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# Airport workers strike for better working conditions, allowances

## Civil aviation authority says operations unaffected by stoppage



KUWAIT: Civil aviation employees stage a walkout at the airport yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

KUWAIT: Hundreds of workers at Kuwait's international airport held a one-hour strike yesterday to demand better working conditions, threatening to stage longer walkouts in the coming days. Ahmed Mohammed Al-Kandari, a union representative, said workers were calling for improved treatment and to be compensated for daily exposure to pollution and noise. The right to strike is guaranteed for citizens in Kuwait, but such actions remain rare in the country. Foreign workers do not have the right to strike.

Yesterday's strike by Kuwaiti staff did not affect flights, officials said, but the workers' union said the strike disrupted six flights. "Airport traffic is very normal," said Sheikh Salman Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah, head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Another official, Saleh Al-Fadaghi, the airport's director of operations, also said flights were not affected. "During the one-hour strike, 19 flights were operated as scheduled. There were five departures and 14 arrivals," he said. Fadaghi praised all personnel and employees at the airport who maintained regular operations, affirming keenness on "enhancing employees' skills and preserving their rights".

Kandari said the purpose of the strike was not to disrupt operations but "to make our voices heard". He added that Kuwaiti workers would hold a further

two-hour strike tomorrow and a 24-hour strike on Sunday if their demands are not met. Of 4,500 civil aviation employees, 1,500 took part in yesterday's strike, he said.

The DGCA had announced two days ago that shift payments were unified for personnel working at the airport and air traffic control. DGCA Director Yousif Al-Fauzan has said the Civil Service Commission (CSC) issued a resolution on Thursday explaining that shifts would be of eight hours and every air traffic control staff member will work morning, afternoon and evening shifts on three consecutive days, followed by two days off.

Fauzan added airport staff will work the same eight hours for three consecutive days followed by one day off instead of the old system of working a full 24 hours followed by 48 hours off. But the DGCA employees syndicate chairman Jaber Al-Azmi said the CSC only approved allowances for air traffic control staff and that the union insists on unified allowances for all staff members working shifts. "We have the minutes of a previous meeting between the union and civil aviation and it was agreed that the unified allowance is deserved by all employees of the directorate," he said yesterday, adding the union is defending the demands and rights of workers who were deprived of the allowance. — Agencies

## Dhaman opens first primary clinic for expats in Hawally

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Health Assurance Hospitals Company (Dhaman) opened its first primary healthcare center in Hawally in Cairo Complex on Ibn Khaldoun Street yesterday. The center, spread over an area of 3,079 sq m, has 20 clinics covering family medicine, pediatrics, preventive services, health education, consul-

tation, acute and chronic diseases, dental services, digital x-ray, ultrasound, laboratory and pharmaceutical services. Dhaman was set up by a public private partnership (PPP) established through a ministerial decree as part of Kuwait's development plan.

The hospital is part of a government push to segregate healthcare, limiting access for expatriates to the public system. Already, some clinics offer Kuwaiti-only timings, and priority for certain clinics and medicines are unavailable to residents, who are also paying higher fees for visits.

"Healthcare is one of the main pillars of the 2035 New Kuwait vision. The main objective is to target residents in Kuwait, as we have more than 2 million expats. The aim is to provide them with high quality healthcare, while at the same time decrease the load on the

health ministry and streamline the system. We are partners with Mayo Clinic in the US, so we are bringing high quality and efficiency," said Tina Baramakian, Dhaman Corporate Director.

Baramakian affirmed the cost of health insurance premiums in the coming years will be a bit higher. "But expats should not be terrified, since we will be charging only a minimal amount - it won't be too high compared to services in private clinics. I assure you prices will be competitive. At government health centers, you have to pay KD 2 or KD 5 - we are only seeing an increase of 500 fils or maybe a dinar, but the good thing is that laboratory, radiology, pharmacy and other basic tests will be free," she added.

Dhaman Chairman Mutlaq Al-Sane, Acting CEO Dr Mohammad Al-Qinae, board

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: Dhaman officials open the company's first primary healthcare center for expats in Hawally yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Turkey starts repatriating IS detainees

ISTANBUL: Turkey deported three foreign jihadists yesterday, with more than 20 Europeans including French and Germans in the process of being expelled to their countries of origin. Turkey's interior ministry said it had deported an American and a Dane, while Germany confirmed that one of its citizens had also been expelled. Seven more Germans were due for deportation on Thursday, the Turkish ministry said, while

11 French citizens, two Irish and at least two additional Germans were also being processed.

Turkey has criticized Western countries for refusing to repatriate their citizens who left to join the Islamic State group (IS) in Syria and Iraq, and stripping some of them of their citizenship. Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said last week that Turkey had nearly 1,200 foreign members of IS in custody, and had captured 287 during its recent operation in northern Syria. It was not clear whether those being deported were captured in Syria or Turkey. "There is no need to try to escape from it, we will send them back to you. Deal with them how you want," Soylu said on Friday.

Continued on Page 24

## Jordan king tours enclave after end of Israel lease deal

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah paid his first visit yesterday to an enclave fringing its northern border with Israel a day after the expiry of a 25-year special regime that allowed Israeli farmers access to the area, official sources said. The king on Sunday declared an end of the arrangement, which many Jordanians saw as a humiliation that perpetuated what they regarded as an Israeli occupation of Jordanian territory.

Under the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty, two territories straddling the border were recognized as under Jordanian sovereignty but with special provisions allowing Israeli farmers to work the land without visas. But in 2018, Jordan said it did not want to renew the arrangement, in what was widely seen as a sign of increasingly strained bilateral relations. — Reuters



BAQOURA, Jordan: King Abdullah II of Jordan and his son Crown Prince Hussein with army officers during a ceremony at this Jordan Valley site yesterday. — AFP

## Power vacuum in Bolivia after Morales steps down

LA PAZ: Bolivia's Evo Morales called yesterday on the opposition that ousted him to "pacify the country" after his shock resignation following weeks of protests over his disputed re-election left a power vacuum in the country. Shops and offices in La Paz were shuttered early yesterday after looting broke out late Sunday in some parts of the capital and the neighboring city of El Alto. Thousands of commuters were forced to walk to work in the morning drizzle as the



Evo Morales

city's cable-car network remained paralyzed and buses were scarce.

The police - largely confined to barracks since riots broke out on Friday, with many units joining the protests - were returning to the streets, police chief Vladimir Yuri Calderon said. "The Bolivian police will be acting," Calderon told ATB television. Tweeting from the central coca-growing region of Chapare, where he fled on Sunday, Morales called on the opposition to

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## Egypt discreetly marks Suez Canal's 150th anniversary

ISMAILIA, Egypt: Since the Suez Canal was inaugurated amid pomp and ceremony 150 years ago, it has become one of the world's most important waterways. But its anniversary will only be discreetly marked in Egypt. The man-made canal was excavated between 1859 and 1869, in an ambitious project to connect the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, and cut shipping times for growing international trade from Europe to Asia.

The Suez Canal is "not a prerogative of one nation", declared Ferdinand de Lesseps, the French diplomat credited with masterminding the project, drawing from the dreams of the pharaohs who dredged a similar channel 4,000 years earlier. "It owes its birth to, and belongs to, the aspirations of humanity," he said in an 1864 speech. A million Egyptians, using camels and mules as beasts of burden, labored over the

Continued on Page 24



ISMAILIA, Egypt: A cargo ship sails through the Suez Canal in this Egyptian port city on Oct 14, 2019. — AFP

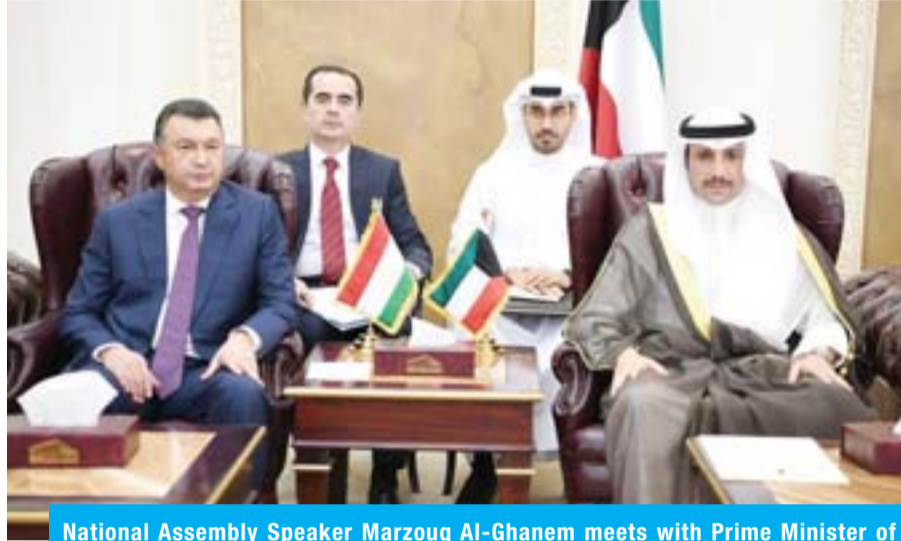
## Local

# Kuwait's Crown Prince receives visiting Tajik Prime Minister

## Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker, Prime Minister meet Tajik Premier



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Prime Minister of Tajikistan Kokhir Rasulzoda. — KUNA photos



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Prime Minister of Tajikistan Kokhir Rasulzoda.



Kuwait's Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes Prime Minister of Tajikistan Kokhir Rasulzoda.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Prime Minister of Tajikistan Kokhir Rasulzoda and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of visiting the country. The reception was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker

Marzouq Al-Ghanem also met with the visiting Prime Minister of Tajikistan and his accompanying delegation. Bilateral relations and means to further them on all levels, as well as recent regional developments, were discussed during the meeting.

Kuwait's Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah had received his Tajik

counterpart along with his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace earlier yesterday. Rasulzoda was accorded a formal reception attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Advisor at His Highness the Prime Minister Diwan Sheikh Dr Salem

Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Dean of Diplomatic Corps Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal to the State of Kuwait Abdou Lahad Mbacke, and Ambassador of Kuwait to Pakistan referred to Tajikistan Nassar Al-Mutairi, in addition to senior state officials. Rasulzoda is visiting Kuwait upon an official invitation from His Highness the Prime Minister.— KUNA



KUWAIT: Ooredoo's Fatima Dashti receives an award on behalf of her company.

## Ooredoo program won Best Voluntary Initiative Award

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, the first in providing the best digital services in Kuwait sponsored the youth Initiative Forum for the fourth consecutive year, in which the company had won the award for Best Voluntary Initiative Award for the Ooredoo Volunteer Program. The award recognizes volunteer and humanitarian efforts by youth in the Arab region. The event took place at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center and was organized in partnership with the Arab Media Forum. More than 120 projects from the Arab world participated in the event, which is judged by a panel that includes a number of leaders in philanthropy in the region. A large number of projects from abroad were invited to Kuwait to showcase their projects. The sponsorship of this event comes in tandem with Ooredoo's core values of caring, connecting and challenging.

During the Youth Initiative Forum award ceremony, Ooredoo received an award for its annual volunteer program OVP Ooredoo Volunteers Program for youth. A program that continues to attract hundreds of participants, preparing them with the right set of skills and tools before matching them with volunteering opportunities. The program was established in 2015 and grows every year and has reached more than 350 volunteers today who are taking interest and participating in every CSR related activity at Ooredoo.

The idea of establishing the forum is inspired by youth-led movements in different fields. The forum is concerned with evaluating non-profit youth initiatives in multiple fields. It works to give young people the incentive for further progress and creativity. The event was organized by the Arab Media Forum, led by Madi Al-Khamis and had representatives from the Arab League, the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences, the Arab Planning Institute, ministry of Information, Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, the Public Authority for Youth and Kuwait Media and Communication Society.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Mijbil Al-Ayoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "This sponsorship comes to reiterate the company's commitment to supporting youth in a variety of fields to enrich their experience, especially volunteerism which is a field the Ooredoo adopted ever since the inception of the volunteer program nearly six years ago."

The award aims to support the youth with their projects and works on creating a competitive atmosphere among young people to push them to work harder. Supporting youth is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. Ooredoo is continuously working with the different entities in both private and public sectors to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields.



A general view of the audience.

## Comoros, Eritrea leaders write to Kuwait's Amir

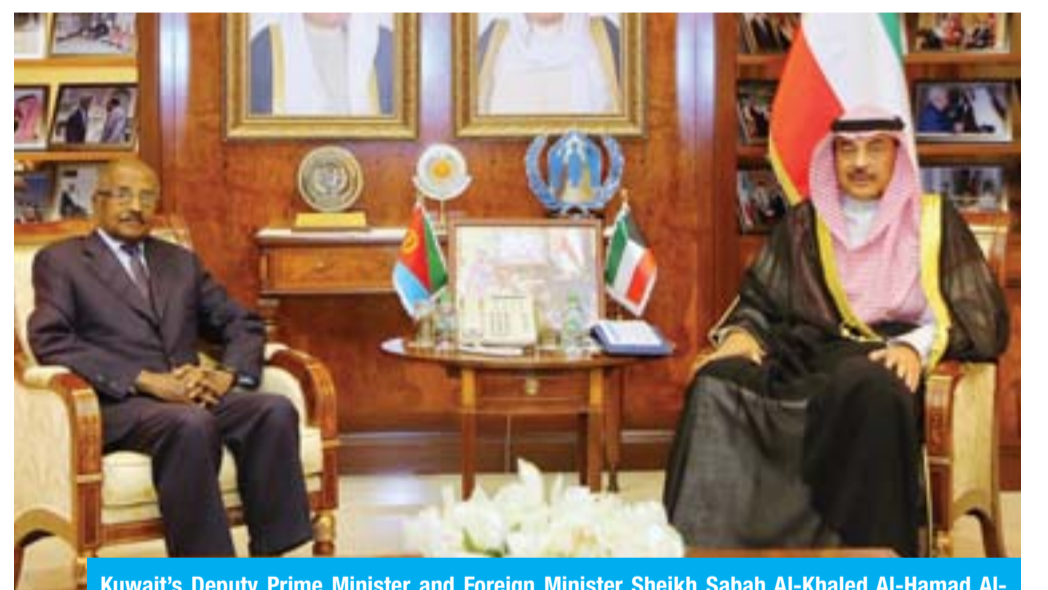
KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a pair of letters from the respective presidents of the Comoros and Eritrea, all of which dealt with plans to improve bilateral relations. The letters from Azali Assoumani and Isaias Afwerki, respectively, were both delivered to His Highness the Amir by Kuwait's Minister of State for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah had received the letters from Comoros' Minister of Health, Solidarity, Social Protection, and Gender Promotion, and from Eritrean Foreign Minister, respectively.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a cable of congratulations from Chairman of Sudan Sovereignty Council General Abdelfattah Al-Burhan. In the cable, the Chairman expressed sincere joy and warm sentiments over the return of His Highness the Amir after completing medical examinations. His Highness the Amir in return sent a letter of gratitude, expressing appreciation for the kind gesture.

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah had met on Sunday with his Eritrean counterpart Osman Mohammed, who is on an official visit to Kuwait. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations, the latest regional and international developments and issues of mutual importance. In attendance was Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Ceremonials Dhari Al-Ajran, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Foreign Minister Office Ayham Al-Omar and the Assistant Foreign Minister for Africa Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Hamad Al-Mashaan.— KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of State for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah receives a letter from President of Comoros Azali Assoumani to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with his Eritrean counterpart Osman Mohammed.

## EGOV7 kicks off today; organized by NoufEXPO

KUWAIT: Magdy Sabry, Executive Manager of NoufEXPO, announced that the seventh eGovernment Forum and its accompanying technology exhibition will launch today. Sabry said, "EGOV7 proceedings will commence at 6:30 pm at Al-Baraka Ballroom of Crowne Plaza Hotel. We extend our sincere gratitude for His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for patronizing the event. Our gratitude is also extended to Anas Khaled Al-Saleh, Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, and the Chairman of the Board of the Central Agency for Information Technology who will be inaugurating the Forum. This distinctive official support reflects Kuwait's leadership focus on bringing Kuwait's government services to new advanced frontiers. This support, as well, reflects EGOV role in supporting Kuwait's eGovernment Initiatives."

Commenting on EGOV7 top-

ics, Sabry said, "In addition to the various smart government technical sessions, EGOV7 will feature two specialized workshops. The Artificial Intelligence: Technology and Practical Use Cases workshop, presented by Microsoft, will acquaint planners and developers of smart government services with artificial intelligence. AI is considered, by the industry, as the next technology revolution that will take us to unprecedented capabilities. Self-driving vehicles, automated health, education, and legal services, face recognition, Virtual Reality, and Augmented Reality are but a few of what is awaiting us. Cloud data centers are playing significant role in supporting AI potential."

Sabry moved on saying, "the Strategies Follow-Up and Performance Management workshop, presented by Techno-Management, will benefit all organizations in the public and private sectors. The workshop introduces an integrated auto-



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh

ated system that allows organizations to set their strategies, goals, objectives, performance indicators, and plans. It also helps organizations to monitor their execution and link it to objectives and strategy. Management will have accurate online view of their performance that helps them face any challenges as they come. The environment helps organizations to combat wastage and corruption while leveraging the efficiency of all available resources."

The Executive Manager of NoufEXPO concluded his state-

ment by extending his thanks to the sponsoring companies that are supporting EGOV7. He specifically cited Microsoft, Xerox -Alghanim Industries, Gulf Cable and Electrical Industries Company, Zain, Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB), Public Authority for Industry, and Techno-Management. Sabry welcomed all visitors from abroad and wished all participants and sponsoring companies a successful event full of fruitful networking and successful business development opportunities.

Local

# Minister cancels earlier decision to dissolve Al-Salam Charity Society

## Home economy teachers protest 'unbalanced work'

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Social Affairs Minister Saad Al-Kharraz cancelled a ministry decision made last year to dissolve Al-Salam Charity Society. The ministerial order cancelled the decision number 132 A/2018 that dissolved the society as per a court ruling. In February, the Ministry of Social Affairs' assistant undersecretary for legal affairs Musallam Al-Subaei had announced that the court of first instance annulled the ministry's decision to dissolve Al-Salam Charity Society, but stressed that the sentence was initial and non-binding. Subaei said the ministry would review the verdict and file an appeal to contest it.

In a statement released in December 2018 to explain the reasons behind the dissolution, the Ministry of Social Affairs' assistant undersecretary for social development affairs Hana Al-Hajeri said that the charity committed violations that include launching a fundraising campaign without getting prior approvals, collecting donations in non-designated locations, collecting cash donations, using a voluntary team without getting the ministry's approval and collecting donations without a license. The violations included projects abroad that had been suspended by the foreign ministry, the travel of its members without registering with the foreign ministry's electronic safe travel system and distributing zakat money outside Kuwait, she added. "Despite repeated verbal and written warnings to the society, it committed several violations and broke many regulations," she noted.

Meanwhile, Minister Kharraz also refused to increase social allowance for married students from KD 559 to KD 700, because this will prompt a review of all social allowances, which in turn will burden the budget,

he explained. Furthermore, the minister said such a proposal requires a comprehensive study of the financial cost, besides a review of all social assistance to ensure equality between them all. The minister was replying to a proposal by some MPs on that regard.

### Teachers' protest

Home economy teachers staged a sit-in yesterday to demand justice in what they described as distributing classes among them. They also called the education ministry to appoint supervisors to take over some of the administrative duties they say they were assigned with. According to the teachers, some of their colleagues have obtained permission through 'wasta' (connections) to be shifted to schools with less-demanding volume of work, leaving sections in other schools short-handed, and teachers there overburdened. Meanwhile, a ministry source who spoke on the condition of anonymity argued that a new curricula introduced this year has caused an average increase of two classes per teacher, noting that a teacher teaches an average of 14-16 classes a week this year.

### Financial issues

The National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States of America (NUKS USA) faces financial issues because of alleged violations committed by the previous union regarding expenses that have not been settled until today, running over tens of thousands of dollars. The union said treasurer Usama Al-Mutairi exerted all efforts to protect the union from any legal action because of an invoice of the annual conference's hotel that was held in Dallas. He said it was agreed with the former board to hand over all invoices that belong to persons who were not guests at the conference. He



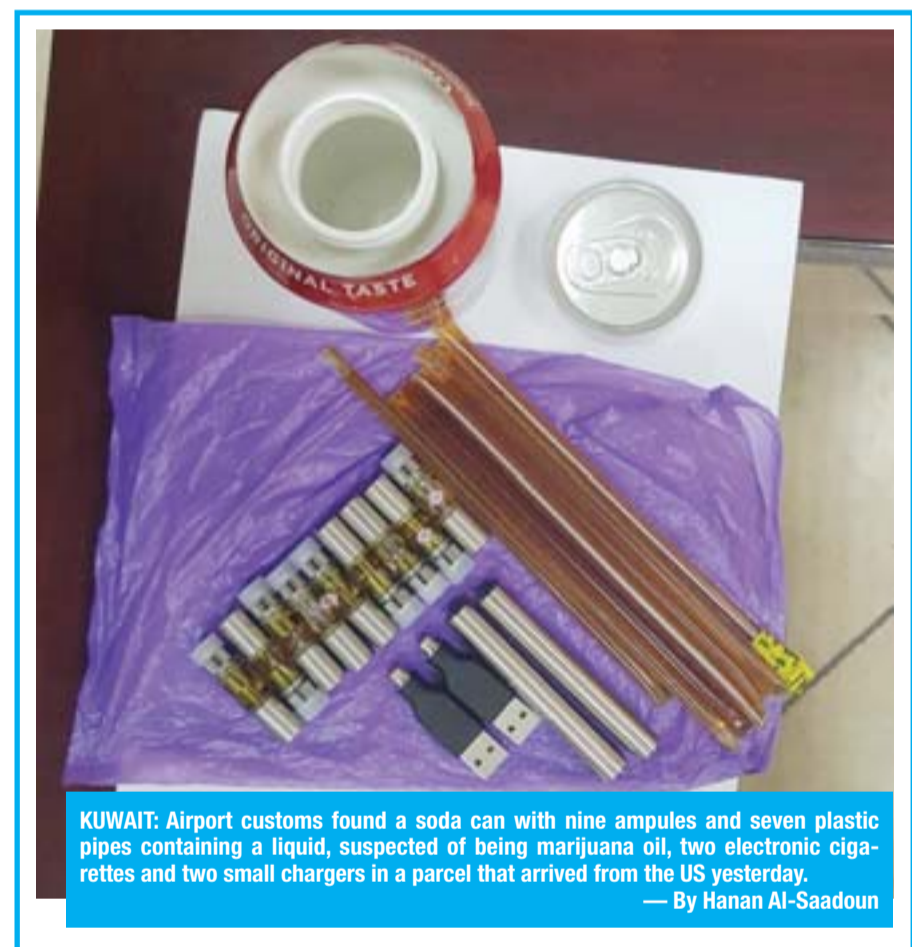
**KUWAIT:** Home economy teachers stage a sit-in yesterday.

said the budget is a trust owned by the students and not members, and because of the remaining invoices, a law firm filed a lawsuit against the union.

### New treatment

Director of Kuwait Cancer Fighting Center Dr Ali Al-Mousawi said a new treatment service was intro-

duced at the nuclear medicine department to treat neurohormonal tumors through the use of radioactive material. Head of the nuclear medicine department at the center Dr Farida Al-Kandari said the first patient with neurohormonal tumors was treated with LU-177 Dota-Tate used in cooperation with the tumor unit and radioactive treatment department. She said this type of treatment is approved by the FDA.



**KUWAIT:** Airport customs found a soda can with nine ampules and seven plastic pipes containing a liquid, suspected of being marijuana oil, two electronic cigarettes and two small chargers in a parcel that arrived from the US yesterday.  
— By Hanan Al-Saadoun

## EU supports any Kuwaiti initiative to defuse tensions

**BRUSSELS:** The European Union's (EU) top diplomat for foreign and security policy yesterday praised Kuwait as a "credible country," saying the 28-member bloc supports any Kuwaiti initiative to foster peace and security in the region. Speaking at a press conference after the meeting of EU foreign ministers, Federica Mogherini said the talks centered on security in the Gulf region, which she said "is extremely relevant for the European security but also for the security of the world as such."

"We discussed today the need for the EU to support and accompany any initiative that would come from the region itself," added the EU official. In reply to a question by KUNA, she said "you come from a country that has a credibility and reputation and role to play in this respect."

"I had the honor to discuss this several times in Kuwait. Others around the Gulf have floated ideas in the region about either regional conferences or back channels to be opened," said the EU foreign policy chief.

"We believe it is not for the EU as such to launch an initiative, but it is for the EU to offer support and accompany any initiative that would be initiated in the region and that would be inclusive and with an eye to decrease tensions and finding ways to live together peacefully," she added. She stressed that the EU will support any initiative that "is seeing the regional actors as the key drivers." "The EU member states have a significant experience on how to live together even when tensions arise in a peaceful manner," added Mogherini. — KUNA

## Kuwait invests \$18 billion in Jordan

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's investments in Jordan are estimated at over \$18 billion, said a senior commerce chamber official yesterday, voicing willingness to offer all facilities to Jordanian investors. Speaking while hosting a visiting Jordanian economic team, First Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abdulwahab Al-Wazzan said the chamber spurs Kuwaiti and Jordanian businessmen to run investments in each other's countries. He added that the Jordanian delegation had assessed a set of promising investment openings in various realms, giving added value to already existing Kuwaiti investments in Jordan. Kuwait and Jordan are bound with several

agreements bearing on tax exemption, investment promotion, direct investment and whatnots. Wazzan pointed out. Meanwhile, Jordan Investment Commission Chairman Khaled Al-Wazni said Kuwait is a key investor in Jordan in the domains of mining, real estate, banks and energy. He elaborated that the goal of his visit is to offer available investment opportunities in the Jordanian market, mainly regarding industrial and tourist cities. Wazni remarked that his country provides foreign investors with many incentives, pointing out a special office for Gulf investments in Jordan in an effort to make it easy for Gulf investors to work in this Arab country. — KUNA

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## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Aerial view of the Green Island. — Photo by Fahad Al-Otaibi (KUNA)

# Zain partners with 9th Kuwait Women Conference and Regional Symposium

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KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti receives a commemorative plaque on behalf of his company during the event.

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its partnership of the 9th Annual Kuwait Women Conference and Regional Symposium: Implementing SDG5 Challenges and Approaches. The conference, organized by Kuwait University's Women's Research and Studies Center (WRSC), is held during 11-13 November under the patronage of Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel.

Zain took part in the event's opening ceremony, which witnessed the presence of Minister Aqeel, Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mahdi, Director of the Women's Research and Studies Center (WRSC) Dr Lubna Al-Kazi, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Kuwait University Dr Homoud Al-Qashaan, Zain Kuwait's Chief Human Resources Officer Nawal Bourisli, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, as well as many prominent figures, ex-ministers, academics, and representatives from the public and private sectors.

The 9th edition of the conference is co-organized by Kuwait University's Women's Research and Studies Center, the General Secretariat for the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD), and the United Nations

Development Program (UNDP). Zain's partnership comes to reflect its commitment in supporting the various efforts that highlight the importance of achieving women empowerment, gender equality, and inclusion in the workplace.

The 9th Annual Kuwait Women Conference and Regional Symposium mainly aims at discussing lessons learned and key elements of success that are crucial to overcome various policy and implementation bottlenecks to advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) in Kuwait and the region.

