastic week for the 44-year-old actress, who also picked up the Hollywood Career Achievement Award at the Hollywood Film Awards. Asked what her favorite movie was, she said: "I mean, it's hard - they really are like your children. But I think 'Monster' was definitely a moment in my career where I realized the opportunity that I was given was a chance to show that I was capable of more and it did change my career. After that, I didn't have to fight so hard for those interesting parts anymore, and more opportunities came my way to get outside of my comfort zone and do things that were maybe not expected for me. I think from that moment on, I built a career that has kind of defined what I really wanted my career to be - not typecast, not stereotypical roles, but to really do things that are interesting and challenges the psyche of how we look at people."

Jessica Biel wants to have more children

The 'Valentine's Day' star has a son, Silas, four, with husband Justin but she is up for expanding their family and thinks it would be "great" if they had more babies. In an interview with OK! magazine, Jessica said: "Babies are crazy and hectic. But, yeah. I think if it happened to us, it would be great." The 37-year-old actress joked that she and the 'Mirrors' hitmaker are "working on" having another child, and having fun doing it. She said: "I mean, we're working on it. We're having a good time. You're making me blush!" Jessica also opened up about Silas, who is named after Justin's grandfather, revealing the youngster has inherited many of his pop star father's traits. She said: "Well, he's a very good DJ. I guess you could say he's musician adjacent. He's very funny, which is very much like Justin. It's scary not only does he get the joke but he makes the joke. We're at the part of life, which is very funny." Jessica also revealed that Silas is an "old man trapped in a little body", despite not yet reaching his fifth birthday. She said: "I took away his iPad and his life was ruined. He's an old man trapped in a little body. He's been here before, I think." Jessica first started dating Justin, 38, in January 2007 and they eventually wed in October 2012 and after being with him for 12 years she can still remember the first moment that she him. She recalled: "We'd been introduced by a friend who said, 'Oh, you guys would love hanging out. You should go to this party that Justin is throwing for a friend of his.' And so I went with some girlfriends and my family and that was where we really started to get to know each other. "After that, we went to the Golden Globes a few months later and we were excited to see each other again. We were both presenting that year, so we said 'Hi' backstage."



Eva Mendes is rediscovering her 'ambition'

The 'Place Beyond the Pines' actress - who has daughters Esmeralda, five, and Amada, three, with partner Ryan Gosling - is feeling the "call to work" again now her children are getting older and her focus is shifting outside of their home. She told People magazine: "They're starting school and so I'm feeling like I finally have a little time to myself. But also, I'm starting to find that ambition again that I lost a little bit. "I was fine with losing it, it was a natural thing, but it transferred - the ambition was in the home. "I'm still in the home, but I'm getting more of that call to work again. That's exciting because it's happening naturally. It's exciting to feel that again." In April 2016, the 45-year-old actress' older brother, Carlos Mendez, sadly died of cancer and Eva will always be grateful that she gave birth to her second child shortly afterwards because it gave her a reason to "move forward". She said: "It's so tough. Thank God I had my baby; it was a week after he passed. So there was something to move forward. There was poetry to it all." The 'Lost River' star wants to honor her brother by sticking with his festive traditions, even if she doesn't think she can "roast" people the way he could. She said: "My favorite memories are when he used to, at Thanksgiving or a big dinner or Christmas dinner, roast everybody - but roast you hard. "Of course, I miss him incredibly, and that's an understatement, but I'm holding on to that tradition. I'm so happy that he gave me that. I don't think I could carry it on the way he did, but those are some fun memories because he would really get raw." — Bangshowbiz



Dream Kardashian celebrated her third birthday

The little girl was joined by her father Rob Kardashian as well as her aunts Khloe Kardashian and Kim Kardashian West and their respective children, True, and Kim's youngest kids Chicago and Psalm. The event was documented on social media and Dream - who wore an adorable pink dress - was overjoyed with her Trolls-themed birthday cake. Even Rob was spotted in the videos posted online, proving further the claims that he wants to be "out and about" following his lifestyle changes. A source said: "Lately, he has been trying to work out more and be healthier. Right away, it makes him feel better about himself. He wants to be out and about ... He enjoyed celebrating Halloween with his family and friends. Hopefully he can keep up with the workouts and continue to feel better about himself. Everyone wants him to have a more extroverted lifestyle." But the source says it hasn't been easy for Rob to get to where he is now, after he first began gaining weight in 2016. The insider added: "Rob has been having ups and downs for years. It's been a sad situation, mostly because he disconnects from the world because he doesn't feel well mentally. His weight gain has long been a struggle. It makes him miserable. A few years ago, he got to the point where he had gained too much weight for it to easily come off. It takes a lot of work and effort to get all that weight off. And it's been a huge, mental challenge for him ... He is motivated and happier than he has been in a long time."

Lifestyle | Gossip



Robbie Williams thinks social media would ruin career

The 'Angels' hitmaker - who has Teddy, seven, Charlie, four, and Coco, 14 months with wife Ayda Field - won't let his management team give him the password to Twitter because he can be aggressive and angry. Robbie recalled how a new staff member recently gave him the password and he embarked on a 48-hour tweeting spree. He said: "I became engulfed with resentment and anger and shame and fear and all those things. Then I was on a plane to Majorca and I phoned my manager and said, 'I've found my password - change it and don't give me the new one.' "He said, 'Oh no, what have you done?' and I said, 'Just do it. I'm one tweet away from a career-ender. "Because

in anger I can be quite creative and my aggression would serve me badly. "There would be people who were showing their disdain. And I'd go and find them and show my disdain back. And then I'd turn into a self-lacerating hate machine." The 45-year-old star feels "drawn" to find negative comments about himself. He told the Daily Telegraph magazine: "I don't understand why I'm drawn like a magnet to try and find out why my deepest fears about myself are true. It's as if I constantly need to bolster the self-hatred. "But it just becomes part of your daily routine: cup of tea, go for a wee, hate yourself. "It's nice that [good things] are there, but they don't affect me as much as the hate." Robbie also warned about the dan-

ger of "shaming" people in public, pointing to the recent row in which Coleen Rooney claimed personal stories about her had been leaked via Rebekah Vardy's Instagram account. He said: "There was a dramatic over-correction. Let's say Rebekah Vardy was guilty - which we don't know. How she will feel inside right now is 10 times worse than how Coleen Rooney would have felt when those things were happening to her. It's a dangerous game to play."

Will Smith wants to raise awareness for colonoscopies

The 51-year-old actor posted a 17-minute long video to his YouTube channel, in which he went through the process of having his first ever colonoscopy, and discovered he has been living with a polyp, which is a precancerous lesion. In the video, Will explained that he thought the idea of filming his colonoscopy would make for a funny video, but the trip turned out to be crucial for his health, as doctors were able to remove the polyp before it had the chance to progress into cancer. His physician, Doctor Ala Stanford, told him in the video: "The results came back that it was a tubular adenoma which is precancer tissues. Ninety-five percent of colon cancers arise from that type of polyp that was in your colon. "We know that screening and early detection saves lives. Even early detection of cancer can prolong your life and your livelihood if you catch it early. "Had you not known, [the polyp] continues to grow and grow and grow. And African American men, in particular, the right colon is where cancer is high ... You would've had fewer typical symptoms. And by the time you presented, it could be full-blown and spread throughout your body." Since finding the polyp, doctors have told the 'Aladdin' star he will need to have a colonoscopy more frequently than others. His doctor added: "Instead of getting a screening every 10 years, you need to get yours done in the next two to three years." And whilst the results were scary for Will to hear, he's thankful he can now help raise awareness for the important check, as it could help to save lives. In his video, he said: "You know, when I decided I wanted to shoot this as a vlog, it was much more, 'Hey, this will be cool. This will be fun.' I didn't realize that there would be a precancerous polyp that would get found out of it."



Courtney Cox is inspired by 'Friends' co-star

The 55-year-old actress - who played Monica Geller in the hit US sitcom - and Lisa Kudrow (Phoebe Buffay) accompanied Jennifer (Rachel Green) to the 2019 SAG-AFTRA Foundation's Patron of the Artists Awards on Thursday night (07.11.19) in Beverly Hills, where she was honored with two Artists Inspiration Awards. Speaking after the star-studded ceremony, Courtney gushed: "She inspires me every day. She is incredible. "[I'm] just so happy to be here to support her." Meanwhile, Courtney recently reunited with their other co-star Matthew Perry - who played her on-screen husband Chandler Bing - this week and shared a picture of them at lunch on her Instagram page. She captioned the selfie: "Guess who I had lunch with today....I KNOW!! Could I BE

any happier? #realfriends (sic)" And Jennifer quipped on the red carpet that she didn't get an invite. Asked about the picture, the 50-year-old star joked to 'Entertainment Tonight': "I know! How come we don't get invited to that?" During one of her acceptance speeches, Jennifer recalled her debut acting role in a commercial for the restaurant chain Bob's Big Boy, and how it "changed [her] life forever" as she was accepted into the SAG-AFTRA union. She told the audience - which included Leonardo Di Caprio and Paul Rudd - at the bash: "I played the waitress at the tacky competitor serving up fast seafood, which is two things that should never ever go together."



St Vincent's ideas of love have changed

The 37-year-old singer - who previously dated Cara Delevingne for two years and was later romantically linked with Kristen Stewart - used to believe the emotion was a "manic dance" but doesn't think like that "any more". Asked what love feels like, she said: "I used to think it was the manic dance of desire and need, of want and have, of possessed and dispossessed. I don't think that anymore." The 'Los Ageless' singer - whose real name is Annie Clark - admitted she finds it hard to relax, but when she does get some free time, her guilty pleasure is tuning into UFC bouts. She admitted to The Guardian newspaper: "I love Ultimate Fighting Championship. When truth is putty and all things seem up for sale, I like that two athletes can get in a ring, and whoever has worked harder, has more grit, and wants it

more, wins." St. Vincent was left terrified after landing in Texas after a flight and realizing her bag was with police - and she'd left an old batch of magic mushrooms inside. She recalled: "I landed in Texas with some long-expired magic mushrooms in my checked bag that I'd forgotten about. My bag didn't appear at the baggage claim and, when I went to retrieve it, it was in a sectioned off area with a police officer and a German shepherd waiting. "I was walked towards them thinking, 'These are my last few breaths of freedom: it has been a good ride: tell Mama I love her.' "When I reached to grab my bag, the officer and dog moved toward me... and then past me and continued their sweep."

