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# Defense, interior ministers in public row over alleged graft

Sheikh Khaled outraged after Sheikh Nasser refers him to prosecution

Green thumbs set record for 'largest gardening lesson'



KUWAIT: Participants set a new world record for the world's 'largest gardening lesson' at Shaheed Park yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: A new world record for the world's 'largest gardening lesson' was set at Shaheed Park yesterday during an event hosted by HGTV and beIN. The event showed the great interest of the local community in gardening and planting. Despite long queues, participants waited patiently for over an hour to get to the area prepared for them to attend the gardening lesson. All participants had registered in advance, which was open to people of all nationalities and ages.

Led by influential gardening expert Alzainah Al-Babtain, 286 participants were taught the essentials on growing their own organic produce for a healthier home and diet and debunked myths surrounding gardening in Kuwait, helping to inspire residents to get their hands dirty all year round.

Ahmed Gamal Gabr, official adjudicator from Guinness World Records, the global authority on record-breaking

Continued on Page 24

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: In a rare event, the defense and interior ministers clashed in public yesterday by issuing statements attacking each other. The clash came just two days after the government resigned over alleged infighting among its members and after lawmakers filed no-confidence motions against two ministers following grillings, one of them against the interior minister.

Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah was the defense minister between 2013 and 2016 and became interior minister after the appointment of Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in late 2017 as defense minister. In his statement posted on the army's Twitter account, Sheikh Nasser said he referred discovered embezzlements of KD 240 million from the Kuwaiti army fund when Sheikh Khaled was the minister.

Sheikh Nasser also said he has referred to the public prosecution Sheikh Khaled himself and five top defense ministry officials over the alleged embezzlements. He said he had asked the prime minister to take action against the embezzlements and that he stopped attending meetings of the Cabinet until the action was taken.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Muabrak Al-Sabah eventually responded by setting an investigation committee to probe the allegations. Sheikh Nasser however said this was not satisfactory to him and accordingly sent the issue to the public prosecution. The defense minister also said the resignation of the Cabinet was not to give time to allow reshuffling the Cabinet but to avoid answering questions over the graft in the army fund.

The interior minister lashed back by saying that he had felt great pain over the leaks on social media that contained unfounded and unsubstantiated accusations that undermined his reputation and the image of his family, adding "loyal Kuwaitis" do not do so. The minister insisted that he did not change

Continued on Page 24

One dead as petrol protests spread in Iran

TEHRAN: One person was killed and others injured in protests that spread yesterday across Iran after a surprise decision to impose petrol price hikes and rationing in the sanctions-hit country. The death Friday occurred in the central city of Sirjan, where protesters tried to set a fuel depot ablaze but were thwarted by security forces, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported. Demonstrations broke out hours after it was announced the price of petrol would be increased by 50 percent for the first 60 litres and 300 percent for anything above that each month.

"Unfortunately someone was killed," Sirjan's acting governor Mohammad Mahmoudabadi said, adding it was still unclear if the civilian had been "shot or not". "Security forces did not have permission to shoot and were only allowed to fire warning shots... which they did," ISNA quoted him as

saying. It was a "calm gathering" exploited by some who "destroyed public property, damaged fuel stations and also wanted to access the oil company's main fuel depots and set fire to them", he added.

Besides Sirjan, "scattered" protests were also held Friday in other cities including Abadan, Ahvaz, Bandar Abbas, Birjand, Gachsaran, Khoramshahr, Mahshahr, Mashhad and Shiraz, state news agency IRNA said. Some "rioters" in Ahvaz torched a bank and in Khoramshahr "suspicious and unknown armed individuals" opened fire and injured a number of people, state television's website said. In other cities, protests were mostly limited to blocking traffic and were over by midnight, it added.

Police fired tear gas at protesters in some cities, state television said, without specifying when. It accused "hostile media" of trying to use fake news and videos on social media to exaggerate protests as "large and extensive". Prosecutor general Mohammad Jafar Montazeri laid the blame for incidents on a "few disruptors" whose actions showed they opposed the system.

But fresh demonstrations were held yesterday in the cities of Doroud, Garmsar, Gorgan,


Ilam, Karaj, Khoramabad, Mehdishahr, Qazvin, Qom, Sanandaj, Shahroud and Shiraz, IRNA said. "Some drivers have protested the new petrol price by turning off their cars and creating traffic jams," it added. Iran imposed petrol rationing and raised pump prices by at least 50 percent from Friday, saying the move was aimed at helping needy citizens.

The measure was expected to generate 300 trillion rials (\$2.55 billion) per annum, the authorities said. About 60 million Iranians would receive payments ranging from 550,000 rials (\$4.68) for couples to slightly more than two million rials (\$17.46) for families of five or more. Under the scheme, drivers with fuel cards would pay 15,000 rials (13 US cents) a litre for the first 60 litres of petrol bought each month, with each additional litre costing 30,000 rials.

Fuel cards were first introduced in 2007 with a view to reforming the subsidies system and curbing large-scale smuggling. Iran's economy has been battered since May last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a 2015 nuclear agreement and reimposed crippling sanctions.

Continued on Page 24

MoH, J&J sign agreement

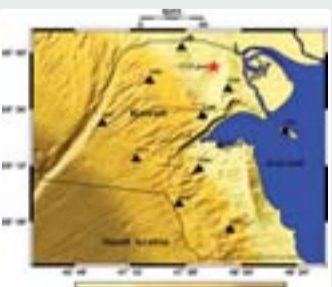


KUWAIT: Officials from the health ministry and Johnson & Johnson sign an agreement during the surgical week organized by the Kuwait Association of Surgeons. (See Page 3)

News in brief

Mild quake jolts Kuwait

KUWAIT: A 3.4-magnitude quake jolted the northern Rawdatain area at 9:19 pm on Friday, the national seismological network, an affiliate of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), reported. The epicenter of the quake was three kilometers underground, the network's supervisor Abdullah Al-Enzi said. "Some residents felt the quake in Abdaly: it was followed by aftershocks ranging in magnitude between 1.2 and 2.2 degrees," he added. — KUNA



Heavy snow hits Tehran

TEHRAN: Heavy snowfall blanketed the streets of north Tehran yesterday, causing traffic chaos and forcing the closure of schools, authorities in the Iranian capital said. Crews of municipal workers were battling to clear roads and pavements in parts of the capital, where snow began falling at the start of the morning rush hour and continued through the day. — AFP

Venice braced for more floods, strong winds

VENICE: Venice was on alert for more floods and fierce winds yesterday after an exceptionally high tide swamped the city of canals, where authorities have declared a state of emergency. Mayor Luigi Brugnaro ordered the iconic St Mark's Square closed on Friday as the latest sea surge struck with strong storms and winds battering the region.

The square was open again yesterday, but the city forecast a high water of 160 cm for today, lower than Tuesday's high of 187 cm but still dangerous. Civil protection authorities downgraded a weather "red alert" for the Venice region to orange, with yesterday's mid-day high forecast to be a manageable 105 cm.

Churches, shops and homes in the city, a UNESCO World Heritage site, have been inundated by unusually intense "acqua alta", or high water, which on Tuesday hit its highest level in half a century. "We've destroyed Venice, we're talking about one billion (euros) in damage," Brugnaro said.

The Italian football team travelled to Venice yesterday to show solidarity with the stricken city. "On behalf of the whole team, we stand close to the city of Venice," said Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma. The Italian football federation delegation visited several businesses damaged by the flooding, and chatted with Venetians, volunteers and police. "Venice will overcome



VENICE: People walk in a street with clothes hanging on top in this flood-hit city yesterday. — AFP

this too. Like an athlete who suffers a serious injury and then gets up again," said delegation chief and former Azzurri international Gianluca Vialli.

The crisis has prompted the government to release €20 million (\$22 million) in funds to tackle the devastation. Surveying the damage, Culture Minister Dario Franceschini warned the task of repairing the city would be huge. More than 50 churches had suffered damage, he said.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte declared a state of emergency for the city on Thursday. Residents whose houses have been hit are eligible for up to €5,000 in

Continued on Page 24

Trump 'intimidating' to ex-envoy as new call details revealed

WASHINGTON: A US ambassador ousted by Donald Trump told a riveting impeachment hearing Friday she felt intimidated by the president, after he launched an extraordinary real-time attack midway through her testimony to Congress. Testifying under oath before a national television audience, Marie Yovanovitch cut a resolute figure as she was grilled for five hours on her fraught dealings with Trump allies she accuses of undermining US foreign policy in Ukraine.

The 33-year diplomatic veteran earned a standing ovation from the public at the conclusion of her marathon testimony, during which spoke in personal terms about how she was subjected to a "painful" smear campaign before being abruptly pulled from Kiev. Setting the scene less than an hour into the hearing, the president erupted spectacularly on Twitter with an attack on the highly-regarded former envoy.

"Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad," he wrote. Asked what effect Trump's tweet might have on her and other witnesses, Yovanovitch appeared unnerved. "It's very intimidating," she told the panel. "I can't speak to what the president is trying to do but I think the effect is to be intimidating." On a momentous day on Capitol Hill, another official provided damning closed-door testimony to impeachment

Continued on Page 24

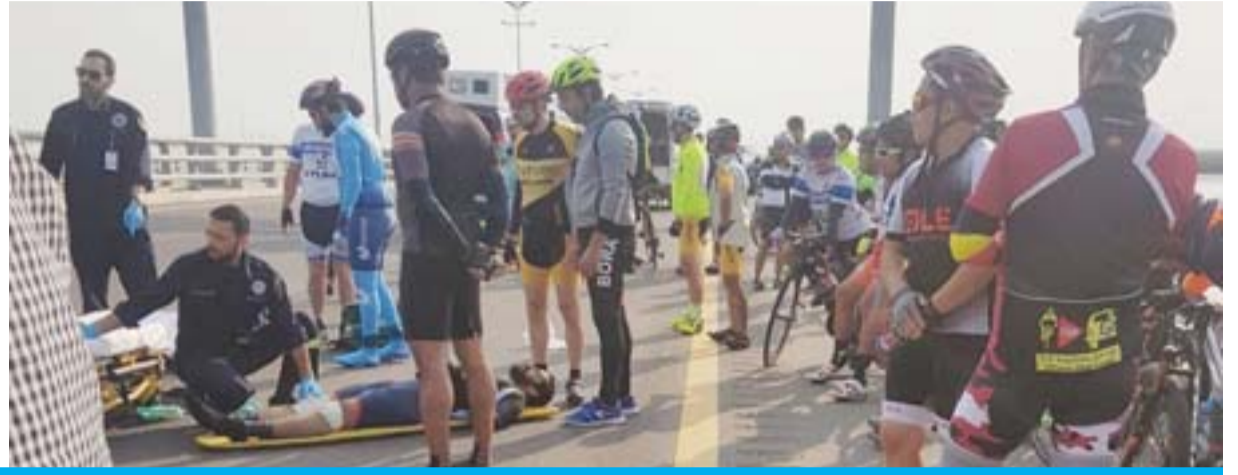
## Local

# Man killed in Wafra road crash; bikers injured in causeway accident

## Man died in Farwaniya park of natural causes



KUWAIT: Emergency medical technicians help cyclists injured in an accident reported on Sheikh Jaber Causeway yesterday.



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti man was killed while nine others including an Asian national were injured in a collision reported yesterday on Wafra road. The injured are aged between 12 to 17. An investigation was opened to reveal the circumstances behind the accident. Meanwhile, a collision of bicycles on Sheikh Jaber Causeway caused five light injuries yesterday. The injured were transferred to Sabah Hospital. An investigation was opened.

### Heart attack

The interior ministry's relations and security information department explained that the death of an Arab man found in a Farwaniya park was of natural causes. Those who were there said the man was exercising and suffered a heart attack. The coroner confirmed the death was of natural causes.