The conference will witness seminars, workshops, and panel discussions that will host many experts from UNDP, UN Women and the World Bank, as well as front-line practitioners from governments, civil society and the private sector to identify solutions for achieving gender equality through the implementation of the SDGs, including the use of innovation and technology towards global policy impact. The conference will also focus on the role the private sector can play in leading gender equality in the region. Zain is keen on actively participating in the various local and regional projects that aim at contributing to the achievement of the country's various developmental goals. The company will spare no efforts to support any entity that serves the global sustainable goals and contributes to the progress and prosperity of the region.

## CERN Kuwait exhibition underway

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) inaugurated the Kuwait CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) Exhibition yesterday. The exhibition aims to educate people on CERN's efforts and achievements, KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shehabeddine said in his opening speech. He noted that CERN promotes scientific culture and encourages innovation and research. Meanwhile, Kuwait University Rector Dr Hussein Al-Ansari affirmed Kuwait's continuous cooperation with international scientific organizations to boost the scientific research field in Kuwait. He said KU is eager to develop its technology and research field, adding that the event also encourages the teaching of modern physics in schools. The exhibition, which runs through November 18, is organized in coordination with Kuwait

University, CERN and Sheikh Ibrahim bin Mohammad Al-Khalifa Center for Culture and Research. — KUNA



KUWAIT: KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shehabeddine delivers his speech. — KUNA

Local

# Municipality oversees demolition of 'violating' Khaitan building

Municipality minister opens 'first-of-its-kind' central food lab



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality officials stand as a building in Khaitan is being demolished for violations of construction regulations.

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality won a case filed against the owners of an apartment building in Khaitan who had been refusing to demolish it for violating construction regulations, said the municipality's legal advisor and head of the violations committee Amshaa Al-Mutairi, adding that she herself supervised the demolition process. Mutairi explained that the case had been in court since 2012 until the final sentence was passed. She also noted that several construction violation cases are being currently heard in courts.

**Council's session**

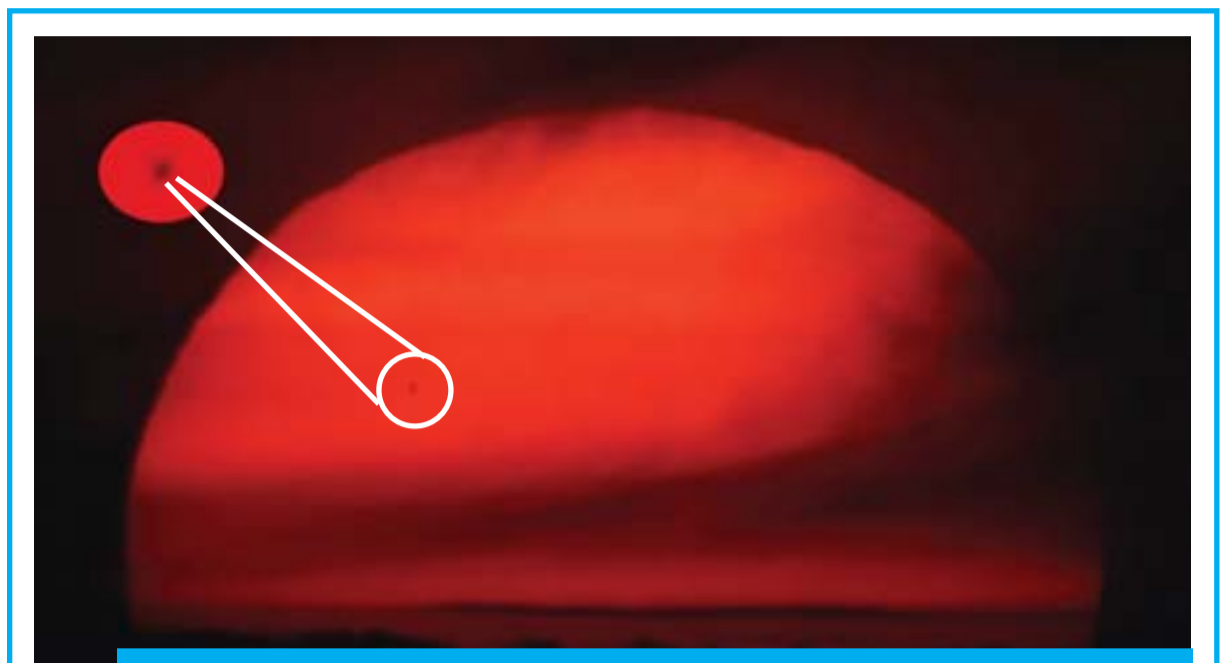
Presided by Chairman Osama Al-Otaibi, the Municipal Council yesterday held its ordinary session in

the second legislative term to resume discussing the topics left over from the previous meeting's agenda. The members agreed to refer a proposal made by member Maha Al-Baghli on amending municipality bylaws and regulations to the minister pending referral to the Cabinet for further discussion. The council also discussed a proposal to hire retirees to help in protecting marine environment and parks, and cleaning concerns in various areas.

**Food lab**

Meanwhile, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Sholah yesterday inaugurated the central lab for examining and analyzing food in Shuwaikh industrial

area. The new center will meet the requirements of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition to ensure the safety of both imported and local food items using the latest devices, the municipality said. The center comprises of two main buildings over a total area of 22387.50 sq m including various labs, in addition to a basement to receive specimens, offices, parking for 264 vehicles, power unit, water reservoirs and four freezing and cooling rooms. Sholah stressed that the central lab is one of the municipality's major projects and will be handed over to the food and nutrition authority to operate it. Also speaking on the occasion, the municipality's projects manager Nadia Al-Shereeda said the central lab is the first-of-its-kind in the Middle East.



KUWAIT: A picture taken in Kuwait City yesterday shows the planet Mercury transiting in front of the sun. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Auditors' meetings contributing to work development: Kuwait

DOHA: Acting Chairman of Kuwait's State Audit Bureau (SAB) Adel Al-Saraawi underlined yesterday the importance of the results of a meeting held by the concerned Arab authorities on auditing and accounting in Qatar, to contribute to the development of work and enhancing capabilities of Arab auditing organizations while coordinating their activities. Saraawi said, on the sidelines of the 58th meeting of the Executive Board of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI) of the 13th General Assembly session, that such meetings

contribute to supervisory work in Arab countries, exchanging knowledge, experience and identifying the best practices in the field.

On the agenda of the 58th meeting, which opened on Sunday lasting two days, Saraawi said that the meeting is vital as it is held after the General Assembly of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), held in Moscow last September. He pointed out that the meetings of INTOSAI had a direct impact on the work of the Executive Council, which dealt with a range of issues, including proposals from Kuwait in which they submitted three reports related to the Standards and Environment Committees, then transferred it to the Commission on Sustainable Development, in addition to the strategic plan. These reports include special proposals from Kuwait, most notably the adoption of a forum or conference for young leaders working in INTOSAI, that was welcomed by countries and will be coordinated with INTOSAI to support it, he added.—KUNA

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Catalan crisis inspires Spain's far right

## Malaysian ex-PM Najib's first 1MDB trial to proceed

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BAGHDAD: An Iraqi protester helps his comrade who was struck by a tear gas canister fired by Iraqi security forces at Baghdad's Khallani square during ongoing anti-government demonstrations. — AFP

# Top Iraq cleric urges 'serious' reforms

## Anti-government demonstrations have left hundreds dead

**NAJAF:** The United Nations' top official in Iraq and the country's most senior cleric urged authorities yesterday to get "serious" about reforms after anti-government demonstrations that have left hundreds dead. Mass rallies calling for an overhaul of the ruling system have rocked the capital Baghdad and the Shiite-majority south since October 1 — the largest and deadliest popular movement in Iraq in decades.

The bloody unrest has sparked serious concern from the UN, human rights groups and the White House, which on Sunday called on Baghdad "to halt the violence against protesters" and pass electoral reform. After weeks of paralysis, Iraq's top leaders seem to have agreed to keep the system intact, but the UN in Iraq (UNAMI) urged them to enact a host of changes. These include electoral reforms within two weeks, the prosecution of those responsible for the recent violence as well as of corrupt officials, and the passing of anti-graft laws.

Yesterday, UNAMI chief Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert met the country's highest Shiite authority, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, in the holy city of Najaf. She said the seat of Shiite religious power in Iraq, known as the marjiah, had stressed that "peaceful demonstrators

cannot go home without sufficient reforms" to answer their demands.

"The marjiah expressed its concerns that the political forces are not serious enough to carry out such reforms," said Hennis-Plasschaert. "If the three authorities — executive, judiciary and legislative — are not able or willing to conduct these reforms decisively, there must be a way to think of a different approach," she warned without elaborating. There was no statement attributable directly to Sistani, who is 89 and never appears in public. In his recent sermons, delivered by a representative, Sistani has described the protesters' demands as "legitimate" and called for the rallies to be handled with "restraint".

### Rallies flare up

In recent days, more than a dozen protesters have been killed as security forces have cracked down on demonstrators. They have cleared streets and squares in Baghdad, in the port hub of Basra and the southern city of Nasiriyah, where four protesters were shot dead on Sunday. Security forces there even chased down demonstrators into a children's hospital and fired tear gas inside.

Yesterday, protesters struggled to come out in large numbers there and security forces reopened roads in Basra, stifling attempts to stage sit-ins near the provincial headquarters. In Baghdad, live rounds rang out in neighborhoods close to the main protest camp of Tahrir (Liberation) Square. But thousands of demonstrators took to the streets again in Hillah, Diwaniyah and Kut.

Aside from the crackdown, activists and volunteer medics have described a widening campaign of arrests and intimidation intended to keep them away from protests. The UN has warned that "a climate of anger and fear has set in," and its human rights council was to meet later yesterday for a periodic review of Iraq's rights record.

### 'We want total change'

Iraq's President Barham Saleh had last month proposed an early vote after reforms, but the suggestion seems to have been widely rejected by the political class. Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi cast them as unrealistic and even firebrand cleric Moqtada Sadr, who first demanded snap elections supervised by the UN, has gone silent.

The initial fissures among the political elite

appear to have closed this week following a consensus brokered by Major General Qasem Soleimani, the head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' foreign operations arm. Soleimani, who often appears in Baghdad in times of political crisis, has led a series of meetings with Iraq's top-tier politicians, sources told AFP.

The agreement, they said, included a series of reforms in exchange for keeping the broader system in place. Those proposals will likely fall short of the demands of protesters, who demand a complete overhaul of a regime they see as deeply corrupt. Demonstrators say the current system means government jobs are doled out based on bribes or nepotism, shutting out applicants who are politically independent.

Youth make up 60 percent of Iraq's nearly 40 million people and the unemployment rate among them stands at a staggering 25 percent, according to the World Bank. One in five people lives below the poverty line, despite the vast oil wealth of OPEC's second biggest producer. "We don't want amendments, we want change — total change," one protester in Baghdad said yesterday. "We don't want this government, or parliament, or any political party." — AFP

## Key backer of 'White Helmets' found dead

**ISTANBUL:** The British founder of an organization that trained the Syrian "White Helmets" emergency response group has died in Istanbul, three people with knowledge of his death said yesterday. James Le Mesurier, founder of the Mayday Rescue group, was found dead early yesterday near his home in central Istanbul's Beyoglu district, a neighbor said. A security source told Reuters it was believed that Le Mesurier had fallen from the balcony of his home office and his death was being treated as a suspected suicide. A third person, a diplomat, said the circumstances around his death were unclear.

The White Helmets, known officially as Syria Civil Defense, have been credited with saving thousands of people in rebel-held areas during years of bombing by Syrian government and Russian forces in the country's more than eight-year civil war. White Helmets members say they are neutral. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and his backers describe them as tools of Western propaganda and Islamist-led insurgents. Mayday Rescue, a not-for-profit organization, began its operations in 2014 and established an office in Istanbul in 2015 to support its Syria project. Its projects have been funded by the United Nations and various governments, its website said.

Mayday Rescue did not immediately



ISTANBUL: A Turkish police officer leaves the scene of the Mayday Rescue offices on November 11, 2019, in the Karakoy district of Istanbul, following the discovery of the body of the organization's founder. — AFP

respond to an emailed query about Le Mesurier. A former British army officer, Le Mesurier was awarded a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth in 2016 for services to Syria Civil Defense and the protection of civilians in Syria. The security source said Le Mesurier's wife told police that she and her husband had taken sleeping pills around 4 am and went to bed. She said she was later woken by knocking on the door and discovered that her husband was lying on the street surrounded by police, the source added. — Reuters

## Suez Canal: The stormy 150-yr history

**PARIS:** In its 150 years of operations, the Suez Canal has been through wars and high-stakes power struggles as it imposed itself as a vital international waterway. On the anniversary of its lavish opening ceremony on November 17, 1869, here is a look back at key dates in its history.

### 4,000 years ago

As far back as the 19th century BC, a canal existed between the Red Sea and a section of the Nile River which links to the Mediterranean. Dug out during the reign of Pharaoh Sesostrius III, it could only be navigated during the wet season and required regular dredging. It was eventually abandoned in the eighth century AD. From the 16th century various plans were explored to build a navigable waterway between the Mediterranean and Red Sea, essentially providing a shortcut between Europe and Asia.

### 1859: Construction starts

In a breakthrough in 1854, French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps persuaded the new Egyptian ruler, Said Pasha, to grant him a concession to construct a canal from the Red Sea's Gulf of Suez to the Mediterranean. De Lesseps

founded the Suez Canal Company in 1855 and the work was financed through the sale of shares, half of which were bought by the Egyptian ruler. Digging began in 1859, at first by laborers using picks and shovels, and later with steam- and coal-powered machinery. It involved about 60,000 workers.

### 1869: Grandiose opening

The canal was opened on November 17, 1869 in a grandiose ceremony at Port Said attended by European dignitaries including Napoleon III's wife, Empress Eugenie de Montijo. In November 1875 an indebted Said Pasha sold his shares to the British government, with French shareholders retaining the rest.

### 1888: Going international

Amid tussles for control, major powers signed in 1888 the Constantinople Convention that gave the waterway international status and open to all ships in times of war and peace. Egypt was not a signatory. The provision was not always respected, including during the two World Wars.

### 1956: Suez Crisis

On July 26, 1956 Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser took the world by surprise by nationalising the canal to help finance construction of the Aswan Dam on the Nile. It sparked the Suez Crisis in which Britain, France and Israel — who feared the vital waterway could be cut off — colluded to attack Egypt. Israel invaded the Gaza Strip and Sinai peninsula in

October; two days later French and British air raids destroyed part of Egypt's air force. Nasser retaliated in November by sinking all 40 ships in the canal, which was closed until early 1957. As the tensions soared, Britain and then France ceded, and fighting abruptly ended after 10 days. The canal was reopened on March 29, 1957 under Egyptian control.

### 1967: Closed by wars

Egypt closed it again in June 1967 during the Six-Day War when Israeli troops invaded Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and reached the east bank of the canal. It remained closed during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when Egyptian forces crossed the canal in a bid to retake the Sinai. The Israeli army repelled the attack with a counter-crossing. The war ended with a UN-backed ceasefire.

### 1974: Returned to Egypt

Talks resulted in a military disengagement deal in January 1974 that saw Israeli forces pull back from the canal, which returned to Egyptian control. After 15 months of demining work, it reopened to international shipping on June 5, 1975.

### 2015: Expansion

On August 6, 2015 President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi officially opened a new route along the canal after work in which part of the existing waterway was widened and deepened. The expansion is intended to cut the waiting times and double the number of ships using the canal to around 97 per day by 2023. — AFP

## International

# Impeachment: The key allegations against US President Donald Trump

## The evidence covers a series of events from April 2019

WASHINGTON: The impeachment investigation of President Donald Trump in the US House of Representatives moves to public hearings on Wednesday. Trump is threatened with removal from office over allegations that he abused his powers and broke the law by pressuring Ukraine to supply damaging information on rival Democrats and possible 2020 presidential election challenger Joe Biden. The evidence covers a series of events from April 2019 when Zelensky was elected, and both sides sought to reboot Washington-Kiev relations. Zelensky sought aid and a meeting with the US leader; Trump sought "investigations."

### Giuliani machinations

Trump gave the Ukraine leader a congratulatory phone call on April 19. Days later, Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani said online and in public that the US wanted Ukraine to investigate Burisma, the energy company on whose board Biden's son Hunter served for five years until April 2019. Giuliani also called for an investigation into a debunked conspiracy theory that Ukraine helped the Democrats against Trump in the 2016 election.

"Explain to me why Biden shouldn't be investigated if his son got millions from a Russian loving crooked Ukrainian oligarch while he was VP and point man for Ukraine," Giuliani tweeted on May 10. Giuliani's immediate impact was in getting Trump to remove US ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, who had resisted Giuliani's involvement in Ukraine policy.

Another result: Trump told Vice President Mike Pence not to attend Zelensky's May 14 inauguration, sending Energy Secretary Rick Perry instead. According to a whistleblower complaint in August, that downgrade was meant to signal to the new government that Trump wanted the investigations.

### July 10 meeting

In a July 10 meeting in the office of White House National Security Advisor John Bolton, Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, told Ukrainian officials that a high profile meeting they sought between Zelensky and Trump was contingent on "investigations in the energy sector" and later referenced "Burisma". Sondland told the Ukrainians the alleged quid pro quo was authorized by Trump's right-hand man, acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney. "We have an agreement with the chief of staff for a meeting if these investigations in the energy sector start," Sondland told the Ukrainians, according to witnesses. Bolton, who objected to the linkage, immediately cut the meeting short, but Sondland continued to make the point in a subsequent meeting, witnesses said.

### Aid suspension

On July 19 Mulvaney, who also heads the White House budget office, froze a military aid package for Ukraine worth \$391 million dollars. He told budget officials it was at the order of Trump, but did not explain the reason. But in October Mulvaney told reporters it was linked to investigations, and said there was nothing wrong with the quid pro quo.

### July 25 phone call

On July 25 Trump spoke again by phone with Zelensky. According to a rough summary of the call released by the White House, he made clear he wanted Ukraine to open the investigations, and hinted at the linkage with assistance and a face-to-face meeting. "I would like you to do us a favor though because our country has been through a lot and Ukraine knows a lot about it," Trump said. Trump made direct reference to the story that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election helping rival Democrats.



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on November 01, 2019 the sun shines over the US Capitol Building on an autumn afternoon. — AFP

"I would like you to find out what happened with this whole situation," Trump said. "It's very important that you do it if that's possible." Trump added that "There's a lot of talk about Biden's son... A lot of people want to find out about that," he said, proposing Kiev cooperate with US Attorney General Bill Barr. "The United States has been very, very good to Ukraine. I wouldn't say that it's reciprocal necessarily because things are happening that are not good but the United States has been very, very good to Ukraine."

### Text messages

After the July 25 call, Sondland pressed on Kiev the

need for investigations. Text messages between Sondland and other US diplomats show he was focused on Trump's insistence on "the deliverable" — the investigations as a quid pro quo for the military aid. "I think potus (Trump) really wants the deliverable," he wrote on August 9. In August he helped arrange a prepared statement for Zelensky to deliver that would satisfy Trump. The statement, according to a August 13 text, was to read: "We intend to initiate and complete a transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016 US elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this problem in the future." — AFP

## Adam Schiff, the star of the impeachment probe

WASHINGTON: Adam Schiff, the head of the Democrats' investigation of President Donald Trump, sought Hollywood glory in his younger days as a prosecutor by crafting a screenplay for a thriller. That didn't go anywhere, but Schiff is now about to hit the small-screen bigtime starring in his own legal procedural: The Impeachment of a President.

As chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, on Wednesday Schiff will gavel in the first open hearing of the investigation into whether Trump violated his oath of office and the law in seeking help from Ukraine for his 2020 reelection campaign. In appearance, few would choose Schiff, 59, as the Democrats' attack dog to take down a Republican leader who is fighting tooth and nail to save his presidency.

A California congressman representing the Hollywood-Burbank entertainment industry hub, he appears more like a vicar or a primary school principal. He never raises his voice, and rarely strays into hyperbole. That made his quietly delivered outrage at the news of Trump's Ukraine dealings in September even more impactful. Trump's July demand for a "favor"

from Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky reflects "a classic mafia-type shakedown of a foreign leader," Schiff said. "This is how a mafia boss talks: 'What have you done for us?'"

Trump has blasted back that Schiff fabricated his words, and now does not miss a chance to label him, without offering any evidence, a "corrupt politician." "Shifty Schiff is a double-corrupt politician," Trump said Friday, attacking the impeachment proceedings as a "scam" and "witch hunt."

### 'Measured but forceful'

As mild-mannered as he appears, Schiff has proven to be a focused, determined investigator, and tough as a bulldog. He's a fit cyclist who at 50 completed a triathlon. House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi chose him, rather than the expected choice of Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, to lead the impeachment effort. Schiff is "logical, linear, measured but forceful," she said.

His approach is rooted in a late 1980s case, when Schiff, not long out of Harvard Law School, prosecuted the first FBI agent ever jailed for spying for Moscow. "I learned a lot about Russian tradecraft: how the Russians operate, who they target, the vulnerabilities they look for," he recounted earlier this year to Zach Dorfman of the Aspen Institute Cyber and Technology program. That background has taken him to the House Intelligence Committee, which has spent much of the last few years investigating how Russians aided Trump's 2016 election campaign.



WASHINGTON: US House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff speaks to the press with other lawmakers following a closed hearing with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale as part of the impeachment inquiry at the US Capitol. — AFP

### Pressure of national television

He takes the impeachment operation with utmost seriousness, showing a limited patience for efforts by Republican colleagues to turn the procedures into a political show. Transcripts of testimony the committee took behind closed doors during October show him wielding a firm hand as Republicans try to discredit witnesses and change the subject.

That will only intensify under the gaze of an audience on national television. But, after having resisted impeachment for months, he claims the evidence is strong — much more than just Trump's July 25 phone call

demanding a "favor" from Zelensky. In the coming hearings, he wrote in USA Today this week, "Americans will hear directly from dedicated and patriotic public servants about how they became aware that US foreign policy had been subverted for the president's personal political interests." "While temperatures might run high and the temptation to turn this solemn process into a political circus could be irresistible to some, I hope that all members of Congress and the public will focus on the facts and the substance of the testimony, not on politics or partisanship." — AFP

## Clinton says abuse of female politicians on social media is 'viral'

LONDON: Female politicians are facing a backlash over women's rights which have been fuelled by social media that rewards abusive posts and conspiracy theories, former U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton said on Sunday. Women in the public eye still face scrutiny over their looks and pressure to behave politely and meekly in a way that men do not, said Clinton as she discussed a book co-authored with her daughter Chelsea Clinton about inspirational women leaders.

Her comments came after a number of female members of parliament in Britain announced they would not stand for re-election at a Dec 12 general election, citing abuse on social media including rape and death threats. "I do think there is a reaction to a lot of the success of women and the roles of women right now," Clinton told an audience at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in central London.

"And I think social media has lit that up, in a very destructive and toxic way. People may have thought a lot of things in the past but now it is amplified and it is viral," Clinton, who lost out on her bid to become the first female president of the United States

at the 2016 election, has said misogyny "certainly" played a role in her defeat to Republican rival Donald Trump.

### Sexist comments

An international study last year by Atlanta, a social enterprise dedicated to advancing women's leadership, found female lawmakers were three times more likely than men to receive sexist comments than their male colleagues. Clinton said the skepticism towards Swedish teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg from some critics revealed how much gendered norms still prevailed in many areas of public life.

"She is a young woman, so the idea that she is standing up and speaking out as effectively as she has just rattles all of the paradigms that people still live with," she said. "There's almost an ancient DNA imprinting about 'This is what women are supposed to do and this is what they are supposed to look like' and you are not supposed to be so pushy and aggressive ... it is maddening how much that still operates."

The Clintons said they hoped their "The Book of Gutsy Women: Favorite Stories of Courage and Resilience" would inspire women to stand up for their beliefs - and help men and boys



LONDON: Hillary Rodham Clinton (L) discusses The Book of Gutsy Women with British historian Mary Beard (R) at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall. — AFP

find female heroes. It comes amid a growing debate over remaining glass ceilings for women, with U.S.-based Women's March demanding rights, while the #MeToo movement on social media against sexual abuse has sparked wider debates on pay, representation and sexism.

Clinton said she was optimistic for future political candidates and others

reaching into male-dominated spheres, but change was needed to ensure they had an equal chance of success. "It is the structures of power that should change. Why are they so set on making it so difficult for not only women but people of color and others to get into the room?" she said. "We are really aware of that. I lived that." — Reuters

## How Trump's impeachment will unroll

WASHINGTON: The start of open hearings in the impeachment investigation into President Donald Trump on Wednesday will give the American public their first chance to witness live the explosive showdown between Democrats and Republicans over the US leader's future. The hearing before the House Intelligence Committee marks the second phase of the impeachment investigation into allegations that Trump abused his powers by seeking help for his 2020 reelection campaign from Ukraine.

Trump is under threat of becoming only the third president in US history to be impeached — formally charged with violating his duties as president or committing crimes, and placed on trial in the Senate. With Democrats in control of the House of Representatives, impeachment appears highly likely, as soon as the end of 2019. But the Republicans hold a majority in the Senate, a bulwark against him being convicted and removed from office — unless they turn against him. There is still much to do, but analysts believe the entire process could be completed before the end of January.

On Wednesday, the House Intelligence Committee takes the impeachment investigation public after six weeks of closed-door depositions from White House, State Department and other officials. Those depositions have already painted a fairly complete picture of how Trump and aides, including personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, pressured Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky to open investigations that could conceivably find political dirt against the Democrats and Trump's possible 2020 election rival Joe Biden.

Some of the witnesses who already testified privately will be recalled to face the public panel, starting with Ambassador William Taylor, Washington's top diplomat in Ukraine, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent on Wednesday, and former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch on Friday. The aim is to further compile the evidence against the president, or, for Republicans, in his support. Democrats chose all the witnesses for the initial private depositions phase. In the open hearings, both parties can propose and subpoena witnesses — although Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff will be able to prevent Republicans from inviting witnesses who have no relation to the core allegations or who simply seek to stall the proceedings.

The next step is hearings by the Judiciary Committee, under Chairman Jerry Nadler, a longtime Trump nemesis, to decide whether the evidence is strong enough to support formal charges, or articles of impeachment. Trump and his lawyers will be able to appear, cross-examine witnesses, and submit evidence in their favor. At the end of those hearings, the Democratic-controlled committee will vote on specific articles of impeachment, based on the US Constitution's standard of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors," and whether Trump's actions constituted abuse of presidential power. Currently, the charges are expected to be abuse of power and obstruction of the investigation.

The Judiciary Committee then sends the articles of impeachment to the entire House for a vote. Only a basic majority of the 435 member House is required to approve impeachment. Democrats currently hold a solid majority, 233 seats to 197 for Republicans, with four seats currently vacant and one held by an independent. That suggests that, if the evidence is strong enough, Democrats will easily pass the impeachment resolution. The resolution would then go to the Senate, where Trump would stand trial, with the 100 senators his jury. Democrats from the House would act as the prosecuting team, while Trump's lawyers would defend him, and Trump could argue in his own favor. Both sides can call witnesses and present testimony. Presiding over the trial would likely be Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, who was appointed to the court by Republican President George W. Bush in 2005. A trial could take a few weeks. The impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton in 1999 lasted five weeks, and ultimately ended in his acquittal: while Republicans had a majority in the Senate, Clinton had enough support among Democrats to easily beat the required two-thirds majority to convict. — AFP

## International

# Abascal ascendant as Catalan crisis inspires Spain's far right

## The Vox party has made significant inroads into the country's political landscape

**MADRID:** With his rallying cry of "Spaniards first" and un-tempered rage against those betraying the unity of Spain, Santiago Abascal has managed to turn the Catalan crisis into political capital that has fuelled the rise of his far-right Vox. Sporting an impeccably-trimmed beard and with a piercing stare, Abascal has become the poster boy for the resurgent far right which in the past year has made significant political inroads following decades on the margins after the death of dictator Francisco Franco.