Kesha doesn't want to be seen as a 'tragedy'

The 'Tik Tok' hitmaker took a long break from her career while she was locked in a legal battle with Dr. Luke in a failed bid to get out of her recording contract with him after she accused him of drugging and raping her, but she doesn't want to be "defined" by what she alleged happened to her at the hands of the producer. Kesha - who has also spoken of suffering from an eating disorder - said: "I don't feel as if I'm beholden to be a tragedy just because I've gone through something that was tragic. "That's really important for people to know - you do not have to be defined by something that was done to you." The 32-year-old singer is trying not to dwell on the past and thinks she has "earned" her happiness. She told The Guardian newspaper: "I truly feel like I've been through the s**t and I have earned my happiness back. "I have God only knows the amount of therapy bills and meditation apps and transcendental meditation retreats." At the 2018 Grammy awards, Kesha performed an emotional

rendition of her song 'Praying' backed by a host of female stars including Cyndi Lauper and Camila Cabello and she admitted she was "terrified" ahead of the performance, but only because she knew it was so "important". She recalled: "[I remember] getting a giant hug from all these people that the media had previously pitted against each other. It was us saying no... "It's interesting because I was putting a very traumatic experience on display, but it was something I consented to. I was also terrified. But if something terrifies me, I feel like it may be important. Even if it sounds like utter hell and I just weep on the microphone, at least I tried." Kesha is saddened by the #MeToo movement and has no idea if things are different for younger starlets. She said: "That enough people have been assaulted and treated poorly that there has to be an entire movement... "You never really know what's going on behind the scenes. Because for a long period, people had no idea what was going on behind the scenes with me."



NICK JONAS IS PLANNING A 'SURPRISE' FOR ANNIVERSARY

The 'Sucker' singer will celebrate a year to the day he and the 'Quantico' actress tied the knot on 1 December and he's planning to take some time off work to be with his wife, though he won't reveal what he's got planned. He told 'Entertainment Tonight': "Well, I don't wanna say what we're doing to celebrate because it's a surprise for her, and she might be watching. And if she is, then I wouldn't want the surprise to be spoiled. "We will be taking a few days away from the tour to have some time." The couple

have had the "craziest" year of their lives since tying the knot but are grateful to have one another. He said: "It's been a crazy year. It's flown by, it's hard to believe it... "This year's been, for me and I both, probably the craziest of our lives, but kind of nice to have that centering grounding feeling with each other." Although the 27-year-old hunk had only been dating Priyanka for months before they married, they had no problems settling into life as husband and wife. He said: "I think we settled into our roles as husband and wife fairly quickly. "A lot of our friends always said that it seemed like we were supposed to be together, so it feels natural. There are natural adjustments when your life is becoming one together, but it's been a beautiful year." The only thing Nick would change in their relationship is having more time to spend with one another. He said: "Hopefully next year we have a bit more time to be in the same place, but being busy is not bad either." The new 'Voice' coach insisted he and the 37-year-old actress don't have any relationship "rules" but simply try to do their best to juggle their schedules and support one another. He said: "The good news is that we both really enjoy talking to each other, which I think is probably pretty important if you married somebody. "There aren't as many rules for, like, how long we can go and things like that. I think we just... We'd always just do the best we can and understand first and foremost we love what we do as well and support each other as well." — Bangshowbiz



Olivia Colman 'can't remember' the Oscars

The 45-year-old star won Best Actress at the 2019 Academy Awards for her role in 'The Favourite' and although it was a high point of her career, she has very little memory of the evening because she was in the bar getting "bladdered" for most of it. She said: "I actually can't remember it. The great thing about the Oscars is there is a bar just behind (the auditorium) so everyone is there. There are hundreds of seat fillers so almost everybody is in the bar getting bladdered!" The 'Broadchurch' actress is returning to the small screen as Queen Elizabeth in series three of 'The Crown' and though she did little to prepare for the regal role, producers had to enlist a movement coach to teach her to walk more gracefully. Appearing on 'The Graham Norton Show' alongside her co-star Helena Bonham-Carter, she said: "I did nothing, though I did have a movement coach, but still I walked like me, or rather like a farmer!"

Helena said: "I do everything to prepare and Olivia does nothing, and she ends up being completely brilliant." The two actresses had a great time working on the Netflix drama. Helena said: "It really is fun. We've been together for so long, but we still like each other." After landing her role as the queen, Olivia met Prince William and though he was "very charming and lovely", the actress was disappointed to learn he doesn't watch the show, which is based on the life of his grandparents, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. Asked if she'd met any royals since getting the role, she said: "Yes, but it didn't go very well. I met Prince William at a dinner and he asked what I was doing at the moment before he quickly added, 'Actually, I know what you're doing'. "I was so excited and asked, 'Have you watched it?' His answer was a firm, 'No.' But he was very charming and very lovely."



Lifestyle | Features



Iraqi artists put the final touches on mural paintings representing anti-government protesters covering their faces with masks in central Baghdad. — AFP photos

Young Iraqi artists paint revolutionary road

Taking vibrant spray paint to Baghdad's grimy concrete walls, Iraqi artists protesting against the government — many of them young and female — are sketching out their vision for a brighter future. In plastic gloves covered in paint smudges, 20-year-old Fatima Hussam commands a team of artists-cum-activists producing today's fresco.

Their murals have transformed a monochrome tunnel leading into the main protest camp in Tahrir (Liberation) Square into a revolutionary art gallery. "We have plenty of artists in this country but nowhere they can express their art, so we decided to use Tahrir for an art revolution in addition to a national revolution," says Hussam, her white veil covered in pink flowers.

Among her works is a version of World War II-era feminist icon "Rosie the Riveter," now with an Iraqi flag painted on her cheek and announcing in speech bubble: "This is what our women are like!" Iraq, where

around 60 percent of its 40 million people are below 25, remains a largely conservative country. Baghdad is more open-minded than the tribal south, where it is rare to see women interact with men who are not their relatives or spouses.

But protests in the capital and Shiite-majority southern provinces have seen women break the taboo, joining thousands of demonstrators en masse to demand regime change. Hussam has joined them this week, with her older brother cautiously but proudly looking on as she paints. Her latest is an ode to fellow women taking part: a veiled woman holding a sign bearing one of the popular uprising's many slogans: "I want my country."

'Joy and colors'

Such slogans are 23-year-old Mohammad Abdelwahab's inspiration. The young artist takes a brush daubed in white paint to a large black background in the tunnel, inscribing popular protest chants into the shape of a

map of Iraq. "We are the generation of change — change for the better!" says Abdelwahab. Dozens of other young artists are working on their own pieces. One mural shows the three-wheeled rickshaw known as a tuk-tuk, now a beloved symbol of the protest movement for its role in ferrying wounded demonstrators to safety.

Another displays the word "LOVE" spelled out by bloodstained hands — a testimony, the artist says, to those who have died facing off against security forces. Nearly 300 people have died since the protests first erupted on October 1, according to an AFP tally. Half of them lost their lives in an initial six-day wave of protests in early October, and the rest in deadly clashes with security forces or in fires set to party offices since rallies resumed on October 24.

Authorities have acknowledged the protests but say that "infiltrators" embedded in them are looking to plunge the country back into instability. Iraq has only recently

emerged from decades of back-to-back conflict, including a 1980s war with Iran, the US-led invasion in 2003 and a battle against the Islamic State group that ended in late 2017. Abdelwahab says the protest movement is about the next phase of Iraq's future. "We're not here to attack the state. We want to bring it joy and colors," he insists.

A growing underground

Mission accomplished, says 38-year-old Mohammad Abbas. "In 16 years, I've never seen this place so beautiful. Our country really needed this," marvels Abbas, who has driven down the same tunnel to get to work for years. "Usually, the walls are dirty and black," he says. Baghdad, a sprawling city of nearly 10 million inhabitants, is usually choked off by traffic, smog and checkpoints. "Young people were able to achieve what the state hasn't been able to do while spending billions on Baghdad," says Abbas, on his way to more swelling protests above ground.

Oil-rich Iraq is OPEC's second biggest producer, but one in five people live in poverty and youth unemployment stands at 25 percent, according to the World Bank. Public services including electricity, water provision and street maintenance are poor, and the country is ranked the 12th most corrupt worldwide by Transparency International. But the art developing underneath Tahrir is not just visual. Every afternoon, musicians bring their clarinets and flutes for impromptu concerts, as woodworkers sell key chains and other statuettes immortalizing the tuk-tuk. "With few means, these artists send a peaceful message to the world," says Ibrahim, 39, a bypasser. Through them, he says, "we're telling the world that the Iraqi people are alive and well." — AFP



The Huawei Watch GT 2 has got 200 smart ideas

Sleep is often an overlooked part of our lives, but it is essential to healthy living. Moreover, healthy living is an important factor that impacts sleep quality — the two go hand in hand. A study has shown that a two-week drop in physical exercise can decrease sleep quality. These insights are part of the driving force behind the innovations that power the new HUAWEI WATCH GT 2. The underlying philosophy is simple — people should sleep scientifically. Here's how the latest innovations from Huawei help make this vision a reality.

Record your complete sleep patterns

The secret behind what makes the HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 so useful is its ultra-long, two-week battery life. This allows wearers to continue wearing the watch even in their sleep, rather than remove it to recharge every night. Using a proprietary technology, the HUAWEI TruSleep(tm) 2.0, the watch can now monitor many important features of sleep, collecting rich data and analyzing it to provide a rare glimpse into your sleeping patterns.

In addition to measuring sleep quality, the HUAWEI TruSleep(tm) 2.0 feature also provides real-time heart rate monitoring, sleep breathing quality, and big data analysis to score sleep quality. The real magic, however, can be experienced when the HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 combines this data with Huawei AI technology. Using the HUAWEI TruSleep 2.0 feature, the watch identifies six common sleeping challenges, such as difficulty falling asleep, shallow sleep, light sleeping during the night, early waking, multiple dreams, and irregular work schedule.

Improve sleep quality with hundreds of ideas

Best of all, the HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 provides hundreds of suggestions for improving sleep, such as meditation, deep sleep guidance exercises, and quick relaxation guidance exercises. In addition, eight sleep reports are offered to give a comprehensive overview of several crucial sleep measurements. These reports include nighttime sleep duration, deep sleep ratio, shallow sleep ratio, rapid eye movement ratio, deep sleep continuity, awake times, respiratory quality, comprehensive sleep monitoring and analysis, and sleep recommendations. With these reports and suggestions, the wearer is armed with the necessary information to improve sleep quality.

Sleep as seriously as you train

The HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 is able to deliver all of this innovation thanks to Huawei's first self-developed Kirin A1 chipset for wearables. The specially designed chip brings ultra-low power consumption and improved performance, delivering a smart watch which can operate for up to two weeks on a single charge. This means that the chip which powers the high-endurance performance for sports also delivers the tools which can help wearers recuperate from their activities. Ultimately, the HUAWEI WATCH GT 2 helps wearers plan, execute, and revise both sport and sleep performance to drive a healthier and happier life.