### Fight

The relations and security information department said a video clip that showed a fight between several

men in front of a chalet took place last week and police did not receive any call about the incident. It said police are taking the necessary action.

### Immoral videos

Vice police arrested a person who uploaded immoral video clips on social media. The suspect confessed to his actions and was sent to concerned authorities.

### Ex-couple row

Responding to a video clip on social media that showed a European woman complaining against a Kuwaiti man, claiming they are married, police found the man, who said that they were romantically involved before, but there relationship has ended since. He said the woman is demanding custody of their baby girl according to a complaint she filed at the family court. The estranged husband said the woman kept insulting and threatening him and filed a custody case at the family court. Furthermore, the man said he did not marry her, and the complaint was rejected. The man does not have a criminal record. Investigations continue.



## Morphine behind most drug overdose deaths in Kuwait

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Recent security statistics showed morphine was responsible for the majority of drug overdose-related deaths in Kuwait, killing around 30 citizens. The study also showed that abusing benzodiazepine sedatives was the next leading cause of death, amphetamines third, methamphetamines fourth and hashish fifth. Statistics also showed that overdoses had killed 75 citizens and expats of various nationalities since the beginning of 2019. According to statistics, the ages of most victims varied between 23 and 35, followed by the age category of 36-50, 18-22 and 51-60, with a majority of male victims.

### Ethiopian maids

Kuwait union of domestic helper office owners urged the foreign ministry to accelerate the process of

signing a cooperation agreement with Ethiopia in order to open more sources for domestic helpers and revive the sector. The union also called for allowing various offices to rehire domestic helpers, which is now restricted to the government company providing the same services.

### Bedoon students

The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) yesterday announced that the total number of illegal residents (bedoons) studying at its colleges and institutes is 1,894. PAAET's dean of admission and registration Dr Meshaal Al-Mansouri said 1,508 illegal residents are registered in PAAET colleges and 386 in various institutes. Mansouri added 592 bedoon students were accepted this year and 1,434 students had graduated over the past four years.

### Rumors denied

Director of the public authority for the disabled Dr Shafiq Al-Awadhi denied social media reports about suspending the shift allowances for the authority's employees. "It is impossible to stop the shift allowance for staff members taking very good care of the disabled in various care centers," she stressed, urging all involved staff to ignore such rumors and get the latest information from authentic sources.

## Fishermen invited for 46th Kuwait Fishing Competition

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Sea Sports Club's (KSSC) Marine Heritage Committee recently invited fishing enthusiasts to take part in its 46th Kuwait Fishing Competition due to be held on Saturday, November 23, 2019. In this regard, the committee's chairman Ali Al-Qabandi announced that the competition is open for all citizens and expatriates, and participation is free of charge. Meanwhile, he explained that fishing should be done using fishing lines and hooks, the maximum length of participating boats is 33 feet, while boats must be registered with the marine survey department and are fully equipped with various safety gear.

Qabandi added that interested competitors should check with KSSC headquarters for further details and filling in the application forms, adding that two personal photographs should also be attached to the form. The deadline for applying is Friday, November 22, 2019, he noted. Further, Qabandi said that the competition includes a heaviest catch contest, with a KD 1,000 allocated for the first place winner, KD 750 for second place and KD 500 for third, while finalists from 4th to 10th would get KD 200 each.



Ali Al-Qabandi

## Municipality sets 'intensive plan' for Jleeb cleaning

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Farwaniya municipality cleaning manager Saad Al-Khrainej said an intensive plan had been set to merge all shift teams in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh from Nov 5. He added that due to the area's special circumstances, garbage collection vehicles operating in Jleeb will work from 8 am till 2 pm.

### Environmental auditing

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah issued a new ministerial resolution establishing a new administration for environmental auditing to be responsible for following up environmental performance and ensuring the implementation of law number 42/2014.

### Food trucks

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) yesterday announced launching online booking of food truck locations in order to help entrepreneurs and improve the business environment. MoCI issued a press release noting it has finalized a list with 400 sites for entrepreneurs in collaboration with the Municipality and the traffic department in various locations such as Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) parks, the seafont, clubs and NGOs parking spaces.

## Kuwaiti house

Local Spotlight



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

Last month, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurated the last session of the current National Assembly, which was elected in 2016. But the Kuwaiti political scene in recent weeks has witnessed several movements by different parliamentary and popular groups - silent public protests, parliamentary grillings and consultations between political groups, Islamists, former MPs and independents are all preparing for the next election scheduled in 2020.

Last week was a feverish week for political action between the government and the National Assembly, which opposes the government's administration and its handling of public issues. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah presented the resignation of the government to His Highness the Amir in order to rearrange ministerial work. This is the seventh resignation of the government, the latest of which was formed in Dec 2017.

The government is now gone, but the National Assembly remains. Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem said His Highness the Amir does not intend to dissolve the parliament at this time. Last Tuesday witnessed grillings of the ministers of public works and interior. The minister of public works, who is also the minister of state for housing affairs, announced her resignation after a stormy questioning session.

My wish now, as a citizen, voter and woman, is that the government will bring personalities who are willing and capable of cooperating and working with all political parties, including deputies and people. There are important issues for the people and the government needs to address them radically. The first is the loans of retirees from the social security body, and they are not a large category. There is also the problem of stateless residents (bedoons), which has been declared by Ghanem as an important political and humanitarian issue. Other topics such as unemployment and the high cost of living need to be addressed.

People need the legislative and executive authorities to rearrange the priorities of the people, and every voter must not fall behind their role and ignore their responsibility as a citizen. Therefore, it is not surprising that the general atmosphere is dominated by preparations for the upcoming election. It is the right of people to demand reform and achieve the best. The government, the parliament and the people are all under one roof of our Kuwaiti house.

While the weather in Kuwait is getting cold, it is not so on the political level, especially with the next elections scheduled for 2020.



KUWAIT: A new world record for the world's 'largest gardening lesson' was set at Shaheed Park yesterday during an event hosted by HGTV and beIN. Led by influential gardening expert Alzainah Al-Babtain, 286 participants were taught the essentials on growing their own organic produce. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

# Health Ministry's long-term plan helped qualify large number of doctors: Official

5,000 bariatric surgeries conducted annually in Kuwait



Dr Salman Al-Sabah



Dr Salman Al-Sabah receives a memento during the event.



J&J country manager Peter Lane and Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, Central Circle Company CEO.

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Health Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Allied Medical Services Affairs Dr Fawaz Al-Rifae said the long-term plan the health ministry started a long time ago to qualify Kuwaitis of both genders resulted in qualifying a large number of doctors, whether from Kuwait University's medical college or from abroad.

Rifae, who spoke to journalists on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of the surgery week in Kuwait, which included four conferences, said the conferences were highly professional with the participation of an elite group of specialists both from Kuwait and abroad. He said it is very important to concentrate on female doctors, because they now represent a large group of graduates in the country, adding they greatly contribute to enhancing health services in the country. Rifae said the health ministry does not spare any effort in introducing the most modern medical equipment and anything that is beneficial



## 'Kuwait Surgery Week' underway

for the health of citizens and expats.

Meanwhile, Head of Kuwait Association of Surgeons Dr Salman Al-Sabah said 3,000 bariatric surgeries in government hospitals and 2,000 in the private sector are conducted annually, adding that the health ministry has completed a national register of obesity surgeries. "We are looking forward to a national register for accidents due to the high rate of deaths of those under 40 due to accidents," he added. He said the registers are used to compile statistics and compare results with those around the world, and hoped the national register includes the private sector soon.

Salman said the conferences focused on the future of surgery and a large number of experts contributed to them, with a concentration on female surgeons. He added reality shows that a large number of Kuwait University College of Medicine graduates are female, adding that the role of the association is to attract them to practice as surgeons.



KUWAIT: A group photo on the sidelines of the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Governor-General of Canada Julie Payette with the staff of Kuwait's embassy.

## Kuwait's envoy to Canada hands in credentials

**WASHINGTON:** Kuwaiti Ambassador to Canada Reem Al-Khaled handed in her credentials to the Governor-General of Canada Julie Payette, said a statement yesterday. Ambassador Reem Al-Khaled commended the strong relations linking Kuwait and Canada, revealing that diplomatic relations have been going strong for around 50 years. The Kuwaiti diplomat conveyed warm greetings from His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Governor-General Payette, affirming that both leadership were eager to bolster relations on all levels. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Ambassador to Canada Reem Al-Khaled with Governor-General of Canada Julie Payette.

## NATO, Kuwait partnership 'moves forward'

**BRUSSELS:** A high-level delegation from various ministries and the armed forces of the State of Kuwait visited NATO Headquarters on November 11-14 to share views on their partnership with NATO and discuss the way ahead through the renewal of the NATO-Kuwait Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program. According to a NATO announcement titled "NATO and Kuwait move their long-standing partnership forward," posted on its website Thursday evening, the Kuwait delegation was headed by Ambassador Jassem Al-Budaivi, Head of the Mission of the State of Kuwait to NATO and Sheikh Fawaz Al-Sabah,

Assistant Undersecretary at the National Security Bureau of Kuwait (NSB). NATO was represented by Giovanni Romani, Head of the NATO Middle East and North Africa Section of the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division and included representatives from other divisions of NATO's International Staff and International Military Staff. During the visit, the Kuwaiti delegation also discussed the review and planning of the activities of the NATO-ICI (Istanbul Cooperation Initiative) Regional Centre and held talks with representatives from the other Gulf Cooperation Council states, it said. The NATO-ICI Regional Centre is based in Kuwait and was inaugurated in 2017. Activities at the NATO-ICI Regional Centre are open to all member countries of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Gulf Cooperation Council, it noted. More than 900 representatives from Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been trained and participated at the Centre since its inauguration in 2017, it added. — KUNA



Kuwait's delegation at the NATO.

## CONDOLENCES

Our heartfelt condolences to the  
**Mohammed Naser Al-Sayer family**  
on the sad demise of their  
Patriarch and Leader



**Mr. Naser Mohammed Al-Sayer**

SEFEENA GROUP OF COMPANIES

MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sheikh Jaber Causeway during sunset. — Photo by Sijo Eianji (KUNA)

# Kuwait continues role supporting peace, security in Middle East

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BRUSSELS: Ambassador Jassem Al-Budaiwi speaks at the meeting. — KUNA

**BRUSSELS:** The Ambassador of Kuwait to the European Union (EU), NATO and Belgium, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, has praised the level of relations between the State of Kuwait and the EU, noting that the two sides enjoy strong relations at various levels. This was expressed at a meeting hosted by the European Parliament's Delegation of Relations with the Arab Peninsula (DARP) with the heads of missions of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Yemen at the EP on Thursday evening.

Budaiwi, in his intervention, stressed that Kuwait will continue to play its crucial role in supporting peace and security in the Middle East. He also praised the statement of the EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini, in her press conference on Monday, November 11, following the meeting of EU foreign ministers, that all 28 EU member states welcome any initiative by Kuwait to defuse tensions and support peace and security in the Arab Gulf region.

Budaiwi also underlined the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in building bridges between peoples and exchanging experiences and views among them. He explained that the relations between the State of Kuwait and the European Parliament through DARP is a clear success story, allowing the two sides to exchange views and experiences in various fields. He noted that with the start

of the new EP, the opportunity is conducive to more effective political dialogue and cooperation. Hannah Neumann, head of DARP, expressed her hope that a Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation would visit the European Parliament in Brussels next year. Addressing the first regular meeting of DARP, she said that the Gulf region is both a challenge and an opportunity for the EU and for this parliament. The EU should adopt a more active stance and continue and interpose its good offices in view for rapid and satisfactory solutions to the current conflicts in the region.