And on Sunday, he scored his biggest triumph yet as Vox surged in the election to become Spain's third-largest party with 52 of the parliament's 350 seats. It was a stunning victory for a party that made its parliamentary debut in April after winning 24 seats. "Eleven months ago, we had no representation and today we are the third political force in Spain," he boomed at a victorious celebration in the Spanish capital after Vox more than doubled its parliamentary presence.

Launched in 2014 by Abascal and a handful of others from the hardline fringe of the rightwing Popular Party, Vox struggled to gain traction at first, attracting only a smattering of voters with its ultra-conservative stance on immigration, gender violence and traditional family values. A media-savvy operator who comes across as courteous and affable while deftly parrying difficult questions, it is Abascal's tough line on the Catalan separatist crisis and his impassioned defense of Spain's unity that has drawn growing support.

"I'm not a xenophobe," said Abascal, smiling and joking as he appeared on a popular Spanish talk show that was watched by 4.7 million viewers in which he called for the expulsion of unaccompanied immigrant minors. "I'm an open and tolerant person."

## Latin America's longest-serving leader collapses

**LA PAZ:** Evo Morales was Latin America's longest-serving president until he resigned in ignominy Sunday, after weeks of opposition protests over an election ultimately said to have been riddled with irregularities. A member of the Aymara people, he grew up in poverty on Bolivia's high plains and was a llama herder, coca farmer and leftist union leader before rising to take office as his country's first indigenous president in January 2006.

His victory in October 20 elections — verified by the heavily-criticized Supreme Electoral Tribunal — had been set to extend his mandate until 2025 and give him 19 consecutive years in power. But election monitors from the Organization of American States who carried out an audit of the controversial polls said they had found many irregularities in their analysis of the election. Morales called new elections, but resigned within hours of that announcement after army and police chiefs joined calls for him to quit.

### Landmark gains

Recently turned 60, Morales was one of the last of the wave of leftist leaders who swept to power in the region in the early 2000s. Those leftist governments have since fallen away, torn down by a conservative backlash in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Ecuador — though Argentina's Peronist left bucked the trend to win last month's elections amid an

## Swedish police set up task force to combat gang violence

**STOCKHOLM:** Swedish police said yesterday they would set up a special task force to deal with a wave of shootings and bombings linked to criminal gangs following the fatal shooting of a 15-year old in the city of Malmo at the weekend. Sweden has long held a reputation as being one of the safest countries in the world and while overall crime and murder rates remain low, gang wars in major cities have claimed an increasing number of victims in recent years.

On Saturday, two 15-year-olds were shot outside a pizza restaurant in Malmo in what police said appeared to be a gang conflict over control of the drug trade in the area. One died immediately and the other is in critical condition. "The weekend was a black weekend for Malmo and for the Malmo police," Malmo police chief Stefan Sinteus told reporters. The attack was preceded by a large car bomb about a mile away which

economic crisis there.

Under Morales' leadership, Bolivia made landmark gains against hunger and poverty. Sitting on the region's second-largest gas reserves, after Venezuela, and the world's largest reserves of lithium, Bolivia's economy has more than tripled in size during his 13 years in office. However, long before the social unrest of recent weeks that heralded his resignation, opponents accused him of tolerating corruption and investing in flashy infrastructure projects at the expense of health and education.

A case in point is his decision last year to move the government headquarters into a luxurious skyscraper in La Paz. While still among the poorest countries in Latin America, Bolivia's poverty rate has decreased from 45 percent of the population in 2010 to 35 percent in 2018, according to the World Bank.

But environmentalists blame him for raging wildfires that destroyed more than four million hectares (10 million acres) of forest and grassland, saying legislation enacted under Morales encouraged wholesale deforestation in order to expand agricultural production. It's all a long way from his childhood herding llamas and helping his parents in the fields in a small, arid village in western Bolivia's Oruro department.

"Until I was 14, I had no idea there was such a thing as underwear. I slept in my clothes... (which) my mother only removed for two reasons: to look for lice or to patch an elbow or a knee," he wrote in a candid autobiography. Four of his six brothers and sisters died of malnutrition and disease before the age of two. Morales never went to college and has considerable difficulty reading speeches in public, instead preferring to improvise by repeating phrases about the economic strides made under his government. — AFP

police believe was intended to divert their attention.

Following the attack, the police's Department of National Operations said they had set up a special task force with a nationwide mandate to fight gang activities, to be called Operation Hoarfrost. Sweden has been hit by a surge in gang violence in recent years with police saying last week that there had been 187 bomb attacks so far this year, up from 152 in the whole of 2018. In June, about 20 people were wounded when a bomb exploded on a residential street in Linköping in southern Sweden.

By the end of August, about 26 people had been shot dead in Sweden against 45 last year as a whole and pressure on the government to act has been mounting. The ruling coalition of the Social Democrats and Greens has sharpened sentences for gun crimes and promised extra resources for the police. But opposition parties claim the effort is too little, too late.

Yesterday, the far-right Sweden Democrats, who have been gaining support among voters worried about violent crime, called a motion of no confidence in Justice Minister Morgan Johansson. "He has done too little," Sweden Democrat leader Jimmie Akesson told Swedish radio. "There is a lot of talk where they send signals, but in practice nothing happens." — AFP

### 'Not a charismatic leader'

Banning separatist parties, taking direct control of the semi-autonomous region of Catalonia to stop secession, repealing a law that fights gender violence, Abascal's ultra-conservative proposals have sparked outrage both online and off. Whether railing against immigrants, Islam or the bias against men in Spain's gender violence laws, the tough-talking career politician has continued to pull in the crowds with often exaggerated or even false populist claims.

But it has been his uncompromising attack on the "criminal separatism" in Catalonia that led to a failed independence bid two years ago that has been the cornerstone of Abascal's success. "He's very popular amongst his voters... but it's not his charisma that is driving voters," said Ignacio Jurado, a politics expert at Madrid's Carlos III University. "What has made the party successful is the crisis with Catalonia and the fact that the mainstream parties were unable to address it."

### ETA and the Smith & Wesson

Born on April 14, 1976 in the northern port city of Bilbao, Abascal was raised in Amurrio, a village where his grandfather served as mayor during the Franco years. Growing up in a region where politicians from both the left and the right were regularly targeted by the ETA separatist movement, Abascal said his father, a local PP councillor, was also in the firing line and escaped three attempts on his life.

But it didn't put off the young Abascal, who joined the party as soon as he turned 18 although he was forced to go everywhere with two bodyguards at his side. "His political experience in the Basque Country, years of threats, must have influenced his ideas," says



**MADRID:** Spanish far-right party Vox candidate for Prime Minister, Santiago Abascal (C) celebrates the polls during the election night. — AFP

Beatriz Acha, a political scientist at the Public University of Navarra.

Today, he openly acknowledges owning a Smith & Wesson firearm, which is rare in a country where the law severely restricts gun ownership — a law he plans to relax. Married to a stylish Instagram influencer called Lidia Bedman, who in recent months has been much more in the public eye, Abascal has four children, two from a previous marriage.

Party rallies often feature footage of him scaling mountains or striding manfully through forests and fields. Last year, another controversial video emerged of him riding a horse, cowboy-style, through Spain's arid south, entitled "The Reconquista begins in Andalusia" — a reference to a series of centuries-long wars to recapture territory from the Muslims who occupied most of the Iberian Peninsula in the early 8th century. — AFP

## Russian historian in court for grisly murder

**SAINT PETERSBURG:** A Russian historian who confessed to murdering and dismembering his ex-student lover was due in court yesterday as calls grew for an investigation into his alleged abuse of women students. The case of prominent Napoleon expert Oleg Sokolov drew fresh attention to violence against women in Russia, including in academic circles, which critics said authorities were not taking seriously.

Sokolov, a 63-year-old who taught history at Saint Petersburg University, confessed to murdering his 24-year-old lover and former student and dismembering her body. He was detained after being hauled out of the icy Moika River on Saturday as he tried to dispose of the woman's arms. A Saint Petersburg court was to decide Monday whether to formally arrest Sokolov, who lived with Anastasia Yeshchenko for the past few years and allegedly killed her last week.

News of the case — and allegations that Sokolov had abused at least one other female student — prompted widespread outrage and demands for action. "This case highlighted the impunity of abusers in society," Alyona Sadikova, the head of the Moscow-based Kitezh women's crisis centre, told AFP. More than 5,000 people signed an online petition urging authorities to probe the management of Saint Petersburg State University, President Vladimir Putin's alma mater.

The petition said Sokolov had treated students "in a monstrous way" and cited another



**MALOYAROSLAVETS:** In this file photo taken on October 23, 2005 members of a historical club, dressed as French soldiers and Oleg Sokolov (C), one of Russia's foremost specialists on the 19th-century European history, take part in the re-enactment of the 1812 battle between Napoleon's army and Russian troops in the town of Maloyaroslavets, some 140 kms from Moscow.

female student who said the historian had beaten her and threatened to burn her with a hot iron and kill her in 2008. "For unknown reasons, the abuser managed to escape any punishment," the petition said, adding that police who had ignored the woman's complaint should also be probed. Russia has no specific legislation on domestic violence or sexual harassment in the workplace and feminist movements like #MeToo have had little impact in the country. Many in Russia see no problem in romantic relations between superiors and subordinates, including professors and students, if they are consensual.

### 'Rotten system'

Alyona Popova, a Moscow lawyer and women's rights activist, said Sokolov — who

also taught at the Sorbonne and was close to Russian authorities — was "shielded by our rotten system". "This murder could have been avoided," she wrote on Facebook. Women's rights activist Anna Rivina told AFP that violence against women was frequently ignored until "something terrible, irreversible happens".

"Our society is absolutely not prepared for work to prevent abuse," said Rivina, who runs a centre providing assistance for victims of violence. Many also slammed the often toxic culture in academia. Commenting on a social media page dedicated to gender violence, one woman said university lecturers often seek sexual favors from "attractive female students". "I pity us if this harassment at universities does not finally become a public issue," wrote another woman, Anastasia Khodyreva. — AFP

## Chile to amend constitution, a key demand of protesters

**SANTIAGO:** Chile has announced it will move to draft a new constitution and replace one dating back to the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship — a key demand of protesters who have rocked the country for three weeks. The new constitution will be drafted by a body called a constituent assembly and then put to a referendum for ratification, Interior Minister Gonzalo Blumel said Sunday. Blumel made the announcement after meeting a coalition of center-right and right-wing parties, which until now had been the most reluctant to change the constitution inherited from the era of the US-backed general Pinochet, from 1973 to 1990.

The government was in the process of preparing "a draft amendment of the constitution", President Sebastian Pinera said in an interview published Saturday by the daily El Mercurio. Among the proposed changes are "a better definition of human rights" and their means of enforcement, plus clarification on "the obligations of the state" and "better mechanisms of participation" for citizens, added the president.

The current constitution, in force since 1980, has already undergone more than 200



**RENACA:** Demonstrators clash with riot police during a protest against the government of Chilean President Sebastian Pinera in Renaca, Vina del Mar, some 120 km west of Santiago. — AFP

changes in more than 40 articles, Pinera said. But it does not establish the state's responsibility to provide education and healthcare — two demands made by millions of Chileans who have taken to the streets. A general public sector strike has been called on Monday, in the midst of the biggest crisis since Chile's return to democracy in 1990, which has left 20 dead — five at the hands of state forces — and more than 1,000 injured.

The unrest that began on October 18 with

protests against a rise in rush-hour metro fares has mushroomed into a broader outcry against the status quo, with burning, looting and daily clashes between demonstrators and police. Protesters cite low wages, high costs for education and healthcare and a yawning gap between rich and poor in a country dominated politically and economically by a few old, elite families. After weeks of sometimes violent and deadly demonstrations, most polls show the protest movement is supported by 75 percent of Chileans. — AFP



## International

# Sydney residents warned that region faces 'catastrophic' bushfire threat

## More than 350 schools will be closed and a broad fire ban has been put in place

**SYDNEY:** Sydney residents were warned of "catastrophic" danger and a state of emergency was declared yesterday as Australia girded for a fresh wave of devastating bushfires. For the first time, Australia's largest city and the surrounding area faced the top level of fire warning — with authorities warning "lives and homes will be at risk".

"There is nothing built or designed to withstand... catastrophic" conditions, said Shane Fitzsimmons, commissioner of the rural fire service for New South Wales state, which encompasses Sydney. High temperatures and strong winds were expected to create tinderbox conditions today, prompting state premier Gladys Berejiklian to declare the seven-day state of emergency. More than 350 schools will be closed, a broad fire ban has been put in place and the military is providing logistic support for firefighters.

Three people have died, thousands have been displaced and more than 150 homes destroyed by dozens of out-of-control blazes in the state's north. In the last few months, roughly 11,000 square kilometers — an area larger than Jamaica or Kosovo — has been scorched, according to the New South Wales fire service. Conditions eased yesterday and some residents were able to return home, although a heavy haze lingered over many fire-hit regions. The Blue Mountains to Sydney's west, the wine-producing Hunter Valley to the north as well as the Illawarra region to the city's south are expected to be the hardest hit.

### 'Can't rebuild lives'

In the town of Rainbow Flat, emergency services were cutting down trees and trying to open roads to get livestock away from the potential path of the fires. "Tomorrow is about protecting life, protecting property and ensuring everybody is safe as possible," said Berejiklian. Some

communities faced the threat of fresh blazes even as they picked up the pieces from the last one.

In Old Bar, firefighters were back-burning to starve the fire of fuel, while helicopters dropped water from overhead. "There (are) unburned pockets of land, so we have actually... burnt it out so it doesn't pose a threat in the next couple of days," said firefighter Brett Slavin. Shirley Murphy, 82, returned from evacuation and said she was "very lucky" to have her home still standing. "You can rebuild a home but you can't rebuild lives."

Months of drought have sapped moisture from the earth and vegetation across much of eastern Australia, creating dangerous conditions for the outbreak and spread of wildfires. Many fires have been burning since October, which according to Paul Read, an expert at Monash University, was "much earlier than usual and will get worse as summer gets closer". As well as the direct risk from fire, Read said there will be a broader risk associated with smoke haze. "An air quality index (AQI) above 300 is considered hazardous to everybody, not just the vulnerable," he said, adding that level had already been breached in multiple locations, including Sydney. Haze was reported as far away as New Caledonia, almost 1,500 kilometers across the Coral Sea. The severity of the fires so early in the season has sparked arguments about the threat from climate change and fresh criticism of the conservative government's refusal to curb the use of fossil fuels. Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, leader of the rural National Party in the governing coalition, drew ire for suggesting now was not the time to talk about the climate. "We don't need the ravings of some pure, enlightened and woke capital-cities greenies at this time, when (people) are trying to save their homes," he said. — AFP



SYDNEY: Trees are burned black after a bushfire in Old Bar, 350km north of Sydney on November 10, 2019. — AFP

## Sri Lanka minister slams Facebook over 'censorship'

**COLOMBO:** A senior Sri Lankan minister accused social media giant Facebook yesterday of censoring comments he made questioning the citizenship of presidential election frontrunner Gotabhaya Rajapakse. The nationality of Rajapakse, brother of former strongman president Mahinda, is a key issue ahead of voting Saturday as Sri Lankan law prohibits dual citizens from holding elected office.

Communications Minister Harin Fernando asked in a Facebook post on his official ministry page Sunday whether Rajapakse should be allowed to stand, suggesting

he was still a US national. "Is Mr Rajapakse legally able to contest at a Presidential election in Sri Lanka?" Fernando asked in the now-deleted post. "If elected, will he be able to take oaths and discharge the duties of the office?" Gotabhaya became a US citizen in 2003, giving up his Sri Lanka passport after migrating to Los Angeles following a 20-year military career.

He returned to Colombo in 2005, when he says he reclaimed Sri Lankan citizenship and was appointed defense secretary in his brother's administration. Gotabhaya insists he renounced US citizenship in May this year. Fernando said Facebook took down the post from his official ministry page on Sunday, and he repeated the allegations on Twitter while complaining he had been censored.

The same post was still visible on his private Facebook page, however, including a screenshot of what he claimed was Rajapakse's US passport. "American companies shouldn't interfere on behalf of an American contesting a SL election. I stand by my every word," he tweeted. A

Facebook spokesperson said they routinely took down any posts containing personal or confidential information. "We remove this content whenever we become aware of it," the company said.

Last month, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said it would not censor political speech. "I don't think most people want to live in a world where you can only post things that tech companies judge to be 100 percent true," he said. Rajapakse's nationality is also the subject of a police investigation, but the next court hearing will only be held after the election. If he wins the vote he would be immune from prosecution during his term.

Social media has been abuzz with speculation about Rajapakse's citizenship, while a copy of a purportedly cancelled US passport shown by his lawyers has been challenged as fake. The US embassy in Colombo has declined to comment on the issue. Rajapakse and current housing minister Sajith Premadasa, are the leading candidates in a field of 35 contesting Saturday's election. — AFP

## Australian citizen jailed in Vietnam for 'terrorism'

**HANOI:** Vietnam jailed a dissident with Australian citizenship for 12 years yesterday on terrorism charges, his lawyer told AFP, in the one-party state where anti-government criticism is routinely quashed. Chau Van Kham, who fought against the communists during the Vietnam War, belongs to the outlawed Viet Tan group and was in Vietnam for a fact-finding mission when he was arrested in January.

The 70-year-old was jailed for "terrorism against the People's Administration" and will be deported after he serves his sentence, his lawyer Trinh Vinh Phuc told AFP. Kham was jailed alongside Nguyen Van Vien, who got 11 years, and Tran Van Quyen who was sentenced to 10 years, both on the same charges. "In court Kham said he did not conduct any terrorist acts, his activities were peaceful," Phuc told AFP after the one-day trial in Ho Chi Minh City. "Twelve years is too high," Phuc said, adding that Kham had hoped for a sentence of less than 10 years.

His son told AFP he was "shocked" by the verdict, which could see his father remain in jail until he is over 80 if his appeal is not successful. "It's the worst possible outcome," Dennis Chau told AFP from Britain, where he lives. Kham and Vien were arrested on January 13 in Ho Chi Minh City, two days after Kham entered

Vietnam overland via Cambodia. He was in the country to conduct human rights research and meet with activist and civil society contacts, Viet Tan said. Prosecutors accused him of giving money to Vien and spreading information about Viet Tan in Vietnam, according to state media.

### Banned group

Kham has been a member of the banned anti-government Viet Tan group since 2010. It is run by members who are mostly overseas since Hanoi designated it a terrorist organization in 2016, accusing it of "instigating violence". Viet Tan denies the claim and says it "advocates for social justice and democratic change through peaceful means". The group called for the men to be released immediately.

"We challenge the Vietnamese government to provide any evidence linking them to terrorism," Viet Tan said in a statement yesterday, accusing Vietnam of "criminalizing human rights advocacy". Kham is a former Navy serviceman who fought on the side of the south during the Vietnam War, fleeing on a boat in 1983 after the fall of Saigon — now called Ho Chi Minh City — and eventually settling in Australia, where his wife and another son now live.

His co-defendant Vien belongs to the Brotherhood for Democracy group and was a Facebook friend of Kham. Quyen was accused of making fake IDs for Viet Tan members, but the group says it has no association with him. Communist Vietnam frequently jails its critics, and a conservative regime in power since 2016 has cracked down on activists in the one-party state. Scores are currently behind bars, an increasing number for posting on Facebook since a controversial cybersecurity law was passed last year. — AFP



KOYRA: A woman walks through a water logged house after cyclone Bulbul hit the area in Koyra, some 100 km from Khulna. — AFP

## Cyclone death toll rises in Bangladesh, India

**KHULNA:** The death toll from a cyclone that barreled into the coasts of Bangladesh and India has risen to 24, authorities said yesterday, as the two nations assess the scale of devastation wreaked by the powerful storm. Bangladesh carried out one of its biggest ever evacuation drives, moving some 2.1 million people to cyclone shelters specially built to minimize casualties from such storms, which can claim thousands of victims.

Cyclone Bulbul, packing winds of up to 120 kilometers per hour (75 mph) when it hit late Saturday, killed 12 people in Bangladesh — 11 from falling trees — and 12 in India's West Bengal and Odisha states. Five others remain missing after a fishing trawler sank in squally weather near Bangladesh's southern island of Bhola, district administrator Masud Alam Siddiqui said. Bangladesh's junior minister for disaster management Enamur Rahman told AFP Bulbul left a trail of destruction, damaging some 10,000 mud, tin and bam-

boo homes and 200,000 hectares (494,000 acres) of crops.

The cyclone weakened as it tracked inland. The Sundarbans — the world's largest mangrove forest which straddles the two nations and is home to several endangered species — shielded the coast from the storm's full impact, officials added. In India, nearly 120,000 evacuated people were returning home as the cyclone weakened, authorities said. Coastal crops in Odisha were also extensively damaged, officials told the Press Trust of India.

Bangladesh's low-lying coast, home to 30 million people, and India's east are regularly battered by cyclones that have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in recent decades. While the storms' frequency and intensity 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. — AFP

## Malaysian ex-PM Najib's first 1MDB trial to proceed

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian ex-leader Najib Razak's first trial linked to the 1MDB scandal will proceed after a judge ruled prosecutors had made a sufficient case yesterday, boosting efforts to bring him to justice over the mammoth fraud. The former prime minister will take the stand next month when his defense begins, in the case related to the theft of billions of dollars from sovereign wealth fund 1MDB.

His coalition was ousted at the polls last year after six decades in power, largely due to the scandal, and he has since been arrested and hit with dozens of charges linked to the looting of the investment vehicle. The 66-year-old went on trial for the first time in April over the controversy, in a case centering on the transfer of 42 million ringgit (\$10.1 million) from a former 1MDB unit into his bank account. Najib denies any wrongdoing.

Prosecutors finished presenting their evidence in August, and on Monday High Court judge Mohamad Nazlan Mohamad Ghazali ruled the case was strong enough to go forward and Najib should enter his defense. "The accused had enormous and overarching influence" over the 1MDB unit, SRC International, the judge told the court, adding the prosecution had established Najib has a case to answer for all seven charges he is facing. "It was under the control of the accused from day one. The accused wielded considerable power."

### 'Calm and cool'

The alternative would have been to strike out the charges in the case — although Najib is still facing several other cases linked to 1MDB, with his biggest trial over the scandal having opened in August. Yesterday's decision will be a relief for Malaysia's government and 94-year-old Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who came to power partly on a pledge to get to the bottom of the 1MDB scandal and bring those involved to justice.

Lawyers for Najib, who is free on bail, said he would take the stand when the defense stage of proceedings gets underway on December 3. "I am calm and cool," the blue-blooded former leader, whose father and uncle were both prime ministers, told AFP after the ruling, giving a smile. But his lead lawyer, Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, said that Najib was "shocked" by the court's decision, adding the ex-PM had been confident of being cleared. And he indicated the legal saga may have some time to run, saying that appeals could push the case beyond Malaysia's next election — due by 2023 at the latest.

### Worldwide spending spree

Najib is facing four charges of corruption and three money-laundering counts in the trial. Each charge of corruption carries a maximum jail term of 20 years, and each money-laundering count is punishable by a term of up to 15 years. The amounts involved in Najib's first trial are small, however, compared to those in his second and most significant one, which centers on allegations he illicitly obtained over \$500 million from 1MDB.

US authorities, who are investigating the fund as money was allegedly laundered through the American financial system, believe \$4.5 billion was looted from 1MDB. It was allegedly used to fuel a worldwide spending spree by Najib and his inner circle — including suspected mastermind, fugitive financier Jho Low — with looted cash spent on items ranging from a super-yacht to high-end real estate. — AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's former prime minister Najib Razak arrives for his trial at the High Court. — AFP

## Zimbabwe readies mass wildlife migration

**HARARE:** Zimbabwe is planning an enforced mass migration of wildlife away from a park in the country's south, where thousands of animals are at risk of death due to drought-induced starvation. At least 200 elephants have already died at two other parks due to lack of food and water, along with scores of buffalo and antelope, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (Zimparks) said yesterday.

"They will continue (to die) until the rains come. The biggest threat to our animals right now is loss of habitat," Zimparks spokesman Tinashe Farawo told Reuters. The El Nino-induced drought has also taken its toll on crops, leaving more than half of the population in need of food aid. Farawo said Zimparks and private partners planned

to move 600 elephants — as well as giraffe, lions, buffalo, antelope and spotted wild dogs — from Save Valley Conservancy in southern Zimbabwe to three other national parks. "This is the biggest translocation of animals in the history of wildlife movement here because we are talking of distances of more than 1,000 kilometers," said Farawo.

It will start once the summer rains come. Those are expected to start this week, which would offer major relief for the stricken animals and for farmers who are preparing for the 2019/20 planting season. The migration will also help to save the conservancy's ecosystem by depopulating it because the animals "are now becoming a threat to their own survival," Farawo said. Zimbabwe is home to some 80,000 elephants, around a fifth of Africa's total, conservationists estimate. Overall numbers have declined sharply in recent years, mostly due to a combination of poaching, illegal hunting and drought. Farawo said Zimparks, which does not receive government funding, requires \$40 million annually for conservation efforts but only generates half the amount. — Reuters



## Business

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2019

**12** World shares fall; Hong Kong violence unnerves investors**13** Qantas Airways joins IAG in pledge to slash emissions**14** Century and half on, Suez Canal is 'lifeline' for Egypt

BEIJING: Workers at their delivery company warehouse drive tricycles to deliver packages to customers during 'Singles' Day'-the world's biggest 24-hour shopping event-in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

# What slowdown? Chinese shoppers set new Singles' Day spending record

## World's biggest 24-hour shopping event kicks off

SHANGHAI: Chinese consumers spent a record amount on Alibaba platforms yesterday during the annual "Singles' Day" buying spree, the world's biggest 24-hour shopping event, which kicked off this year with a glitzy show by US singer Taylor Swift. The country's leading e-commerce firm said that by late afternoon the amount of goods bought surpassed the previous record of \$30.7 billion spent during the entire 24-hour period last year, and was still rising with several hours to go.

China's economy is in an extended slowdown exacerbated by the US trade war, and the Singles' Day fire sale is viewed as a snapshot of consumer sentiment in the world's second-biggest economy. But there was little hint of Chinese belt-tightening, with \$1 billion spent via Alibaba in just the first 68 seconds.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said his tariffs on Chinese goods have put the country's economy on the ropes, but the state-run tabloid Global Times said the shopping figures proved otherwise. "It clearly speaks to the Chinese people's stronger spend-

ing power to back up the economy, despite the 17-month-long trade war & HK unrest," it said on Twitter, referring to months of pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong.

The promotion, now in its 11th year, began at midnight with Chinese bargain-hunters going online to snap up everything from electronics to clothing and household goods via Alibaba and rival websites. Alibaba kicked it off with an annual gala show in Shanghai, headlined this year by Grammy-winning pop star Swift. Singles' Day, also called "11.11" for the November 11 date, was originally set as an unofficial day for unmarried Chinese.

But Alibaba, based in the eastern city of Hangzhou, turned it into a shopping promotion akin to the late-November US "Black Friday", which "Singles' Day" now handily surpasses. Other Chinese online platforms and myriad retailers have since tapped in. Alibaba competitor JD.com, which holds an 11-day promotion ending at midnight on November 11, said total sales so far had reached

\$25.6 billion as of yesterday afternoon, beating the \$22.4 billion spent over the full 11-day stretch last year.