Polanski weighing legal riposte after latest rape claim

Roman Polanski may sue the French newspaper that published accusations he raped a former actress in the 1970s, his lawyer said yesterday, as he comes under renewed fire over the latest claim of sexual assault to emerge against the Oscar-winning director in recent years. France's author and director guild could meet soon on whether to exclude the French-Polish star, its vice-president told Le Parisien newspaper, which published the allegations Friday.

Valentine Monnier, a photographer and former actress, recounted an "extremely violent" assault and rape by Polanski at his chalet in the Swiss ski resort of Gstaad in 1975, when she was 18. Monnier said he tried to make her swallow a pill during the attack, and later made a tearful apology while demanding a promise that she never tell anyone. "I thought I was going to die," she said in an open letter published by Le Parisien, which also interviewed her and said it had contacted witnesses who confirmed the account.

Monnier is the first Frenchwoman to level charges of sexual assault against Polanski, whose new film, "An Officer and a Spy", comes out in France under the title "J'accuse" on Wednesday. "Mr Polanski disputes in the strongest terms this rape accusation," his lawyer Herve Temime said in a statement. "We are working on the legal action to bring against this publication," he added.

Pressure mounts

Monnier's claims have rocked a French film industry already reeling after a top actress last week accused the director of her first film of sexually harassing her when she was just 12. Adele Haenel, whose account has garnered an outpouring of support, on Saturday urged others to speak out in support of Monnier and "take notice of her story". The allegations may prove a turning point for French cinema, where the MeToo movement against rape and sexual assault that rocked Hollywood has not prompted as deep a reckoning of abuses in the industry.

Broadcaster TF1 confirmed Sunday that the star of Polanski's new film, Jean Dujardin, had cancelled a prime-time interview set for Sunday night. The Dutch-Belgian actress Sand Van Roy, who has accused French director Luc Besson of rape in a case under investigation, tweeted that she believed Monnier's graphic account. Monnier wrote that Polanski "pummeled me until I gave in and then raped me, making me do all sorts of things".



French Polish director Roman Polanski (L), flanked by French actor Jean Dujardin (C), French actor Louis Garrel (R) and French actress Emmanuelle Seigner (2R), speaks on stage after the preview of his last movie "J'accuse" (An Officer and a Spy) in Paris. — AFP

She had previously written to France's first lady Brigitte Macron, who forwarded them to France's equality minister Marlene Schiappa, who has pushed for new measures to combat sexual abuse. Schiappa wrote to Monnier in March last year and hailed her courage "in daring to break the silence," while reiterating that the alleged attack was beyond France's statutes of limitations for prosecution.

'Criminal past'

Monnier, who acted in a few films in the 1980s, said the release of Polanski's film, about one of the most notorious errors of justice in French history, the Dreyfus affair, had prompted her to speak out. "How could he benefit from public funds to instrumentalist history, and in doing so rewrite his own to cover up his criminal past," she wrote.

Polanski was first accused of rape by the mother of American Samantha Geimer, who was 13 when she was drugged at the home of film star Jack Nicholson in Los Angeles in 1977. In 2010, British actress Charlotte Lewis accused him of "sexually abusing" her in 1983 when she was 16. Another woman, identified only as Robin, accused him in August 2017 of sexual assault when she was 16 in 1973. The next month, former actress Renate Langer filed a new complaint alleging she was raped by Polanski in 1972 when she was 15.

And then in October 2017, California artist Marianne Barnard accused him of sexually assaulting her in 1975 after asking her to pose naked when she was just 10 years old. The claims, all denied by Polanski, nevertheless forced him to abandon the presidency of the 2017 Cesars, the French equivalent of the Oscars. Although awarded the 2003 Best Director Oscar for "The Pianist", Polanski was expelled from the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2018. — AFP

Queen's former press secretary fumes at 'The Crown'

Queen Elizabeth II's former press secretary is not amused. Dickie Arbiter told The Sunday Times that the new series of "The Crown" history drama on Netflix was inappropriately hinting at an early romance between the monarch and her horse racing manager. "This is distasteful and totally unfounded," Arbiter fumed. "The queen is the last person in the world to have considered looking at another man." The 93-year-old

queen fell in love and married Prince Philip in 1947. She was only 21 at the time and still five years away from ascending to the throne.

She is played in the Netflix series by Britain's 2019 Oscar-winning actress Olivia Colman. The disputed episode is due to be released next Sunday. The Sunday Times said it shows the queen spending a month visiting stud farms in the United States and Australia with Lord

Porchester — a horse racing manager she calls "Porchie". Prince Philip becomes suspicious and the two exchange words. "If you have something to say, say it now," the queen tells her prince in the episode. "Otherwise, if you don't mind, I'm busy." Prince Philip apparently decides to leave things at that and say no more.

The Sunday Times wrote that the queen "remained close to Porchie until his death in 2001". But it also stressed that

there is no evidence to imply they were more than friends. "The Crown" is fiction," her former press secretary pointed out. "No one knows any conversation between members of the royal family, but people will tell the story they want to and sensationalise it." Buckingham Palace did not comment. — AFP



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II looks on from a balcony as she attends the Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph on Whitehall in central London. — AFP

Classifieds

Monday, November 11, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Relatively hot with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 10/11/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	31 °C	21 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	31 °C	15 °C		
ABDALY	31 °C	15 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	31 °C	18 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	29 °C	23 °C		
AHMADI	29 °C	23 °C		
NUWAISIB	28 °C	19 °C		
WAFRA	31 °C	17 °C		
SALMY	31 °C	20 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	11/11	Mostly Sunny	31 °C	15 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Tuesday	11/12	Mostly Sunny	31 °C	14 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 26 km/h
Wednesday	11/13	Sunny	31 °C	14 °C	VRB-S	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	11/14	Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered rain	31 °C	14 °C	SW-SE	10 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:46
Sunrise	06:07
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:35
Sunset	16:56
Isha	18:15

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	31 °C
MIN. Temp.	16 °C
MAX. RH	53 %
MIN. RH	18 %
MAX. Wind	NW 18 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

REQUIRED FOR AHMADI GATE RESTAURANT IN AHMADI

AG

- ORDER TAKER
- HEAD CHEF
- INDIAN LINE COOK
- CHINESE CHEF
- CHINESE LINE COOK
- TANDOOR CHEF
- CONTINENTAL COOK
- KITCHEN STEWARDS
- WAITERS

Preference for candidates fluent in English & Arabic speaking. New Visa can be given if required. Good salary with profit sharing system based on good experience. Interested candidates can contact Mr. Talat on his Mobile No. 99765183. Can send CV's to fax No:- 23981916. E-mail :- talat@saharoac.com

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	224256700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516

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

Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

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

UAE calls for Iran talks, says Houthis have role in Yemen

ABU DHABI: A top UAE official yesterday said Arab Gulf states should take part in "collective diplomacy" to reach an agreement with Iran amid increased tensions between Washington and Tehran. UAE state minister of foreign affairs Anwar Gargash's statements come following a string of attacks that Washington and its allies blamed on Tehran. Iran denies the allegations. Animosity between the Islamic republic and the United States has soared since President Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned a landmark 2015 nuclear accord with Iran and reimposed crippling US sanctions.

"When it comes to dealing with Iran, we should not fall for the false choice between war on the one hand or a flawed (nuclear deal) on the other," Gargash said. "This moment requires a renewed, robust and realistic diplomatic effort to reach a more sustainable agreement," Gargash told a political conference in Abu Dhabi. Gargash said escalation serves no one. "We strongly believe that there is room for collective diplomacy to succeed," he said, adding that talks with Iran should involve the international community as well as Arab Gulf states.

"Gulf states would need to be at the negotiating table," he said. A "meaningful political process" was needed, he said. "For such a process to work, it is essential that the international community is on the same page, especially the US and the EU, as well as the Arab Gulf states." A US-led naval coalition officially launched operations in Bahrain Thursday to protect shipping in the troubled waters of the Gulf after a string of attacks that Washington and its allies blamed on Iran. The latest attack was on Sept 14 against two key Saudi oil installation that temporarily knocked out half of the kingdom's production. Iran denied any involvement in the attacks which were claimed by the Tehran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. The UAE is part of a Saudi-led coalition battling the Houthis in Yemen.

Gargash also said the Houthi rebels will have a role in their country's future, voicing optimism that a recent peace deal between the government and southern separatists could lead to a wider solution. The comments were the lat-

est conciliatory move in the long-running Yemen conflict, after the Iran-backed Houthis offered in September to halt attacks on Saudi Arabia.

Gargash urged all sides to maintain momentum for a political solution. "Such an agreement must take account of the legitimate aspirations of all parts of Yemeni society. That includes the Houthis," Gargash said at the political conference. "Houthi militias have wreaked havoc on the country, but they are a part of Yemeni society and they will have a role in its future."

The Houthi rebels have been fighting the internationally recognized government and its allies for more than four years in a war that has pushed the country to the brink of famine. But Gargash said he was hopeful that a power-sharing deal between the government and the secessionist Southern Transitional Council, inked in Riyadh last week, could pave the way for a wider peace deal. "The agreement solidifies the anti-Houthi coalition and provides a more robust basis for reaching a political solution," he said. "Now we need to build on the momentum this has given us."

The so-called Riyadh agreement would see Yemen's government return to Aden - the interim capital seized by separatists in August - and place the forces from both sides under the authority of the defence and interior ministries.

Gargash's comments came after a rally organized by the Houthi insurgents to mark the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on Saturday drew hundreds of thousands in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, a much larger crowd than last year. Rebel chief Abdulmalik Al-Houthi addressed the crowd via a video message played on a large screen, while many chanted slogans in support of the insurgent leader.

The Iran-backed rebels took Sanaa in 2015, after which Saudi Arabia, the UAE and their allies intervened in the conflict in support of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. Since then, tens of thousands of people - most of them civilians - have been killed in a conflict that has triggered what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. — Agencies



YAZD, Iran: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani delivering a speech to a crowd in this central city yesterday. — AFP

Hezb says 'arms won't be twisted' as crisis deepens

BEIRUT: Political talks to agree an urgently needed Lebanese government are still deadlocked, three senior sources said yesterday, as the powerful Shiite group Hezbollah indicated it would not be forced into concessions. The latest failure to break Lebanon's political impasse will worsen pressures on an economy gripped by its deepest crisis since the 1975-90 civil war, amid protests against a political establishment widely regarded as corrupt and inept.

Since reopening a week ago, commercial banks have been seeking to stave off capital flight by blocking most transfers abroad and imposing curbs on hard-currency

movements, though the central bank has announced no formal capital controls. A big part of Lebanon's economic crisis stems from a slowdown of capital inflows which has led to a scarcity of US dollars and spawned a black market where the Lebanese pound has weakened below its official pegged rate.