Gabriel Munuera Vinals, Head of the Arabian Peninsula and Regional Policies Section at the European External Action Service, said the EU has been on the side of the mediation initiative and the efforts of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He pointed out as evidence of deepening relations with Kuwait, the opening by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini of an EU Delegation in Kuwait last July. He also noted that Kuwait has agreed in principle to start a human rights dialogue with the EU. He said the EU's relationship with the Gulf region is deep rooted and multifaceted and he spoke of the positive momentum in EU-GCC relations in recent months, and stressed that the EU values the GCC as a stabilizing force and a close partner in the region. — KUNA

## Kuwait signs two deals with French university

**PARIS:** Kuwait inked two agreements with Lyon University in France and Jean Moulin Lyon 3 University to promote bilateral cultural and scientific cooperation. Head of Kuwait's cultural office in Paris Yacoub Al-Shammari said the deals would open horizons for sharing expertise, and benefiting from development programs and scientific research. Shammari, who signed the deals on behalf of the Kuwaiti side, added the University of Lyon has 12 colleges, including University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 (the College of Law). There are over 80 Kuwaiti students studying in France, in addition to 59 doctors registered in French board programs, he said. He expected the number of the Kuwaiti nationals studying in France to increase in the next period. — KUNA



PARIS: Kuwait signs one of the agreements. — KUNA

## Local

# Refugees' mass wedding highlights Kuwait's week of humanitarian action

## Winter clothing coupons distributed to 236 needy families inside Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwait continued its humanitarian efforts throughout the week, helping desperate, needy, and helpless people around the world through several relief, aid, and social programs, campaigns, and activities. Kuwait's Rahma International Society, an affiliate of Social Reform Society (Eslah), organized a mass wedding for Syrian refugees in Jordan. The event was part of the Kuwaiti charity's projects to support the refugees' humanitarian conditions in the region, said Waleed Al-Swailem, head of Rahma International's branches in Syrian and Jordan. "This mass wedding is Rahma's fourth project organized in cooperation with Sana Al-Khair Charitable Society, a Kuwaiti-based women voluntary team," Swailem noted. The number of weddings in this project has amounted to 10 for male and female youngsters, most of whom were orphans, he added. The Kuwaiti charity was keen to officiate such matrimonial ceremonies, especially for people who live in desperate situations, to help them achieve emotional stability and facilitate their integration into society, affirmed Swailem. Rahma follows a particular strategy in its charitable work, with the aid of Kuwaiti philanthropists, consisting of backing relief, social, educational, health, and humanitarian activities, in general, to achieve better living condition for the affected and weak, he said. In the meantime, a number of newlywed young couples praised the Kuwaiti people's initiative to help them get married and support their family lives amid "harsh" and "difficult" living conditions that most premarital refugees face. The mass wedding was held at one of Amman's wedding halls under auspices and attendance of Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Daihani, officials of Rahma's branch in Jordan, and Sana Al-Khair team.

### 'Winter Clothing'

Meanwhile, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) kicked off its annual campaign, tagged 'Winter Clothing,' by distributing 236 winter clothing coupons, including blankets and heaters, to 236 needy families inside Kuwait. The winter clothes are being handed to KRCS-registered families in order to alleviate their suffering and help them as well, Meriam Al-Adsani, director of local aid department at the society, stated to reporters on the sidelines of the distribution process. KRCS handed the vouchers for buying winter clothes in cooperation with one of the commercial markets, Adsani noted, affirming the importance of supporting needy families in facing the burdens of life responsibility. She affirmed KRCS' constant keenness to back activities and programs that contribute to serving the society and helping needy families, adding such humanitarian actions reinforce the principle of joint constructive benevolence and cooperation, and the value of social partnership and national strategy.

KRCS takes into consideration support and aid to needy families, Adsani noted, adding it targets them at all occasions with various assistances, particularly during religious and national festivals, winter seasons, and the holy month of Ramadan. She called on philanthropists to donate to the winter clothing campaign through the various available KRCS' donation channels, including the society's headquarters and website. Adsani also praised all philanthropists, including individuals and private sectors, for their renewed trust in KRCS each year, adding such a campaign has great importance and positive impact on the feeling of needy ones, especially with advent of winter season.

### Global recognition

The Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross Bernt Apeland praised meanwhile KRCS's regional and international efforts, as well as its partnerships with humanitarian societies and organizations. Boosting humanitarian initiatives and enhancing development projects contributed to strengthen Kuwait's status and hoist its humanitarian banner high on regional and international levels, Apeland said after meeting with KRCS' Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and his accompanying delegation. Kuwait's humanitarian benevolence has also contributed in highlighting its presence, through His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti government and people, at regional and international are-

nas. Apeland stressed the importance of consolidating all efforts toward promising and unique partnership to support relief and humanitarian action, pointing out an initiative to launch an e-donate platform for national societies. The humanitarian action has become a communication bridge among people who face painful humanitarian circumstances, he said, affirming the importance of effective partnerships, among world national societies, in responding to the humanitarian duty.

Sayer, in turn, said boosting partnership, exchanging information, coordinating efforts, and benefiting from humanitarian organizations' expertise and strategies became a main requirement, recalling the current humanitarian situations in Yemen, Syria, Somalia, and Sudan. KRCS' strategy stems from its constant urge to form partnerships with others in more professional and vital manner, said Al-Sayer. Some of KRCS' current partnerships with world national societies, notably the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), reflect and bolster the concept of partnership in several of its humanitarian projects. He also said that the ongoing deterioration of humanitarian situations worldwide requires collective humanitarian efforts and real humanitarian partnerships that enhance humanitarian action. Since its beginning and development in Kuwait, the humanitarian action has become a main base for the coun-



## Kuwait reiterates UNRWA support

try's principles and policies through its various government and public institutions that operate development, humanitarian, and relief projects in various world countries, said Sayer.

### Human rights

In the meantime, Chairman of Kuwait's National Diwan for Human Rights Ambassador Jassim Al-Mubarki underlined the Diwan's role in protecting freedoms and rights of people. The Diwan's work is part of Kuwait's continuous humanitarian efforts around the world, Mubarki said on the sidelines of his visit to Qatar. The Diwan also visits prisons and shelters to monitor human rights and organize seminars to promote the implementation of human rights agreements, as well as bring awareness to society on this matter, he noted. He also said his GCC tour aims at sharing experience and boost cooperation in the human rights field, affirming his country's eagerness to implement other Gulf States' experience in the field. Moreover, the ambassador said the Diwan consists of six committees concerned with topics including human trafficking, women, special needs people, complaints, civil and political rights and children.

### Supporting UNRWA

Kuwait renewed its stance on continuing to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), embodied last year with a contribution of \$50 million. This was brought up during a speech by Kuwait at the UN General Assembly Fourth Committee (C4), delivered by Diplomatic Attache Ahmad Al-Duweesh. Kuwait provided UNRWA with an additional donation of \$five million during the current year, Duweesh pointed out. He deeply appreciated all UNRWA members for their strenuous efforts despite the circumstances they were going through.

Duweesh commended them for harnessing all available means to provide the necessary services to over 5.5 million Palestinian refugees across its five fields of operation.



AMMAN: A group photo taken during a Kuwaiti-funded mass wedding organized for Syrian refugees in Jordan. —KUNA

They believe in the solid foundations of Kuwait's foreign policy in supporting humanitarian issues and the pivotal role played by UNRWA, renewing its mandate for another three years, he said. He stressed continuing to support UNRWA due to the positive indicators contained in the report of UNRWA's former Commissioner-General, including the support by Kuwait when UNRWA faced the most serious financial crisis in 2018 going from \$446 million to zero, and the financial discipline, which resulted in financial savings estimated at \$500 million in the past years. The information received regarding the financial constraints resulted in 50 students per semester and 100 daily patient visits to each doctor, making them more determined to continue the support, he said.

Duweesh said that the support would contribute to upgrading educational, health and relief services, along with providing basic needs for Palestinian refugees. He said that despite concerns over allegations made over the past few months about suspicions against some of the UN agency's officials, the assurances of the Secretary-General of the donor countries are appreciated. Duweesh wished that these suspicions would not hinder the benefit of the Palestinian refugees from the services provided by the UN agency.

On Wednesday, Kuwait announced voluntary contributions to a number of UN agencies, programs and funds worth \$6.4 million, reiterating continuing support for UN humanitarian and development activities. This was brought up during Kuwait's speech delivered by Diplomatic Attache Dhari Al-Faris at the UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities. This will contribute to creating the appropriate development ground for developing countries in the implementation of the 2019 UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), showing determination in strengthening international cooperation to achieve sustainable development in all ways by 2030, he mentioned.

Faris pointed out that Kuwait's keenness to support developing countries is in accordance with their needs, cooperating with all development partners and strengthening international efforts to address existing and emerging development challenges. Since 2008, Kuwait has channeled 10 percent of its total aid to the affected countries through UN agencies and organizations, and has allocated \$15 billion for 2015-2030 to finance development projects in developing countries through Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED).

Donations included UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Emergency Response Fund, he said. The contribution includes the UN Development Program (UNDP) of \$570,000, in addition to \$500,000 each to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). He announced a voluntary grant of \$500,000 to the Development Fund for the revitalized Resident Coordinator system to ensure a successful transition. Kuwait's voluntary contribution to UNDP will be deducted and divided for the years 2020-2021 and will be allocated to the activities of the Resident

Coordinator in Kuwait, added Faris.

### Syrian crisis

On Thursday, the CEO of the Al-Sham Humanitarian Foundation Mohammad Othman praised the assistance from humanitarian aid organizations in Kuwait for the Syrian refugees and displaced people inside his country. "As an organization we receive assistance from Kuwait aid agencies to implement humanitarian aid projects inside Syria as well as inside Turkey for the refugees. We work through humanitarian aid agencies in Kuwait," Othman said on the sidelines of a major humanitarian aid exhibition in Brussels. "Kuwait has been very supportive of providing funds to this Syrian humanitarian crisis," he said, noting that Kuwait has hosted three international donor conferences on Syria. "Kuwait has always been one of the countries and donor that provided support and assistance to humanitarian organizations and agencies in Syria," he said.

On Friday, a fourth humanitarian relief plane landed at Khartoum Airport via Kuwait airlift, carrying nearly 10 tons of baby milk and medical aid to those affected by heavy rain and torrents that recently wreaked havoc across the country. The plane has been ordered under directives of the Humanitarian Leader His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to help the Sudanese people face the burden caused by floods and torrents disaster, Charge d'affaires of Kuwaiti Embassy in Khartoum Abdulkareem Al-Mejaym said. The plane is loaded with seven tons of medicines and other medical supplies, in addition to three tons of baby milk donated by Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). Mejaym added, affirming the Kuwait airlift will remain active until the crisis ends in all around Sudan. Head of the support committee at the Sovereignty Council of Sudan Brigadier Musa Omar expressed his gratitude and appreciation of the Kuwaiti leadership, government, and people for their supportive stand by his country through generous and continued support. Three humanitarian relief planes have previously landed in Sudan via the Kuwait airlift, carrying nearly 110 tons of Kuwaiti aid, Omar noted, adding KRCS has donated \$527,000 as a financial support to provide sheltering needs and health supplies for those affected by the torrents and floods.