### 'More diverse and younger'

Despite sobering economic data over the past year, China retail sales have remained a relatively bright spot, facilitated by e-commerce and one-click smartphone payments. "Over the years, we've seen consumers become more diverse and younger," Alibaba chairman Daniel Zhang said in comments released by the company, describing the continued robust Singles' Day performance. China is also transitioning to an economic model increasingly driven by domestic consumption and away from a past over-reliance on manufacturing.

E-commerce sales have expanded thanks to the growing diversity of products available to Chinese shoppers and as consumers increasingly seek better-quality, higher-priced goods, analysts say. "Consumption has already become an important portion of the economy. Digitalisation has facilitated this trend as it makes con-

sumption more convenient and efficient than ever before," Raymond Ma, portfolio manager with Fidelity Investments, said in a research note.

Alibaba accounts for more than half of China's e-commerce market. It hits new Singles' Day records each year, but the pace of growth has slowed. The US-listed company earlier this month said revenue in the most recent quarter slowed to 40 percent, from 54 percent in the same quarter last year. This is Alibaba's first Singles' Day without Jack Ma, who stepped aside as chairman in September.

Ma co-founded Alibaba in his Hangzhou apartment 20 years ago. It is now among the world's most valuable companies. Alibaba is hoping to raise up to \$15 billion in a Hong Kong IPO, a report said last week, which would be the city's biggest listing for nine years. Environmentalists accuse Alibaba and other online retailers of fuelling a culture of excessive consumption and adding to a growing national garbage crisis by producing mountains of discarded packaging. — AFP

## China's love of e-commerce powers Alibaba Singles' Day

SHANGHAI: China's dominant e-commerce firm Alibaba Group Holding raked in \$23 billion worth of sales in the first nine hours of its annual Singles' Day shopping extravaganza yesterday, setting records as the event celebrates its 11th year. The 24-hour shopping event is akin to Black Friday and Cyber yesterday in the United States and has become a highlight of China's e-commerce industry, with other retailers running concurrent promotions. This year, Alibaba netted \$1 billion in sales in the event's first 68 seconds. Here are some quick facts about China's e-commerce's industry:

### World's biggest

China is on track to book \$1.94 trillion in e-commerce sales in 2019, more than three times the United States which is in second

place with \$586.92 billion, a report from researcher eMarketer shows. China on its own represents 54.7% of the global e-commerce market, nearly twice the share of the next five countries combined, the report showed. However, the country is ranked fourth when it comes to forecast e-commerce sales growth for 2019, behind Mexico, India and the Philippines, according to eMarketer.

### Top players

Alibaba's e-commerce marketplaces, business-to-consumer Tmall and Taobao, where both individuals and businesses set up shop, are China's dominant shopping platforms, hosting thousands of merchants selling products as varied as T-shirts, household sundries and four-poster beds. The firm's competitors include longtime rival JD.com, which sources goods and sells them directly to consumers, and four-year-old Pinduoduo Inc that managed to break into the top ranks by courting China's rural residents with deep discounts and a group-buying model.

There are also a range of other e-commerce sites that focus on different market segments, such as cosmetics, groceries and home appliances. Competition between platforms is rife and has boiled over into the public sphere. This month, regulators sum-

moned over 20 platforms and urged them to stop practices that could be seen as monopolistic.

### Sector's backbone

E-commerce in China is heavily reliant on logistics companies, couriers and payment systems such as Alibaba-backed Alipay and WeChat Pay from Tencent Holdings Ltd. Couriers STO Express Co Ltd, ZTO Express (Cayman) Inc, YTO Express Group Co Ltd, S.F. Holding Co Ltd and Yunda Holding Co Ltd send parcels for as little as 8 yuan (\$1.14), making purchases online more convenient at times than offline. Many couriers are also part of the Cainiao Smart Logistics Network, majority owned by Alibaba which co-founded it in 2013. Cainiao provides software to and shares data with warehouses, couriers and logistics firms. JD.com manages its own logistics network, a FedEx-style parcel delivery service which it started last year.

### How are they faring?

The rapid growth of Alibaba and JD.com has tracked that of China's economy and the expansion of its middle class over the past two decades. This, however, has also made them vulnerable, as the economy slows to its weakest pace in almost three decades and retail sales post their slowest



BEIJING: A worker sorts out packages at a delivery company warehouse to be delivered to customers during 'Singles' Day'-the world's biggest 24-hour shopping event-in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

growth since early 2003. Alibaba said revenue for the quarter to September-end for its core commerce business rose 40% year-on-year, versus 56% in the same period in 2018. Their next step, as a result, has been to diversify, with Alibaba moving into financial services, cloud computing and

artificial intelligence (AI), while JD.com has invested in AI to improve its logistics and advertising capabilities. They are also doubling down on reaching consumers in China's third- and fourth-tier cities, where Pinduoduo currently has a foothold, citing more promising, higher growth. — Reuters

Business

World shares fall; Hong Kong violence unnerves investors

European shares down 0.2%; Gold, Japanese yen gain

LONDON: Shares across the globe fell yesterday, buffeted by escalating violence in Hong Kong that pushed Asian stocks to their worst day since August...

The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, slipped 0.2%, with Hong Kong's Hang Seng index falling 2.7% and leading losses across Asia...

Some investors said markets risked being hit by any further escalation of the violence in Hong Kong, where protesters are angry about what they see as police brutality and meddling by Beijing in the freedoms guar-

anteed to the former British colony. "At some stage I think it will be likely that there will be a more fully-fledged crackdown," said Stéphane Barbier de la Serre...

global political or economic turmoil, strengthened 0.3% against the dollar. China's yuan, in contrast, weakened 0.3% to 7 per dollar in offshore trade.

Trade war

Investors were also focused on the US-China trade talks. After a bout of optimism last week over prospects for Washington and Beijing to reach an initial deal that would quell the worst of the 18-month old dispute...

Trump said reports that the United States was willing to lift tariffs were incorrect, adding that Beijing wanted a deal more than he did. Still, some market players said Trump's comments fitted an established pattern of optimistic rhetoric from the US president...

MSCI world index falls 0.2%; trade war worries weigh

The violence in Hong Kong sent investors running for assets perceived as safe havens and away from riskier currencies. Gold rose 0.4%, rebounding from a three-month low touched on Friday...



SHANGHAI: A worker walks on a road next to the new Tesla factory built in Shanghai. —AFP

"We are probably still moving in the direction (of a deal), and that's the way the market is priced on balance ... the direction is still a positive one." The uncertainty over trade weighed on commodities markets

commodities. Oil lost nearly 1% yesterday, with concerns over trade looming and worries on oversupply weighed on the market. Brent crude was down 54 cents, or 0.9%, at \$61.97 by 0745 GMT. — Reuters

Food shortage fears spark panic buying in protest-hit Lebanon

BEIRUT: Fearing food shortages in protest-hit Lebanon, Sanaa crammed bags of fava beans into a packed trolley, one of dozens of shoppers who rushed to buy basic supplies in a Beirut department store.

Around Sanaa, a civil servant who asked to use a pseudonym, shoppers swarmed the meat refrigerators and vegetable stalls, mostly ignoring the alcohol and sweets aisles to focus on essential food products.

Fears were deepened by warnings from petrol station owners and hospitals of a shortage of fuel and medicine after banks limited access to the dollars they needed to pay for supplies.



BEIRUT: People shop at a supermarket 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...

the 63-year-old recalled Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war and said: "I hope such days won't come back. "I remember how we used to stand in line and beg for bread."

Bank restrictions

Demonstrators have targeted banks and state institutions, demanding better living conditions in a country they say has become unaffordable for ordinary people.

in central bank reserves.

Access was further limited days ago after banks reopened for the first time since the unprecedented popular uprising began on October 17. They have halted all ATM withdrawals in dollars and severely restricted conversions from Lebanese pounds.

Euro hobbles around 4-week low vs dollar

LONDON: The euro held steady against the US dollar yesterday after matching a four-week low earlier as the greenback maintained its gains on optimism that the United States and China would roll back tariffs that have hurt global growth.

Even though that was subsequently denied by US President Donald Trump on Friday, he did not completely rule out a deal and US benchmark Treasuries

held above a key support level at 1.9%, buoying the currency. Moves were slight as traders kept a wary eye on further news on the US-China trade war...

"Market participants have become more cautious over the potential positive impact for global growth from a partial US-China trade deal following comments from President Trump," said Lee Hardman, currency analyst at MIFG.

The euro traded at \$1.1023, flat but not far from the Oct. 15 low of \$1.10165 it fell to on Friday. The Japanese currency was last up 0.3% at 108.98 against the dollar.

rencies was neutral at 98.317, flirting with a four-week low. The Chinese yuan weakened 0.3% to 7 per dollar in offshore trade on fresh violence in Hong Kong...

Disappointing economic data also hurt sentiment toward the yuan, as China's producer prices fell the most in more than three years in October. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed on Saturday...

Sell off grips southern Europe bond markets

LONDON: A selloff in southern European bond markets gathered pace yesterday, pushing yields higher, with an inconclusive election in Spain adding to uncertainty in its bond market.

Analysts put this down to a number of factors such as a growing sense that further European Central Bank stimulus is unlikely and profit-taking on stellar gains in peripheral bond markets before year-end-Italian and Spanish 10-year bond yields are down 140 and 100 basis points respectively...

"The FT article adds to this notion that the ECB is reaching the limits of what it can do, rate cut expectations have faded and that helps explain the weakness in peripheral bonds," said Rainer Guntermann, a rates strategist at Commerzbank.

It has jumped 30 bps this month alone, while French and German peers are up around 12 bps each. In Spain, 10-year bond yields rose 2 bps to 0.41%, pushing the gap with its German peer to its highest level since mid-October at around 67 bps.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

Table with 2 columns: EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES and exchange rates for US Dollar, Euro, Sterling, etc.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Table with 2 columns: ASIAN COUNTRIES and exchange rates for Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, etc.

GCC COUNTRIES

Table with 2 columns: GCC COUNTRIES and exchange rates for Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, etc.

ARAB COUNTRIES

Table with 2 columns: ARAB COUNTRIES and exchange rates for Egyptian Pound - Cash.

Table with 2 columns: Egyptian Pound - Transfer, Yemen Riyal/for 1000, etc.

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Table with 3 columns: Rate for Transfer, Selling Rate, and exchange rates for various currencies.

Table with 2 columns: Thai Bhat, Turkish Lira, Singapore dollars and exchange rates.

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

Table with 3 columns: CURRENCY, BUY, SELL and exchange rates for various currencies.

Table with 3 columns: Chinese Yuan, Hong Kong Dollar, Indian Rupee, etc. and exchange rates.

Arab

Table with 3 columns: Arab exchange rates for Bahraini Dinar, Egyptian Pound, etc.

## Business

# Africa oil states offer new deals to lure more selective investors

## Changes include revisions to taxes and royalties

CAPE TOWN: Lower prices and increasing competition for investment are driving many African states to make it easier and cheaper for overseas companies to keep their oil and gas output flowing. From Ghana to Gabon, governments are adjusting terms to lure picky investors who are also increasingly concerned about long-term demand for fossil fuels as renewable energy gains ground. The shift follows declining oil production in Angola and Cameroon and disappointing bid rounds in Ghana. It also marks an recognition that the era of \$100 per barrel oil is over.

"Because of increased competition for investment in Africa, we are changing our strategy," Mohammed Amin Adam, Ghana's deputy minister for petroleum, said at last week's Africa Oil Week in Cape Town. Ghana's Adam was not alone in announcing plans to revise oil and gas licensing laws in an effort to spur

output. Ministers from Angola, Cameroon and Gabon also stressed changes to legal and fiscal terms to boost their own production.

"We are aware that oil companies have to spend a lot of money. That is why we are careful in the way we design our (terms) to have it as a win-win," Gabon's petroleum minister Noel Mboumba said at the event. As renewables and efforts to cut fossil fuel consumption gain ground, there are also growing concerns that the world will not need all of Africa's oil. "We don't know how much new supply we're going to need. So

obviously everybody is going to have to be competitive for that," Andrew Latham, vice president of global exploration at Wood Mackenzie, said.



**Cheaper renewables, and demand 'peak' driving change**

for oil and condensate development and allowing companies to recoup "exploration expenses" from

production sharing contracts.

Gabon revised its fiscal terms to reduce the government take for shallow and deepwater concessions and increased the cost-recover limits for companies. But not all African producers are sweetening the deal. Nigeria, the continent's largest producer, last week increased the amount oil companies pay the government for offshore production, while an overhaul of its oil and gas terms has languished for more than a decade.

Senate president Ahmad Lawan said the revisions would raise revenue while allowing companies to make money - and the government has promised to pass the broader bill next year. Companies and analysts said reforms are needed. "The continent has to compete for capital with other areas," said Mike Sangster, head of Nigeria for French oil major Total. "It's important that the regulators understand that." — Reuters

## Gulf Bank launches 100% Cashback Campaign

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has launched a new Cashback campaign, which gives customers the chance to win 100% Cashback of their spends by using their Gulf Bank Credit Cards locally or internationally and by using their Debit Cards Internationally. The campaign gives cardholders who spend using their cards the chance to be one of 15 lucky winners to win 100% Cashback of their spends.

During the course of the campaign, which is scheduled to run until January 31, 2020, customers will automatically be entered into the final draw based on their spends. For every KD 10 spent locally on a Gulf Bank Credit Card, customers will receive one entry into the draw. For every KD 10 spent internationally using a Credit or Debit card, customers will receive three

entries into the draw. Gulf Bank will be announcing 15 lucky winners at the end of the campaign, each of whom will receive a 100% Cashback with a cap of max Cashback amount of KD 1,000 of the spends made on the Gulf Bank Card.

The draw will take place on February 16, 2020 in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce. Commenting on the campaign, Ahmad Al Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "As promised last week to our clients, Gulf Bank is launching yet another exciting campaign for debit and credit cardholders, as part of the Bank's commitment to maximizing customer satisfaction.

At Gulf Bank, we are constantly working to offer our customers the very best of all our service offerings, financial products, solutions, and more. We hope that our customers enjoy the benefits of our newest cash-back campaign, and encourage our debit and credit cardholders to use their cards both in Kuwait and abroad." Gulf Bank credit cards are packed with powerful benefits and features to enhance customer experience & satisfaction. These benefits include fraud protection with Gulf Bank 3D secure, online shopping, and

instant discounts of up to 20% at over 300 renowned restaurants and coffee shops, up to 25% at over 150 retail outlets in Kuwait. In addition, Gulf Bank credit card customers also earn Gulf Points, which can be redeemed for free flights, hotel bookings or travel packages.

Gulf Bank credit cardholders can also receive free travel insurance for themselves and their families, which can be used for the Schengen Visa application. To learn more about Gulf Bank's activities, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 58 branches or log on to [www.e-gulfbank.com](http://www.e-gulfbank.com). Customers can also contact the Customer Contact Center by calling 1805805 or direct their queries through the WhatsApp service on 65805805 for assistance and guidance.



Ahmad Al-Amir

## Gulf Bank announces the Al Danah winners

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 10th November 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 3 - 7 November 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week. The winners this week are: (1) Khadeejah Abdullah Ahmad Alali (2) Deema Eyad Ezzat Sayma (3) Hassan Ahmed Al Arabi Al Qoudsi (4) Kholod Hussain Aden Alanzy (5) Khuloud Bader Mullaq Dhaher.

Gulf Bank's final Al Danah draw for KD1,000,000 will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al Danah customers in 2018, have been added to their 2019 chances, and the same process will take place in 2020, and so on. Terms and conditions apply. Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws.

If the customer's account balance falls below KD200 at any given time, a KD2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

Customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 58 branches, transfer online, place queries through the official Gulf Bank WhatsApp service on 65805805 or call the customer contact center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance. Customers can visit the website to find out more about Al Danah and its winners.

## Qantas joins IAG in pledge to slash emissions

MELBOURNE: Qantas Airways Ltd yesterday pledged to slash its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, joining British Airways owner IAG as the industry's response to climate change activists gathers momentum. "We're doing this because it's the responsible thing to do," Qantas' Chief Executive Alan Joyce said in a statement, calling climate change concerns "real". IAG last month became the first major airline group to make the net zero by 2050 commitment, leading the way amid intense pressure from climate change activists such as Extinction Rebellion and teenager Greta Thunberg.

The high-profile debate has spurred increasing numbers of environmentally conscious travelers and investors, putting pressure on the aviation industry. The broader industry has committed to halving emissions by 2050 compared to 2005 levels. Qantas said it was looking to cap net emissions at 2020 levels and will invest A\$50 million (\$34.3 million) over 10 years to develop sustainable fuel to help lower carbon emissions by 80% compared with traditional jet fuel.

Australia's national carrier has already experimented by flying a plane from Los Angeles to Melbourne using mustard seed biofuel. "So we know the technology's possible," Joyce told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "It's to actually do it commercially and to do it on scale and not impact the other environmental concerns like taking away from food crops or increasing the cost of food crops. That's why it'll take some time to get there."

Qantas' pledge coincided with an outbreak of deadly bushfires along Australia's east coast, which experts have linked to climate change. Qantas said it operates the largest carbon offset program in the aviation industry,



with around 10% of customers choosing to offset their flights through conservation and environmental projects. The airline said it would now match every dollar spent on offsets, effectively doubling the number of flights offset. Air France and British Airways last month said they would offset all emissions on their domestic flights from 2020.

### 'Flight shaming'

Airline companies are finding it harder to ignore growing scrutiny of their climate change policies by investors. Fund managers, pension funds, sovereign wealth funds and others are showing greater care when

investing in companies, and have started limiting exposure to oil, gas and coal stocks.

In coordination with the International Air Transport Association, which represents nearly 300 airlines, the aviation industry is launching a campaign it hopes will counter a 'flight shaming' movement that has gained momentum as travelers become more concerned about their environmental impact. The aviation industry has already cut carbon emissions from each plane traveler in half since 1990, largely thanks to more fuel-efficient aircraft. Plane and engine makers are also working on plans for hybrid or all-electric engines to help lower emissions in the future. — Reuters

## China's Jingye Group in talks to buy British Steel

BEIJING: China's Jingye Group is in talks to buy British Steel, it said yesterday, in a deal estimated to be worth 70 million pounds (\$90 million) that could protect thousands of British jobs. Any agreement would be of major political significance in Britain as it prepares to elect a new government on Dec 12. The lack of opportunities in northern England, where British Steel is based, is an election issue, as the social gap between north and south widens.

A deal is not yet finalized. Jingye said following a BBC report of an imminent 70 million pound (\$90 million) agreement. A spokeswoman for Hebei-based Jingye Group, a private company, said she was unclear about the value and whether further details would be announced this week. Gareth Stace, director general of industry lobby group UK Steel, also said nothing had been finalized. "I would be surprised if it did

not get finalized," he said.

"But it's not a done deal." No-one from British Steel was immediately available for comment. The company was put into compulsory liquidation on May 22 after Greycapital, which bought the firm for one pound from Tata Steel three years ago, failed to secure funding to continue its operations. Its closure would impact 5,000 jobs in Scunthorpe and a further 20,000 jobs in the supply chain.

### Embrace China

Turkey's military pension fund OYAK said in August it had reached a provisional agreement to take over British Steel but that deal has not been finalized. Henri Murison, director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, set up to boost the economy in the north of England, said a rescue deal would be "very welcome news". He said it was



SCUNTHORPE: A logo is pictured on a sign outside British Steel's Scunthorpe plant in north Lincolnshire, north east England. — AFP

time to embrace cooperation with China, which is extending its international reach through its Belt and Road global development strategy. Chinese companies have also bought a steel plant in Serbia and its sole copper mine.

Chinese ownership is contentious, especially in the steel industry. The European Union, which does not include Serbia, has sought to protect its own steel industry from competition from

cheap Chinese imports. Britain has said it will leave the economic and political bloc, but has yet to agree a departure deal. An advantage of Jingye, a multi-industry business specialized in iron and steel, is that it knows the industry and has the ability to invest, industry sources say. With 23,500 employees and registered capital of 39 billion yuan (\$5.58 billion), Jingye Group ranks 217th among the top 500 enterprises in China. — Reuters

## Adidas shifts US German, smart factories to Asia

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Sportswear maker Adidas announced yesterday it was closing two niche but flagship factories in Germany and the United States that use robots and 4D printing to make sneakers, shifting the manufacturing to cheaper Asian factories instead. The production of high-tech running shoes at its so-called speedfactories in Germany's Ansbach and in the US city of Atlanta "will be discontinued by April 2020 at the latest", Adidas said in a statement.

Just three years ago, the Bavaria-based group had hailed its speedfactory concept—which uses highly automated processes to make shoes more quickly, more customized and closer to sales outlets—as proof that manufacturing jobs could return to high-wage countries. But from the end of this year, the speedfactory shoes will join Adidas' other models and be produced by existing suppliers in Asia, the group said.

Citing "advancements" made at the suppliers, the move would make production of the shoes "more flexible and economic while simultaneously expanding the range of products available". Adidas executive board member Martin Shankland said. The two speedfactories churn out just a million of the roughly 400 million athletic shoes made by the group each year. The future of the Ansbach plant's 160 workers is unclear at the moment.

The factory is operated by the German technology firm Oechsler, which has collaborated with Adidas on the project. Oechsler CEO Claudius Kozlik said in the same statement that he regretted Adidas' pullout. But he stressed that the two companies would continue to work together on soles for football shoes and 4D-printed soles. Like 3D printing, 4D printing produces three-dimensional objects at the touch of a button but then goes further by creating materials that change properties when they come into contact with triggers such as water or heat. — AFP

## Business

# In Kimberley, the world's diamond capital, illicit mining fight flounders

## First mining formalization project hits obstacles

**KIMBERLEY:** The first South African project to bring illegal miners into the formal fold has been plagued by violence in diamond capital Kimberley, dealing a major blow to national efforts to stem a booming illicit trade. The project was launched 18 months ago in Kimberley, the site of a 19th-century diamond rush that lured fortune-seekers from the world over.

Mine owners granted more than 800 unlicensed, or informal, small-scale miners the right to legally mine around 1,500 acres of diamond-rich waste fields. The aim of the government-backed scheme was to curb illegal mining and black-market trade of diamonds, and serve as a blueprint for future attempts elsewhere in the country, not only in the diamond sector, but also potentially manganese, gold and chrome.

However the project has been hit by violence, with informal miners not included in the scheme attacking infrastructure and even members of the newly licensed cooperative, according to mine owner Ekapa Minerals which is running the initiative. The failure thus far of this pilot scheme is a blow to wider corporate and governmental efforts to bring South Africa's estimated tens of thousands of informal miners, or "zama-zamas", into the mainstream, to boost productivity and curb crime.

Illicit mining and mineral trading cost around \$1.5 billion a year in lost sales, taxes and royalties, according to a 2017 estimate by industry group the Minerals Council, and sees criminal networks exploit vulnerable workers struggling to make ends meet. While the government has always acted in an advisory capacity, it indicated it may now be forced to take a more active role in the project, the first to attempt so-called formalization in the mining industry.

Asked whether he was pleased with the results of the Ekapa project, minerals minister Gwede Mantashe told

Reuters: "I'm not. We will have to assign somebody to work on it." He did not elaborate on what would have to be done, adding only: "I am not happy because it (informal mining) must be in the mainstream of mining, it must not be in the periphery." The project's troubles also demonstrate the perils of piecemeal formalization in a country whose regulation of small-scale mining lags far behind its African counterparts.

### 'They come with weapons'

Ekapa and Petra Diamonds, then a part-owner of the mine, launched the initiative last year at Kimberley, in



**Illegal mining costs millions of dollars a year**

Northern Cape Province, hoping to address the problem of an influx of zama-zamas - a Zulu-derived word which loosely translates as "keep trying". As much as 6 million rands' (\$400,300) worth of diamonds were being taken by illegal miners each month, Ekapa estimates. In a bid to stem that, the company formed 836 miners into the Batho Pele mining cooperative and gave them a license to mine the fields. But a year and a half later, the track record on the ground is not promising.

Illegal miners who are not part of the cooperative have

stolen fences, petrol-bombed three Ekapa trucks, blocked access roads with rocks and burning tyres, and sabotaged a waste pipeline, shutting down its plant, according to Ekapa. Ekapa security teams have been attacked with knives, slingshots, rocks, petrol bombs and, in one instance, a hunting rifle, the company said. Ramping up its defenses against illegal miners drove Ekapa's security costs up to around 3 million rand (\$200,160) before the project began, and the company is again beefing up security.

It has resorted to using alternative, longer routes for its trucks, adding up to a heavy financial burden on the company, said Ekapa Minerals CEO Jahn Hohne, in an interview at their Kimberley headquarters. A police spokesman said its records show 22 criminal incidents linked to illegal mining across Ekapa's property and the area mined by Batho Pele between March and October this year, including an attempted murder and three serious assaults.

Members of the cooperative, who cannot afford formal security, say they are also a target. "The problem that we are encountering now is from the other zama-zamas. They want to enter this thing with force," said Batho Pele member Victor Taku. "They come here with weapons, others come here with firearms, others come here with a spade." The 44-year-old dressed in orange overalls paid for his son's university fees with the money he made mining. With joblessness at an 11-year high and the economy in distress, that income is out of reach for many South Africans.

### Dearth of data

The Ekapa project's woes show the urgent need for the government to provide clear policy on small-scale or "artisanal" mining using rudimentary techniques, campaigners say. In contrast with other African countries such as Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania, South African law has no provisions for this.

"Our legislative framework is just missing in action when it comes to artisanal and small-scale mining," said David Perkins, an economist at Mining Dialogues 360, an NGO. Efforts to bring illegal mining into the mainstream are also hindered by a lack of accurate data about how many are involved, what income they generate, and under what conditions they work.

"We have so many people that we don't even know where they come from. That is the challenge we are having," said Northern Cape police commissioner Lieutenant General Risimati Shivuri. Pontsho Ledwaba, researcher at Wits University in Johannesburg, said there could be as many as 100,000 informal miners across South Africa. To plug this data gap the World Bank is pushing government to conduct a comprehensive study of artisanal mining, and may even fund it, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

"Accurate, reliable data is an essential first step to understanding the sector, recognizing miners and formalizing their work," said a World Bank spokeswoman. "While the World Bank is in continuing dialogue with the South African government, no study of the sector is planned at this time." Even should formalization projects like that at Kimberley ultimately prove successful, another question looms in the longer term: What happens to the small-scale miners when the resources run out, and where do they go?

The diamonds in the area of Kimberley mined by the cooperative, for example, are expected to run out in about five years. "Our dream is that, when we give the land back to Ekapa, 90% of us will have something in our pockets," said 44-year-old miner Kagiso Nofomela, who hails from the town of Kuruman, about 145 miles away. "We must have money, cars, homes and our kids must be educated." — Reuters

## Global Markets Report

### NBK Capital: Boursa Kuwait achieves 2nd best performance

**KUWAIT:** The performance of the GCC markets was largely negative in October in a continuation of a general weakness which has been prevailing since the end of April. The S&P GCC Index declined by 2.67% during the month almost exhausting all of the positive year-to-date performance that was accumulated during the first few months of the year.

The Index' performance since the beginning of the year now stands at 0.49%. Leading the decline was the Saudi Tadawul All Share Index which lost 4.30% in October turning negative for the year at -1.06%. It was followed by Qatar Exchange Index and Dubai DFM General Index with declines of -1.72% and -1.23% respectively.

On the positive side, Abu Dhabi's ADX General Index was the best performer with a gain of 1.0%, followed by Kuwait All Share Index which added 0.68% and Bahrain Bourse All Share Index with a marginal gain of 0.44%. The wider S&P Pan Arab index slightly outperformed its GCC counterpart with a loss of 2.30% supported by a positive performance in Egypt as the EGX 30 added 2.11%. Emerging markets strongly outperformed in October led by the performance of Asian markets.