A meeting on Saturday evening between caretaker Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri and senior officials from Hezbollah and its Shiite ally Amal failed to yield any breakthrough towards forming the new cabinet, the sources said. "The crisis is deepening," one source familiar with Hariri's position said. A senior source familiar with the view of Hezbollah and Amal said: "Nothing has changed. So far the road is completely blocked." A third senior source said the situation was still deadlocked.

Hariri quit on Oct 29 in the face of unprecedented protests fuelled by poverty, joblessness and lack of basic services like electricity. Hariri wants to lead a technocratic government devoid of other politicians, while Amal, Hezbollah and its Christian ally the Free Patriotic

Movement want a government mixing technocrats and politicians.

The source familiar with Hariri's views has said he believes a cabinet composed of both technocrats and politicians would not be able to secure Western assistance and would also anger protesters who want to see a change of leadership. Hariri reiterated his position in the meeting with caretaker Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil of Amal and top Hezbollah official Hussein Khalil, the senior source familiar with Hezbollah and Amal's view said.

Both Hezbollah and Amal communicated their view - that Hariri should return as premier of a new 'technopolitical' cabinet - at the meeting. Hariri said he would only agree to head a technocratic cabinet. "Practically, what he wants is a government devoid of Hezbollah," the senior source said. "After 10 days have passed, matters must be decided."

The source familiar with Hariri's position said he believed Hezbollah, Amal and the FPM were seeking the

inclusion in the cabinet of politicians rejected by the protesters. These include FPM leader Gebran Bassil, foreign minister in the outgoing cabinet and a son-in-law of President Michel Aoun. "If these faces return to government we will have pushed the street to return to protest in a greater way," the source familiar with Hariri's position said. One dollar was buying 1,800 pounds or more on Friday compared to 1,740 on Thursday, two market sources said. The pegged rate is 1,507.5 pounds.

In a statement apparently referring to the deadlock and to Hezbollah's loss of fighters in various conflicts, Hezbollah lawmaker Mohammad Raad said: "Our arms will not be twisted nor can we be neutralised from achieving the goals of the martyrs." Lebanon's highest Christian authority urged the president to hasten the appointment of a prime minister and the formation of a government that meets protesters' demands. "The country's situation cannot withstand another day of delays," Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rai said. — Reuters

Aramco to launch IPO on Nov 17...

Continued from Page 1

"This lack of clarity in the prospectus shouldn't alarm us as it's a book building exercise," said Nasser Saidi, another analyst. "And let's be clear Saudi will do whatever it takes to make this IPO successful because so much hinges on it," Saidi told Bloomberg TV.

The share sale appears unlikely to see Aramco hit a \$2 trillion valuation for the company that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had initially hoped for. Investment research firm Bernstein estimates the valuation could fall within a range of \$1.2 and \$1.5 trillion. Based on a \$1.5 trillion valuation, a two percent stake sale would raise Aramco \$30 billion. That would still make it the world's biggest IPO, eclipsing Chinese retail giant Alibaba's \$25 billion listing in 2014.

Saudi Arabia is pulling out all the stops to ensure the success of the IPO, a cornerstone of Prince Mohammed's ambitious plan to steer the economy away from oil by pumping tens of billions of dollars into a host of megaprojects and non-energy industries. The government has reportedly pressed wealthy Saudi business families and institutions to invest, and many nationalists have

labelled it a patriotic duty.

Aramco had initially been expected to sell a total of five percent on two exchanges, with a first listing of two percent on the kingdom's Tadawul bourse, followed by a three percent listing on an overseas exchange. But the firm has said there are no current plans for an international stock sale, indicating that the long-discussed goal of a second offering on a foreign bourse had been shelved for the time being.

Even for the domestic listing, there are reports the firm is struggling to attract foreign institutional investors, amid an uncertain outlook for the energy sector and questions over company disclosures and governance. Norway's sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, does not plan to invest in Aramco, a Norwegian official told AFP.

Investors are also concerned about geopolitical risks. The news of the listing comes just weeks after crippling attacks on the heart of Aramco's facilities briefly halved its output as tensions spiked with Iran. But China, the world's top oil importer, may commit as much as \$10 billion through sovereign wealth funds and other state-owned enterprises, Bloomberg News reported.

Aramco, a cash cow that catapulted the kingdom to become the Arab world's biggest economy, does appear to hold enormous appeal for local retail investors. Many Saudis appear to be tapping lenders and selling personal assets to raise money to invest in the share sale. Aramco last year posted \$11.1 billion in net profit. In the first nine months of this year, its net profit dropped 18 percent compared to the corresponding period of 2018 to \$68.2 billion. — AFP

Authorities have cracked down hard on "economic disruptors" - Iranians accused of exploiting shortages and fluctuations in gold and currency prices, with dozens tried and some executed. "I call on the judiciary... to explain billion-dollar corruption cases to the people," Rouhani said during his speech in Yazd. "Where has the money gone?"

He pointed to a "\$2.7 billion case" whose suspect has been "arrested, sentenced to die and is now in prison" - but in which the money is yet to be recovered. He appeared to be referring to business magnate Babak Morteza Zanjani, on death row after being convicted in 2016 of embezzling \$2.7 billion while helping the government circumvent international sanctions.

Meanwhile, Iran started pouring concrete yesterday at its second nuclear power plant, a key step in building the facility with Russian help in the southern port of Bushehr, state television reported. "Nuclear power provides reliable electricity... and each power plant saves us 11 million barrels of oil or \$660 million per year," Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said in a televised ceremony.

Salehi and deputy chief of Russia's nuclear agency Rosatom, Alexander Lokshin, launched the new stage at a ceremony where concrete was poured for the reactor base. The reactor is one of two officially under construction since 2017 at the Bushehr site that is around 750 km south of Tehran. The United States plans to allow Russian, Chinese and European companies to continue work at Iranian nuclear facilities to make it harder for Iran to develop a nuclear weapon, two sources familiar with the matter said in late October. — Agencies

Israeli farmers shut out as Jordan...

Continued from Page 1

On a hilltop on the other side, a Jordanian flag flew above two tents and military vehicles were patrolling the site where a ceremony was expected today.

The Naharayim territory has seen its share of tragedy. On the Israeli side there is a memorial garden for seven schoolgirls killed in a 1997 massacre by a Jordanian soldier. Then-King Hussein later went on condolence visits to the families. Local Israeli official Shay Hadar, 47, said around 150 people would visit the enclave of Naharayim on a normal weekend with Jordanian permission.

He said the visitors would see the remains of a hydroelectric power plant and train station and learn about the history of the Island of Peace. Tour money will be lost and business at a guest house at the Ashdot Yaakov Ihud kibbutz is expected to suffer.

"Of course it's a big loss," said Adva Algarisi, director of tourism for the kibbutz, who explained that visitors would often combine trips to the Island of Peace with other sites in the area. "It's close to the (Sea of Galilee), it's close to other Christian places, holy places," she said, noting what had long been the site's unique appeal of demonstrating "how to live in peace with our neighbors".

Residents of the area hope to eventually regain some access to the lands, or compensation from the Israeli government. "What's most important is the fields, the land," said Ami Kabri, spokesman for the Jordan Valley regional council. A statement by Jordan's foreign ministry said that Israeli farmers would be allowed to harvest vegetables from both enclaves - but only once,

during the upcoming harvest season, and after obtaining a Jordan visa.

The second enclave, Ghumar, deep in the Negev desert south of the Dead Sea, is known in Hebrew as Tzofar. The lands were privately owned by Israeli entities for decades, but the 1994 deal saw the kingdom retain sovereignty there. Since the heady days of Israel's second peace treaty with an Arab state - after Egypt - relations with Amman have been strained. Opinion polls have repeatedly found that the peace treaty with Israel is overwhelmingly opposed by Jordanians, more than half of whom are of Palestinian origin.

The simmering tensions have been punctuated by bouts of violence. In 2017, an Israeli embassy security guard in Amman killed two Jordanians. Three years earlier, an Israeli soldier at a border crossing killed a Jordanian judge he deemed a threat. Just last month, Amman recalled its ambassador from Israel over the prolonged detention without trial in the Jewish state of two Jordanians. The ambassador returned after the two were released.

"It was like a punch to the face," said Eli Arazi, 74, a farmer. Arazi said his kibbutz, Ashdot Yaacov Meuhad, had been growing crops there for 70 years, including olives, bananas, avocados. The end of the land deal came at a low point in Israeli-Jordanian relations, said Israeli Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel. "We are not on a honeymoon but rather in a period of ongoing arguments," he told Reuters.

The government, Ariel said, should have taken action earlier to try to convince Jordan to extend the deal and let the farmers work the land. Arazi is still hopeful that eventually Jordan will quietly let the farmers back. Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported yesterday that Amman granted his fellow farmers in Tzofar, the second land parcel further south, another six months of access to the land. — Agencies

Iran finds massive oilfield with 53bn...

Continued from Page 1

It has hit back at the US with a series of counter-measures, stepping up its nuclear activities and threatening to go further unless the deal's promised economic benefits materialize. It insists its moves are transparent and easily reversible, calling on the deal's other parties to honor their commitments. The remaining parties to the 2015 accord - Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia - have been working on measures to help it avoid US sanctions, but with few results so far.

Since the US withdrawal, tensions have cranked up in the Gulf with a series of mysterious attacks on tankers and Saudi oil installations, with Tehran and Washington narrowly avoiding an armed confrontation after the downing of a US drone over Iranian territory. Iran has experienced a sharp economic downturn this year, fuelled in part by US sanctions, with a plummeting currency sending inflation skyrocketing and hiking the prices of imports.

But Rouhani insisted the economy had now stabilized. "Our people weathered hard days in the past year ... (but) I believe America is now hopeless," he said. The IMF has said Iran's economy will contract by a massive 9.5 percent this year, its worst performance since 1984 when the Islamic republic was at war with neighboring Iraq, but notes the growth is expected to stabilize at zero next year.

Tunisia #MeToo breaking taboos...

Continued from Page 1

"At first, we created a group to defend the young girl who filmed the lawmaker, because she had suffered a lot of criticism and pressure," said Myriam Bouattour, who heads Aswat Nissa. "Then women, and sometimes men too, shared their stories, so now we are trying to organise workshops with psychologists." Bouattour said she has received messages from parents who have "broken the family taboo by talking about sexual harassment with their children, after reading testimonies about pedophilia".

Traditional attitudes and apathy among some in power mean the nascent #EnaZeda initiative faces an uphill battle. Kaboudi - the woman who called out street harassment - laments the passivity of the police, who "were a few feet away" and did not "lift a little fin-

ger" to help her when she was harassed. She also despairs of witnesses who similarly "did nothing".

In an attempt to break the silence, in October the Centre for Research, Study, Documentation and Information on Women (Credif) launched an awareness campaign about sexual harassment on public transport. Dubbed "the harasser #MaYerkech (does not ride) with us", the initiative includes an app that uses a chat bot to speak to a harasser on behalf of a victim of witness and remind them of the law.