Also on Friday, Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) delivered more than 62 tons of food to Syrian refugees at two refugees' camps in the city of Duhok of Iraqi Kurdistan. The delivery process, began last week as part of 'Kuwait by your side' campaign, was conducted under the supervision of the Kuwaiti Consulate-General in Irbil, distributing 2,068 food parcels to families at Giwelan and Aaqra camps, said Ismail Abdulaziz, member of the administrative commission at Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF). The two camps house Syrian refugees who have been residing the Kurdistan region for years, in addition to new refugees who fled the recent violence in northeastern Syria, said Abdulaziz. He reiterated his thanks to Kuwait and its humanitarian institutions for providing all sorts of aid to the refugees and internally displaces persons in the Kurdistan region and Iraq in general, noting the Kuwaiti food parcels are of quality-standard and filled with the best quality food. —KUNA

## KFH program to qualify tech, digital banking leaders

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched a training program to qualify and train future leaders in the field of technology, digital banking, products and technical developments in Fintech. This program is in line with KFH's future orientations, reflects its interests and many successes in this respect and serves its plans and strategies to promote digitization in all its activities. The trainees were selected from among the most distinguished

Kuwaitis and the first graduates who have Technology degree.

With the participation of 11 outstanding young Kuwaitis, the program is the first of its kind in the banking sector in the GCC and the Middle East. It is also part of the 'Forsa' project, which includes more than 30 training programs and workshops on the use of information technology in the banking sector and its latest developments, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, cybersecurity, banking robotics and others. The two-year program also includes field visits to the world's Tech giants, such as Google, Amazon and Oracle in the Silicon Valley, US, as well as 10-day visits to laboratories of the largest American universities in digital transformation studies such as Berkeley University in California.

The program includes field training in KFH's departments and subsidiaries, such as the award winning bank, KFH-Turkey

which has gone a long way in developing many tech innovations, products and services. The trainees will also visit global companies such as Microsoft, Facebook, Tesla, Apple and other world renowned leading brands in the field of technology and electronic services.

Group Chief Human Resources officer at KFH, Frederick Carstens, said that KFH is keen to train and develop its employees, especially the young Kuwaiti talents through such a program which is designed to suit the digital transformation phase that KFH is going through. He explained that the strategic objective of such KFH training programs is to raise the employees' level of performance to keep up with international standards and provide them with the expertise, skills and knowledge regarding the advanced banking system, adding that these programs enrich the experience of the employee, and raise the leadership spirit of the young Kuwaiti.



## ABK raises early diabetes detection awareness



KUWAIT: To reiterate the importance of early diabetic detection, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently hosted sessions for staff at its headquarters in Kuwait. Through a series of engaging events and activities ABK encouraged dialogue in support of World Diabetes Day. Dalal Al-Nukhailan from Dalal Impact Nutrition Consultation Services, a home-grown pioneering organization, discussed the importance of nutrition and fitness as part of preventing diabetes. The employees participated in informative and interactive sessions that aimed not only to increase awareness of the dangers of diabetes, but

encourage healthy habits to help combat the disease.

Through a series of interactive games, competitive activities and rewards, employees enjoyed a fun and educational day. To ensure continuation, staff were presented with special discounts for diabetes testing at Dalal Impact Company and Royale Hayat Hospital. Employee health is a key focus for ABK, who firmly believe that a healthy and happy workforce brings success within an organization. By spearheading initiatives to support employee wellbeing ABK is investing in their most valuable asset, their employees.



North Korea slams Biden

## France’s yellow vests seek show of strength for first anniversary



GAZA STRIP: Palestinians check the destruction following an Israeli air strike on November 14, 2019 in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. For the first time in more than a decade, Israeli forces have bombed Gaza without targeting Hamas. —AFP

# Israel strikes Hamas targets in Gaza

## Tit-for-tat air strikes and rocket fire between Israel and Islamic Jihad continue

**GAZA CITY:** Israel targeted Hamas in air strikes on Gaza early yesterday after rockets were fired at it from the Palestinian enclave, the army said, two days after a fragile ceasefire began. Hamas, the Islamist movement that has de facto control over the Gaza Strip, had been spared the brunt of Israeli bombardment during this week's flare-up which focused on its hardline ally Islamic Jihad.

A ceasefire has been in place since Thursday morning following the wave of tit-for-tat air strikes and rocket fire between Israel and Islamic Jihad — the territory's second most powerful militant group. The army said it launched yesterday's strikes after "two rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israeli territory" and were intercepted by air defenses. It was not immediately known who fired the rockets.

Palestinian security sources said the Israeli strikes were aimed at two Hamas

sites in the north of the territory. "Among the sites targeted was a military camp of the Hamas terror organization and a military compound used by the Hamas naval forces," a statement from the Israeli military said. "In addition an underground terror infrastructure was also targeted." There were no reports of casualties.

It was the first time Hamas had been hit since this week's escalation began with Israel's targeted killing of a top Islamic Jihad commander early on Tuesday. That strike triggered almost immediate retaliatory rocket fire from Islamic Jihad, which set off air-raid sirens and sent Israelis rushing to bomb shelters in the country's southern and central regions.

### Fragile ceasefire

The Israeli military said around 450 rockets were fired at its territory during the fighting and air defenses intercepted dozens of them. The military responded

with air strikes it said targeted Islamic Jihad militant sites and rocket- and missile-launching squads. After two days of fighting which killed 34 Palestinians and no Israelis, a ceasefire was agreed. But it has so far been precarious, with fire coming from both sides after the agreement went into effect.

There have been three wars since 2008 between Israel and Palestinian militants in the blockaded territory which is home to some two million people.

Israeli analysts said that the focus on Islamic Jihad rather than Hamas earlier this week was a clear signal that the army sought to avoid a major new conflict. Hamas repeatedly said it would not abandon its ally, but keeping out of the fighting helped it maintain a fragile truce with Israel that has seen tens of millions of dollars in Qatari aid flow into Gaza since last year.

It was criticized in Gaza for not joining the fighting. Likewise, Israeli Prime

Minister Netanyahu came under fire from political rivals at home for not holding Hamas accountable for attacks from the territory it rules. The violence came at a politically sensitive time for Israel, with no new government in place since a September election ended in deadlock.

On Thursday, Israeli military spokesman Jonathan Conricus told reporters that the army had "wanted to keep Hamas out of the fighting". "Throughout the operation, we of course distinguished between Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and all of our operations were measured, proportionate and focused only on military assets belonging to Islamic jihad," he said. But there was a marked shift in tone in yesterday's statement. The military said it "holds the Hamas terror organization responsible for events transpiring in the Gaza Strip and emanating from it". "Hamas will bear the consequences for actions against Israeli civilians." —AFP

## Sudan's Bashir supporters oppose handover to ICC

**KHARTOUM:** Supporters of ousted Sudanese leader Omar Al-Bashir held a protest yesterday vowing to oppose any move by the country's new authorities to hand him over to the International Criminal Court. Dozens of his supporters, carrying Bashir's portrait, gathered outside the Khartoum court where he is being tried on charges of illegally acquiring and using foreign funds.

"We are with you. We will never betray you. No, no to ICC," chanted the crowd as the former president was brought to the courthouse for a hearing. The demonstration comes amid growing calls from human rights groups, activists and victims of Sudan's Darfur war for the surrender of Bashir to The Hague-based court. "President Bashir represents the whole of Sudan. We have an independent judiciary and if any trials are to be held, they must be held here," said protester Mohamed Ali Daklai. "We reject any outside or foreign tribunal. ICC is anyway a political court used by Western countries to pressure the weak."

Bashir was ousted by the army on April 11 following nationwide protests against his iron-fisted rule of three decades. The military generals who initially seized power after the president's fall refused to hand Bashir over to the ICC. He is wanted by the ICC for his alleged role in the Darfur war that erupted in 2003 as ethnic African rebels took up arms against Bashir's then Arab-dominated government, accusing it of marginalizing the region economically and politically.

Khartoum applied what rights groups say was a scorched earth policy against ethnic groups suspected of supporting the rebels — raping, killing, looting and burning villages. The ICC has accused Bashir of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in the vast western region of Darfur. He denies the charges. About 300,000 people were killed and 2.5 million displaced in the conflict, according to the United Nations. Bashir, who ruled Sudan for three decades after seizing power in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989, is being held in a Khartoum prison and facing trial on corruption charges. —AFP

## Gunman in US school shooting dies as police hunt motive

**LOS ANGELES:** The teenager who gunned down classmates at a California high school before shooting himself died Friday, leaving detectives baffled over the motive of a Boy Scout with no obvious alarm bells in his background. Nathaniel Berhow died in a hospital one day after shooting himself in the head at the end of a 16th birthday rampage that left two fellow students dead.

Berhow had been in critical condition since police officers storming the campus found him lying among the wounded. The Los Angeles sheriff's department confirmed Berhow died shortly after 3:30 pm (2330 GMT) on Friday. The puzzle of what led him to open fire at Saugus High School, a short commute from Los Angeles, deepened as a picture emerged of a quiet yet sociable teen who was familiar with guns but had no history of troubled behavior. "We know it was a planned attack, it was deliberate... The motive? We don't have it yet," Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva told a news conference.

The victims — a boy and a girl died while another three students were wounded — appeared to have been chosen at random, he said. "There's no relationships that we can tell (between) the suspect and the victims," Villanueva added, scotching rumors that an ex-girlfriend had been his target. There was also no history of the teen being bullied. The FBI earlier said there is no evidence that the suspect had any ideological motives or acted on behalf of any organization. No manifesto or suicide note has been found.

Deepening the riddle, Berhow's late father had owned

six registered guns — but none of them matched the .45 caliber semiautomatic the suspect used. His proficiency with the weapon during his short, deadly ambush suggested he had been firing guns for some time. "In 16 seconds he cleared a malfunction and was able to shoot five people and himself, so he seemed very familiar with firing the weapon," said Villanueva.

### 'Bewildered'

Jared Axen, 33, a next door neighbor, described Berhow as an introvert who was usually quiet and reserved but who had friends and could readily be engaged in conversation. "I would see him go back and forth between scouting. I'd see him do a lot of sports-related activities," he told the Los Angeles Times. School records show Berhow was a keen middle-distance track runner.

Aidan Soto, a fellow scout and student at Saugus, described the suspect as a "good kid," and the last person he would expect to carry out a mass shooting. "The younger scouts really looked up to him. He was there when they needed him with anything. I'm bewildered and looking for answers." Although Berhow had no evident history of violence, his family life over the past few years had been difficult.

His father, divorced from his mother not long before, died of a heart attack in December 2017. The father had reportedly suffered from alcohol-related problems, and was at one point suspected of domestic violence but never prosecuted for lack of evidence. Nonetheless, the father and son were seemingly close. "He would tell me that he missed his father and that he loved him," Axen said.

### 'Another innocent person'

The father was a keen hunter whom neighbors would see manufacturing ammunition in his garage. Investigators said they found additional arms at the



SANTA CLARITA: A Saugus High School student (2nd L) is embraced as she visits a makeshift memorial in front of the school for victims of the shooting there on November 15, 2019. —AFP

home, beyond the six registered weapons. Berhow would sometimes accompany his father on hunting trips, according to Axen — accounting for the deadly accuracy of his shooting.

He also "knew how many rounds he had," noted Villanueva, the sheriff. The teen gunman saved his final bullet for himself. The students slain by Berhow were identified as Gracie Anne Muehlberger, 15, and a 14-year-old boy. Messages on Muehlberger's Instagram page read "I miss you so much already love," and "It's so sad that another innocent person has to die."

Another wounded teenager was able to return home Friday morning, and two girls — both operated on for gunshot wounds — should be able to leave the hospital in a few days, say medics. Tearful prayer vigils were held Thursday night, and all schools in the district remained closed Friday in a mark of respect, Deputy Superintendent Mike Kuhlman said. —AFP

# ‘Come back tomorrow’: Refugees battle for asylum in South Africa

‘We are tired, we don’t like this South Africa anymore’

PRETORIA: Therese Walu's eyes welled up as she recalled the last time she shared dinner with her whole family, 19 years ago, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The next morning, soldiers raided her village of Mukakira, in the country's northeast — where a civil war that killed millions raged between 1998-2003. She grabbed her youngest daughters and fled into the surrounding forest, not knowing whether the rest of the family survived.