The MSCI EM Index advanced by 4.09%, while the MSCI Asia ex-Japan Index added 4.49%. The two indices are up by 7.89% and 8.20% for the year respectively. The Russian Stock Exchange recovered strongly with an advance of 5.34% during the month while the Taiwan Stock Exchange Index added 4.89%. Other notable movers include the India's Nifty 50 which advanced by 3.51% and Turkey's Boursa Istanbul 100 Index which declined by -6.25% slashing its year-to-date return by half from 15.1% last month to 7.9% in October.

Global financial markets found support during October in easing trade tensions between the US and China, a diminishing risk of no-deal Brexit, and expectations of a Fed rate cut which was realized at the end of the month. The MSCI AC World Index added 2.64% during October, bringing its year to date performance to 17.28%. Emerging markets also rallied and the MSCI Emerging Markets Index advanced by 4.09% after having declined by 5.11% during



the third quarter.

In the US, preliminary third quarter GDP estimates show an advance of 1.9% on an annualized basis compared to a consensus estimate of 1.6% and a second quarter advance of 2.0%. Inflation showed an uptick as core PCE for the third quarter came in at a preliminary 2.2% up from 1.9% for the second quarter. The ISM manufacturing PMI, on the hand, bounced back slightly from 47.8 recorded in September to 48.3 in October but was still below expectations of 48.9. Employment figures also showed signs of stabilization in the US economy which added 128,000 jobs during October against expectations of 89,000, while average hourly earnings continued to recover recording a 3.0% increase year-on-year. The unemployment rate ticked marginally higher to 3.6% from 3.5% during the previous month. The US Federal Reserve cut interest rates for the third time this year by a quarter of a percentage point to a range of 1.50% to 1.75%.

The Fed Chair indicated that the rate cut was done to help sustain US growth but clearly signaled that there would be no further cuts "as long as incoming information about the economy remains broadly consistent with our outlook". US Indices advanced steadily during October and reached new all-time highs shortly after the close of the month boosted by strong US economic data. The S&P 500 added 2.04% while the Dow Jones Industrial Average underperformed with an advance of 0.48%. The two indices are now up 21.2% and 15.9% since the beginning of the year.

The Nasdaq strongly outperformed advancing by 3.7% during October and 25.0% for the year. In the treasury market, the 10-year yield closed the month virtually unchanged at 1.69% compared to 1.67% at the end of September after declining from a month high of 1.85% after the Fed decision to cut rates. On the shorter end of the curve, the two-year rate initially declined

a rare interview.

"We give credit to Ferdinand de Lesseps for putting forward the idea," he said, referring to the French diplomat who masterminded the waterway dug over a decade between 1859 to 1869. But he insisted it was thanks to the "genius" of the Egyptian people that the project really came to life. "It was a miracle by all accounts to excavate a 164-kilometre-long canal in 10 years with rudimentary tools," he said. "A quarter of Egyptians took part in the excavations, that was about a million citizens out of the population of 4.5 million people at that time."

"Between 100,000 to 120,000 died," Rabie added, highlighting that many succumbed to disease. Experts however dispute those figures saying the fatalities were poorly documented. In 2015, Egyptians threw their support behind President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's project to

expand the canal, "purchasing 64 billion Egyptian pounds (3.5 million euros, \$3.8 million) of investment certificates within eight days".

Thanks to that project, transit time has now been cut from 22 to 11 hours, and the number of vessels crossing daily has increased from an average of 40-45 to 60-65 giant tankers, he said. Nowadays, container ships account for more than half of the canal's total traffic, with some of them being among the largest in the world reaching a capacity of up to 23,000 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit).

Giant oil tankers carrying more than 200,000 tons can now transit through the canal as well. Authorities have also sought to develop the Sinai Peninsula, which lies on the eastern edge of the canal. "We have also dug six tunnels under the Suez Canal to facilitate movement crossing to and from the Sinai," Rabie said. — AFP

## Special November offers from Nissan Al Babbain

**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babbain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, is pleased to announce its latest campaign that is applicable on the Nissan Maxima, Nissan X-Trail and Nissan Patrol Safari models. Starting from only KD 6,450, the family vehicle Nissan X-Trail comes with four years of free service, a five-year manufacture warranty, free traffic registration and 3rd party insurance.

The popular model gives young families and adventure-seekers more premium style options such as the choice between the five or seven-seat version as well as five new vibrant exterior vehicle shades, unrivalled space and

comfort. Accompanied by one-year free comprehensive insurance in addition to a five-year manufacture warranty, free traffic registration and 3rd party insurance, the Nissan Maxima starts from only KD 8,750.

The 4-Door Sports car, Nissan Maxima thrills fans with a 300 HP engine, 3.5L V6 cylinder, and 19" aluminum-alloy wheels. The front presents the signature boomerang-shaped headlamps that feature a captivating LED signature line that stays illuminated at all times. November offers include the perfect desert companion Nissan Patrol - Safari, which gives its drivers high on-road performance, providing maximum speed and power.

Special desert package offers avid campers with relevant equipment to challenge any obstacles he/she might face in the desert, ensuring overall convenience in addition to a five-year manufacture warranty, free traffic registration and 3rd party insurance. Nissan Al Babbain invites everyone to visit its showrooms in Al Rai and Ahmadi to discover new experiences through the new deals.

## US aviation authority downgrades Malaysia air safety rating



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Workers set up iron scaffoldings at a building construction site in Kuala Lumpur. — AFP

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has downgraded Malaysia's air safety rating, restricting the country's airlines from adding flights to the United States, four sources familiar with the matter and a US government official said yesterday. The FAA's safety rating is based on a country's aviation oversight regime and is an assessment of the country's civil aviation authority. The Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia and the FAA did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Malaysia's transport ministry did not have an immediate comment. Malaysia has been downgraded to Category 2, said the sources, who did not want to be identified as they were not authorized to speak to the media. A US government official said the FAA would make an official announcement on Tuesday.

The official said the US government was working with the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia and would help

the Southeast Asian country achieve international standards that would give it the top Category 1 rating. The new rating means the air carriers from the country cannot start new services and are restricted to current levels of any existing service to the United States. The carriers would also be subject to additional inspections at US airports.

FAA will also not allow reciprocal code-sharing arrangements between US carriers and Malaysian carriers when a country is rated Category 2. The downgrade places Malaysia in the same FAA category as neighbour Thailand, which was downgraded to Category 2 in December 2015 and has since tried unsuccessfully to restore the Category 1 rating. Other countries in Category 2 include Bangladesh, Ghana and Costa Rica. At present, the only Malaysian airline route to the United States is AirAsia X Bhd services from Kuala Lumpur to Honolulu via Osaka. — Reuters

## Century and half on, Suez Canal is 'lifeline' for Egypt

**ISMAILIA:** One hundred and fifty years after the Suez Canal opened, the international waterway is hugely significant to the economy of modern-day Egypt, which nationalized it in 1956. The canal, which links the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, was opened to navigation in 1869 and was expanded in 2015 to accommodate larger ships. Dug in the 19th century using "rudimentary tools," the canal has today become "a lifeline for Egypt and countries around the world," Admiral Osama Rabie, head of the Suez Canal Authority, told AFP in

# Prepare an epic playlist for your Iceland road trip



Iceland's landscape is one of the most evocative on the planet - mist shrouded cliff-sides, inky black beaches, ghostly blue glaciers. All of it creates an unrivaled sense of atmosphere, so it's only appropriate that your Iceland road trip has a soundtrack just as majestic.

#### The classic Ring Road

For such a wild, wonderful land, much of Iceland is surprisingly compact: the classic Ring Road trip loops you near the most popular sights. With extra time, you can add on myriad adventures along the way.

#### The Golden Circle and the Southwest

The beautiful Golden Circle and southwest has many of Iceland's most legendary natural wonders, and the further you go the better it gets. Tourist faves such as Þingvellir, the former Icelandic parliament at the meeting of tectonic plates, are just beyond the capital. Churning seas lead to the Vestmannaeyjar archipelago. Then, at the region's far reaches, you'll discover the powerful Hekla and Eyjafjallajökull volcanoes, the adventure bases of Skogar and Vik, and the hidden valleys of Þorsmork and Landmannalaugar.

#### Southeast Iceland

The 200km stretch of Ring Road from Kirkjubæjarklaustur to Hofn is mind-blowing, transporting you across stark deltas of grey glacial sand, past lost-looking farms, around the toes of craggy mountains, and alongside glacier tongues and ice-filled



lagoons. The only thing you won't pass is a town - but there are properties offering brilliant activities, accommodation and meals (book well ahead, as beds here are in hot demand).

#### East Iceland

Most travelers hit the accelerator and follow the Ring Road as it ploughs through the east, but they're missing some gems. This is a region that rewards slow travel: prepare yourself for superb vistas as the road skirts mountain peaks, steep-sided fjords, black-sand beaches and broad valleys. Stop to admire tiny fishing villages bathed in creativity and to investigate ancient geology.

#### North Iceland

The region's top sights are variations on two themes: a grumbling, volcanically active Earth, and ice and water wending their way toward the ocean. Nature's masterpieces are everywhere you look. Take in little

Akureyri, with its surprising moments of big-city living; windy pastures full of stout Viking horses; white-water rapids ready to deliver an adrenaline kick; unhyped and underpopulated ski fields; moon-like lava fields and belching mudpots; and lonely peninsulas stretching out toward the Arctic Circle.

#### West Iceland

Geographically close to Reykjavík yet far, far away in sentiment, West Iceland (known as Vesturland) is a splendid blend of Iceland's offerings. Two of the best known sagas, Egil's Saga and Laxdæla Saga, took place along the region's brooding waters, marked today by haunting cairns and an exceptional museum in lively Borgarnes. The long arm of Snæfellsnes Peninsula, inland lava tubes and remote highland glaciers are added enticements.



Health & Science

# Bangladesh plants defense 'trees' as deadly lightning strikes surge

**GHIOR:** Along the rutted village roads of this sub-district in central Bangladesh, one plant stands out: young palm trees. Hundreds have been planted since 2017 in an effort to combat one of Bangladesh's fastest-growing disaster threats - a surge in deadly lightning strikes. In Bangladesh, moist and hot air flowing from the Bay of Bengal and colder, heavier air descending from the Himalayas have long collided in lightning-sparking thunderstorms, said Murad Ahmed Farukh, an environmental scientist at Bangladesh Agricultural University.

But as the atmosphere warms as a result of climate change, and holds more moisture, deadly lightning strikes are happening more frequently than before, turning lightning into one of the South Asian nation's deadliest disasters. Last year, around 360 people in Bangladesh were killed by lightning strikes - more than by floods or cyclones, according to the nation's disaster ministry. In 2016, 80 people died in a single stormy day.

Ghior is now one of the communities trying to find ways to cut the risks, in part by planting fast-growing palm trees that can divert strikes away from people. Local authorities began sowing palm seeds in 2017 in response to a call from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who also urged that buildings be constructed with earthing systems, to discharge electricity from lightning strikes to the ground. Lightning protection measures are now part of the country's national disaster management plan and its National Building Code.

Abdul Baten, an elected official in Ghior, has used \$500 from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief's food-for-work program to grow more than

500 palms, he said. "This is a preemptive measure by the government to cut loss of lives to lightning," Baten said, standing along a road lined with young palms. So far, Bangladesh's disaster management department has supported sowing of 4.8 million palms nationwide, exceeding an initial target of 1 million, an agency official said.

**Rising fears**

Still, lightning continues to cause deaths in Ghior sub-district, most recently claiming 55-year-old Mongol Chandra Sarker in August as he walked to a pond to bathe. Abdul Baten, a 57-year-old farmer, said he now leaves his fields if it begins to rain.

Unlike in the past, "now we go back home as soon as we see dark clouds in the sky," he said. So does brick kiln worker Abdul Latif, 55, who said he had not heard about climate change but could see the weather getting warmer. Azad Mia, of nearby Kalia village, blamed the growing lightning menace on the felling of large trees in the area as people created space for new homes or rice fields. "Now taller trees such as date palm, betel nut, coconut and fan palm have almost vanished," he said, noting that such trees once attracted lightning away from people.

**Preventing deaths**

But rising awareness of the risks may have begun to cut the numbers of deaths. As of mid-September, about 180 people had died in lightning strikes this year, down from about 360 last year, according to disaster ministry figures. Dhaka campaign group Save the Society

and Thunderstorm Awareness Forum said by its tally 246 people had died between February and August this year, based on media reports.

In 2017, the death toll was 307, almost double the number in 2015, government data showed. Mohammad Mohsin, a disaster ministry additional secretary, said as people learned more about the threat they were taking steps to lower their risk. "The number one factor is awareness," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, in an interview at his office in downtown Dhaka.

That is playing out in the country's economy, he said. Last year, farmers in Sunamganj, a wetland-dotted northeastern district considered the country's lightning capital, had difficulty finding enough workers at harvest season, he said. Farukh, the environmental scientist, however, said the introduction of a fast-growing rice in wetland districts - one that can be harvested in April, before the May and June peak lightning season - was likely to save lives. Besides causing deaths, lightning strikes leave many of their victims permanently impaired with burn scars, hearing loss and neurological difficulties, medical experts say.

Mojibur Rahman, a next-door neighbor of Sarker, the man who died in a lightning strike in August, still suffers hearing loss in his right ear and a burn on his left side after lightning hit him five years ago as he was fishing. "I became senseless at the lightning flash," said the 35-year old, who now peddles fruit for a living. "It was so powerful that the railings of a nearby bridge collapsed," the bare-chest man recalled, standing in front of the iron shed where he lives with his wife and three children. — Reuters

## South Korea bans liquid e-cigs on army bases

**SEOUL:** The South Korean Army has banned the use and possession of liquid e-cigarettes on its bases for health reasons, the military said yesterday, following a government warning for people to stop using the devices. South Korea has a large military of nearly 600,000 soldiers, primarily conscripted men, and the Army makes up the largest portion with 464,000. While the rate is declining, South Korean men are among the heaviest smokers in the world.

The Health Ministry issued an advisory last month urging people to stop using liquid e-cigarettes citing cases of lung injuries in the United States including fatalities. The ministry said it would conduct studies to determine whether there was a scientific basis to ban the sales of liquid e-cigarettes, which vaporize liquid containing nicotine.

A pneumonia case of a 30-year old South Korean e-cigarette user was reported last month, according to the ministry. A day after the government warning, a major convenience store chain GS25 suspended the sale of flavored liquid e-cigarettes made by US company Juul Labs and South Korean company KT&G. E-cigarettes have been gaining popularity in the country's \$16 billion tobacco market since 2017, accounting for 13% of the tobacco market by sales as of June, government data show. — Reuters

CLINIC  
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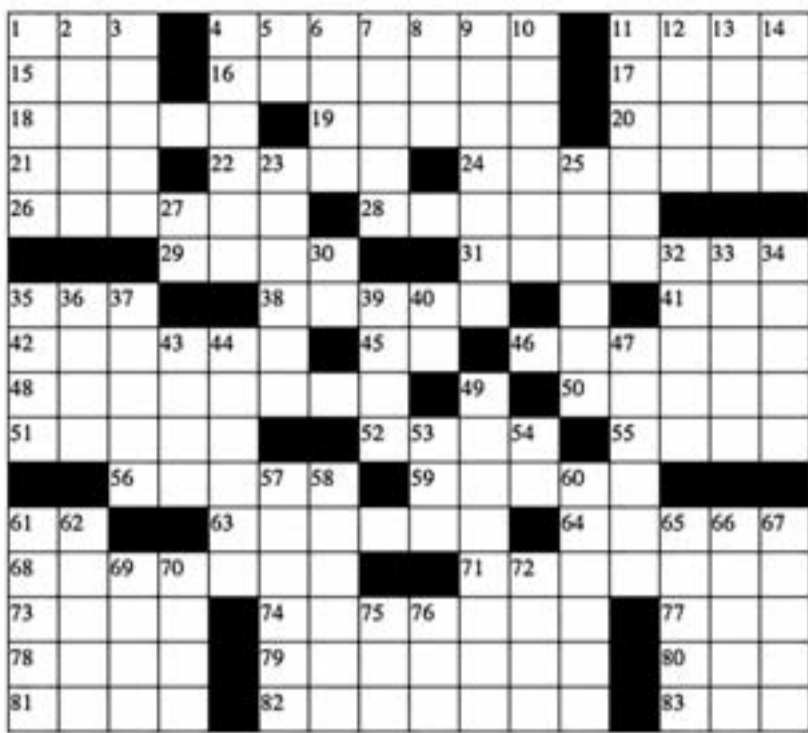
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Stars

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ACROSS

1. System of measurement based on centimeters and grams and seconds.
4. (Hinduism) Term of respect for a Brahmin sage.
11. Being or occurring in fact or actuality.
15. Not in.
16. A ship with a reinforced bow to break up ice and keep channels open for navigation.
17. At or constituting a border or edge.
18. Lose blood from one's body.
19. A linear unit (1/40 inch) used to measure diameter of buttons.
20. Weak-stemmed plant that derives support from climbing, twining, or creeping along a surface.
21. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
22. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
24. Inflammation of the ileum.
26. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
28. A flammable colorless gaseous alkene.
29. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
31. German chemist (1853-1932).
35. A label made of cardboard or plastic or metal.
38. The superior of an abbey of monks.
41. The waging of armed conflict against an enemy.
42. A sum of money paid in compensation for loss or injury.
45. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
46. The wrist bone in line with the 4th and 5th fingers.
48. Someone paddling a canoe.
50. Type genus of the Percidae.
51. A criminal who takes property belonging to someone else with the intention of keeping it or selling it.
52. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
55. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
56. People having the same social or economic status.
59. Using the voice.
61. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
63. Argentinian carriama.
64. Music performed for dancing the polka.
68. A member of one of the four divisions of the prehistoric Greeks.
71. Occurring during the middle of the week.
73. Bite or chew on with the teeth.
74. European annual grown for forage.
77. A master's degree in business.
78. A Russian river.
79. Of or relating to Tantrism.
80. Tag the base runner to get him out.
81. Founder of Christian Science in 1866 (1821-1910).
82. Specify individually.
83. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Large dark-striped tropical food and game fish related to remoras.
2. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
3. An advantageous purchase.
4. Some point in the air.
5. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
6. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
7. Dwell (archaic).
8. Provide with clothes or put clothes on.
9. Genus of economically important tropical plants.
10. Spider monkeys.
11. A new appraisal or evaluation.
12. Make editorial changes (in a text).
13. God of fire.
14. The sediment from fermentation of an alcoholic beverage.
23. The basic unit of money in Gambia.
25. Take or catch as if in a snare or trap.
27. An associate degree in nursing.
30. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
32. A grant made by a law court.
33. Spring-loaded doorlock that can only be opened from the outside with a key.
34. Causing fear or dread or terror.
36. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
37. Of or relating to or produced by or being a gene.
39. A Chadik language spoken south of Lake Chad.
40. A Russian river.
43. Period extending from Dec. 24 to Jan. 6.
44. Mar or spoil the appearance of.
47. A field where grass or alfalfa are grown to be made into hay.
49. (Italian cookery) Squid prepared as food.
53. A small piece of cloth.
54. A blow that renders the opponent unconscious.
57. The female or generative principle.
58. A large bonnet that shades the face.
60. United States author (born 1932).
62. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
65. Minute aquatic herbs floating on or below the water surface of still water consisting of a leaflike frond or plant body and single root.
66. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
67. Jordan's port.
69. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
70. Distant in either space or time.
72. Plants with sword-shaped leaves and erect stalks bearing bright-colored flowers composed of three petals and three drooping sepals.
75. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
76. What you can repeat immediately after perceiving it.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

In taking care of business, it is important to stay focused. There is a sense of emotional coolness or detachment at the personal level. It is ideas that count for you now, more than narrowly personal concerns—and you may have little tolerance for people who do not function at this level. You do not waste words today as communications tend to be short and to the point. Take time to be specific and ask for feedback so that you can be sure you were clear in your instructions to others. Take care of every last detail by proofing, or if possible, exchanging your work with someone else and proofing the other's work. Develop and use your critical faculties.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Inventions, in particular in communications, perhaps by updating computers and electronics, may be a path of temptation to move into some type of new profession. There are clear perspectives into your present reality, making situations easier to understand. You are tolerant and accepting of differences and have good insights into problems. Independent, you like to promote and compromise and otherwise show your desire and abilities to understand others. You may be unconventional in matters of philosophy and religion—always finding new ways to get past the fluff. You must understand, however, that your insights into truth and the eternal make you a loner at times.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time of good fortune when things open up in a very natural way for you. Opportunities are plenty and you may find yourself wanting and able to do almost anything. This is one of those days that everything blends together and results are the best they can be. Now... Here are some real opportunities to complete and work out difficulties and projects that require both long-term effort and a high degree of discipline. This is also a day that is good for most job-related events. You could represent or speak for your company at this time. Any personal matters you want to accomplish or business matters that need tending will also certainly end in positive ways. Tonight would be a good time to pal around with some of your friends—maybe sports.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are in control of your day, especially when interacting with superiors. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it requires. It is ideas that count for you now, more than narrowly personal concerns. You are at your most practical when it comes to dealing and working with others. You know just what to do and can act without haste. Your ideal dream is a private one and heaven is as close as work and family. The romantic in you struggles against the frontier spirit that often moves you to action. You will continue to develop a knack for organizing things and people as a sense of ambition and practicality deepens.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your dreams and ideals are very important to you. You may be more focused on your goals now than ever before. You busy yourself putting those plans of yours to work. You will notice that you have become more focused in your work lately. This afternoon, when you show up early for a family get-together, they may be surprised as well as pleased that you broke free from your projects in order to be with them. You are intuitively learning your limits as well as implementing a balance in your life. There is time this evening for making a few special plans that will help you complete one or two of your goals. You may find yourself putting your whole heart into making your dreams and ideals a reality. Much can be accomplished without stress.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Saying or writing with style comes natural to you these days. New words to increase your vocabulary expertise can be a fun activity between you and a friend or co-worker. Your ability to discriminate real breakthroughs and spot new trends makes you able to work in areas that are at the very fringe of technology as well as psychology. You love all that is new and different and electronics, computers, communication—in fact, everything electrical is where your attention stays focused most of this day. There is a desire for variety this evening, particularly where it applies to romantic experience and artistic tastes. A sociable, congenial, slightly frivolous orientation sets in now. You will enjoy the interaction of friends tonight.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your career could assume a much more determined and solid form. This is a real time to buckle down and firm up your career goals. Your own ambition and drive are strong. You are able to use good reasonable thinking and make good choices. You can get a faster push forward by taking the right kind of action: you are positive and attentive. By working at a steady pace you will make a lot of progress. This afternoon you may find yourself advising or guiding another. Your spontaneity and unpredictability make you interesting to a group gathering this evening. You are independent and the way you come across to others creates an opportunity to teach and guide. You find some time to enjoy some simple exercise before retiring tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find that a particular project is just not your cup of tea this morning. You take your turn and may have the opportunity to suggest a rotation routine so that you are not always called on to do things you do not want to do every day. A good sport attitude may be all-important just now. Outwardly you are intense and passionate and this quality is so essential to your character that all else revolves around it. This is what makes you popular when your work or personal partners want to move forward and get things accomplished. This afternoon you and your neighbors may decide that this next weekend would be perfect for a cookout.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are in tune with the practical issues in the workplace today. A firm sense of direction will help get you to your destination. This is a great time to be working in groups. You may be sought after as a guide or leader. You could be most persuasive with others and charismatic in speech and communication. You could come up with new solutions or inventions, and it is good that you are willing to listen to the ideas of others. It is ideas that count for you now, more than narrowly personal concerns. Family needs are important and there is no question about attending a family event this evening. Praise and support encourages a loved one to achieve the best.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Be satisfied with the ordinary and usual for now. Novel ideas or insights could be more damaging than useful. There is hectic emotional energy prevailing, but it is only temporary. After the workday is over, you could be tempted to relieve stress by purchasing some items. There is a greater appreciation for things of value and the idea of value itself is in order. This could be a period of great material gain; it is certainly a time when material things have a great deal of importance for you. If you are on a budget, give yourself twenty-four hours before making your final purchase decision.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Anyone who tries to get you to play with words is in for a big surprise. Your mind cuts right through all the window dressing and gets right down to the quick. Before anyone knows it, you have the heart of the matter out front for everyone to see. You would make a great investigator, either in scientific research or undercover work. It makes no difference. Your ability to get to the point is all but phenomenal. You can talk and put into words areas of the psychological that others would not touch. You have an urge to put out to sea and to somehow get past what separates and into that which unites or ties things together.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your successful optimism is obvious and therefore, catching. You see positive results from your hard work today. Family, home, relatives and real estate play a big part in your life now. Perhaps you have been planning a move and someone calls with information on just the right home for you. You work to show off your skills and you enjoy the praise you receive. This time marks a change of direction for you, away from the material and glitter, toward inner needs and security. Your intuition is strong and can guide you accurately in making forecasts or decisions: allow this to work for you. You will find yourself more concerned with maintaining and strengthening your position, rather than pushing outward. These next few months are for friends.

Wordsearch Puzzle

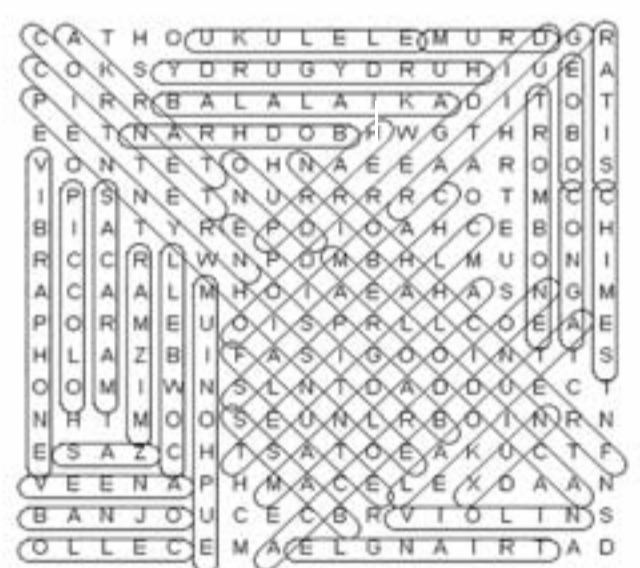
Musical Instruments 2

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



- |            |              |           |               |
|------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| BASSOON    | FIFE         | MARIMBAS  | SHOFAR        |
| BONGOS     | FLUGELHORN   | MELODEON  | SLIDE WHISTLE |
| BOUZOUKI   | GONG         | MOCCINO   | STRUMSTICK    |
| BUGLE      | HARMONICA    | NEFER     | TAMBOURINE    |
| CASTANETS  | HARMONIUM    | OCARINA   | TAMBURA       |
| CONCERTINA | HUNTING HORN | PIANO     | TIN WHISTLE   |
| CONCH HORN | JEW'S HARP   | REBEC     | TRUMPET       |
| CUMBUS     | KEYBOARD     | RECORDER  | TUBA          |
| CYMBAL     | LUTE         | SAROD     | VIOLA         |
| DULCIMER   | MANDOLIN     | SAXOPHONE | XYLOPHONE     |

Musical Instruments 1



- |           |             |              |            |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| ACCORDION | CONGA       | HURDY-GURDY  | SAZ        |
| BAGPIPE   | CORNET      | LAGUTA       | SITAR      |
| BALALAIKA | COW BELL    | MANDOLA      | TARKA      |
| BANJO     | DEGGERIDOO  | MARACAS      | TRIANGLE   |
| BASS      | DRUM        | MELODICA     | TROMBONE   |
| BODHRAN   | EUPHONIUM   | MIZMAR       | UKULELE    |
| CABASAS   | FLUTE       | OBOE         | VEENA      |
| CELLO     | FRENCH HORN | ODU          | VIBRAPHONE |
| CHIMES    | GUITAR      | PENNYWHISTLE | VIOLIN     |
| CITTERN   | HARP        | PICCOLO      | XUN        |
| CLARINET  |             |              |            |

Hidden sentence: THOSE WHO HEAR NOT THE MUSIC THINK THE DANCERS MAD

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2019



US singer/songwriter Pink reacts as her son Jameson Moon Hart runs towards her as she gets ready to pose with the People's Champion Award during the 45th annual E! People's Choice Awards at Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California. — AFP

## British rocker Pete Doherty arrested in Paris

French police arrested British rocker Pete Doherty after a drunken brawl in Paris Sunday, a day after they released him following cocaine bust, prosecutors and his lawyer said. Doherty, 40, the front man of the Libertines, was arrested for assaulting a man while drunk, said the Paris prosecutors' office. His lawyer Arash Derambarsh said Doherty was arrested after a fight with another man who was also drunk, who had filed a complaint for assault against him.