Najla Allani, director of Credif, told AFP the app states out loud the type of sexual misdemeanor and location, in a voice that speaks firmly in local dialect to "intimidate and scare the harasser". "People dare not speak (themselves) out of fear, but with this voice app, they will be better able to react", Allani said. An evaluation of the experimental initiative later this month will decide if it continues, so long as "the financial means allow it", she added. It remains to be seen how big a contribution #EnaZeda will make to Tunisia's battle against sexual harassment, but one thing is sure - the shroud of silence is no longer so suffocating. — AFP

Sports

World Cup stars shine as Toulouse hammer Clermont

Late Belleau penalty denies Cruden a winning send-off in final French league game

PARIS: France's Rugby World Cup stars shone on their return to the Top 14 as champions Toulouse convincingly beat Clermont 34-8 in a re-run of last season's final on Saturday. Les Bleus' Sofiane Guitoune, Maxime Medard, Romain Ntamack and Alivereti Raka all scored in their first appearances since the quarter-final defeat by Wales in October, as the French top flight returned after a fortnight's break.

Toulouse's Ugo Mola named five players in his starting lineup who featured at the World Cup, including Ntamack who was named World Rugby Young Player of the Year last weekend but South Africa's Cheslin Kolbe, who lifted the Webb Ellis trophy, is only expected to be back later in the month.

"It's good to get back with Toulouse, my mates, the jersey, I could not have dreamt of a better return," Ntamack told Canal+. "Certainly it's a great pleasure to win something individual but it's a group effort, be that with France or my club, so I owe it to them."

Clermont coach Franck Azema also welcomed back individuals who had been away at the tournament including France pair Raka and Camille Lopez, who took the place of the league's top point scorer Jake McIntyre at fly-half.

"We're disappointed, it was a slap in the face. We went missing in the contact area, in every aspect actually," Lopez told Canal+. The home side raced into a 17-0 lead within the opening quarter of an hour as they replicated the swashbuckling play which led to lifting the title in June with two superb tries despite greasy conditions.

Centre Guitoune finished off a sublime long-range

move which included a no-look pass from Yoann Huget on the halfway line and Medard scored in the corner as Thomas Ramos slotted two conversions and a penalty goal. Despite the superb start, the best try of the half was saved for the 24-minute mark.

Australian fly-half Zack Holmes chipped over the high Clermont defence before centre Ntamack caught the ball and smoothly side-stepped two defenders with ease to slide over.

The away side's only response in the opening 40 minutes was a Morgan Parra penalty goal. Parra was key in setting up his side's first touchdown of proceedings, feeding Lopez who off-loaded with one hand for winger Raka to go over in the corner six minutes after the break.

After Ramos slotted his second three-point goal of the game on the hour mark, substitute Gillian Galan sneaked over with a pick and go to claim the bonus point for Toulouse to guarantee only their fourth win of the season.

Earlier on Saturday, a late Anthony Belleau penalty denied ex-New Zealand fly-half Aaron Cruden a winning send-off in his final French league game as Toulon drew 19-19 with Montpellier. Cruden, 30, leaves France after two seasons and will return to former franchise the Chiefs ahead of the new Super Rugby campaign.

The 50-time All Black international was joined in the starting line-up by France World Cup squad members Louis Picamoles and Guilhem Guirado, who both retired from Test rugby after the tournament. On Sunday, Stade Francais and Racing 92 meet in the Parisian derby with both clubs in the relegation zone. — AFP



TOULOUSE: Toulouse's French scrum half Sebastien Bezy (R) passes the ball during the French Top 14 rugby union match between Stade Toulousain and ASM Clermont Auvergne at the Municipal Stadium in Toulouse, southern France. — AFP

Haney makes first defence of WBC lightweight title

LOS ANGELES: Unbeaten Devin Haney successfully defended his WBC lightweight title for the first time with a unanimous decision over Alfredo Santiago on Saturday night. American Haney, who turns 21 on November 17, knocked Santiago down in the fifth round of a surprisingly close fight at Staples Center Arena in Los Angeles.

This was Haney's first defence of the 135-pound title which was given to him after it was vacated by top-ranked Vasiliy Lomachenko who was then awarded new title of WBC "franchise champion".

Haney won every round on the judges' scorecards but Santiago made him work for the victory. All three judges scored it 120-107 for Haney, who was the heavy favourite going into the bout but couldn't give the American boxing crowd the knockout they were craving.

Haney said after the fight that he thought he dislocated his right shoulder in the fight but couldn't remember in which round. "It was bad the whole fight," he said of the shoulder. "I am not sure what round but he was on the ropes and I threw a right hand."

"He was very crafty. I went in there and got the win. We received this opponent on a week notice," Santiago was knocked down by a right uppercut late in the fifth round but got up at the count of eight and survived the final 13 seconds of the round.

Haney was unable to carry that momentum over into the sixth round as Santiago recovered and kept most of the rounds close by using his reach advantage to keep



LOS ANGELES: Devin Haney poses with his WBC lightweight title.

Haney at a distance. Santiago, who was making his US debut, suffered his first defeat and is now 12-1, with four knockouts.

Santiago is from the Dominican Republic but fights out of Puerto Rico. He was coming off a technical knockout of Diego Contreras in June. Despite struggling against an unknown late replacement, Haney hopes he did enough to strengthen his case for a shot

at unified lightweight champ Lomachenko.

Haney and Santiago had to fight on the undercard of a main event novelty fight between a pair of YouTube entertainers, American Logan Paul and Olajide Williams Olatunji, also known as KSI.

England's KSI won the battle to see who is the king of social media with a split decision six-round victory over Paul. — AFP

Luke Zhao secures victory at Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup Grand Final

ISTANBUL: After two days of competition, Luke Zhao came out on top with a two-round combined score of 93 points to become the 2019 Turkish Airlines World Cup Overall Champion. Although topping their categories Tomohiro Uemura from Tokyo, Japan, and Aysen Erdogan from Istanbul, Turkey came so close to winning. The leading gross winner of the tournament, Sachin de Silva from Colombo, played some spectacular golf and won the trophy with a total score of -3 for his two rounds. The Nearest the Pin competition on day one on the 12th hole was won by Mariano Rodriguez for the men and on 3rd hole was won by Christine Ochola for the ladies and on day two was won by Roberto Fabris for the men and Christine Ochola once again for the women.

The Grand Final, which featured 101 players from 70 countries around the world was played at the Cornelia Golf Club, Antalya, Turkey. Contestants were the winners from the 101 Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup qualifying events. The winners went on to progress to the Turkish Airlines Open Pro-Am to play with the world's elite golfers to acquire a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, M. Ilker Ayçi said of the tournament: "We are delighted to maintain our commitment to golf as the seventh staging of the Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup Amateur Series is concluded after a great spectacle and competition. As one of the world's best corporate golf tournaments, Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup is becoming more



exciting every year. We are already looking forward to see the next finals' excitement, and congratulating this year's new champion Luke Zhao."

The support shown by Turkish Airlines to golf along with other sports such as basketball, rugby and football among others with key partner-

ships including Turkish Airlines Open, Turkish Airlines EuroLeague, European Professional Club Rugby and 2016 UEFA European Championships are playing an important role in Turkish Airlines' commitment to creating an outstanding sporting legacy.

Momota defends Fuzhou crown for 10th title of 2019

AHANGHAI: Kento Momota won his 10th title of a remarkable year as Japan's world number one defeated Chou Tien-chen to retain his Fuzhou China Open crown yesterday. Home hope Chen Yufei similarly successfully defended the women's title with a gritty victory over Japan's Nozomi Okuhara.

Reigning two-time world champion Momota battled past Taiwan's world number two Chou 21-15, 17-21, 21-18 in a repeat of last year's final. The 29-year-old Chou is in the unusual position of not having a coach and instead relies on his longtime physio to guide him court-side during matches.

Chou saved one match point but handed Momota the title by hitting into the net. The Japanese player fell onto his back and screamed in celebration, his fists clenched. The peerless Momota, 25, has had another hugely successful year, his haul of titles in 2019 including another world crown and the prestigious All England Open.

The women's final was a similarly gruelling affair and likewise went to three games. China's Chen lost the first game 21-9 to Okuhara but recovered to lift the Fuzhou title for the second year in a row by winning the next two 21-12, 21-18. It was more disappointment for Okuhara, who has now lost all six finals she has contested this year. — AFP

Australian boxer Ritchie dies in sparring accident

SYDNEY: Australia's boxing community was in shock yesterday after middleweight Dwight Ritchie collapsed and died aged just 27, reportedly while sparring. Sydney's Daily Telegraph said he took a body shot on Saturday, walked back to his corner and collapsed. He could not be revived.

It said he was sparring in Melbourne with Michael Zerefa, who is preparing for a rematch with Jeff Horn, a former WBO welterweight champion. Ritchie's promoter Jake Ellis confirmed the news on Facebook.

"It is with great sadness and shock to announce that the fighting cowboy Dwight Ritchie sadly passed away today doing what he loved," he said. "As Dwight's promoter and friend it's unbearable to accept the tragic news that's just surfaced."

Ritchie, nicknamed "The Fighting Cowboy", held a 19-2 record. He last fought in August, losing to Tim Tszyu by a unanimous decision for the IBF Australasian super welterweight title. "I am truly saddened by the passing of Dwight Ritchie," Tszyu said on Instagram.

"Only fighters understand the bond shared between them, especially those who shared a ring together. Rest In Peace to a true champion." Ritchie's death comes less than a month after American boxer Patrick Day died after suffering a serious brain injury during his knockout defeat to Charles Conwell in Chicago.

He was the third boxer to die from injuries sustained in the ring this year. Argentina's Hugo Santillan died in July following a bout in San Nicolas, just north of Buenos Aires. His death came just two days after Russian fighter Maxim Dadashev died from brain injuries sustained in a fight in Maryland. — AFP

Sports

Jordan's all-round show powers England to series win against NZ

Match reduced to 11 overs a side due to rain

WELLINGTON: England all-rounder Chris Jordan shone with both bat and ball to steer his side to a thrilling super over win against hosts New Zealand in the rain-truncated fifth Twenty20 international at Auckland yesterday and a 3-2 series victory.

Chasing New Zealand's total of 146-5, the touring side needed 16 runs from the last over for victory but managed only three from James Neesham's first three deliveries. Walking in to bat at the fall of Tom Curran, Jordan smashed a six and a four to score 12 from the

remaining three deliveries to take his team to 146-7 and force the super over.

The right-arm seamer then expertly defended the touring side's super over score of 17, taking a wicket while giving away just eight runs. "There was nothing between the sides in the 11-over game. And in the super over I thought the standout was Chris Jordan," England captain Eoin Morgan said at the presentation.