With nothing but the clothes on her back, Walu started a perilous 10-year journey that would eventually take her more than 3,000 kilometers, to South Africa's capital Pretoria. But like millions of displaced Africans, she reached a country boasting one of the world's most progressive refugee policies but she only found herself knocking on closed doors. "The only thing they ever gave us is a (temporary) paper of asylum," said Walu, who has been battling for refugee status since 2010. Fed up, she joined hundreds of asylum-seekers on October 8 for a long-running sit-in protest in front of the offices of the UN refugee agency UNHCR in Pretoria. On Thursday the protesters forced their way into the UNHCR office grounds after being served with a court order evicting them from the street in front of the offices. A similar protest was quashed in Cape Town after demonstrators were forcefully evicted from the building last month.

"We are tired, we don't like this South Africa anymore," said Walu, 41, who wants the UNHCR to help relocate her family. She told AFP the sit-in — sparked by a wave of xenophobic violence in September — was "the only chance" to protest against her situation. South Africa is one of the few countries in the world that allows asylum-seekers to work, have access to healthcare and study while their applications are being processed.

That reputation helped attract more than a million asylum-seekers between 2007 and 2015, one of the world's highest, according to the government. With high hopes to begin with, most have faced a lengthy, confusing and increasingly backlogged process. "When I first arrived in South Africa I thought 'finally!'," said another



CAPE TOWN: A mother and her child (C) are seen sitting in the Methodist Church after a scuffle broke out earlier in the day in Cape Town, on November 15, 2019. —AFP

Congolese asylum-seeker Esther Kabinga, 46. After losing her husband in a plane crash and being gang-raped by soldiers, Kabinga left her home in the southeastern Katanga province in 2011, and walked into neighboring Zambia with her three small children. Kabinga then paid truck drivers to smuggle them to South Africa.

She recalled having to leave home at 3.30 am to queue up for the processing of her application at the Home Affairs department. "They give you a number and you wait. At the end of the day they tell you to come back tomorrow, come back next week." Like most asylum-seekers, both Kabinga and Walu's initial applications were rejected, marking the start of a lengthy appeal process. "Currently there is a 99 percent (initial) rejection rate," human rights lawyer Jessica Lawrence told AFP, adding that thousands were stuck in limbo.

The UNHCR has also voiced concern about the number of "pending cases". Despite the backlog, South Africa has reduced the capacity of some of its refugee application offices. Human rights lawyer Sharon Elkambaram lamented the lack of "political

will" to process applications. "The quality of the decision-making is shocking," she added. South Africa processed more than 630,000 applications over the past decade, less than 10 percent of which were granted refugee status. Home Affairs spokesman Siya Qoza told AFP the majority were "not genuine cases" that were "clogging the system" by lodging appeals. "Why would we need to increase the capacity when most of the world is stable?" he asked. "You would do that if the entire world was at war."

Walu and Kabinga have been living with temporary asylum permits for almost a decade. That paper needs to be renewed every three to six months — a process that can take up to three weeks. Asylum-seekers also say the document brands them as foreigners, making them vulnerable to police bribes and discrimination. Walu claims her daughters were given a different high school diploma from a normal refugee because of their asylum-seeking status, and have since been refused access to university. — AFP

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# CONDOLENCES

**Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief,**  
**management and staff**  
convey their deepest condolences to

**Al-Sayer family**  
on the sad demise of

**Naser Mohammed Al-Sayer**

*May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him*

## International

# France's yellow vests seek show of strength for first anniversary

## 'We're here even if Macron doesn't like it'

**PARIS:** French "yellow vest" protesters began a series of nationwide demonstrations yesterday in a bid to show the government they can still muster support on the first anniversary of their movement. Numbers attending the protests and levels of violence have sharply diminished in recent months from the height of the movement, which began on November 17 last year with a giant Paris protest that drew almost 300,000 people.

But the yellow vests want the actions on Saturday — their traditional day for protests — and also Sunday — the anniversary day — to show President Emmanuel Macron they remain a force to be reckoned with. "We're here even if Macron doesn't like it" demonstrators chanted as they arrived on the outskirts of Paris yesterday, with others singing "Happy Birthday". Paris police reported 24 arrests by 10.50 AM (0950 GMT) after incidents involving police using teargas and demonstrators setting fires.

Several metro stations were closed in the capital and police were deployed in numbers, especially along the Champs-Elysees, which was again closed off to demonstrators following the ransacking of shops that followed a protest last March. Police were also stationed near government ministries. Around 200 demonstrations are planned, with authorities expecting several thousand to rally in the capital.

This estimate includes a few hundred radical protesters from the ultra-left and far-right, often behind the worst scenes of mayhem. France has a long tradition of violent protest, but the ferocity of last winter's demonstrations and allegations of police brutality shocked the country. Officials said the magnitude of the weekend protests is far from certain but deputy interior minister Laurent Nunez noted a "more pronounced interest" than in previous weeks, and police would plan their deployment accordingly.

"There will be a significant mobilization but not on

the scale we saw in December and January at a national level," said a French security source, asking not to be identified by name. "We are expecting a difficult Saturday," said the source, noting that protesters "mobilize at the last minute in a bid to take us by surprise".

### 'Still in the street'

A poll by the Elabe institute published Wednesday said 55 percent of French people support or have sympathy for the yellow vests, although 63 percent said they do not want the protests to begin in earnest again. The most prominent figures in the movement, which has explicitly shunned any formal leadership structure, acknowledge the declining numbers but say the authorities' response has not been sufficient.

"We shouldn't still need be on the street one year on," said Priscillia Ludosky, an entrepreneur whose online petition against high fuel prices helped kick off the movement. "It's unfortunate there has been no political response, but also to see that we are slightly lacking energy in terms of mobilization," she told the Regards news site. The yellow vests — named for the glow-in-the-dark waistcoats all French drivers must carry in their cars — posed the biggest challenge to Macron since he swept to power in 2017 on the back of promises of sweeping change. They accused Macron of being deaf to the troubles of ordinary French people as he embarked on a major program aimed at modernizing the country.

### 'Cry of suffering'

Initially taken aback by the size and intensity of the movement, Macron offered billions of euros in state aid and tax breaks — and scrapped a planned fuel tax hike — while embarking on a "Great National Debate" at town halls nationwide. He has also tried to soften his sometimes abrasive style. Just



**PARIS:** In this file photo taken on March 16, 2019 AFP photographer Zakaria Abdelkafi (C), injured during clashes between riot police forces and Yellow Vest protesters, receives medical assistance on the Champs-Elysees in Paris, on the 18th consecutive Saturday of demonstrations called by the 'Yellow Vest' (gilets jaunes) movement. —AFP

weeks before the protests erupted, Macron told a 25-year-old man looking for a job in Paris that "if I crossed the street I'd find you one".

"The yellow vests opened our eyes to the reality for millions of people," Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Friday, adding that the government wanted to respond to this "cry of suffering". Apart

from Paris, rallies are expected in cities including Bordeaux, Lille and Toulouse, which have often attracted thousands of people. The next major street challenge to Macron, however, may not come from the weekend's protests but a strike called by unions on December 5 to rally against his planned pension reforms. —AFP

## Australian survives croc attack by gouging its eye

**CAIRNS:** An Australian wildlife ranger has recounted his terrifying escape from the clutches of a "particularly cunning" crocodile, after wrestling with the reptile and sticking a finger in its eye. Craig Dickmann, who made a split-second decision to go fishing last Sunday in a remote part of Northern Australia known as "croc country" last Sunday, said a 2.8-metre (nine-foot) crocodile came up from behind him as he was leaving the beach.

"As I've turned to go, the first thing I see is its head just come at me," he told reporters on Friday from his hospital bed in the town of Cairns in Queensland state. Dickmann said the animal latched on to his thigh. "That noise will haunt me forever I think, the sound of the snap of its jaws," he said. The 54-year-old said he wrestled with the croc on the remote beach as it tried to drag him into the water. Dickmann stuck his thumb into its eye, saying it was the only "soft spot" he found on the "bullet-proof" animal.

"Their eyes retract a fair way and when you go down far enough you can feel bone so I pushed as far as I possibly could and then it let go at that point," Dickmann said. After a few minutes, he said he managed to get on top of the croc and pin its jaws shut. "And then, I think both the croc and I had a moment where we're going, 'well, what do we do now?'" Dickmann said he then pushed the croc away from him and it slid back into the water. —AFP

## Lithuania, Norway swap spies with Russia at border

**VILNIUS:** Russia on Friday returned two Lithuanians and a Norwegian convicted of espionage to Vilnius while NATO and EU member Lithuania freed two Russians jailed for spying in an exchange reminiscent of the Cold War. Tensions between Lithuania and Soviet-era master Russia grew after the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in 2014, triggering a string of espionage allegations on both sides.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda first pardoned the two Russians jailed by Vilnius for spying, prompting Moscow to announce it would respond in kind. "Today, at midday, the exchange operation was completed successfully," Lithuanian intelligence chief Darius Jauniskis told reporters in Vilnius on Friday. "Lithuanian citizens Yevgeny Mataitis and Arstidas Tamosaitis and Norwegian citizen Frode Berg successfully returned to Lithuania," he said, adding that Berg was then transferred to the Norwegian embassy in the Lithuanian capital.

Jauniskis said Lithuania handed over the two pardoned Russians, Nikolai Filipchenko and Sergei Moisejenko, in the exchange at a Lithuanian border crossing with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. Russia's SVR foreign intelligence agency director Sergei Naryshkin had told news agencies that Moscow would take "reciprocal measures" following Lithuania's pardon. —AFP

## North Korea slams Biden

**SEOUL:** North Korea launched a visceral diatribe against US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, calling the former vice-president a "rabid dog" — while also borrowing the terminology of Donald Trump. Pyongyang is renowned for its vitriol, but the verbal deluge was unusually ferocious even by its own standards.

Biden "had the temerity to dare slander the dignity of the supreme leadership of the DPRK", the North's official KCNA news agency said late Thursday, referring to the country by its official name. "Rabid dogs like Biden can hurt lots of people if they are allowed to run about," it went on. "They must be beaten to death with a stick. "Doing so will be beneficial for the US also," it added.

It was not immediately clear what had provoked Pyongyang's ire, but Biden's campaign on Friday seemed to relish the attack. "It seems that murderous dictator Kim Jong Un doesn't like me," Biden said in a statement. "Add him to the list of autocrats who don't want me to be president — right next to Vladimir Putin. I wear their insults as a badge of honor."

Trump said that "he and Kim 'fell in love' — well, there will be no love let-

ters in a Biden Administration", the former vice president said. Biden, who vowed not to "embrace dictators", said that Trump is "emboldening" the North Korean leader. Kim "would love to see Trump re-elected, as would the rest of America's adversaries. That's just one more reason it's so important we beat him next November", Biden said.

### Kim a 'tyrant'

The Biden campaign earlier released an ad condemning Trump's foreign policy, saying that "dictators and tyrants are praised, our allies pushed aside". The voiceover says the word "tyrants" at the exact moment a picture appears of Trump and Kim shaking hands at their Singapore summit last year. KCNA appeared to cite one of Trump's favored insults for the candidate — "Sleepy Joe" — when it said Americans called him "Biden not awakened from a sleep".

Biden had shown "a sign of the final stage of dementia", KCNA added. "It seems time has come for him to depart his life." KCNA misspelled the candidate's name as "Baiden" throughout, seemingly reflecting the spelling used in the Korean alphabet. It is not the first time the North has condemned Biden. In May it called him an "imbecile" and a "fool of low IQ" days after he called Kim a "dictator" and "tyrant".