After being released Saturday from custody following an arrest for possession of cocaine, Doherty "went home then went out again to have a drink", the lawyer added. But because of the detox treatment he has been following for a month he cannot hold his drink, said Derambarsh. Doherty was first arrested in the early hours of Friday morning when Paris police caught him just after he had bought cocaine.

The singer opted for a simplified procedure for people caught using drugs, agreeing to pay daily 50-euro fines for 100 days, failing which he will be jailed, the Paris prosecutors' office said. A judge still has to sign off on that deal, however. Derambarsh said on Saturday that his client, who is at the start of a major tour, had agreed to undergo full-time a medical treatment for his addiction to avoid a relapse.

The bad boy of British rock—as famous for having dated supermodel Kate Moss as for his music—has repeatedly made headlines for drugs offences. In 2012, he was thrown out of a luxury rehab clinic in Thailand after claims he was a bad influence on other patients and did not try hard enough to kick his heroin habit.—AFP

## Syria puppeteer offers Idlib children breathing space

Walid Abu Rashed walks past bombed-out buildings in war-torn northwest Syria, carrying a large wooden board and a plastic bag filled with puppets while dozens of children trail behind him. The 26 year-old's mobile puppet theatre has become a small respite from war for the children of Saraqib, a town in the jihadist-run province of Idlib. After school, they gather amidst the rubble, clapping their hands, as the theatre actor puts on a show from behind his makeshift puppet stand, a flashy yellow wig covering his black hair.

The war-weary children sing along to a tune blasting from a speaker as hand puppets of a lion and a mouse pop up from a square hole carved at the centre of the wooden board. "How sweet it is to live well and in peace," they chant in unison. Packing up his kit after the show, Abu Rashed says theatre is a form of resistance.

"Theatre is an integral part of the culture and civilization of Idlib," he told AFP, as the children around him clamored for pictures. "I will fight tyrants through art." Nearby, 10-year-old Mina Malak said the show had offered her much-needed relief. "His shows make us laugh," she said. "It helps us forget the bombardment."

### Magic Caravan

Years of fighting and displacement in Idlib province



have wrought chaos for children, destroying schools and scattering destitute families across the countryside. Hundreds of people have been displaced since April alone, when the government and its Russian backer upped their deadly bombardment of the jihadist-dominated enclave.

According to Save The Children, the bombing since late April has damaged or otherwise impacted around 90 educational facilities, while dozens more are being used as shelters for those displaced by the violence. A ceasefire announced by Moscow on August 31 has reduced air strikes, but sporadic shelling and flare-ups persist. Before the Syrian conflict started in 2011, Abu Rashed wanted to attend the Higher Institute for Dramatic Arts in Damascus—the country's most prominent theatre school.

"I won the award for best theatre actor in Idlib in 2011 and the horizons of my future in the arts started to take shape," he said, lighting a cigarette. "But I chose to stand with the revolution and join the protesters, because theatre can deliver a message under oppressive rule." Instead of attending university, he joined a troupe of theatre actors by the name of the Magic Caravan. They performed plays for out-of-school children living in displacement camps near the border with Turkey, before disbanding in 2014 after their founder was killed by a regime barrel bomb that fell near Abu Rashed's home.

### Hold back tears

A few months later, Abu Rashed organized his first solo puppet show in a camp for the displaced in the countryside of neighboring Latakia province. "I couldn't hold back my tears when I heard the long applause after the show ended," he said. "At that moment, I decided to continue performing in every spot in Syria I could reach." He has since become a mainstay in Saraqib, where frequent power cuts have left children with few sources of entertainment.

He recalled a recent exchange with a young member of his audience, who asked him why his toys at home didn't speak the same way Abu Rashed's puppets do. "He insisted that his toys participate in the next show so they can learn how to speak and dance," Abu Rashed said. While he holds most of his shows outside, the puppet master has recently turned the basement of his home into an alternative performance space for when the bombing spikes. Gathering outdoors during heavy air strikes, he said, is akin to suicide. But that does not deter him. "I promise you these shows will not stop," he said. — AFP



Syrian puppeteer Walid Abu Rashed performs a puppet act for children amidst the rubble of damaged buildings in Syria's northwestern city of Saraqib in the Idlib province. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Awards



US singer/songwriter Pink



Cole Sprouse



Noah Centineo



Zendaya

# Pink, 'Stranger Things' among winners at E! People's Choice Awards 2019



US actress Lucy Hale

The 40-year-old star - born Alecia Moore - was presented with the People's Champion Award on the night at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, and she used her acceptance speech to urge others to "stop fighting each other and to help each other". Pink - who was accompanied at the ceremony by her husband Carey Hart, and their eight-year-old daughter Willow and two-year-old son Jameson - told the crowd: "It is an absolute honor to be getting this award. I grew up in a family of activists and I know that one person can make a difference. There is so much to be done. I don't care about your politics, I care about your kids. I care about decency and humanity and kindness.

"Kindness today is an act of rebellion. There are people who don't have what you have, help them get it. There is a planet that needs help, it feels good to help. Stop fighting each other and help each other. "Get together with your friends and change the world." In the movie category, 'Avengers: Endgame' picked up a hat-trick of prizes, including the coveted Movie of 2019 gong. The motion picture also won Action Movie of 2019 and one of the film's big stars Robert Downey Jr. won Male Movie Star of 2019.

He dedicated his award to the "late, great Stan Lee", the US comic book writing legend who passed away in November 2018 aged 95. He said: "Well look, I just got to come up here and open the show so I'll just say thank you Disney, thank you Marvel, thank you Russo brothers. "And most of all, to the late, great Stan Lee, this is for you, buddy." Spider-Man: Far From Home's Tom Holland and Zendaya took the Action Movie Star of 2019 and Female Movie Star of 2019 accolades respectively, and she also won the Drama TV Star of 2019 award.

Elsewhere in the TV category, 'Stranger Things' was the big winner, taking home the coveted Show of 2019 prize, and Drama Show of 2019. And Millie Bobby Brown, who plays Eleven in the Netflix sci-fi series, won the Female TV Star of 2019 gong. In the music category,



(Left to right) Kris Jenner, Kourtney Kardashian, Khloe Kardashian and Kim Kardashian

BLACKPINK were the big winners on the night, taking home Group of 2019, Music Video of 2019 for 'Kill This Love' and Concert Tour of 2019 for their 'BLACKPINK 2019 World Tour'. Harry Styles won the aptly-named Style Star of 2019 trophy, and Olympian Simone Biles was named Game Changer of 2019. — Bang Showbiz



US actress Anne Winters



Sarah Hyland



Jimmy Fallon



Kelsea Ballerini

Lifestyle | Awards



KJ Apa

**E! People's Choice Awards 2019 winners:**

People's Champion Award: Pink  
People's Icon of 2019: Jennifer Aniston  
Fashion Icon of 2019: Gwen Stefani

**Movie Categories**

Movie of 2019: Avengers: Endgame  
Comedy Movie of 2019: Murder Mystery  
Action Movie of 2019: Avengers: Endgame  
Drama Movie of 2019: After  
Family Movie of 2019: Aladdin  
Male Movie Star of 2019: Robert Downey Jr., Avengers: Endgame  
Female Movie Star of 2019: Zendaya, Spider-Man: Far From Home  
Drama Movie Star of 2019: Cole Sprouse, Five Feet Apart  
Comedy Movie Star of 2019: Noah Centineo, The Perfect Date  
Action Movie Star of 2019: Tom Holland, Spider-Man: Far From Home  
Animated Movie Star of 2019: Beyoncé, The Lion King

**TV Categories**

Show of 2019: Stranger Things  
Drama Show of 2019: Stranger Things  
Comedy Show of 2019: The Big Bang Theory  
Reality Show of 2019: Keeping Up with the Kardashians  
Competition Show of 2019: America's Got Talent  
Male TV Star of 2019: Cole Sprouse, Riverdale  
Female TV Star of 2019: Millie Bobby Brown, Stranger Things,  
Drama TV Star of 2019: Zendaya, Euphoria  
Comedy TV Star of 2019: Kristen Bell, The Good Place  
Daytime Talk Show of 2019: The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
Nighttime Talk Show of 2019: Jimmy Fallon  
Competition Contestant of 2019: Hannah Brown, The Bachelorette  
Reality TV Star of 2019: Khloe Kardashian, Keeping Up With the Kardashians  
Bingeworthy Show of 2019: Outlander  
Sci-Fi/Fantasy Show of 2019: Shadowhunters

**Music Categories**

Male Artist of 2019: Shawn Mendes  
Female Artist of 2019: Billie Eilish  
Group of 2019: BLACKPINK  
Album of 2019: Taylor Swift, Lover  
Song of 2019: Shawn Mendes, Camila Cabello, 'Señorita'  
Country Artist of 2019: Blake Shelton  
Latin Artist of 2019: Becky G  
Music Video of 2019: 'Kill This Love', BLACKPINK  
Concert Tour of 2019: BLACKPINK: BLACKPINK 2019 World Tour

**Pop Culture Categories**

Social Star of 2019: David Dobrik  
Beauty Influence of 2019: Bretman Rock  
Social Celebrity of 2019: Ellen DeGeneres  
Animal Star of 2019: Doug the Pug  
Comedy Act of 2019: Kevin Hart  
Style Star of 2019: Harry Styles  
Game Changer of 2019: Simone Biles  
Pop Podcast of 2019: 'Scrubbing In with Becca Tilley and Tanya Rad'  
— Bang Showbiz



US actress Jenna Dewan



US singers/songwriters Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton

*Gwen Stefani* stuns in monochrome statement dress

The 'What You Waiting For' hitmaker was honored at the music ceremony at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California on Sunday night. The singer wore a beautiful white Vera Wang dress, which was completed with a statement ruffled train that had the words 'Fashion Icon' written on it. The dress was partnered with velvet thigh-high black boots and matching long black gloves. Elsewhere, Zendaya impressed with a beautiful one-shouldered gown by Christopher Esber. The stunning outfit showed off her midriff, with sparkling detailed straps around the tummy to accentuate her slim figure.

The Kardashians ensured they would appear on the best dressed list for the People's Choice Awards, with momager Kris Jenner dressed in a black Alexander McQueen suit, complete with silver detailing. Kim Kardashian West wore a stunning Versace gown of a tight blue snakeskin variety. Khloe Kardashian opted for

an outfit by new designer LaQuan Smith, a gold bralette which she teamed with a sheer top. She accessorized with a Judith Leiber dollar note clutch bag, which cost a whopping \$5,695. Kourtney Kardashian chose an outfit by designer Naeem Khan, a stunning two part embellished suit.

Meanwhile, another big winner at the event, Pink arrived on the red carpet with her entire family. For herself, she opted for a pastel pink and black suit but her children - Willow, eight, and Jameson, two - stole the show with their accessories. Willow wore a bright pink and red dress, accessorizing it with a My Little Pony toy, which she wore around her neck like a scarf. — Bang Showbiz



US actresses Joey King, right, and sister Hunter King

*Jennifer Aniston* pays tribute to her 'iconic' sitcom

The 50-year-old actress was honored with the coveted Icon accolade at the ceremony and felt the only thing that would make her deserving of the title was her work on the classic series - which ran for 10 years until 2004 - as Rachel Green, a role she hailed as the "gift of a lifetime" as she praised her co-stars Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, David Schwimmer, Matthew Perry and Matt Le Blanc. Speaking on stage at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California, she said: "When I had first heard that I had won this Icon Award the first thing I thought was, 'Holy shnicks, have I been around that long? It turns out I have."

"If I have any claim to this word 'icon,' it's only because I was able to be on an iconic show, with an iconic cast, and an iconic haircut. 'Friends' was truly-it was the gift of a lifetime, and I would not be standing up here without that

amazing show, without those amazing five other actors, and with an audience who stuck with us for a decade and through streaming services now, and syndication and I'm sure coming to a watch soon near you or something!"

"But anyway, you believed in us, you really did, and you believed in those very impossible large apartments, but you had to believe it because we were telling our story." The 'Morning Show' actress also thanked her fans for all their support through the years. She added: "You paved the way for everything that I've had a chance to do since and it feels so good, also, that I get to be back on television, where it all started. "Thank you for being on this journey with me, and just, I love you guys. Thank you for sticking by me!" — Bang Showbiz



Tanya Rad, left, and Becca Tilley



US singer Kelly Rowland



Scottish actress Karen Gillan



US actress Storm Reid



US actress D'Arcy Carden

## Qatar Museums presents KAWS exhibition in the Middle East

Qatar Museums will present KAWS: He Eats Alone, the first museum show in the Middle East dedicated to Brian Donnelly (b. 1974, USA), known professionally as KAWS, at the Fire Station: Artist in Residence in Doha from October 25, 2019 through January 25, 2020. Curated by acclaimed art historian Germano Celant, this solo survey will explore the artist's career and vast oeuvre, featuring paintings, graphic design, small-scale objects, and large-scale sculptures made over the past twenty years.

The exhibition will feature forty artworks representing the artist's studio practice on view at the Garage Gallery in the Fire Station and a monumental inflatable sculpture titled HOLIDAY (2019) installed in the Dhow Harbour. Some ninety examples of products and commercial collaborations designed by KAWS - among them sneakers, skateboards, and toys - will be presented in the Archive located on the second floor of the Fire Station's Cafe building.

"We are pleased to present this important exhibition of the work of internationally renowned artist KAWS, along with the giant public installation in Dhow Harbour," said Sheikh Reem Al-Thani, Director of Exhibitions at Qatar Museums. "If the public reception of the recent installation of KAWS's Small Lie (2018) at Doha's Hamad International Airport, is any indication, the artist's larger than life sculptures, which evoke questions of humanity and hope, will unquestionably resonate with the people of Qatar."

Talking about the artist's work, Germano

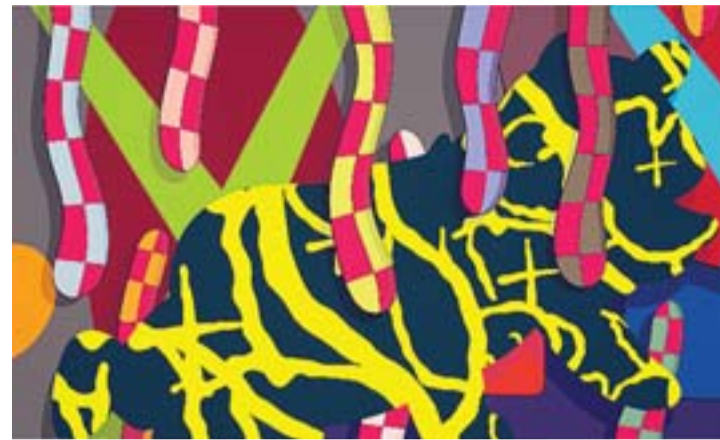
Celant, curator of the exhibition said: "The figures by KAWS are inflected in the world through a system of global communication and distribution. They are delicate, original forms that graft into every earthly context. They bear witness to the cosmopolitan spirit of an art "without place" that is able to convey an imaginary universe, always aware of having to negotiate its presence with the already existing market of signs."

"It is an acknowledgment of the iconic materials in circulation that have led us to a nomadic, and now virtual, culture. KAWS crystallizes a few of these, uprooting them from their mass profitability and making them alternative through their individuality, in keeping with a human perspective connected to the feelings of suffering and pain, boredom and sadness, which enable us to resist mass flattening and annihilation," he said.

KAWS' imagery has long possessed a sophisticated, dark humor, revealing the interplay between art and consumerism, referencing both art history and pop culture. Donnelly began his career in street art in the 1990s, becoming synonymous with the name KAWS, a tag that became a staple in his advertisements and 'sub-vertisments' (modifications of commercial works).

Later, the artist explored industrial production with KAWS companion, chum, and accomplice. These large- and small-scale objects translate the noisy exuberance of graffiti into 3-D cartoon characters that recall familiar images and characters in pop

culture. By doing so, the artist is simultaneously representing the vacuity of media and, as a consumable product, the failure of art-a failure to change the world. Blindly, with Xs for eyes, these characters approach their audience with recognizable yet manipulated shapes, mutating in attempt to more easily interact with society.



The formidable power of these hybrid figures, when cast as larger-than-life sculptures, speaks to a contemporary era in which image is often exchanged for persona-while their emotional stances are imbued with humanity.

The Doha exhibition will take over the Fire Station through large scale, artist-produced graphic installations that envelop the complex, inviting the visitor into the singular world of KAWS. The museum's Garage Gallery is trans-

formed into labyrinthine of gallery spaces designed by New York-based studio 2x4. A composition of fragmented art walls and sculpture platforms serve to both anchor and frame the works throughout the exhibition, including the titular piece He Eats Alone (2014), an early painting M2 (2000), signature

work Companion (passing through) (2010), a 5-meter-tall matte black figure, seated with his hands covering his eyes, will be installed. The Companion figure, which was created by KAWS in 1999 and represented one of the artist's first characters in 3D, is likewise the subject of the large-scale inflatable, titled

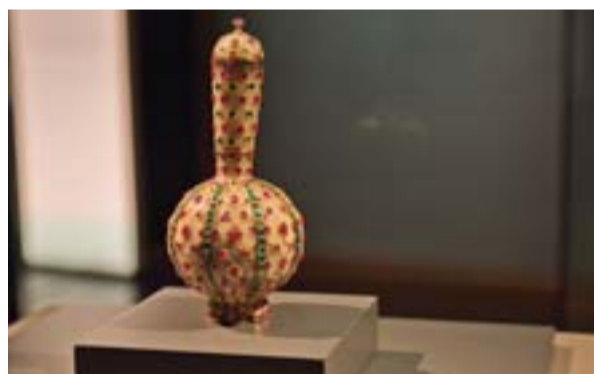


character sculpture Chum (2008, black) and Accomplice (2010).

Across the courtyard, the Archive features a wide array of smaller KAWS objects in a series of intimately scaled, display vitrines. The KAWS editions from 1999 to 2019 on view range from fashion and design objects to plush toys and skateboards produced in collaboration with diverse companies and brands.

In the Fire Station's courtyard space, the

Holiday (2019), in Doha's Dhow Harbour. The 40-meter-long figure, in this iteration in a reclined position, was installed earlier this year on a campground at the base of Mount Fuji in Japan.



## Set In stone: Gems and jewels from royal Indian courts

In celebration of the 2019 Year of Culture Qatar-India, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) is delighted to present an exhibition on magnificent gems and jewelry from India. Set In Stone: Gems and Jewels from Royal Indian Courts will showcase more than 100 pieces from across Qatar Museums' collections, including many masterpieces that have never been displayed before. Drawing from MIA's permanent collection, the National Museum of Qatar, and Qatar Museum's Orientalist Collection, this exhibition will bring together a splendid array of jewelry, jeweled objects, works on paper, and photography.

For over 5,000 years, minerals and metals were extracted from India's rich earth and crafted into beautiful pieces to adorn the body or give as offerings. India's reputation for abundantly rich natural deposits attracted trav-

elers and traders for centuries; so prized were these stones that wars were waged to win the right to exploit mines and control trade routes.

The wealth of any Indian court was directly tied to the size and value of its royal treasury, and nowhere was this clearer than in the Mughal Empire (1526-1858). Whether left in their natural state, carved, or set within gold, precious stones adorned a variety of objects that came to be associated with the wealthy elite, Emperors and Maharajas. Spectacularly opulent, these objects defined Indian luxury.

The exhibition is organized into four sections: "Precious Stones" reveals the cultural and economic importance of stones in India, tracing their history, sourcing, and trade in the early modern period. "Court & Ceremony" explores the role that gems, jewelry and jeweled objects played within a courtly context in the outward projection of wealth and status. "Beyond the Court" demonstrates the personal, private and devotional uses of crafted jewels. "Qatar Connection, Pearls for Gold" recounts the long cultural and commercial exchanges between India and Qatar, as seen through the traditions of pearls and gold, and explores how this lineage has influenced local Qatari jewelry fashion.

Dr Julia Gonnella, Director of the Museum of Islamic Art, said: "We are delighted to celebrate the opening of this extraordinary exhibition, developed as part of the Qatar-India Year of Culture. Set In Stone: Gems And Jewels From Royal Indian Courts allows us to present examples of the most spectacular pieces in the Museum of Islamic Art, along with important artworks and objects from other Qatar Museums' collections."

Exhibition highlights include 'Indian-Cut' diamonds from the famed mines of Golconda, in the Deccan (southern India), which - until the discovery of new diamond deposits in the 18th century - were the main source of diamonds throughout the world. MIA's jeweled falcon, which most likely adorned the top of a throne, is a masterpiece of 17th century Mughal craftsmanship and demonstrates the richness of the Mughal court.

Another highlight is the magnificent necklace from Varanasi: composed of seventeen diamonds suspended with gold-collared emeralds surmounted by baroque pearls, this necklace showcases the continued opulence of 19th century Maharajas. The most impressive object on display is known as the 'Clive flask', a 17th century jewel-encrusted jade flask that once belonged to Robert Clive, 1st Baron Clive of Plassey (1725-1774). This object - remarkable for both its beauty and provenance - will be displayed in Doha for the first time.



## National Museum of Qatar to present jewels of Jean Schlumberger

The National Museum of Qatar will present an exhibition dedicated to the vibrant and sculptural work of Jean Schlumberger (1907-1987), who transformed 20th century fashion with jewellery and accessories inspired by natural forms. On view at the National Museum of Qatar from October 15, 2019 through January 15, 2020, Magnificent Jewels of Jean Schlumberger: From the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Collection includes more than 125 pieces from the Rachel Lambert Mellon Collection at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the largest and most comprehensive public collection of jewellery and art objects by Schlumberger.

The exhibition will feature the designer's imaginative, witty and awe-inspiring interpretations of animal and botanical subjects, particularly marine life and flowers, which combine precious metals and gemstones, as well as organic materials. "We are proud to present Magnificent Jewels of Jean Schlumberger as one of the first temporary exhibitions at the recently opened National Museum of Qatar," said Sheikh Reem Al Thani, Director of Exhibitions at Qatar Museums. "Schlumberger's dazzling jewellery and art objects, which were inspired by nature, will certainly captivate visitors, just as the museum has through its organic design, resembling a desert rose, a flower-like mineral formation that occurs naturally in the Gulf region."

Magnificent Jewels of Jean Schlumberger: From the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Collection is organised by Dr. Michael R. Taylor, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and Kristie Couser, Curatorial Assistant for Works on Paper, The Clark Art Institute. The exhibition debuted in 2017 at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and has traveled to The Museum of Fine Art in St. Petersburg, Florida and The National Museum of China in Beijing.

"This unparalleled collection of Jean Schlumberger's iconic jewellery, accessories, and other decorative objects was given to VMFA by Rachel Lambert Mellon, one of the most generous donors in our history," said Dr. Michael R. Taylor, VMFA. "These extraordinary works - with their vibrant colors, exquisite craftsmanship, and natural inspirations - showcase Schlumberger's dazzling imagination and clarity of vision."

Schlumberger began his career crafting costume jewellery for the French fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli in 1930s Paris, before heading his own private salon at New York's Tiffany & Co. beginning in the 1950s. Schlumberger's designs for objects ranging from cigarette cases and pill boxes to brooches and necklaces were popular with some of the most celebrated women of the period, among them Rachel "Bunny" Lambert Mellon (1910-2014), a noted American horticulturalist and philanthropist, whose collection is the focus of this exhibition. Schlumberger's designs featuring precious



stones would include diverse cuts, carat size, and colour - adding a multi-faceted dynamism to each piece. A natural lapidary (gem artisan), he shaped minerals and gems using the techniques of cabochon cutting to maximise a gem's brilliance.







ABU DHABI: Sheikh Khaled bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan stands alongside Claude Chirac, late Jacques Chirac's daughter, as a street sign in the name of her father is unveiled at the Louvre yesterday. — AFP

## Louvre Abu Dhabi marks 2 years, without da Vinci

**ABU DHABI:** The Louvre Abu Dhabi yesterday celebrated two years since it opened its doors, but the fate of what was to be a prize exhibit remains unknown. The world's most expensive painting, Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi* was meant to go on display at the museum in Sept 2018. But in a surprise move, the United Arab Emirates postponed the hanging.

The famous work has not been seen in public since it was sold for \$450 million at a Christie's auction in 2017, sparking speculation over its authenticity and its buyer. Asked whether or not the piece would go on display in the coming year, museum head Manuel Rabate told

AFP it was "a question for the city", referring to Emirati authorities. The emirate's Department of Culture and Tourism declined to comment.

The *Salvator Mundi* - in which Christ is depicted emerging from darkness, blessing the world with one hand while holding a transparent globe in the other - is the last known Da Vinci in the hands of a private collector. The museum had said in Dec 2017 that the culture department had acquired the work, which dates to around 1500.

The *Wall Street Journal* first reported that the painting was bought by Saudi prince Badr bin Abdullah, acting in the name of the kingdom's Crown Prince

Mohammed bin Salman. Riyadh never confirmed or denied the report. Artprice, the leading art market information service, said clerics from Cairo's prestigious Al Azhar university had told Prince Mohammed the painting could not be displayed on religious grounds. Jesus (PBUH) is seen as a prophet within Islam, which prohibits any physical depiction of God. But the picture portrays him as a savior and thus a deity.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi opened with about 600 pieces including items from early Mesopotamia. Under a 30-year agreement, France provides expertise, lends works of art and organizes exhibitions in return for one

billion euros (\$1.16 billion). The first works on loan from the Louvre in Paris included another Da Vinci painting, "La Belle Ferronniere", one of his portraits of women.

Yesterday, the museum hosted a ceremony to name a street after Jacques Chirac, honoring the late French president for his role in French-Emirati relations. Chirac's daughter, Claude, attended the naming ceremony for the road leading to the museum. Rabate said the venue has welcomed around two million visitors since it opened. "This shows that we have found our place in Abu Dhabi and in Emirati society," he said. — AFP

## Egypt discreetly marks Suez...

Continued from Page 1

decade-long construction, according to official figures. And tens of thousands died in the process, experts say.

The first ships sailed down the 164-km canal on Nov 17, 1869, with hopes that fair winds would permit a faster route to and from Asia, avoiding a lengthy and perilous circumvention via the tip of southern Africa. But the waterway's history has followed the turbulent ebbs and flows of the volatile Middle East region.