"The guy is extremely calm under pressure and delivers." The deciding match between this year's 50-

SCOREBOARD

AUCKLAND: Completed scoreboard yesterday in the fifth Twenty20 international between New Zealand and England in Auckland, reduced to 11 overs per side by rain:

New Zealand		England	
M. Guptill c Banton b Rashid	50	T. Seifert c Morgan b Jordan	6
C. Munro c Vince b S. Curran	46	M. Guptill not out	1
C. de Grandhomme c Vince b Mahmood	6	J. Vince c Kuggeleijn b Southee	0
T. Seifert b T. Curran	39	C. de Grandhomme not out	0
J. Neesham not out	1	Extras (w)	1
R. Taylor run out (S. Curran/Billings)	3	Total (for 1 wkt)	8
Extras (lb)	1	Fall of wicket: 1-7 Seifert	
Total (for 5 wks, 11 overs)	146	Bowling: Jordan 1-0-8-1 (w)	
Fall of wickets: 1-83 (Guptill), 2-93 (de Grandhomme), 3-120 (Munro), 4-143 (Seifert), 5-146 (Taylor)		Result: England win after super over	
Bowling: S. Curran 2-0-33-1, T. Curran 2-0-30-1, Jordan 2-0-28-0, Rashid 3-0-34-1, Mahmood 2-0-20-1.		Series: England 3-2	
England		New Zealand	
T. Banton lbw Boult	7	T. Seifert c Morgan b Jordan	6
J. Bairstow c Seifert b Neesham	47	M. Guptill not out	1
J. Vince c Kuggeleijn b Southee	1	C. de Grandhomme not out	0
E. Morgan c Kuggeleijn b Boult	17	Extras (w)	1
S. Curran st Seifert b Santner	24	Total (for 1 wkt)	8
S. Billings not out	11	Fall of wicket: 1-7 Seifert	
L. Gregory c Southee b Santner	6	Bowling: Jordan 1-0-8-1 (w)	
T. Curran c de Grandhomme b Neesham	12	Result: England win after super over	
C. Jordan not out	12	Series: England 3-2	
Extras (lb, w)	9		



AUCKLAND: England's cricket team celebrate winning the series after the 5th Twenty20 cricket match between New Zealand and England at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday. — AFP

over World Cup finalists was reduced to 11 overs a side due to rain and Martin Guptill and his opening partner Colin Munro gave New Zealand a blistering start after Morgan won the toss and chose to bowl.

The duo added 83 in five overs, including 55 in the first three of the powerplay, to lay the foundation for their imposing total at the ground, which last year witnessed Australia make 245-5 for the highest successful run chase in the format.

Guptill fell after hitting five sixes and three fours in his 20-ball 50 while Munro was out for 46 off 21

balls. Wicketkeeper Tim Seifert produced the fireworks at the end for the Black Caps with a knock of 39 from 16 balls.

England lost two early wickets in their chase but were never behind the steep required rate of over 13 with Jonny Bairstow hitting boundaries at will. The right-handed opener hit two fours and five sixes in his 47 off 18 balls with Morgan and Sam Curran also chipping in with useful contributions. The two sides will next play a two-Test series, with the first starting from Nov. 21 at Mount Maunganui. — Reuters

Celtics lose Hayward, keep win streak going

SAN ANTONIO: Jaylen Brown scored 30 points and Kemba Walker added 26 as the Boston Celtics overcame a first-half injury to Gordon Hayward to reach a season-high in points in beating the Spurs 135-115 Saturday night for a rare victory at San Antonio. Jayson Tatum had 19 points, Marcus Smart had 16 and Robert Williams III chipped in 11 as the Celtics won their seventh straight game, and first at San Antonio since 2011. Boston had lost 14 of its last 15 to the Spurs overall. DeMar DeRozan scored 22 and Patty Mills added 20 for the Spurs, who lost for the third time in four games. LaMarcus Aldridge was held to three points, taking just four shots from the field in 26 minutes. Hayward fractured his left hand when he ran into Aldridge while guarding Dejounte Murray with 1:34 left before halftime. Aldridge was assessed an offensive foul, and Hayward quickly exited to the locker room. He will see a specialist Monday to determine if surgery is necessary, according to ESPN.

MAVERICKS 138, GRIZZLIES 122

Luka Doncic missed his fifth triple-double of the season by two assists, finishing with 24 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists to lead Dallas to a victory at Memphis. The second-year standout played only 29 minutes on the second night of a back-to-back, helping the Mavericks soothe the sting of a four-point home loss to New York on Friday. Kristaps Porzingis took the night off altogether. Likewise, Memphis chose to rest rookie standout Ja Morant on the second night of their back-to-back. Jaren Jackson Jr. led the Grizzlies with 23 points while Jae Crowder had 18, and Tyus Jones and Marko Guduric scored 14 apiece.

ROCKETS 117, BULLS 94

James Harden scored 42 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and dished out nine assists to



SAN ANTONIO: Jaylen Brown #7 of the Boston Celtics shoots the ball against the San Antonio Spurs at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas. — AFP

lead visiting Houston past Chicago, as the Bulls once again failed to win back-to-back games. Russell Westbrook added 26 points on 10-for-20 shooting for Houston, which won its third game in a row. Danuel House Jr. recorded a game-high six steals to go along with 11 points, and Clint Capela finished with 16 points and 20 rebounds. Wendell Carter Jr. was among four players with 13 points to lead the Bulls. He also had 16 rebounds. Chicago has three victories on the season, but has followed all three with a loss.

THUNDER 114, WARRIORS 108

Danilo Gallinari scored 21 points and Dennis Schroder added 16 as host Oklahoma City beat Golden State at home for the second time in 14 days. Chris Paul scored 16 points with nine assists and Steven Adams scored 13 points with eight rebounds as the Thunder shot 46.7 percent (14 of 30) from 3-point range to win for the third time in four games. D'Angelo Russell scored 30 points a

night after he went for 52, and Alec Burks added 23 as the Warriors lost their third consecutive game and fell for the sixth time in their last seven games. Russell was 10 of 19 from the field and 4 of 8 from 3-point range.

PELICANS 115, HORNETS 110

Brandon Ingram scored 25 points and New Orleans used an offensive burst midway through the fourth quarter to overcome host Charlotte and win for only the second time in nine games this season. JJ Redick added a season-high 22 points on 5-for-9 3-point shooting for the Pelicans. Kenrich Williams had 15 points and Jrue Holiday provided 12 points for New Orleans, which trailed for much of the final three periods and finished with 26 turnovers. Devonte' Graham led the Hornets with 24 points, while Terry Rozier pumped in 18 points and Miles Bridges and Dwayne Bacon had 12 apiece. The Hornets used a 13-0 run to open the second quarter and built up a 61-55 halftime lead. — Reuters

Wenger contradicts Bayern's claim they turned him down

MUNICH: Arsene Wenger has contradicted a claim by Bayern Munich that they turned him down for the vacant head coach's job and accused the defending German champions of a lack of discretion.

Bayern need a new coach after Niko Kovac was sacked last Sunday with former Germany assistant Hansi Flick appointed interim boss for Wednesday's win over Olympiakos and Saturday's 4-0 rout of Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga.

On Thursday, Bayern put out a statement claiming Wenger had called club chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge to express interest in replacing Kovac, but said the former Arsenal boss had been turned down.

However, Wenger, 70, rejected that version of events and criticised Bayern for leaking "rumours from everywhere". "My name came out of nowhere," said Wenger in an interview with beIN Sports on Friday.

"On Wednesday, Rummenigge called me, I called back out of courtesy. "We talked for four or five minutes, maximum, and he reported that they signed Flick (as interim coach) for the next two games.

"He asked me if I would be interested, because they are looking for a coach." Wenger says he told Rummenigge that he would think about it and "we decided together" to talk again "next week because I am in Doha until Sunday night. This is the true story".

After a decade as Bayern's president, Uli Hoeneß will step down on Friday and Wenger said Bayern are at a "turning point" with Rummenigge also set to quit as chairman within the coming year.

Between them, Hoeneß and Rummenigge have helped grow Bayern into one of the most successful clubs in Europe. "It seems that the

future is uncertain," said Wenger who added that the German club had always been "very discreet and direct" in the past, "but today (they are) very exposed with rumours coming from everywhere".

Wenger wished Bayern "good luck" in finding a replacement for Kovac. Other candidates for the vacancy, Paris Saint-Germain boss Thomas Tuchel and Ajax's Erik ten Hag, already made it clear last week that they will not join Bayern before at least the end of the season.

After Bayern thrashed Dortmund at the Allianz Arena, Rummenigge said Flick will remain in charge for their next league game on November 23 and seemed to apologise to Wenger for any "misunderstanding".

"First of all, I have an incredible amount of respect for Arsene Wenger. I know him for an extremely long time. I am sorry for any misunderstanding, I have absolutely no problem with him," said Rummenigge. "And we will certainly talk in the near future once more on the telephone." — AFP

Intensive efforts to include bowling in 2028 Olympics

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of International and Asian Bowling Federation Chairman of Kuwait Bowling Club Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah will have meetings with organizing committee officials of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics to include bowling game in this major event.

Al-Mohammad left for the United States for this purpose as part of his efforts to improve the game and give it its right to be on the Olympic agenda, as it has been served injustice being out for many years, due to one

justification which is the high cost of building and maintaining its facilities.

The bowling sport's base got wider since Sheikh Mohammad became President of IBF, within an ambitious plan he put out, and lately oversaw three important international events in Kuwait, that were highly successful, the 25th Asian Championship, 13th Kuwait International open and the finals of the World League.

It is worth mentioning that bowling was included in the Olympics in Seoul 1988, and only amateurs participated.

Blues win 7th straight, again in overtime

ST LOUIS: David Perron was the overtime hero once again, as the St. Louis Blues won their seventh straight game with a 3-2 road victory over the Calgary Flames Saturday night. The defending Stanley Cup champions have used overtime to win five times during their seven-game spree, which has vaulted them atop the Western Conference. Taking advantage of a four-on-three power play in overtime, Perron one-timed a shot from the high slot for his third overtime winner of the win streak. He also won games in overtime on Oct. 27 and Nov. 1. Goalie Jordan Binnington made 27 saves for the Blues, who blew a 2-0 lead in the final 10 minutes of regulation but regrouped to net the win.

CAPITALS 5, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2

Nicklas Backstrom scored twice, and Evgeny Kuznetsov had a goal and an assist as Washington defeated visiting Vegas. Backstrom scored both of his goals in the third period — the final two goals of the game and last into an empty net. Tom Wilson and Jonas Siegenthaler each also scored as the Capitals won their sixth consecutive game. Jakub Vrana and John Carlson both added two assists, as the Caps are on a 10-0-1 roll. Goalie Braden Holtby earned the win with 30 saves and has gone 7-0-1 in his last eight games.