The North Korean rhetoric underscores its "impatience" with any criticism of Kim, said Cheong Seong-Chang, a senior researcher at the pri-



**FRANKLIN:** Democratic presidential hopeful former US Vice President Joe Biden speaks with supporters after a town hall at the Proulx Community Center. —AFP

ivate Sejong Institute. "Pyongyang has always loathed hearing its leadership labeled as tyrant or dictator by the outside world," he said. The invective against Biden was "pretty high on the scale", North Korean propaganda specialist Mason Richey of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies told AFP, highlighting the multiple repetitions of the "beating the dog" trope.

Trump himself has also been the target of Pyongyang's anger at times. In 2017 the two leaders traded personal insults and threats of war before

the diplomatic rapprochement that has seen them meet three times and Trump repeatedly proclaim their personal friendship, although nuclear negotiations remain deadlocked. As tensions mounted, Kim called Trump a "mentally deranged US dotard" whom he would "tame with fire", while KCNA also branded him a "rabid dog". KCNA used the same Korean word previously translated as "dotard" in its article Thursday, although the epithet did not appear in the official English version. —AFP

## Trump issues pardons in US war crimes cases

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump on Friday pardoned a former soldier convicted of murder and a Green Beret charged with killing a suspected Taliban bomb-maker, defying warnings that the move would be an abuse of the powers afforded him under the US Constitution.

Trump dismissed a second degree murder conviction against Army First Lieutenant Clint Lorange, who is six years into a 19-year term for ordering soldiers in 2012 to fire on three unarmed Afghan men on a motorcycle, two of whom died. "Many Americans have sought executive clemency for Lorange, including 124,000 people who have signed a petition to the White House, as well as several members of Congress," said a White House statement released Friday.

He also granted clemency to West Point graduate Matt Golsteyn, an ex-member of the elite US Army Green

Berets, charged with premeditated murder in the shooting death of an alleged Taliban bomb-maker in 2010. The case prompted Trump to tweet that Golsteyn was a "US military hero" who could face the death penalty "from our own government." The president also reversed the demotion of Edward Gallagher, a 15-year Navy Seal accused of stabbing to death a wounded teenage Islamic State prisoner in Iraq, and of other killings of civilians. Gallagher was cleared of the most serious charges in July but was convicted of posing with the slain fighter's body in a group picture with other SEALs. "Congratulations to Navy Seal Eddie Gallagher, his wonderful wife Andrea, and his entire family. You have been through much together. Glad I could help!" Trump tweeted at the time. "There are no words to adequately express how grateful my family and I are to our president, Donald J. Trump, for his intervention and decision," Gallagher said in a statement posted on Instagram.

Retired Navy admiral James Stavridis was among those who came out strongly against Trump's reported plans when he first revealed he was thinking of the pardons in May. "I commanded several of the servicemen Trump may pardon," the former NATO Supreme Allied Commander wrote in Time magazine. "Letting them off will undermine the military." Such pardons would be "an



**WASHINGTON DC:** US President Donald Trump delivers remarks in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. —AFP

affront to the idea of good order and discipline and to the idea of the rule of law" warned Democratic presidential hopeful and Navy veteran Pete Buttigieg. Trump has granted controversial pardons to a number of allies including conservative commentator Dinesh D'Souza and former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio. —AFP

ments, aimed at ridding the area of armed groups. But the civilian death toll in ADF attacks has been rising, and residents have accused the army of focusing their efforts on the wrong areas. "It's a complicated situation because the population is the target of ADF revenge attacks against army operations," said Teddy Kataliko, president of the Beni Civil Society.

The ADF, which has been present in Democratic Republic of Congo since 1995, is accused of having killed hundreds or even thousands of civilians in the Beni region in the past five years. The Islamic State jihadist group has claimed some of the ADF's recent attacks but there is no clear evidence of any affiliation between them. —AFP

## Rebels in DR Congo kill 14 civilians in revenge

**GOMA:** Assailants in DR Congo have killed 14 civilians in revenge for army offensives against Ugandan rebel strongholds in the east of the country, a local official said yesterday. The latest killings, which occurred in the night from Friday to Saturday, take the total number of

those killed in revenge attacks in the past two weeks to more than 30.

The attacks took place in two locations in the Beni region of the North Kivu province where the Congolese army last month announced an offensive to root out insurgents belonging to the Islamist-inspired rebel group the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) — a militia of Ugandan origin that has long operated in the border region. Beni administrator Donat Kibwana said the attackers used machetes and knives, and were believed to have gone on to loot shops and homes.

The army said on October 30 it had launched "large-scale operations", including shelling and troop deploy-

# BELGIUM

Words by H.E. Ambassador Piet Heirbaut



Dear Readers,

I want to thank the Kuwait Times for giving me the opportunity, on the occasion of King's Day, to present my country to you.

It is a pleasure to, once again, look back on a year of excellent bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Belgium. Political relations were cordial and very constructive, we made substantial progress in our economic cooperation and witnessed very meaningful cultural exchanges.

Both Kuwait and Belgium are members of the United Nations Security Council in 2019. We have been working very closely together in a spirit of dialogue and inclusiveness as we share the same multilateral conviction.

On the economic side a Belgian trade delegation focusing on the sports and entertainment sector visited Kuwait in February of this year, underscoring the huge potential for cooperation in these fields. We also witnessed closer cooperation in the medical sector and between the Belgian and Kuwaiti Port Authorities. In order to support the developments in multiple economic sectors both countries decided to launch a joint Economic and Technical committee in 2019. The first meeting of the committee will take place later this month in Brussels.

A first Belgian tourism promotion fair took place at the Avenues Mall in March to showcase the beautiful historic cities and landscapes of the country. Some special visitors from Belgium "Papa Smurf and Smurfette") were also in attendance.

2019 was also a very busy year of cultural exchanges. In cooperation with Dar Al Athar Al Islamiya the Embassy organized a concert of Belgian artist Karim Baghili in March of 2019. An exhibition of Belgian comic strip character "Spirou" took place at the French Institute during the festival of the Francophonie.

The celebration of King's Day is the perfect occasion to bring our countries and people even closer together and I am looking forward to continue working with you in the next coming years.

Yours truly,

Piet Heirbaut  
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium  
to the State of Kuwait.

Instagram : belgiuminkuwait  
Facebook : #BelgianEmbassyKuwait  
Website : kuwait.diplomatie.belgium.be/en

## Your partner in the center of the European Union

### A Major logistics hub

Thanks to its location in the throbbing heart of Western Europe, Belgium offers easy access to millions upon millions of consumers. As a result, many international companies have chosen Belgium as their bridgehead for continental Europe and have benefited from two added assets, the country's excellent infrastructures and the high quality of its workforce.

#### Innovation, the Key of the success of the Belgian Economy

Since the days of the industrial revolution, in which Belgium played a pioneering role, the country has never ceased to innovate. Indeed innovation is the key to Belgium's future economic success in the traditional industrial sectors and in the new high tech industries. Belgium is in the top 3 of the "Innovation Indicator" - an innovation ranking of 35 countries. The university of Leuven has been ranked the most innovative University in Europe for three consecutive years.

Universities are without a doubt the main catalysts of fundamental and applied research in Belgium. For one thing, universities have a number of technology transfer offices (TTO's) which are responsible for completing the delicate transition of a given project from the laboratory to a start-up company. Every year Belgian universities are instrumental

in setting up dozens of spin-offs, some of which go on to become big players in the global economy.

A showcase of Belgian Know-How is biopharma : around 4200 researchers work in the R&D laboratories of the Belgian Pharmaceutical industry. The companies and their employees benefit from a unique business environment that has made Belgium the second-biggest exporter and the third biggest producer of medicines and vaccines in the European Union. Looking back over the last fifty years, Belgium has also been at the forefront when it comes to developing and applying information technologies and the Internet and promoting the digital revolution.

#### A high level education system

According to recent education reports of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Belgium has the third best education system amongst the 35 OECD countries. Thanks to outstanding teachers and a flexible education system, our country has scored considerably better than the world average.

This is also reflected in the performance of Belgian universities at the global level. Five Belgian Universities ranked in the top 250 in the World University Ranking 2019.

— Belgium Embassy



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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2019

13 South African Airways hit by crippling strike



13 Indian tax officials find Modi's targets too taxing, some quit



14 India shelves consumer spending report; leaked data shows slump



SHENYANG: A worker drives a tricycle to deliver packages to customers in Shenyang in China's northeastern Liaoning province. —AFP

# What's Alibaba, China's e-commerce giant?

## E-commerce remains the company's bread and butter

**SHANGHAI:** Formed in the Hangzhou flat of co-founder Jack Ma in 1999, Alibaba has ridden the seemingly insatiable Chinese appetite for online shopping to become one of the world's most valuable companies. On Friday, the US-listed company confirmed plans to add its value further, but listing additional shares in Hong Kong in an offering worth around \$13 billion. Here are the answers to key questions about the company:

**How did Alibaba start?**  
Ma, a former English teacher who claims to have never written a line of computer code, had dabbled in various ventures with mixed success before friends introduced him to the internet while on a 1990s trip to the United States. With Amazon already making waves in online shopping, Ma convinced a group of Chinese and foreign friends to front \$60,000 in 1999 for a business-to-business e-commerce venture. Ma dubbed it "Alibaba" because the name is easily pronounced in virtually any language, including Chinese, and because the "open sesame" catchphrase signified that its platforms "open a doorway to fortune for small businesses", according to the company.

## Amazon alleges 'bias' in Pentagon awarding contract to Microsoft

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Amazon has challenged the awarding of a \$10 billion Pentagon cloud computing contract to Microsoft, alleging "unmistakable bias" in the process. The 10-year contract for the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure program, better known as JEDI, ultimately will see all military branches sharing information in a system boosted by artificial intelligence. "It's critical for our country that the government and its elected leaders administer procurements objectively and in a manner that is free from political influence," a spokesperson for Amazon Web Services said.  
"Numerous aspects of the JEDI evaluation process contained clear deficiencies, errors, and unmistakable bias," Amazon said it filed a notice in a US court last week signaling its intent to protest the handling of the bidding process, which the Department of Defense

**Why has it been so successful?**  
Alibaba was founded at a time when Chinese incomes were soaring after decades of rapid economic growth and the country was becoming increasingly digitalized. That allowed Alibaba to easily facilitate commerce between consumers increasingly hooked on the ease of online shopping, and the country's countless manufacturers of cheap goods.  
Today, China has the world's largest online population-in excess of 850 million-most of them smartphone users deeply immersed in the country's growing digital ecosystem and e-commerce. The business generated by Alibaba's own mobile monthly active users-which reached 785 million in the most recent financial latest quarter-propelled rapid growth, and in September 2014, the company listed on Wall Street, raising \$25 billion in what remains the largest IPO ever.