Its watershed moment came in July 1956. Egypt's iconic late president Gamal Abdel Nasser, a staunch defender of Arab unity, defied British and French interests and nationalized the Suez Canal Company which ran the waterway. The decision, which saw Nasser's popularity rise at home, triggered an international crisis. France and Britain - countries which both controlled the company at that point - as well as Israel attacked Egypt around three months later. The canal also served as a frontline during Arab-Israel wars in 1967 and 1973.

Today the vital sea route is managed by the Suez Canal Authority and was expanded in 2015 to accommodate modern, larger vessels. It has grown into a major economic asset, providing passage for 10 percent of all international maritime trade. But the region's volatility is never far away. Running along the southern rim of the Sinai, the canal is today heavily secured by the Egyptian army which is battling a long-running insurgency against Islamist militants in northern Sinai.

Dug in the 19th century using "rudimentary tools", today the waterway has become "a lifeline to Egypt," Osama Rabie, head of the authority told AFP. In 2015, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi staged a grand ceremony for the opening of a new 72-km lane parallel to the canal after 12 months of excavations. The authority has since boasted new cargo and transit records

saying the new lane has facilitated the crossing of larger shipping convoys and decreased transit times. In August "a record breaking number" of 81 ships carrying a total of 6.1 million tons transited the canal in one day, the authority said.

"The tonnage has leapt," according to Jean-Marie Miossec, shipping specialist and professor at the University Paul Valery-Montpellier. He believes the growth is linked to an "increase in container traffic between Asia and Europe as well as Europe and the Indian subcontinent". "By expanding the canal, Egyptian authorities offer augmented potential, especially with regard to vessel sizes and transit time," he said. Revenues for the fiscal year 2018-2019 reached \$ 5.9 billion, up 5.4 percent from the previous year, the authority said in August. And Egypt is planning for revenues to rocket to \$13.2 billion in 2023.

Sumptuous feasts and banquets even attended by French Empress Eugenie, wife of Napoleon III, were held during the initial inauguration in 1869. But in stark contrast, no celebrations are planned for the canal's 150th anniversary. Arnaud Ramiere de Fortanier, from the association in the memory of Ferdinand de Lesseps and the Suez Canal, believes the anniversary is "bit tricky". "The issue of 1956 went wrong," he said, maintaining that for the company's former shareholders the entire Suez crisis was mishandled by all sides and was a "disaster".

Rather than highlighting the canal's pre-1956 history, Egyptian authorities are preferring to underscore the canal's current performance and its contributions to the country's battered economy. "Everyone writes history their own way," said French ambassador Stephane Romatet, noting Egyptians only started benefiting from the canal after the 1956 nationalization.

In Egypt and France, stamps bearing images resembling de Lesseps have been printed to mark the anniversary. And a conference entitled "The Suez Canal: A place of memories" is to be held in Egypt's famed Bibliotheca Alexandrina on Nov 13. Egypt has also dedicated a museum, currently under construction, to the canal in the city of Ismailia at the historic premises of the Suez Canal Company. But no opening date has yet been set. — AFP

ly automated system. "The newly opened clinic is a primary center. Primary centers will be opened in several areas. The center can take care of primary and secondary patients of all age groups. Secondary patients are those who will be treated in hospitals for complex cases. We will be setting up hospitals too for expats, but any case that we cannot treat will be sent to ministry hospitals for proper treatment. Gradually it's a withdrawal from government-run clinics to Dhaman healthcare services to Dhaman hospitals," she explained.

Dhaman will be a one-stop healthcare provider with all services under one roof. "In setting up hospitals or primary clinics, we consider the location - crowded areas and neighborhoods and with public transportation access. Everything will be there - laboratories, pharmacies and more. We don't want patients to wait or come back the next day for laboratory results - they will be available in 30 minutes," Baramakian said. "We will soon open primary centers in Farwaniya, Jahra and Ahmedi. More clinics will open in 2020, and the hospitals by 2021."

Asked if the primary healthcare center in Hawally will now accept insured expats, Baramakian replied in the negative. "The healthcare card is not ready yet. When the card is ready, we will start accepting expats patients. For now, we will be charging the same as other private clinics. Nonetheless, pilot tests will continue."

## Power vacuum in Bolivia after...

Continued from Page 1

"assume its responsibility" after Sunday's riots. He said the opposition leadership had a "responsibility to pacify the country and guarantee the political stability and peaceful coexistence of our people."

Morales, who was Bolivia's first indigenous president, said his opposition rivals, Carlos Mesa and Luis Fernando Camacho, "discriminators and conspirators, will go down in history as racists and coup plotters". Camacho is a key opposition leader in Santa Cruz, Bolivia's biggest city and economic capital. Mesa, a former president, came a close second to Morales in the disputed October 20 election.

Morales, whose Movement for Socialism party retains a majority in the Congress that will elect his temporary successor, said "the world and patriotic Bolivians repudiate the coup". Morales announced his resignation in a televised address Sunday, capping a day of fast-moving events in which many ministers and senior officials quit, some seeking refuge in the Mexican ambassador's residence. The streets of La Paz immediately exploded in celebration, with jubilant Bolivians waving the country's flag, but violence and vandalism later erupted overnight there and in El Alto.

In the confusion, a group of 20 lawmakers and government officials took refuge at the Mexican ambassador's residence, and Mexico announced it was offering asylum to Morales as well. Morales also wrote that "violent groups" had attacked his home. Police announced on Sunday night that they had arrested Maria Eugenia Choque, the head of the country's electoral court, an institution slammed by the opposition as biased.

Morales, a member of the Aymara indigenous community, is a former coca farmer who became Bolivia's

first indigenous president in 2006. He defended his legacy Sunday, which includes landmark gains against hunger and poverty and tripling the country's economy during his nearly 14 years in office. He gained a controversial fourth term when he was declared the winner of the presidential election by a narrow margin.

But the opposition said there was fraud in the vote count and three weeks of street protests ensued, during which three people died and hundreds were injured. The Organization of American States carried out an audit of the election and on Sunday reported irregularities in just about every aspect that it examined: The technology used, the chain of custody of ballots, the integrity of the count, and statistical projections.

As chanting Bolivians kept up demonstrations in the street, the 60-year-old Morales called new elections, but this was not enough to calm the uproar. The commanders of the armed forces and the police joined the calls for the president's resignation. A raft of ministerial resignations followed Morales' announcement and raised the question of who was in charge, given that vice president Alvaro Garcia Linera also resigned.

Under the constitution, power then passes to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the lower house of Congress, in that order. But they have resigned, too. An opposition senator, Jeanine Anez, said on Sunday she would assume the interim presidency of Bolivia. But Congress will first have to be convened for a vote to take place. With the situation in Bolivia unclear following the fast-moving events, regional heavyweight Colombia called for an urgent meeting of the OAS permanent council to look for solutions.

Latin American leftist allies rallied to denounce what they called a coup against one of their own. Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro said Morales and Bolivia's indigenous communities were "victims of racism". Hooded demonstrators overran Venezuela's embassy in La Paz on Sunday, the country's ambassador, Crisbeylee Gonzalez, told state news agency ABI. — AFP

## Dhaman opens first primary...

Continued from Page 1

members and a group of dignitaries and officials toured the center and had a look at the clinics and equipment. The tour was followed by a press conference during which Qinae gave a detailed presentation about the services at the center, adding this opening is the first stage of the company's operational plan that includes the opening of five centers in Kuwait's governorates. The other four centers are expected to open during the last quarter of 2019.

Sane said the company has completed medical, administrative and logistic preparations to receive patients and start commercial operations in a practical preparatory stage to implement the main goal behind establishing the company, which is to provide services to expats very soon in cooperation with the health ministry. He said Dhaman's strategy is to upgrade healthcare services and develop infrastructure in a way that benefits the healthcare sector as a whole.

Baramakian said the pilot healthcare center has a ful-

## Turkey starts repatriating...

Continued from Page 1

A French official told AFP that the French nationals being expelled were mostly women. Some had been in Turkey for a long time, while others arrived recently, the official added, without giving further details. These 11 will be tried, the official said, adding that discussions were under way to determine whether their arrival will be handled by civil or military airport authorities.

A French foreign ministry source told AFP at the weekend that a number of suspects had been quietly repatriated under a 2014 agreement with Turkey, and that the current deportations were nothing new.

"Jihadists and their families are regularly sent back to France and arrested as they leave the airplane. Most of the time it is done secretly. The news is not published, or released much later," the source said.

Meanwhile, a Dutch court ruled yesterday that the Netherlands should repatriate the children of women who joined IS, though the mothers themselves need not be brought back. The ruling was a response to 23 Dutch women being held in detention camps in Syria, calling for

their return along with their 56 children.

A German foreign ministry official confirmed the legal proceedings involving the 10 German nationals in Turkey, saying they included three men, five women (at least two who lived in Syria) and two children. Germany's interior ministry said "it did not wish to oppose the return of German citizens" and that authorities were still verifying the identities and the reasons for their repatriation.

Turkey has lately increased pressure on Europe to take responsibility for the problem. "Turkey is not a hotel for Daesh members," Soyly said last week, using another acronym for IS. The return of jihadists follows Turkey's offensive last month in northern Syria against Kurdish militants who were holding thousands of IS fighters and their families. Turkey said it would take control of captured jihadists in areas that it seized from Kurdish groups, but demanded greater assistance from Europe.

It remains unclear, however, whether Turkey will be able to repatriate those who have lost their citizenship. Although the 1961 New York Convention made it illegal to leave people stateless, several countries, including Britain and France, have not ratified it, and recent cases have triggered prolonged legal battles. Britain alone has stripped more than 100 people of their citizenship for allegedly joining jihadist groups abroad. Yesterday, state broadcaster TRT Haber said Turkey aimed to repatriate around 2,500 militants, most to EU countries. It said there were 813 militants at 12 deportation centers. — Agencies



## Sports

# Seattle defeat Toronto 3-1 to capture MLS Cup final

## Sounders collect second title in four campaigns

LOS ANGELES: Seattle defenders Kelvin Leerdam and Victor Rodriguez and Peruvian striker Raul Ruidiaz scored second-half goals to spark the Sounders over Toronto FC 3-1 in Sunday's MLS Cup championship match.

A noisy crowd of 69,274, the largest in the history of Seattle's NFL and MLS stadium, roared in delight at the final whistle as the Sounders collected a second title in four campaigns. "The atmosphere was amazing," said Spanish reserve Rodriguez, who was named the MLS Cup Most Valuable Player. "I will remember this moment as long as I live. I'm really happy."

It was the third championship match meeting over four seasons for Toronto and Seattle, but their first on US soil. The Sounders won the 2016 crown on penalties after a goalless draw but the Canadian club avenged the loss by capturing the 2017 title 2-0.

"We are so competitive," Rodriguez said. "We have really good mentality always. And at home with our fans it's a little bit easier for us. I'm proud for all my teammates. We really deserved that."

Dutchman Leerdam's blast deflected in off Toronto defender Justin Morrow but officials chose not to call it an own goal in the 57th minute, the score against the run of play giving the Sounders the lead for good. Rodriguez took a centering pass from Uruguayan midfielder Nicolas Lodeiro at the top of the box and smashed a right-footed shot into the far corner in the 76th minute.

Ruidiaz added Seattle's final goal in the 90th minute, netting his seventh goal in six career playoff matches. American Jozy Altidore, who came off Toronto's bench in the second half after missing most of the playoffs with a quadriceps injury, scored in the third minute of stoppage time to avert a shutout for the Reds.

Leerdam, a 29-year-old Suriname-born right back, hit a shot that was going wide before striking Morrow. It wasn't the first costly mistake by Morrow in an MLS Cup final. In 2016, he missed Toronto's last penalty kick off the crossbar just before Seattle's Roman Torres netted the title-taking kick. It was the second MLS title for 57-year-old hometown coach Brian Schmetzer, who began his playing career with the original Sounders in 1980. "It's a good moment for Seattle and the fans and the players, who have overcome adversity all year," he said.

"The first goal, Kelvin got the deflection and that got us started. My team is a dangerous team and that really got us going." Toronto sustained early pressure, with Canadian Jonathan Osorio and Frenchman Nicolas Benezet forcing saves by Seattle goalkeeper Stefan Frei in the first 11 minutes and Sounders winger Jordan Morris denied on a counter-attack by Toronto goalkeeper Quentin Westberg.

Frei deflected a Benezet shot with his left arm in the 36th minute and Westberg saved a Ruidiaz right-footed blast from the heart of the box in the 45th minute to keep the game scoreless at half-time. — AFP



SEATTLE: The Seattle Sounders celebrate after defeating Toronto FC 3-1 to win the 2019 MLS Cup at CenturyLink Field in Seattle, Washington. — AFP



## Kuwaiti shooter books berth at 2020 Tokyo Olympics

DOHA: Kuwait's shooter Saud Habib has booked a fourth berth at 2020 Tokyo Olympics after winning the third place on Sunday in the Skeet game at the 14th Asian Shooting Championship held in Qatar. In the same contest, India won the first and second positions. In the teams' contest of the same championship, Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Rashidi, Habib and Mohammad Al-Daihani ranked the second place, winning the silver medal in the Skeet, while Qatar came first and India third. Speaking to KUNA, head of Kuwait Shooting Federation (KSF) Duajj Al-Otaibi lauded the achievements made by the Kuwaiti athletes, which helped

them book another berth at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. He said that Kuwait's athletes Habib, Talal Al-Rashidi and Abdullah Al-Faihan qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in this championship, while their compatriot Mansour Al-Rashidi had previously qualified for Tokyo. The Kuwaiti shooters have made a brilliant performance at regional and international championships, winning several medals at the Asian tournaments, he noted. He stressed keenness of the KSF to do its best to create a propitious environment to help the shooters make many accomplishments. Al-Otaibi congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well as the Kuwaiti people on the achievements made by the country's shooters. For his part, Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi expressed his happiness for Kuwait's fourth qualifying card in

this tournament, which is witnessing a strong competition of shooting champions in the Asian continent. Al-Osaimi said that the KSF is working on an integrated program for the Kuwaiti athletes in the coming period, which will witness international participations, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in August. The Kuwaiti shooters will take part in an experimental tournament in Tokyo next April, he said, pointing to organizing training camps in South Korea and Italy as well as Kuwait in preparation for His Highness the Amir Shooting Cup, which will feature world's shooting champions. He thanked the wise political leadership, the government and all bodies supporting the shooting for their efforts led to the achievements by the Kuwaiti shooters on the continental and international levels. In addition, shooter Habib also expressed his delight for qualifying for 2020 Tokyo Olympics, stressing his keenness on making several accomplishments in the next tourney. He thanked the political leadership for its efforts which lead to the success of the country's athletes. — KUNA



## Kane, Blackhawks outscore Leafs

CHICAGO: Patrick Kane had two goals and an assist, and the Chicago Blackhawks poured in four goals in the first period before holding on for a 5-4 win over the visiting Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday evening. Kirby Dach, Jonathan Toews and Brandon Saad also scored for Chicago, which has bounced back from a difficult start to collect at least one point in five of six games this month. Alex DeBrincat had three assists. William Nylander scored twice, and John Tavares and Andreas Johnsson each scored once for Toronto. Auston Matthews recorded four assists. Blackhawks goaltender Robin Lehner made 53 saves — the second-highest total in a game in his career — to earn the win. Chicago blitzed Toronto with four goals in the first 17-plus minutes and carried a 4-1 advantage into the first intermission.

### OILERS 6, DUCKS 2

Connor McDavid delivered his fifth career hat trick, and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored two goals as visiting Edmonton cruised to a victory against Anaheim. Leon Draisaitl had four assists as the Oilers won their third consecutive road game following a four-game road losing streak. Zack Kassian added a goal for Edmonton. Rickard Rakell and Max Jones scored goals for the Ducks, who lost their third consecutive home game after opening the season 6-1-0 in their own building. The Ducks are 2-2-1 on a season-long seven-game homestand.

### PANTHERS 6, RANGERS 5 (SO)

Vincent Trocheck scored the game-winning goal in the third round of the shootout as Florida overcame three one-goal deficits and recorded a wild 6-5 victory over host New York. The Panthers won it when Trocheck made a wide move and then reached the middle of the ice. He waited for New York goaltender Henrik Lundqvist to go down and then flipped a wrist shot over him and into the back of the net for his 13th career shootout goal. Frank Vatrano also scored in the shootout for the Panthers, and rookie Kaapo Kakko scored in the third round for the Rangers. Panthers goalie Sam Montembeault made 29 saves, and Lundqvist stopped 30 shots.

### FLYERS 3, BRUINS 2 (SO)

Joel Farabee scored the lone goal of the shootout as Philadelphia won at Boston. Travis Konecny and Philippe

Myers tallied in regulation, as the Flyers recovered from blowing a two-goal lead in the third period. Carter Hart had 26 saves and turned away all three shots he faced in the shootout to lead Philadelphia to its fourth straight win. Danton Heinen and Brad Marchand scored for the Bruins, who have lost three in a row for the first time this season. Jaroslav Halak stopped 27 shots.

### JETS 3, STARS 2 (OT)

Mark Scheifele scored 21 seconds into overtime as host Winnipeg snapped Dallas' four-game winning streak with a victory. Scheifele scored his seventh goal of the season off a two-on-one that he kept and drove past Stars netminder Anton Khudobin (26 saves) to help the Jets improve to 4-0-1 in their last five contests. Down 2-1, Winnipeg tied the game just 1:52 into the third period when Andrew Copp drilled a Khudobin save of Tucker Poolman's shot into a gaping net.

### RED WINGS 3, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2

Anthony Mantha scored the game-winning goal with 31 seconds remaining to lift Detroit past visiting Vegas for its first win streak since the first two games of the season. Mantha skated in on a partial breakaway and fired a wrist shot from the right face-off circle inside the far post and just under the crossbar for his 11th goal of the season. That proved enough for the Red Wings, who trailed 2-1 entering the third. The Golden Knights have now lost five of their last six games. They finished 1-2-1 on a four-game road trip against Eastern Conference opponents.

### DEVILS 2, CANUCKS 1

New Jersey goaltender Mackenzie Blackwood made 30 saves to beat Vancouver for the second time in less than a month in the visiting Devils' narrow win. Sunday's road win was the 11th straight victory for the Devils over the Canucks, including Blackwood's 25-save shutout on Oct. 19 in New Jersey. Wayne Simmonds and Jesper Bratt tallied for the Devils, who ended their five-game road trip with a 3-2-0 record. A 22-year-old native of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Blackwood improved to 4-0 against the Canucks, allowing a total of three goals in those games. New Jersey played without standout defenseman Sami Vatanen, who took an elbow to the face in Friday's 4-0 loss in Edmonton. — Reuters



PARIS: In this file photo taken on September 22, 2019 chessboxers play a round of chess during a chessboxing training in Paris. Chessboxing combines rounds of boxing with chess. It was born 18 years ago when its founder Iepe Rubingh brought to life a seemingly far-fetched idea from a French graphic novel, "Cold Equator" by French author Bilal. — AFP

## Chessboxing bout thrills French creator

PARIS: French comic book writer Enki Bilal laps it up as he watches two proponents of his creation combine the cerebral nature of chess with the physicality of boxing in a "sporting" first. Bilal watched spellbound as Paris's Cabaret Sauvage hosted France's first "bout" of competitive chessboxing Saturday, nearly three decades after he first depicted the concept in his work.

A sellout crowd turned up to watch as the competitors alternated brawn and brain, three-minute rounds of boxing giving way to mini-chess bouts across a maximum 11 rounds, the whole thing ending either with a knockout — or a checkmate.

A DJ whips up the audience before the bare-chested protagonists, sweatshirts slung over their shoulders, enter the ring, escorted by their respective entourages. To drown out the noise of the partisan crowd, the "fighters" put headphones on as they survey the chessboard. "Move your pawn," reads one supportive banner in a crowd of mainly 30-something fans.



PARIS: Athletes compete in a chessboxing match organised at the Cabaret Sauvage, in Paris. — AFP

Shifting to not pulling punches, the rivals launch into battle, eschewing protective headgear. After three minutes of sweaty, adrenaline-fueled action they return to the chessboard for some more brainy manoeuvring. "Passing from the violence of boxing to re-concentrating on chess is using the two most beautiful human capacities — intelligence and physical force," Bilal told AFP, amused to see his concept leap from the pages of his comic books to become physical reality.

Bilal came up with the idea while writing his Froid Equateur (Cold Equator) trilogy in 1992. Ten years on, Dutchman Iepe Rubingh actually organised a maiden fight and an international federation was created. Today, there are a dozen national federations with around 3,500 proponents.

"When Iepe read the comic book he saw the sport straight away. Boxing is a noble art, with its rules and codes, its elegance — (it is) a form of beauty and, inexorably, strength, resistance and intelligence.

"Chess is strategic, about mental (strength)," said Bilal, adding that he was thrilled to witness "the birth of chessboxing champions". "Training for chess is also about mugging up on books. It's worse than music theory. They've come up with something modern, a sport which blends all the human qualities, and there are precious few sports which do that." As for Saturday's card, the outcome was two technical knockouts and one checkmate. — AFP



ANAHEIM: Mikko Koskimen #19 and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins #93 of the Edmonton Oilers defend against Sam Steel #34 of the Anaheim Ducks during the first period of a game at Honda Center in Anaheim, California. — AFP

## Sports

# Tannehill fires late 23-yard touchdown pass to Humphries as Titans stun Chiefs

## Falcons defeat Saints on topsy-turvy NFL day

**NASHVILLE:** Ryan Tannehill fired a decisive 23-yard touchdown pass to Adam Humphries with 23 seconds remaining Sunday, and the Tennessee Titans stunned the Kansas City Chiefs, 35-32, in Nashville, Tenn. Harrison Butker, who made a field goal as time expired to enable the Chiefs to beat Minnesota last week, had a 52-yard attempt blocked at the buzzer. Tannehill passed for 181 yards and two touchdowns, and Derrick Henry rushed for 188 yards and two more scores. On their previous possession, the Chiefs (6-4) lined up for a field goal after going three-and-out inside the final two minutes, but holder Dustin Colquitt could not handle the snap and was flagged for intentional grounding on a desperation pass. Tannehill and the Titans (5-5) took over and covered 61 yards in four plays to spoil the return of Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, who missed the two previous games with a dislocated knee. Mahomes, playing with a brace on his right knee, passed for 446 yards, going 36 of 50, with three touchdowns.

### PACKERS 24, PANTHERS 16

Preston Smith stopped Christian McCaffrey inside the 1-yard line on the game's final play, and Green Bay survived Carolina's lengthy, last-minute drive to win at snowy Lambeau Field. McCaffrey was stopped on second-and-goal from the 2 — with the ruling upheld upon review — ending an 18-play, 88-yard drive by the Panthers (5-4) that included a fourth-and-10 conversion from quarterback Kyle Allen to D.J. Moore. The Packers (8-2) rode three touchdowns from Aaron Jones and 156 combined rushing yards from Jones and Jamaal Williams. Aaron Rodgers finished 17 of 29 for 233 yards.

### FALCONS 26, SAINTS 9

Matt Ryan threw two touchdown passes, and visiting Atlanta ended a six-game losing streak by stopping New Orleans' six-game winning streak. Ryan, who completed 20 of 35 for 182 yards, threw scoring passes of 8 yards to Austin Hooper and 10 yards to Brian Hill for the game's only touchdowns. The Falcons (2-7) limited Drew Brees and the Saints' offense to three Wil Lutz field goals. Brees, playing in his second game after a five-game absence due to thumb surgery, completed 32 of 45 passes for 287 yards and was sacked six times by a defense that had seven sacks total entering the game.

### STEELERS 17, RAMS 12

Mason Rudolph passed for 242 yards and a touchdown to James Washington to complement a strong Pittsburgh defense in a win over visiting Los Angeles. The Steelers (5-4), who won their fourth straight game, held the Rams (5-4) without an offensive touchdown and had four takeaways. Washington had six receptions for 90 yards, including the touchdown, which tied the game at 7-7 at the end of the first quarter. Minkah Fitzpatrick had a fumble recovery and return for a touchdown and sealed the win with an interception with 20 seconds left.

### RAVENS 49, BENGALS 13

Lamar Jackson threw three touchdown passes and scored on a long run as visiting Baltimore ripped Cincinnati. Jackson completed his first 11 passes, two of those touchdowns to Mark Andrews. He also scored on a 47-yard run, fooling a pair of defenders with a spin move before accelerating into the end zone. The Bengals (0-9), the NFL's lone winless team, didn't appear to have solved anything even as they came off an open week on the schedule. Rookie Ryan Finley ended up 16 for 30 for 167 yards with a touchdown and an interception. He replaced Andy Dalton, who was benched after eight games, as the starter.

### BEARS 20, LIONS 13

Mitch Trubisky threw for 173 yards and three touchdowns to help host Chicago snap a four-game losing streak with a victory against Detroit. The Bears (4-5) won for the first time since Week 4 to take sole possession of third place in the NFC North. The Lions (3-5-1), playing without injured starting quarterback Matthew Stafford, lost for the fifth time in six games. Backup quarterback Jeff Driskel's fourth-down pass toward the end zone from the Bears' 25-yard line fell incomplete as time expired. Stafford missed the game with what ESPN reported were multiple fractures in his back, snapping a streak of 136 consecutive starts, the sixth-longest by a quarterback in NFL history.

### BROWNS 19, BILLS 16

Baker Mayfield found Rashard Higgins for a 7-yard touchdown pass with 1:44 remaining to help Cleveland snap a four-game losing streak by defeating visiting Buffalo. Buffalo's Stephen Hauschka missed a 53-yard field-goal attempt with 17 seconds to go. It was his second missed field-goal try of the game. Mayfield finished 26 of 38 for 238 yards and two touchdowns for the Browns (3-6), who had been 0-3 at home. Nick Chubb ran for 116 yards on 20 carries. Cleveland's winning drive went 82 yards in 10 plays, taking 3:42.

### JETS 34, GIANTS 27

Le'Veon Bell's 1-yard touchdown run eight seconds into the fourth quarter gave the "host" Jets the lead for good, as they defeated the Giants in a battle of skidding New York teams who share MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. The Jets (2-7) snapped a three-game losing streak, while the Giants (2-8) have lost six straight. Quarterback Sam Darnold threw for 230 yards and accounted for two touchdowns — one passing and one rushing — for the Jets. Safety Jamal Adams had two sacks and two forced fumbles and scored the other touchdown by stripping the ball from Giants quarterback Daniel Jones and racing untouched into the end zone for a 25-yard score early in the third quarter. Jones connected on 26 of 40 passes for 308 yards and four touchdowns — two apiece to Golden Tate and Darius Slayton — but was sacked six times. The Giants had just 23 yards on 17 carries, including 1 yard on 13 carries by Saquon Barkley.



**NASHVILLE:** Ryan Tannehill #17 of the Tennessee Titans is tackled in the second half by Frank Clark #55 of the Kansas City Chiefs at Nissan Stadium in Nashville, Tennessee. The Titans defeated the Chiefs 35-32. — AFP

### BUCCANEERS 30, CARDINALS 27

Jameis Winston passed for 358 yards and a touchdown, and Peyton Barber scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 1-yard run with 1:43 remaining as host Tampa Bay broke a four-game losing streak at the expense of Arizona. Ronald Jones had 106 yards from scrimmage and rushed for a touchdown, and O.J. Howard caught a scoring pass from Winston, who engineered the 10th fourth-quarter comeback of his career as the Bucs (3-6) played their first game in Raymond James Stadium in 49 days. Tyler Murray completed 27 of 44 passes for 324 yards and tied a career high with three touchdowns. Christian Kirk caught all three scores while setting career highs in receiving yards (138) and touchdowns as the Cardinals (3-6-1) lost their third straight.