LIGHTNING 5, SABRES 3

Defenseman Victor Hedman scored the go-ahead goal in his home country, Patrick Maroon tallied twice and Tampa Bay beat Buffalo in the NHL Global Series in Stockholm. The Lightning swept the two-game series in Sweden after recording a 3-2 victory on Friday. Hedman, who had an assist Friday and

was the lone Swede on Tampa Bay's roster, snapped a tie at 1 on the power play early in the second period. Maroon recorded his ninth career multi-goal game, netting his first tally late in the first period on a power play and adding his second just before the second intermission. Yanni Gourde and Mathieu Joseph scored in the third period for the Lightning, who became the fifth team to score five goals in a regular-season game played outside North America.

PENGUINS 3, BLACKHAWKS 2 (SO)

Jake Guentzel and Jared McCann scored in the shootout, as Pittsburgh snapped a 10-game losing streak against Chicago. Guentzel beat Blackhawks goalie Corey Crawford between the pads, and McCann blasted a shot past Crawford's stick. Penguins goalie Matt Murray stopped Jonathan Toews and Alex DeBrincat, while allowing a goal to Patrick Kane. The win was tempered because Penguins captain and leading scorer Sidney Crosby left early in the third period with an unspecified injury. Coach Mike Sullivan called it a "lower-body" injury and said he would have more information on Monday.

AVALANCHE 4, BLUE JACKETS 2

Rookie defenseman Cale Makar scored twice, Nazem Kadri had a goal and an assist, and Colorado doubled-up on Columbus in Denver. Pavel Francouz had 39 saves, Samuel Girard also scored and Tyson Jost finished with two assists for the depleted Avalanche, who won their second straight following a five-game losing streak. Colorado forward Pierre-Edouard Bellemare left the game late in the second after he was elbowed in the head by Nick Foligno. The Avalanche were already without defenseman Nikita Zadorov, who underwent surgery on Friday for a broken jaw. Goaltender Philipp Grubauer (lower-body injury) missed his second straight game, but he is expected to be with the team for the five-game road trip that starts Tuesday in Winnipeg. — Reuters

Sports

Man Utd build momentum with win over Brighton

United's best run since Solskjaer first took over from Mourinho

MANCHESTER: Manchester United's upturn in form continued as Andreas Pereira and Marcus Rashford struck in a 3-1 victory over Brighton at Old Trafford that was even more comfortable than the scoreline suggested.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side also benefitted from a first half own goal from Davy Propper to recover from an unproductive spell that had seen them score just four times in their last four home league games.

United moved to within a point of the top five after scoring twice in two first half minutes and, although both came after significant deflections off Brighton defenders, it was no more than Solskjaer's side deserved.

Fielding the youngest starting line-up of any team in the Premier League this season - 23 years, 350 days - United made an energetic opening with Rashford coming closest to a goal, with a committed run and powerful shot which Mat Ryan saved well.

But on 17 minutes a United counter-attack saw Fred find Anthony Martial. His link with Pereira, whose shot took an unkind deflection off Dale Stephens, wrong-footing Ryan on its way in. United supporters were still celebrating that opener when they were handed double cause for celebration from a deep free-kick that Fred floated into the Brighton area.

Harry Maguire rose powerfully, causing panic for Ryan and his defence, and with Brighton slow to react, Scott McTominay forced the ball over the line, via a final touch by Davy Propper.

Not even the inevitably drawn-out delay for a VAR check, over whether Maguire had handled or Ryan fouled in the build-up to the goal, could dilute the joy of home supporters. It was a scintillating spell of football from a side that, before Thursday's Europa League

win over Partizan Belgrade, had not scored two first half goals at Old Trafford for nearly 10 months since Brighton's last visit in mid-January.

After some low moments so far this season, including a dispiriting 1-0 defeat at Bournemouth last weekend, United were on their way to a fifth victory in their last six league and cup games.

This is United's best run since Solskjaer first took over from Jose Mourinho at the turn of the year. Brighton were looking for their first ever victory at Old Trafford but rarely threatened in the first half beyond a couple of set-piece deliveries.

And if Fred had been more fortunate with a 61st minute strike that Ryan fumbled onto his bar to catch at the second attempt, the afternoon could have been far more comfortable. As it was, there was worry for United on 64 minutes when Brighton halved arrears from a Pascal Gross corner, met by Lewis Dunk who headed in from six yards despite the close attention of Maguire.

United's response was swift and clinical, however, with the Reds restoring their two-goal cushion just two minutes later. It came from a blistering counter-attack and a beautifully-weighted through ball from Fred which Martial took in his stride, brushing off Shane Duffy and rounding Ryan before pulling back for Rashford to convert.

Rashford would follow that, moments later, with an astonishing miss as he failed to find the back of an open net from six yards after fine work and accurate cross from Dan James. Teenage full-back Brandon Williams, making his first ever league start, James and Rashford were all denied by Ryan as United threatened to make the victory even more emphatic, but settled for three goals and a very welcome three points. — AFP



OLD TRAFFORD: Brighton's German midfielder Pascal Gross (R) challenges Manchester United's defender Aaron Wan-Bissaka (L) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Brighton and Hove Albion at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England yesterday. — AFP

Vardy and Maddison on target as Leicester silence Gunners

LEICESTER: Jamie Vardy and James Maddison struck second-half goals as Leicester City beat an unimpressive Arsenal 2-0 at the King Power Stadium on Saturday to move into second place in the Premier League.

Leicester have 26 points and are above Chelsea on goal difference and one point ahead of champions Manchester City, who visit leaders Liverpool. The Gunners have now gone four games without a win in the league, and the latest defeat will add to the questions being asked of their decision to replace Arsene Wenger with Spaniard Unai Emery.

It was an evenly balanced first half, although Arsenal's looseness in possession frequently handed Leicester opportunities. This Leicester team have also made a habit of upping their game after the interval, and that was again to be the case against the Gunners.

Arsenal had a 55th-minute effort from Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang ruled out for offside after a VAR review and 13 minutes later Leicester struck. Vardy produced a characteristic, confident first-time finish from just inside the box after neat passing in the build-up from a confident Leicester side, clearly enjoying their football under Brendan Rodgers. The goal was Vardy's ninth in 10 appearances against Arsenal and he went close to a second in the 72nd minute but his low drive was kept out by Bernd Leno.

Three minutes later, Vardy turned provider for the Foxes' second, poking the ball back to Maddison whose low strike whistled past Leno. Rodgers was quick to praise Vardy, the Premier League's top scorer with 11 goals so far this campaign.

"It's firstly about giving him confidence. He is up

there with the very, very top strikers in European football with what he brings to a team, his pressing," said the former Liverpool and Celtic manager. "We've allowed him to do essentially what he wants to do - how we play, being aggressive and playing quickly obviously suits him. But his finishing ability, how clinical he is, is absolutely phenomenal. That's a big testament to his concentration - when the opportunities come he's always ready."

Emery said his side had shown better defensive organisation but said he accepted that people will question his work at the club. "I am speaking with the club to stay strong and recover. We also have young players who are growing up with us," he said.

"I know we are receiving criticism, but I have done before and I have recovered. I accept all the criticism. It is normal. Today we did one step ahead being better defensively," added the Spaniard.

"We need to recover our confidence. We need to be patient with some circumstances, and we are going to do that." — Reuters

Real Madrid go top after cruising to victory at Eibar

EIBAR: Karim Benzema struck twice as Real Madrid continued their sparkling run of form by coasting to a 4-0 win at Eibar on Saturday thanks to a rampant first-half display, going level on points with La Liga leaders Barcelona.

Benzema got Zinedine Zidane's side off to a comfortable start in the torrential rain at Eibar's compact Ipurua stadium, knocking a loose ball into the net in the 17th minute after it had been sprayed across a crowded penalty box.

Real quickly extended their lead with a penalty from Sergio Ramos in the 20th after Eden Hazard had been tripped. They earned another spot-kick when Lucas Vazquez was felled and Benzema took the ball and calmly tucked it home to net for a fourth time in two games after his brace in Wednesday's 6-0 rout of Galatasaray in the Champions League.

Real were not as ruthless in the second half but still managed to stretch their lead in the 61st minute when Luka Modric teed up Uruguayan midfielder Federico Valverde, who scored his first goal for Real.

The victory briefly took Zinedine Zidane's side top of the standings on 25 points after 12 games but Barcelona went ahead of them on goal difference after a 4-1 win at home to Celta Vigo.

Real Sociedad are third on 23 points after drawing 1-1 at home to Leganes on Friday, although Barca and Real each have a game in hand on the Basque side.

"We have been producing very complete performances recently and today was another one," said Real defender Dani Carvajal. "Our start set the tone for the game and we have to keep that up, unfortunately the international break comes at a time when we are doing very well."

Real had harrowing memories of their last trip to Eibar, when they were overpowered 3-0 last November in a game that spelled the beginning of the end for coach Santiago Solari. Things could hardly have been more different this time — Real were insatiable in the first half as Valverde provided relentless energy through the middle and Hazard looked at his most dangerous since his summer move from Chelsea.

Real have now scored 16 goals without conceding any in their last five fixtures, a resounding response to their shock 1-0 defeat at Real Mallorca three weeks ago. "We worked very hard and believed in what we were doing," said Real coach Zidane.

"The Mallorca game was tough for us but since then we have played with a lot of generosity, and when you have the amount of quality we have everything is easier." "We are being more ruthless in both areas and that is making a big difference," added Carvajal.

"Last week against Betis the ball wouldn't go in, and they became more confident the longer we didn't score and it became harder for us. But when we make a strong start and score early the opponent leaves a lot of space and we can take advantage." — Reuters

Barella winner sends Inter Milan top as Napoli held in Serie A

MILAN: Nicolò Barella sealed a 2-1 win over Verona to send Inter Milan top of Serie A on Saturday as Napoli were jeered by their fans after being held to a goalless draw at home by Genoa. Former Cagliari midfielder Barella scored his first goal for Inter with a stunning curling strike seven minutes from time, allowing Inter to overtake defending champions Juventus.

Inter sit two points ahead of Juve, who host 13th-placed AC Milan in Turin on Sunday. But Serie A runners-up Napoli saw their winless league run extended to four games, and are stuck in seventh position, 12 points behind Inter.

Napoli fans were furious with the point against their northern rivals who are 17th in the league, days after the team's Champions League last 16 progress was stalled with a 1-1 draw against Salzburg.

Inter coach Antonio Conte had also been furious after his side threw away a two-goal lead to fall to a 3-2 Champions League defeat at Borussia Dortmund in midweek. But the former Juventus and Chelsea boss was happy with the way his team hit back.