**What does it do?**  
E-commerce remains the company's bread and butter, conducted mainly via its largely consumer-to-consumer Taobao site and the more business-to-consumer Tmall, and typically paid for via its digital-payments

maintained was fair. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly lashed out at Amazon and company founder Jeff Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post. The newspaper is among US media outlets most critical in its coverage of Trump and his administration.  
The president told reporters during a news conference in July that he had asked aides to investigate the JEDI contract, citing complaints from companies that compete with Amazon. "I'm getting tremendous complaints about the contract with the Pentagon and with Amazon... They're saying it wasn't competitively bid," Trump said. "Some of the greatest companies in the world are complaining about it, having to do with Amazon and the Department of Defense, and I will be asking them to look at it very closely to see what's going on."  
**From leader to loser**  
Amazon was considered the lead contender to provide technology for JEDI, with its Amazon Web Services (AWS) dominating the cloud computing arena and the company already providing classified servers for other government outfits including the CIA. But the Pentagon delayed awarding the hefty contract, saying

unit Alipay, which has become a pioneer in that sector. Through Alibaba's platforms, Chinese consumers can buy a wide array of products from clothing to electronics, food, luxury products and even more unusual goods-including Boeing 747 cargo planes.  
But Alibaba's success has seen it invest heavily in new business lines as well. It owns leading Chinese video streaming website Youku, and its Alibaba Pictures unit in 2016 bought a stake in Steven Spielberg's Amblin Partners, which owns DreamWorks Pictures, among other entertainment ventures. It also is investing in cloud computing and other aspects of China's growing digital ecosystem including the acquisition of Chinese food-delivery leader Ele.me.  
**How big is it?**  
Alibaba is now the most valuable public Chinese company, with a market capitalisation of around \$477 billion as of this week, and one of the top-10 most valuable in the world, though still trailing US e-commerce counterpart Amazon, which is worth around \$870 billion. Alibaba now claims nearly 104,000 employees at its headquarters in Ma's hometown of

the process would be reviewed by newly appointed Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who was selected by Trump. A new book on the tenure of Esper's predecessor James Mattis, written by his speechwriter Guy Snodgrass, contends that Trump told Mattis to "screw Amazon" out of the JEDI contract.  
Microsoft was Amazon's only rival in the final bidding for the winner-take-all contract, despite employees urging it to drop out. The Pentagon announced it was awarding the contract to Microsoft in late October. Microsoft did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment late Thursday. Esper ultimately recused himself from the review process on the grounds his son works for one of the original bidders, but backed the award Friday. "I am confident it was conducted freely and fairly without any type of outside influence," he told reporters in Seoul, where he was beginning an Asia tour.  
**'Paradigm changer'**  
Microsoft chief Satya Nadella and Amazon's Bezos are "laser focused" on what has the potential to be a \$100 billion market for government projects, according to Wedbush analyst Daniel Ives. Amazon's protest of



PARIS: Photo shows the logo of the Chinese multinational e-commerce, retail, internet, and technology conglomerate, Alibaba group app for smartphone in Paris. —AFP

Hangzhou in China's eastern province of Zhejiang, but also around China and overseas. The company has in recent years taken steps to go global, primarily in Southeast Asia where it runs the Lazada e-commerce platform. —AFP  
The JEDI procurement process is not likely to change the decision, the analyst said. "We ultimately believe this is a paradigm changer for Microsoft who will remain the lone winner," Ives said, calling Amazon's loss a "black eye" for the company and Bezos.  
Microsoft should be able to beef up its cloud services with money from the major military contract, increasing the odds of beating AWS more often in a market expected to see \$1 trillion in cloud spending in the coming decade, according to the analyst. Microsoft reported that profits rose 21 percent in the recently ended quarter on the back of its thriving cloud computing business which has become a core focus for the US technology giant.  
The tactic is a major switch from the way the Redmond-based company built its empire selling packaged software to computer users. Amazon, one of the world's most valuable companies, has expanded from its origins in e-commerce to cloud services, streaming media, artificial intelligence and other ventures. AWS accounted for nearly \$9 billion in revenue in the recently-ended quarter, with growth in the cloud computing unit up 35 percent from a year ago. —AFP

# Gulf Bank wraps up 6th ever ‘Gulf Bank 642 Marathon’

Record-breaking 9,300 participants run for a cause



KUWAIT: Yesterday, Gulf Bank wrapped up one of its biggest community events of the year, as a record number of participants hit the streets to run for a special cause. Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel, and Gulf Bank CEO, Tony Daher, attended this year's Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, which was an unprecedented success with over 9,300 attendees representing over 100 nationalities competing, and over 300 volunteers.

The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon kicked off at 7:30 AM at SouqSharq, and took runners through beautiful landmarks across Kuwait. Participants made their way along Gulf Road, jogging past the Grand Mosque and Souq Al Mubarakia, where local vendors cheered on participants and added to the incredible atmosphere of the day. Depending on the distance category, runners continued on their respective running paths, jogging past a variety of Kuwait's beautiful landmarks, from the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center to the Kuwait Towers, before crossing the finish line.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust corporate social responsibility program. Every year, Gulf Bank extends its support to local youth initiatives, proudly advocating for women empowerment, sustainability, health and fitness, and building on the legacy of Kuwait's heritage and history. This year, Gulf Bank 642 Marathon partnered with Kuwait Red Crescent Society to bring medical aid to those who are unable to afford medical treatment, providing support in covering the provision of medical devices including pacemakers, cochlear devices, hearing aids, electric wheelchairs, and stents.

For the fifth year in a row, Gulf Bank held the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon in partnership with Pro-Vision Sports Management. The race consisted of four categories that were open to runners of all abilities, including: the 5K Family Fun Walk/Run, the 10K Souq Run, the 21K Half

Marathon, and the 42K Full Marathon.

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

Gulf Bank employees also shared in the day's fun, with 450 Gulf Bank employees participating in the run. Groups from other local companies also enjoyed their day outside of the office working on their health and fitness together, including: Alghanim Industries, AlYasra, IKEA, AlFuttaim, Fit Group, Grey Wolf Drilling International, Gulf Agency Company, Fantasy World, AlTamimi, Casio, Limitless, Flare Fitness, Vitality Fitness Center, the Touristic Enterprises Company, Garmin, and Aljairaiwy.

Gulf Bank also hosted the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon Exhibition, a three-day health and fitness event that took place from November 12-14 at Kuwait International Fairgrounds (Hall 4A). This year's main sponsors included Kuwait Airways, Lincoln Alghanim, Extreme Sports, and Intersport. The exhibition included a number of health and fitness-related discussions, as well as activities for participants to enjoy.

Commenting on this year's Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, Mr. Ahmad Al Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "This year's Gulf Bank 642 Marathon was an unparalleled success, with more than 9,300 runners from over 100 nationalities competing, and over 2,200 international participants, including athletes and professional runners who came from all over the world to participate in



Kuwait's only AbbottWMM-accredited marathon.

It gives us great pride to see the marathon growing in success year after year, and we would like to thank all those who participated in making this year's Gulf Bank 642 Marathon an unforgettable experience. We would like to extend a special thanks to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Sport, and all our volunteers. We are proud to be a

part of an annual community initiative that reflects our commitment not only to Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility program, but our greater commitment to our beloved homeland, Kuwait." For more information regarding the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, and to view the marathon winners' names, please visit [www.gulf-bank642marathon.com](http://www.gulf-bank642marathon.com) or check out the Instagram account @GulfBank642.



# Indian tax officials find Modi's targets too taxing, some quit

## Tax officers fearful of missing target, over-reach accusations

MUMBAI: India's tax officials are facing a taxing issue. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government wants them to collect 17% more in direct taxes this year as New Delhi seeks to shore up revenues amid a sharp economic slowdown. The target has been maintained even though Modi recently approved a massive cut in corporate taxes, which are part of direct taxes, and warned officers not to harass businesses in their drive to collect revenue.

Over a dozen tax officials interviewed by Reuters said they are stuck between a push to meet unrealistic collection targets, which influence their appraisals and transfers, and the fear of being accused of over-zealousness if they crack down on evasion. Critics say Modi's demands of his tax officials are symptomatic of the confusion surrounding his government's economic policies, and that the bungling has contributed to a slowdown in growth.

Twenty-two top-level tax department officers have opted for voluntary retirement so far this year and around 34 did so in 2018, according to data provided by Bhaskar Bhattacharya, vice president of the Income Tax Gazetted Officers' Association. Bhattacharya was unable to provide comparative data but said bureaucrats ditching jobs usually considered prestigious and powerful was rare.

"Even seasoned officers after working for 25-30 years cannot take this pressure anymore," he said. "There are applications for voluntary retirement coming in one after the other despite the fact that there is no voluntary retirement or golden handshake scheme in the department." The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) did not respond to requests for data and comment on the resignations. The CBDT, the Finance Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office did not respond to questions about tax targets and alleged harassment by tax officials.

While only a small fraction of the tax department's few thousand senior officers have quit, several officials in the tax depart-

ment said the departures provided a snapshot of broader discontent that has also led to internal transfers as well as resignations among lower-level employees. "The level of impatience in the government has gone up ... Anyone who has any alternate option says: 'Why should we stay in the department?'" said one officer who has quit the job and plans to go tend the family farm. He said the stress had "become unbearable."

"The pressure is getting greater. To achieve our targets we are under pressure, so we do some things that we don't want to do," said another tax official in northern India. The two men asked to remain unnamed for fear of reprisals from the government. Unorthodox



### Modi seeking 17% more in direct taxes this year

tactics being used by the department included asking companies for advance tax payments, as well as delaying refunds, other tax officials said.

#### 'Black sheep'

India's economy grew 5% year-on-year between April and June, its weakest pace since 2013, and the slowdown could deepen, economists say. They blame the mess partly on the centralization of power in Modi's office and lack of debate, leading to ill-conceived policy. "Even well-meaning people find it very difficult to tell him, 'This is wrong, let's do it another way,'" said Sebastian Morris, a senior faculty member at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India's premier

business school. Conflicting signals on issues ranging from tax policy to the auto sector were confusing, Morris said. "It's a madhouse."

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been touring tax offices saying that the revenue target is realistic and therefore collectors "need not overstretch." But there is no clear definition of over-reach, so confused officers are hesitant about how to handle truant taxpayers, said Bhattacharya of the tax officers' association. "In an effort to erase the fear psychosis in the public, tax officers are now going through a fear psychosis themselves," he said.

Indian businesses were complaining about sometimes high-handed tactics used by tax officers to crack down on evasion long before Modi came to power. But it became a hot-button issue after a prominent coffee magnate committed suicide earlier this year, purportedly leaving behind a letter blaming persecution by tax officers. Tax authorities said at the time their probe was based on credible evidence of concealed transactions.

The government compulsorily retired 64 senior tax officers over alleged wrongdoing this year, a government source said. "Some black sheep in the tax administration may have misused their powers and harassed taxpayers," Modi told the Economic Times in August. "We will not tolerate this type of behavior." Modi's administration needs funds for flagship programs including free cooking gas connections and toilets for poor rural Indians, popular policies that helped win him a second term in May.

But in a bid to propel growth rates higher, India cut its corporate tax rate in September to 22% from 30%, forgoing almost 1.5 trillion rupees (\$21.4 billion) in revenue. Direct tax collections have grown only 3% in the first six months of the April-March fiscal year, an official in the finance ministry said. They would have to grow by 42% from October to March to meet the target for the year, estimated Aditi Nayar, principal economist at ICRA, the Indian unit of Moody's. — Reuters

## South African Airways hit by crippling strike

JOHANNESBURG: South African Airways workers on Friday embarked on an indefinite strike for higher wages and against the national carrier's overhaul plan, forcing the cash-strapped airline to ground hundreds of flights. The stoppage has forced South Africa's largest carrier to cancel more than 300 domestic and regional flights between Friday and Monday.

The company has asked travellers who had flights booked not to turn up at airports and offered them a chance to rebook for free or to fly on other flights operated by partner airlines. It however said it was making plans to resume international flights by today night. "The airline is pleased to announce that it is aiming to operate all international flights with effect from today and customers should report to the airport as normal," it said in a statement.

More than 3,000 workers, including cabin crew, check-in, ticket sales, technical and ground staff are taking part in the open-ended, according to unions. Hundreds of placard-waving workers picketed outside the SAA head office near OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg - one of the continent's busiest airport - singing and dancing. "We will continue with the strike (until demands are met)," Sifiso Mabena, an aircraft mechanic at the airport told AFP. Unions pressed on with the walkout after talks with management dead-

locked.