### DOLPHINS 16, COLTS 12

Miami's defense intercepted Brian Hoyer three times, and kicker Jason Sanders boomed three long field goals, including the go-ahead and insurance kicks in the fourth quarter of an upset in Indianapolis. Sanders' 48-yarder with 5:45 left in the game gave the Dolphins (2-7) a 13-12

lead, and another 48-yarder just over two minutes later upped the lead to four. That occurred five plays after Nik Needham intercepted Hoyer at the Indianapolis 35. The Colts' final drive ended at the Dolphins' 8 when Hoyer's fourth-down pass to tight end Eric Ebron came up 2 yards shy of a first down, as Needham made the tackle with 45 seconds remaining. Hoyer, making his first start in two years as Jacoby Brissett (knee) sat out, finished 18 of 39 for 204 yards.

### VIKINGS 28, COWBOYS 24

Kirk Cousins completed 23 of 32 passes for 220 yards and two touchdowns, both to tight end Kyle Rudolph, and Minnesota held on for a win over host Dallas in Arlington, Texas. Dalvin Cook finished with 26 carries for 97 yards and a touchdown for Minnesota (7-3), which won for the fifth time in six games. Cook also had seven catches for 86 yards out of the backfield. Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott completed 28 of 46 passes for 397 yards, three touchdowns and one interception, which came on a "Hail Mary" from the Dallas 46 as time expired. Amari Cooper had 11 catches for 147 yards and a touchdown, while Randall Cobb had six catches for 106 yards and a touchdown for the Cowboys (5-4). — Reuters

## Racists out of tune with changing world: England star Archer

**LONDON:** England's fast-bowling sensation Jofra Archer says cricket fans who resort to racist abuse should realise times have moved on and the world is a much more multicultural place. The 24-year-old Barbados-born bowler has quickly become a favourite with the England fans since he became eligible to play for his adopted country earlier this year.

The Sussex star benefited from the England and Wales Cricket Board reducing the eligibility period from seven years to three so he did not have to wait till 2022. He quickly showed his worth by bowling the decisive Super Over in the thrilling World Cup final win over New Zealand. He then marked his test debut by flooring Australia's star batsman Steve Smith in the second Ashes Test at Lord's which saw him miss the following match at Headingley with concussion and in his absence England won to level the series. It was in the fourth Test at Old Trafford — which Australia won to ensure they retained the Ashes — that Archer was barracked by a couple of fans. "I was aware that the guys were saying — something about my passport — but I blanked them," he told The Daily Mail in an interview conducted in New Zealand where England are touring.

"It was only later that Rooty (Joe Root the England captain) said the guys got ejected. "It was the first time I'd seen someone get ejected from a ground, because there were some abusive fans when we played Pakistan at Trent Bridge (heckling Ben Stokes).

### MORE MULTICULTURAL

Archer, who says an elderly spectator at a county game with Kent had once queried how he was playing for Sussex, said racist incidents occurred far less in cricket than football. "The world's changing," he said. "It's becoming more multicultural. A lot of people have accepted it for what it is. "Look at the England cricket team — there's huge diversity. "It's the same with any football club in the world.

"I think people have to accept it. Times have changed, it's not 2007 any more." Archer says he sees himself as a role model to young British West Indians who have aspirations to play cricket for England. "Yeah, to let them know it's possible," said Archer. "It doesn't really matter where you're born. "If you know that cricket's what you want to do, you never know where you'll end up. "I didn't know my dreams would come true and I'd end up playing cricket for England. "If it happens for me, it can happen for anyone." Archer says being the man who bowled the decisive Super Over in the World Cup did not alter his profile. "Not many England fans knew who I was anyway, so if they saw me in the street they probably thought I was a footballer, or something," he said. "I guess that was the beauty of it, being able to go under the radar." — AFP

## Burgan Bank and International Wheelchair Fencing titleholder, Tareq holds 'Sabre Challenge Championship' in Kuwait



**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank recently concluded its sponsorship of the "Sabre Challenge", organized by the International Wheelchair Fencing Titleholder "Tareq Al-Qallaf", which was held in Kuwait for the first time. This final challenge follows as part of the bank's one-year sponsorship of Al Qallaf's activities, after representing Kuwait in four global championships in 2019. As one of Kuwait's most celebrated athletes "Tareq Al Qallaf" competed for the first time locally with US wheelchair fencing champion, "Rick Swauger".

Enhancing its role in community development and as an active member of the society that seeks to inspire positive changes, Burgan Bank has been continuously advancing opportunities for ambitious Kuwaiti youth. The bank remains the main sponsor of Tareq Al-Qallaf's

journey across many championships in the field of fencing for five years.

Serving as an inspiration and role model to all those who aspire to follow their dreams in the sports and special needs, the homegrown world champion organized the one-of-a-kind contest that tests the abilities of both titleholders on local grounds. Bringing the popular sport to Kuwait for the first time, Al Qallaf won with Rick Swauger coming in second place. During the event that took place in the midst of media partners, and official sponsors, an appreciation token was presented to Burgan Bank for its ongoing commitment and regular funding.

Falling in line with Burgan Bank's CSR strategy, the continued contribution demonstrates its belief that each

individual has the right to showcase their skills and fulfill their ambitions. Burgan Bank promotes diverse opportunities to pursue independent goals and an inclusive environment that people with disabilities can benefit from as equal members of the community.

Supporting sports falls under Burgan Bank's CSR strategy, through its program: 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. Burgan Bank sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.

## Sri Lanka tightens sports betting rules to fight cricket graft

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka introduced tough penalties for match-fixing and tightened sports betting restrictions yesterday in a bid to stamp out graft scandals that have dogged the country's cricket team.

Allegations of corruption have plagued Sri Lankan cricket for years, including claims of match-fixing ahead of an international Test against England last year. "Many tried to prevent this piece of legislation, but I am happy

that it was taken up today," Sports Minister Harin Fernando said after the law was passed unanimously by parliament.

Betting on sports matches hosted in Sri Lanka was already illegal, but the new rules will also ban Sri Lankans from gambling on overseas contests.

Offenders could face up to 10 years' jail and fines of up to 100 million rupees (\$555,000) for match-fixing under the new law, which also bans people with family links to gambling businesses from sitting on the sport's local governing body.

The provision appears in part to target the former president of Sri Lanka Cricket, Thilanga Sumathipala, who was until recently a member of the organisation's executive committee and whose family owns a gambling business. Sumathipala, a controversial businessman and politician, has repeatedly denied involvement in the gam-

bling side of the family business. The new law comes months after Sports Minister Harin Fernando said the sport's local governance was riddled with graft "from top to bottom", and that the International Cricket Council considered Sri Lanka one of the world's most corrupt cricketing nations.

Former Sri Lankan fast bowler Dilhara Lokuhettige was last year suspended for corruption linked to a limited-over league in 2017. He was the third Sri Lankan player charged for violating the ICC's anti-corruption code, following charges levelled against former captain and ex-chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya, and former pacesman Nuwan Zoysa.

Jayasuriya was found guilty of failing to cooperate with a match-fixing probe and was banned for two years, while Zoysa was suspended over the match-fixing accusations. — AFP

## Sports

# Herrmann double keeps Gladbach four points clear in Bundesliga

## Freiburg go fourth, level on points with Leipzig and Bayern

**BERLIN:** Borussia Moenchengladbach maintained their four-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga on Sunday as Patrick Herrmann scored twice in an emphatic 3-1 home win over Werder Bremen.

RB Leipzig, who won at Hertha Berlin, and defending champions Bayern Munich, who routed Dortmund 4-0 at the Allianz Arena, had both trimmed Gladbach's lead to just a point with their victories on Saturday.

Gladbach finished with 10 men after goalscorer Rami Bensebaini was sent off late on for a second yellow card before Bremen midfielder Leonardo Bittencourt netted a late goal deep into added time.

It was a weekend to remember for Herrmann, whose wife gave birth to their first child on Friday. "Before the match, I hadn't noticed that the birth had given me a big boost," said Herrmann. "I'm going to pick them up from the hospital afterwards."

Hosts Gladbach took the lead with two goals inside 107 seconds.

Midfielder Laszlo Benes whipped in a free-kick and left-back Bensebaini out-jumped the Bremen defence to power home his header on 20 minutes.

The second followed almost immediately from a counter-attack, when French striker Marcus Thuram drew Bremen goalkeeper Jiri Pavlenka to present Herrmann with a simple tap-in.

Yuya Osako looked to have halved the lead with 28 minutes gone when Bremen's Japan forward hit the net, the goal was disallowed by VAR for a foul in the build-up. At the start of the second half, home captain Yann Sommer saved a penalty attempt by Bremen skipper Davy Klaassen on 54 minutes.

Herrmann made it 3-0 by firing home on the hour mark. With time almost up, Bensebaini picked up a sec-

ond yellow card for fouling Bittencourt, having also been booked while giving away the penalty Klaassen failed to convert.

Gladbach will have been top for a month by the time they play their next game at newly-promoted Union Berlin in two weeks' time.

### FREIBURG GO FOURTH

Later on Sunday, Freiburg went fourth — level on points with Leipzig and Bayern — after a 1-0 home win over nine-man Eintracht Frankfurt, with three red cards dished out at the Schwarzwald Stadion.

Freiburg striker Nils Petersen scored the hosts' winner 13 minutes from time, but Frankfurt played the second half with 10 men after defender Gelson Fernandes was shown a second yellow card just before half-time.

There were ugly scenes at the end of a tense match as Frankfurt captain David Abraham was shown a straight red for barging into and knocking over Freiburg coach Christian Streich on the sidelines.

Freiburg winger Vincenzo Grifo, who had been substituted on 57 minutes, also saw a red card on the bench for grabbing Abraham by the throat in the ensuing melee.

Earlier, mid-table Bayer Leverkusen backed up their mid-week Champions League win over Atletico Madrid with a 2-0 victory at Wolfsburg with goals by Karim Bellarabi and substitute Paulinho.

Having been second in the table in mid-October, Wolfsburg are now 10th after four straight defeats in all competitions. Bellarabi put Leverkusen ahead on 25 minutes by powering into the area and firing home, before Brazilian midfielder Paulinho came on to add a second goal six minutes into added time. — AFP



**MOENCHENGLADBACH:** Moenchengladbach's German forward Lars Stindl and Bremen's Czech goalkeeper Jiri Pavlenka (R) vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match Borussia Moenchengladbach v Werder Bremen in Moenchengladbach, western Germany. — AFP

## Ronaldo's fitness and attitude both under the spotlight

**MILAN:** Cristiano Ronaldo's fitness and attitude has come under the spotlight after he reacted angrily to being substituted during Juventus' win over AC Milan and coach Maurizio Sarri said the 34-year-old had been nursing a knee injury for some time.

Ronaldo now faces two matches with Portugal where he will want to help the European champions guarantee their place at Euro 2020 and close in on the 100-goal milestone for his country. He currently has 95 goals and, given his prolific record, it is not inconceivable that he

could reach 100 against Lithuania and Luxembourg — if he can play. Ronaldo gave Sarri a dirty look and walked straight down the tunnel after being substituted in the 55th minute on Sunday, prompting widespread criticism led by former Real Madrid, Juventus and England coach Fabio Capello.

"Ronaldo hasn't dribbled past a player in three years and I remember when he could leave them on the floor," Capello told Sky Sport Italia. "Sarri was right to take him off. The fact that he did not go and sit on the bench was not a good image."

Sarri said the player had taken a knock on the knee in training a month ago was still feeling the effects. "When he trains with high intensity and plays matches, he feels some pain. He can't train too hard and has difficulty when he kicks the ball."

Sarri added that Ronaldo was also suffering problems with his thigh and calf, raising questions as to whether the striker was taking unnecessary risks by

playing on rather than taking some time out to regain full fitness.

Ronaldo's career has been remarkably injury-free and his longest layoff was in 2008 when a fractured knee cap sidelined him for 94 days, during which he missed 11 games. An ankle injury cost him nine games in 2009 and he suffered another knee injury during the Euro 2016 final for Portugal against France.

He was also troubled by tendinitis around his left knee in the run-up to the 2014 World Cup. He played in all of Portugal's games but later admitted that he had taken a risk by playing through it.

According to the specialist website Transfermarkt, he has only missed 53 games in his entire career due to injury. Sarri described Ronaldo's angry reaction to being substituted as normal for a top player, but he will probably be more than happy to let Portugal coach Fernando Santos deal with the problem for the next week. — Reuters

## Dybala keeps Juve at Serie A summit, Lazio, Cagliari into top four

**MILAN:** Paulo Dybala struck the decisive goal in Juventus' 1-0 win over AC Milan on Sunday after replacing Cristiano Ronaldo as Juventus stayed top of Serie A, while Lazio and Cagliari moved into the Champions League places.

Argentine forward Dybala hit the winner in the 77th minute in the Allianz Stadium having taken the place of Ronaldo 20 minutes earlier. Defending champions Juventus maintain their one-point lead over Antonio Conte's Inter Milan who had taken pole position after their 2-1 win over Verona on Saturday.

AC Milan's seventh defeat in 12 games saw Stefano Pioli's side drop to 14th position, just four points above the relegation zone. However Milan had threatened as the former European giants chased their first win against Juventus in Turin in eight years.

Wojciech Szczesny was kept busy in the Juventus goal, denying fellow Pole Krzysztof Piatek, Lucas Paqueta and Hakan Calhanoglu. Blaise Matuidi missed Juventus's best chance before Dybala's winner when his powerful curling effort flew wide just after the break.

Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo, who had also been taken off during the midweek Champions League win over Lokomotiv Moscow, reportedly left the stadium before the end of the game after being substituted on 55 minutes.

Douglas Costa also came on for Federico Bernardeschi after an hour, with the two substitutions changing the game for the champions. Gonzalo Higuain fed Dybala, who easily shook off Alessio Romagnoli to beat Donnarumma and claim his third league goal this season.

"Cristiano should be thanked because he made himself available despite not being in optimal conditions," said Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri. "In the last month he has had this discomfort in his knee and this a little problem for him."

"It's only natural a player is going to be irritated to leave the pitch, especially when he worked so hard to be there." Behind the leaders, Lazio and Cagliari moved into the top four after goal-packed wins. Lazio saw off newly-promoted Lecce 4-2, while surprise package Cagliari continued their superb form with a 5-2 rout of Fiorentina.

The two teams are level on 24 points, eight behind Juventus with Lazio ahead of the Sardinians on goal difference. Lazio's Argentine forward Joaquin Correa hit a brace either side of Sergej Milinkovic-Savic's strike, with Serie A top-scorer Ciro Immobile slotting in a penalty at the Stadio Olimpico.

Cagliari, who battled relegation last season, have been in superb form since Radja Nainggolan returned to the Sardinian outfit after five years away, including a difficult season at Inter Milan last term. The Belgian contributed three assists and capped a stellar performance with the fifth goal of the game on 65 minutes.

Fiorentina are struggling without Franck Ribery who is serving a three-match ban for pushing an official. Nainggolan set up Mark Rog for the opener on 17 minutes, with Fabio Pisacane nodding in the second less than ten minutes later.

The 31-year-old was involved again in Giovanni Simeone's third goal against the Argentinian forward's parent club, as well as Joao Pedro's effort 10 minutes after the break, before blasting in his second goal of the campaign from distance.

He was given a standing ovation when substituted in the 78th minute. "We are doing something extraordinary," said Nainggolan whose side are unbeaten in 10 games, which include seven victories and three draws. — AFP

## Khaka says he is ready to battle for Arsenal place

**LONDON:** Granit Khaka may have been stripped of the Arsenal captaincy due to his public run-in with the club's fans but he says he will be staying and fighting for his place in the team. The volatile 27-year-old Swiss international midfielder has not played since he mouthed an obscenity at a section of Gunners fans jeering him when he was substituted in the Premier League match with Crystal Palace a fortnight ago.

However, despite manager Unai Emery deciding he could not carry on as skipper — a role he was given after a secret ballot of the players — he told Swiss newspaper Blick he would not be leaving. Khaka has had a fractious relationship with Arsenal supporters since his arrival from Bundesliga outfit Borussia Moenchengladbach in 2016, costing the Premier League side a fee reported to be £38 million (\$49 million). "You can be sure that I'll keep fighting and putting myself out there in every training session," Khaka said. "I feel last week has been dealt with and I'm ready. My time at Arsenal has been very positive for a long time."

"After a difficult start, I played a lot and overall I've had a great time at Arsenal. My family and I also feel very well in the city of London." Khaka, who has been linked with a move to struggling Newcastle in the January transfer window, said the boos and jeers has not altered his views of the city or the club.

"I'll continue to stay positive," he said. "(To) give my all to an even greater extent and prove that I am an important part of this great team." The 2-0 defeat by Leicester on Saturday left Arsenal with just one win in six Premier League games and eight points adrift of fourth-placed Manchester City.

Khaka and many of his teammates are now on a fortnight international break. Their next league game will be against second-from-bottom Southampton on November 23.

Khaka does concede the abuse hurt — he claimed his emotions were running high because his daughter had received online abuse — but said it was counter-productive for the whole team's morale.

"Insulting and swearing at your own captain will cause upset and a bad atmosphere for the team you are actually supposed to be supporting. That makes no sense to me and weakens the team's spirit."

He does not spare the online abusers either. "What has changed through social media are phenomena such as 'xxxx storms' that can over-run you from one minute to the next," he said. "Also new is the cloak of anonymity you can use to attack players without fear of consequences. What happened here is abnormal and excessive and there can be no justification for it." — AFP



**MARSEILLE:** Lyon's French forward Mathis Rayan Cherki (C) fights for the ball with Marseille's Tunisian midfielder Saif-Eddine Khaoui (L) during the French L1 football match between Olympique de Marseille (OM) and Olympique Lyonnais (OL) at the Orange Velodrome stadium in Marseille, southeastern France. — AFP

## Lyon sunk by Payet brace after team bus attacked

**MARSEILLE:** Two first-half goals from Dimitri Payet gave Olympique de Marseille a stormy 2-1 win over bitter rivals Olympique Lyonnais, who complained that their team bus was pelted with missiles on the way to the Stade Velodrome on Sunday.

The match, which saw Marseille go second in Ligue 1, was also interrupted for five minutes when a laser was shone at Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes and again in the second half because of smoke caused by pyrotechnics.

Photographs showed windows on one side of the Lyon bus had been smashed and club president Jean-Michel Aulas at one point threatened to pull his team out of the match. "We were victims of an ambush," he

told reporters. "If it continues like this, we will not play." French media said that Lyon insisted on using their highly customised and distinctive team bus despite being advised to use a more discreet vehicle. The match went ahead and there was more chaos after Marseille were awarded a penalty.

First, Marseille forward Dario Benedetto appeared to push another player, leading to a VAR review over a possible red card, and then a laser beam was shone towards Lopes. Payet finally converted in the 18th minute, five minutes after the spot kick was awarded, as Marseille became the first team to score 4,000 goals in Ligue 1. The Reunion Island-born player struck again in the 39th minute after he won a tackle in midfield, found Lopez, collected the return and drilled his shot past Lopes. The game was stopped for smoke early in the second half and it was still clearing when Moussa Dembele headed in Bertrand Traore's pass to reduce the arrears.

Marseille had Alvaro Gonzalez sent off five minutes later for a denying Dembele a clear scoring chance but the hosts held on to leave them with 22 points, eight behind leaders Paris St Germain. — Reuters

**25** Seattle defeat Toronto 3-1 to capture MLS Cup final

**26** Tannehill fires late 23-yard touchdown pass to Humphries as Titans stun Chiefs

**27** Herrmann double keeps Gladbach four points clear in Bundesliga



## Jokic, Nuggets recover to top Wolves

Raptors knock off Lakers for 10th straight time



MINNEAPOLIS: Will Barton #5 of the Denver Nuggets grabs the rebound against the Minnesota Timberwolves at Target Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. — AFP

**MINNESOTA:** Nikola Jokic hit a 15-foot jumper with 3.3 seconds left in overtime, and the Denver Nuggets beat the Minnesota Timberwolves, 100-98, in Minneapolis on Sunday. Jokic finished with 20 points and hit a last-second game winner for the second consecutive game. Paul Millsap had 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Will Barton scored six of his 13 points in overtime and added 12 rebounds. Denver has won four straight, despite allowing a 16-0 Timberwolves run in the final 6:43 of regulation to force overtime. Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points, 16 rebounds and six assists. Andrew Wiggins also scored 25 and Josh Okogie had 17 points for Minnesota. The Timberwolves played without their two top point guards. Jeff Teague was out due to illness, and Shabazz Napier sat with a right hamstring strain.

**RAPTORS 113, LAKERS 104**

Pascal Siakam scored 24 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, and short-handed Toronto used a second-half surge to beat Los Angeles for the 10th straight time. Fred VanVleet had 23 points and 10 assists for the Raptors, who snapped the Lakers' seven-game winning streak. Toronto, which played without guard Kyle Lowry and forward Serge Ibaka, has won six of its last seven contests. Anthony Davis led the Lakers with 27 points to go along with eight rebounds and four blocks. LeBron James recorded his fourth triple-double in five games, finishing with 13 points, 15 assists and 13 rebounds.

**BUCKS 121, THUNDER 119**

Giannis Antetokounmpo collected 35 points and 16 rebounds, and Brook Lopez sank a go-ahead 3-pointer with 25.4 seconds left as Milwaukee won at Oklahoma City. Eric Bledsoe finished with a season-best 25 points, marking the fourth consecutive game that he has scored at least 20 after being held to 18 or fewer in each of his first six contests. Lopez joined Bledsoe in making a trio of 3-pointers for the Bucks, but none bigger than the one he sank after Oklahoma City went on a 13-2 run to forge a tie at 114. Dennis Schroder shot 9-of-12 for 25 points, and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 22 for the Thunder, who saw their four-game home winning streak come to a halt.

**TRAIL BLAZERS 124, HAWKS 113 (OT)**

Outscoring Atlanta 17-6 in the overtime period, Portland broke a four-game losing streak with a home victory. Kent Bazemore, the former Hawk traded to Portland in the offseason, catalyzed the Blazers' offense in the extra period, scoring the first six points on a pair of 3-pointers. He finished with 13 points and took on the diffi-

cult task of guarding Atlanta guard Trae Young, who scored a team-high 35 points but shot just 9 of 30 from the field. Damian Lillard led Portland with 30 points, supplemented by 23 from CJ McCollum, 21 points and 12 rebounds from Hassan Whiteside and 20 points off the bench from Anfernee Simons. Atlanta got 27 points and 11 rebounds from Jabari Parker and 15 from Kevin Huerter.

**PACERS 109, MAGIC 102**

Domantas Sabonis led a balanced attack with 21 points as Indiana rallied from a halftime deficit to turn back host Orlando. T.J. Warren and Malcolm Brogdon chipped in with 19 points apiece, and Doug McDermott added 18 off the bench as the Pacers, down 60-51 at the half, dominated the final 24 minutes en route to their third straight win. Evan Fournier paced Orlando with 22 points. Nikola Vucevic grabbed a game-high 17 rebounds to go with 18 points for the Magic.

**SUNS 138, NETS 112**

Devin Booker had 27 points and nine assists, Ricky Rubio had his third straight double-double with 22 points and 12 assists, and host Phoenix made a season-high 19 3-pointers in a victory over Brooklyn. Kelly Oubre Jr. had 18 points, rookie Cam Johnson had a season-high 15 points, and Aron Baynes and Tyler Johnson had 14 apiece for the Suns, who at 6-3 are off to their best start since the 2009-10 team won eight of its first nine. Spencer Dinwiddie had 18 points off the bench, reserve center DeAndre Jordan had 16 points and 12 rebounds and Kyrie Irving had a season-low 15 points for the Nets, playing the second game of a five-game road trip.

**76ERS 114, HORNETS 106**

Six players scored in double figures for Philadelphia, which rallied from a halftime deficit to beat Charlotte after losing three straight to end its four-game Western Conference road swing. Joel Embiid led the 76ers with 18 points and nine rebounds, followed by Furkan Korkmaz with 17 points, Al Horford with 15, Tobias Harris with 14, Trey Burke with 12 and Josh Richardson with 11, as star Ben Simmons sat out with a shoulder injury. Cody Zeller scored 14 of his game-high 24 points in the second quarter for the Hornets, who outscored Philadelphia in the period 34-20. Reserve guard and season-long Hornets leading scorer Devonte' Graham provided his usual spark off the bench, finishing with 19 points and a game-high 10 assists.

**CAVALIERS 108, KNICKS 87**

Collin Sexton scored a career-high 31 points, and

Cleveland won for the 11th straight time at Madison Square Garden, a wire-to-wire victory over New York. The Cavaliers led by double digits for the last 30-plus minutes and won consecutive games for the first time this season, while the Knicks failed for the second time

this season to record back-to-back wins. Kevin Love added 17 points and eight rebounds, while reserve Jordan Clarkson also contributed 17 for the Cavaliers. Julius Randle led the Knicks with 20 points and 16 rebounds. — Reuters

### Federer faces early ATP Finals exit after Thiem defeat, Djokovic cruises

**LONDON:** Roger Federer faces an uphill task to qualify for the last four of the ATP Finals after defeat by Dominic Thiem on Sunday following a masterclass by Novak Djokovic. Six-time champion Federer was beaten 7-5, 7-5 in the evening match on the opening day after Djokovic had swatted aside debutant Matteo Berrettini in the earlier Group Bjorn Borg contest in London.

Federer and Djokovic will meet later in the week in a repeat of this year's epic Wimbledon final, with two players advancing from the four-man group. The Swiss 20-time Grand Slam winner recovered quickly from being broken in the first game of the match but the Austrian fifth seed repeated the dose in the 11th game and took the opening set 7-5.

Federer, uncharacteristically wayward, squandered an early chance to break in the second set and the games went with serve until the 11th game again, when Thiem broke to love after the third seed dumped a forehand into the net.

The Austrian stuttered while serving for the match, forced to save two break points, but he held his nerve to take the set 7-5 and seal a deserved victory on his second match point. "I thought Dominic saved himself real well when he had to," said Federer. "So I thought he played a tough first-round performance today, and my game was probably just not good enough, and the start didn't help."

"It's a normal tournament from here on forward,"

added the 38-year-old, who may now have to beat Djokovic to progress. "Not allowed to lose anymore for me. That's how it is every week of the year for the last 20 years, so from that standpoint there is nothing new there."

Thiem came into the match with a 4-2 winning record against his illustrious opponent but the result is still a surprise. The only time Federer has failed to progress to the knockout stages was in 2008.

"We had a good and close match, and it's always special to beat Roger, who is a legend," said Thiem, who impressed with his clean hitting. "It's amazing to play against probably the best player of all time, but luckily I have a pretty good record against him."

Earlier, Djokovic began his quest for a record-equalling sixth ATP Finals title and sixth year-end number one spot a 6-2, 6-1 romp against Berrettini. The Serbian was last week nudged off the top position in the rankings by Rafael Nadal, who is also in the eight-man field in London.

Djokovic must reach the final at the O2 Arena to stand any chance of dislodging Nadal but there are major questions over the Spaniard's fitness. If the Serbian does claim the year-end number one spot, he would match the record of Pete Sampras and victory at the end-of-season event would equal Federer's mark. The second seed saw off the challenge of Berrettini in just 64 minutes, converting five of seven break points and at one stage going on an eight-game streak. "It feels great to be back," said the Wimbledon champion. "Earlier this year I had a great stay in London, and over the years I've played well in this arena." Nadal, who has never won the event, is bidding to clinch the year-end number one spot in the ATP rankings for a fifth time.

The tournament, featuring the year's best eight players, is contested in a round-robin format with the best four players and doubles teams reaching the knockout semi-finals stage. Nadal, in Group Andre Agassi, begins his campaign today against defending champion Alexander Zverev. —AFP