"I saw an important response after Dortmund," said Conte. "The lads are doing something important — 31 points in 12 games is a nice haul. "Now there is a (international) break and we're going to rest after a victory that gives us enthusiasm and the knowledge that we're on the right path."

Inter had got off to the worst possible start when Valerio Verre put Verona ahead from the spot on 19 minutes after Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic tripped Mattia Zaccagni.

Goalkeeper Marco Silvestri and the Verona defence held off Inter at the San Siro before Matias Vecino broke through, heading home a Valentino Lazaro cross on 65 minutes. Barella completed the comeback late on, whipping off his jersey as he celebrated wildly with his teammates.

It was his second goal since joining Inter last summer having scored the equaliser in a 1-1 Champions League draw with Slavia Prague. "We wanted to win at all costs, despite the fatigue from the recent matches," said Barella.

"Now it's time for the national team and I'm already focused on that," he added of Italy's upcoming Euro 2020 qualifiers.

In Turin, Andrea Belotti converted a pair of penalties with Alex Berenguer bagging a brace of his own to get Torino back to winning ways with a 4-0 romp over 10-man Brescia. Torino snapped their six-match winless run and inflicted a first defeat on new Brescia coach Fabio Grosso, whose side are second from bottom in



MILAN: Inter Milan's Argentinian forward Lautaro Martinez (L) and Verona's Kosovan defender Amir Rrahmani go for a header during the Italian Serie A football match Inter Milan vs Hellas Verona at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

the Serie A table.

Belotti got Torino off the mark on 17 minutes with a penalty awarded after a Simone Verdi free-kick bounced off Brescia defender Andrea Cistana's arm. The second came on 26 minutes when Czech defender Ales Mateju was also deemed to have used his arm to block a Belotti shot after a VAR review.

Belotti again slotted in to bring his tally to seven Serie A goals this season. Brescia were reduced to 10 men before the break when Mateju was sent off for a second yellow card after fouling Belotti.

A man down, Grosso substituted Brescia striker Mario Balotelli for defender Bruno Martella after the break. Jesse Joronen denied Belotti a hat-trick before Berenguer fired past the Finnish keeper with 15 minutes remaining.

And five minutes later, Berenguer latched onto Diego Laxalt's long ball forward to slot in his second goal this season. Brescia, with a game in hand, fell to their fourth consecutive defeat with their winless run now stretching back seven games. Torino's first win since September 26 puts them 11th. — AFP

Wolves beat Villa to move into top eight

WOLVERHAMPTON: Wolverhampton Wanderers beat Aston Villa 2-1 in yesterday's Midlands derby with goals from Ruben Neves and Raul Jimenez taking them into the top eight in the Premier League. It was a difficult afternoon for Villa from the moment they lost goalkeeper Jed Steer to injury after only five minutes.

Wolves dominated and the only surprise was it took them until nearly halftime to go ahead, Neves giving replacement keeper Orjan Nyland no chance with a thumping drive. Another injury for Villa led to left back Matt Targett being replaced before the

interval but the visitors showed plenty of endeavour after the break to stay in the game.

Villa even threatened to equalise on the odd occasions but Wolves effectively sealed the points when Jimenez, guilty of wasting some earlier chances, fired into the corner after good work by the dangerous Adama Traore. There was some consolation for Villa when Trezeguet halved the deficit in stoppage time but it was too late. Wolves' first Premier League win over Villa for eight years lifted them to 16 points from 12 games while Villa remain fourth from bottom with 11 points. — Reuters

25 Haney makes first defence of WBC lightweight title

26 Jordan's all-round show powers England to series win against NZ

27 Man Utd build momentum with win over Brighton



France claim first Fed Cup title

Last tournament played under the current format



PERTH: French team celebrate winning the Fed Cup final tennis competition between Australia and France in Perth yesterday. A jubilant Kristina Mladenovic and Caroline Garcia led France to its first Fed Cup title since 2003 winning a deciding doubles rubber to crush Australian dreams 3-2. — AFP

PERTH: A jubilant Kristina Mladenovic and Caroline Garcia led France to its first Fed Cup title since 2003 yesterday, winning a deciding doubles rubber to crush Australian dreams 3-2. In the last tournament played under the current format, the pair kept their focus at Perth Arena to overcome Ashleigh Barty and Samantha Stosur 6-4, 6-3, denying the home team their first crown in 45 years.

It was France's third title and first since they beat the United States 16 years ago, piling more misery on seven-time champions Australia who have now lost all nine of the last Fed Cup finals they have appeared in.

Mladenovic and Garcia, who won the 2016 French Open doubles title, bounced back from going an early break down in the first set to expose Stosur's weaknesses, with the veteran out-of-sorts and making too many mistakes.

World number one Barty, stunned by Mladenovic in a singles rubber earlier yesterday, did her best to keep Australia in the hunt, but the French pair were clinical, racing to victory as their team-mates went wild.

"I'm the proudest man on the planet right now, I'm so proud of my girls and my team. They deserve it because they fought for a long time for this title," ecstatic France captain Julien Benneteau said courtside.

"For sure I am going to have a lot of beers now." The final marked the last Fed Cup played under the current format, with an overhaul next year seeing 12 nations compete in a six-day event in Budapest.

That will mean an end to home ties and the atmosphere they bring, with the 26,951 fans turning up over two days in Perth the second-highest Fed Cup attendance on record after Roland Garros (30,000) in 2005.

The doubles clash was set up by Ajla Tomljanovic hauling the home team back into the tie by beating France's Pauline Parmentier 6-4, 7-5. She came on court after 40th-ranked Mladenovic upset Barty 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/1) in an epic.

Croatian-born Tomljanovic, in her Fed Cup debut for Australia, had been thrashed 6-1, 6-1 by Mladenovic in the opening singles rubber on Saturday. But captain Alica Molik kept faith with her and she bounced back to beat Parmentier 6-4, 7-5.

"Really glad I got a second chance today and got the win and kept us in," said the Australian. "The team has been unbelievable all week and it is such a privilege to play for you guys." Earlier Barty, who has been in scintillating form, whipping Garcia 6-0, 6-0 on Saturday after winning the WTA Finals in China last weekend, crashed in a classic.

"From my point of view I fought as hard as I could and I hope that I did my team proud and all Australians proud. I fought with everything I had left," said Barty.

Barty started where she left off after the "double bagel" of Garcia on Saturday, breaking Mladenovic's first service game with a net volley to extend her streak to 15 games this weekend.

But Mladenovic held serve to end the Barty run and it became a closer affair before the Australian began forcing errors to take the first set.

Barty saved five break points in the opening game of the second set, but Mladenovic finally worked a first crucial break with some quality passing shots, with a forehand long from Barty giving her a 5-4 lead. She held her nerve to serve out the set.

Mladenovic, who beat Barty on clay in Rome earlier this year, was on a roll with the French star breaking then holding for a 3-1 third-set lead. Stung, Barty rallied for 3-3 but the errors again crept in and the set ultimately went to a tense tie breaker where Mladenovic triumphed.

"I just kept believing because I felt I was out there fighting and giving her a hard battle. I'm just so proud how I kept pushing and obviously won the game," said Mladenovic. — AFP

Liverpool beat City to open up eight-point Premier League lead

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool took a huge step towards a first Premier League title in 30 years by beating defending champions Manchester City 3-1 at Anfield yesterday to open up an eight-point lead at the top of the table.

Two goals in the first 13 minutes from Fabinho and Mohamed Salah gave the European champions a dream start before Sadio Mane's diving header early in the second half sealed City's fate. Bernardo Silva pulled a late goal back but a third defeat in eight league games

leaves City down in fourth, nine points behind Liverpool, and with a mountain to climb if they are to claim a third straight league title.

City's defensive deficiencies have been so publicised without the injured Aymeric Laporte so far this season and they crumbled as Liverpool scored with their first two attacks of the game. But the visitors were furious with some justification at the move that led to the opening goal when a dangerous foray into the Liverpool box ended with the ball striking Trent Alexander-Arnold on the arm.

Instead of City being awarded a penalty, the hosts broke down the other end and the ball fell to Fabinho on the edge of the area. The Brazilian is not renowned for his goalscoring, but when invited to shoot by a hesitant City back line five minutes in, he arrowed a strike beyond stand-in goalkeeper Claudio Bravo.

The visitors had their chances to get level in between Liverpool's early blitz as Raheem Sterling

headed wide Kevin De Bruyne's in-swinging free-kick. But it was Liverpool who were ruthless as a pinpoint cross by Andy Robertson was headed home on the bounce by Salah.

City still went on to enjoy the better of the play in the remainder of the first half, but the damage was already done. Sergio Aguero was denied his first ever goal at Anfield by a smart save from Alisson Becker before a purposeful burst forward by Angelino saw his deflected shot come back off the post. Aguero then dragged City's best chance of a reply before the break wide after great work by De Bruyne. Any hope of a City comeback was eliminated six minutes into the second half when Jordan Henderson's teasing cross was met with a diving header by Mane although Bravo could have done better to stop the ball creeping over the line. Liverpool agonisingly missed out on the title by a solitary point last season as City ended the season on a 14-match winning run to edge a titanic tussle. — AFP

Seamer Chahar posts best T20 figures in India's series win

MUMBAI: India seamer Deepak Chahar took a hat-trick and posted the best bowling figures in Twenty20 internationals to guide the hosts to a series clinching 30-run win against Bangladesh in the third and final match at Nagpur yesterday.

Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul struck brisk half centuries to help India post 174-5 in their 20 overs after Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah won the toss and chose to bowl. Iyer smashed 62 off just 33 balls while Rahul made 52 from 35.

In reply, Bangladesh lost Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar in successive deliveries to Chahar early to get off to a false start in their chase and were finally all out for 144 to go down 2-1 in the series. Opener Mohammad Naim, who made his international debut during the series, kept Bangladesh in the hunt with 81 off 48 balls but his dismissal in the 16th over snuffed out the touring side's chances.

Naim added 98 for the third wicket with Mohammad Mithun, who made 27, before the latter became Chahar's third wicket of the evening. Chahar then dismissed Shafiqul Islam on the last delivery of his third over and returned in his final one to send back Mustafizur Rahman and Aminul Islam to complete his hat-trick and finish with figures of six wickets for seven runs off 3.2 overs. His figures broke Sri Lanka spinner Ajantha Mendis' mark of 6-8 against Zimbabwe in 2012 as the best bowling figures in the shortest format of the game. India all-rounder Shivam Dube picked up 3-40, including the prized scalps of Naim and experienced Mushfiqur Rahim.

India's stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma, leading the side in the absence of rested Virat Kohli, fell for just two while his opening partner Shikhar Dhawan also did not last long and was out for 19. Bangladesh medium pacerman Shaiful accounted for both the experienced openers and could have also dismissed Iyer for naught if Aminul had managed to hold on to a simple catch. — Reuters