Zazi Nsibanyoni-Mugambi, president of the South African Cabin Crew Association (SACCA), however said a new round of mediated talks with the airline was expected on Saturday. "We have always and will always be willing to negotiate and talk to management, we have told them this time and time again," Nsibanyoni-Mugambi said. "We are hoping these talks will bear fruit," said Phakamile Hlubi-Majola, spokeswoman of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUM-SA) said to eNCA television network.

#### 'Company could fold'

The airline, which employs more than 5,000 workers, is one of the biggest in Africa, with a fleet of more than 50 aircrafts providing dozens of domestic, regional and international flights each day. But the company is deep in debt, despite several government bailouts, and has not recorded a profit since 2011. The unions are pressing for a three-year guarantee of job security and an eight percent across-the-board wage hike. The airline is offering a 5.9 percent increase. The airline has said it is embarking on a restructuring process that could lead to the loss of close to 1,000 jobs. The unions have said "inflated contracts" outsourcing work were "crippling SAA's finances (and) literally bleeding SAA dry every day". — AFP



## Business

# India shelves consumer spending report; leaked data shows slump

## Report is bad news for Prime Minister Modi

**MUMBAI:** India said that it would not release a controversial report on shrinking consumer demand after a leading business daily leaked data showing that per capita spending had slumped for the first time in four decades. The report is bad news for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has struggled to revive India's stuttering economy.

Consumer demand in India's villages fell 8.8 percent between July 2017 and June 2018, compared with 2011-12, the Business Standard reported, using unpublished National Statistical Office (NSO) data. Two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion population lives in rural areas, making it a key economic driver. But spending on food, education and clothing declined, with demand for essential items such as cereals plunging 20 percent, the newspaper said.

Although urban consumption rose by two percent,

overall per capita monthly spending in the country slipped 3.7 percent - the first time it has fallen since 1972-73, the business daily said. The report was scheduled for release in June but was delayed because of its "adverse" findings, the Business Standard said, citing sources familiar with the matter. The ministry of statistics slammed the claims, saying that the government had decided not to release the report following the recommendations of an expert committee.

"Concerns were also raised about the ability/sensitivity of the survey instrument to capture consumption of social services by households especially on health and education," a ministry statement said. "In view of the data quality issues, the ministry has decided not to release" the report, it said. A ministry official had earlier told AFP the

report was not finished. The data "can only be confirmed once the ministry publishes the report", AK Mishra said.

### Prolonged slowdown

The decision to bury the report comes as Asia's third-largest economy battles a prolonged slowdown. In January, the Business Standard reported that unemployment had surged to a four-decade high during Modi's first term in power, citing unpublished government data. The delay in releasing the jobs report prompted a top Indian government statistician to quit in protest.

The report confirming the jobless data was finally released in May, after Modi was re-elected with a thumping majority, defeating challenger Rahul Gandhi. On Friday, Gandhi hit out at the government's alleged attempt to bury

unflattering data. "Modinomics stinks so bad, the Govt has to hide its own reports," he tweeted. To counter the fall in demand for everything from cars to cookies, India's central bank has trimmed interest rates five times in a row, but to little effect.

Experts say India's economy has never recovered from Modi's surprise cash ban in 2016, which made 86 percent of the currency in circulation void. Many small businesses shut up shop and hundreds of thousands lost their jobs. The rollout of a nationwide Goods and Services Tax (GST) in July 2017 worsened the situation as businesses struggled to adjust to the new rules. In October, market researcher Nielsen said Indian rural consumption had slumped to a seven-year low, highlighting falling income for farmers who are struggling with mounting debt.— AFP

## Burgan Bank record one of the strongest third quarters



**Raed Al-Haqhaq, Burgan Bank Deputy CEO and CEO-Kuwait**



**Naveen Rajanala, Group Head of Strategy and Capital**

**KUWAIT:** Raed Al-Haqhaq, Burgan Bank Deputy Group CEO and CEO-Kuwait, stated that Q3'19 was one of the strongest third quarters for the bank. In Q3'19, Burgan Bank generated Net Income of KD 22.7mn, Y-o-Y growth of 10.7%. The financial results of first 9 months of 2019 (9M2019) was also solid with Group Revenue of KD 178.3mn and Group Net Income of KD 67.5mn. Loan book of the bank grew to KD 4.2bn while total deposits increased to KD 4.0bn as on 30th Sep 2019.

Burgan Bank achieved these results in spite of including only 8 months of subsidiaries' results instead of 9 months, as included in the prior periods. Burgan has been pursuing a selective growth strategy with focus on growing Kuwait business and cautious approach to its subsidiaries' business. This reflects the bank's proactive measures to manage the challenges in some of its subsidiaries' markets.

Raed highlighted this during the earnings call and stated "We can see that Kuwait grew by 7.7% against a reduction of 4.8% for the same period last year. As a group, the overall growth this year is 1.5% against a reduction of 6.6% last year". Maintaining stable margins has been another key focus point for Burgan. During 9M 2019, the Bank maintained its margins at similar levels as last year despite rise in cost of funds in Kuwait. During the earnings call, Raed Said, "At a group level, the margins are almost at the same level at 2.8% this year against 2.9% last year".

Group NIM of 2.8% is one of the highest in Kuwait and Burgan has been able to maintain these margin levels over the last few years. Burgan continues to deliver on operating efficiency. During the earnings call, Naveen Rajanala, Group Head of Strategy and Capital, said, "Burgan's operating expenses both at Group and Kuwait levels are lower than previous period". Burgan has reported Operating Profit of KD 103.6mn for 9M 2019.

Burgan Bank's Cost of Credit reduced significantly to 0.8% in 9M 2019 from 1.4% in the same period last year. Raed highlighted Burgan's strong risk management framework and said "In the first 9 months of 2019, Kuwait Cost of Credit is at KD 6mn with a total Group Cost of Credit of KD 26mn. In comparison, cost of credit in Kuwait was KD 15mn last year with a total of KD 45mn achieving reduction of 43% Y-o-Y".

The improvement across all these metrics contributed to achieving strong Net Income for 9M 2019. During the call, Raed said, "In terms of Group Net income, we have reported KD 67mn this year against KD 71mn last year. The dip is primarily due to the one-month lag in our subsidiaries reporting whereas the Net Income from Kuwait business grew strongly from KD 51mn to KD 67mn." Burgan's Kuwait business Net income grew impressively by 32%. Burgan is placed quite comfortably in terms of its capital and liquidity levels. On this topic, Naveen said, "Burgan continues to be a capital efficient organization.

Our CET1 is currently at 11%. At year end, we expect our CET1 to be about around 11.5%. Regarding the liquidity levels, he said, "Burgan continues to be comfortable on both short term and long-term liquidity ratios." Going Forward, Burgan Bank remains generally optimistic about the prospects of growth of the Kuwait economy. Raed said, "Our target in Kuwait this year was a growth of 7% to 8% which we have achieved and this will continue to be our target even for next year".

## NBK-Egypt reports KD 30 million in net profits

**KUWAIT:** NBK-Egypt - a member of NBK Group - reported EGP 1.666 billion in net profits (KD 30 million) for 9M2019 up 13.8% compared to EGP 1.464 billion for the corresponding period of last year. As of September 30, 2019, shareholders' equity reached EGP 7.54 billion up 29.7% compared to EGP 5.81 billion by the end of September 2018. Total customers deposits grew by 8.2% for the same period, reaching EGP 56.15 billion, compared to EGP 51.90 billion for the corresponding period of last year.

Meanwhile net operating income stood at EGP 2.84 billion, up by 11.4% y-o-y compared to EGP 2.55 billion in the corresponding period of 2018. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, National Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of NBK-Egypt, said that NBK Egypt's outstanding growth solidifies its success in affirming its leading position in the Egyptian market, which represents one of NBK Group's key growth markets, given its promising growth opportunities and positive outlook, as it contributes about third of the profits that the Group derives from its international branches.

Al-Bahar highlighted that the profit growth in H2019, mainly driven by operating income, also reflect the stability of the Egyptian economic environment as well as NBK Group's insightful long-term investments strategies in the Egyptian market.

"We seek to transfer our FinTech expertise to the Egyptian market to capitalize on the promising investment opportunities and the exceptional growth witnessed in the region's most populous markets, as part of our digital transformation strategy and our aim to improve product integration between NBK-Egypt and the Group to increase our competitive advantage and strengthen our position in the Egyptian market," Al-Bahar commented.

Al-Bahar highlighted that NBK-Egypt plays an integral role in the bank's diversification strategy, therefore it seeks



**Shaikha Al-Bahar**

**Yasser El-Tayeb**

to expand its geographical footprint as well as to grow its business activities, with special focus on achieving record growth in the retail sector and maintaining the Bank's leadership in corporate finance.

Al-Bahar stressed that the Egyptian economy has begun reaping the benefits of its economic reform program that has been successfully implemented by the government over the past three years. That initiative included a wide array of economic and financial reforms, which led to substantial improvement in the macroeconomic and financial inclusion indicators, as confirmed by leading international institutions.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman & Managing Director of NBK-Egypt, Yasser El-Tayeb highlighted that 9M2019 financial results reflect that NBK-Egypt has continued its growth and solid performance across most financial indicators, thanks to the prudent policy adopted by the Bank as a member of NBK Group and its business model based on diversifying and balancing its income sources and credit portfolio while offering flexible financing solutions and providing innovative banking products at the same time to cater to its customers actual needs based on detailed in-depth market studies.

This is in addition to the bank's solid financial position, strong balance sheet, successful strategy and the experienced and accomplished team that brings comprehensive banking knowledge and expertise. El-Tayeb added that most of NBK-Egypt's profits are driven by corporate

## KIB appoints Hesham Al-Mubarak as Deputy General Manager

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently appointed Hesham Ahmad Al-Mubarak as Deputy General Manager of Wholesale Banking - Head of Domestic Commercial Banking. Al-Mubarak holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, concentration in Finance, from Kuwait University, as well as a slew of academic and professional certifications from various prestigious international institutions and universities.

In his new role, Al-Mubarak will oversee the development of the team and enhancement of KIB's commercial banking services, financing activities, and a number of product offerings for local corporate customers. KIB is always looking to attract the best and brightest local talents in the banking sector, which has led to the appointment of Al-Mubarak in his new role as Deputy



**Hesham Al-Mubarak**

General Manager. Al-Mubarak is a seasoned banker with a wealth of skills amassed over a career spanning more than 19 years in wholesale banking.

Moreover, Al-Mubarak's broad-ranging experience includes serving at many leadership roles in the banking industry, such as Deputy General Manager-Local Real Estate

Financing at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), as well as Executive Manager- Corporate Banking Group at Boubyan Bank, noting that he began his career as a Credit Officer at Ahli United Bank (AUB).

Al-Mubarak is one of the notable local figures KIB is proud to have within its leadership team, as he brings with him a wealth of experience. His appointment is in line with the Bank's strategy to recruit highly qualified caliber at senior positions in an effort to enhance its position as a leading Islamic banking institution.

## S&P downgrades protest-hit Lebanon

**BEIRUT:** S&P Global Ratings has downgraded Lebanon's sovereign debt, saying a twin political and economic crisis had hit investor confidence and constrained the government's funding model, which relies on deposit inflows. The move to lower the protest-hit country's credit ratings to 'CCC/C' from 'B-/B' with a negative outlook came one day after S&P said it had downgraded three Lebanese banks.

It also came after Moody's rating agency downgraded Lebanon's sovereign debt earlier this month, saying sweeping anti-government protests had hit investor confidence and threatened macro-economic stability. The demonstrations have rocked Lebanon since October 17, forcing the government to resign last month and banks to close. They were fuelled in part by fears of a currency devaluation and a dollar shortage after banks restricted access to the greenback, causing the exchange rate to spike on the black market.

ATMs no longer dispense dollar bills and

banks have capped the amount that can be withdrawn from branches or transferred abroad. As a result, the exchange rate in the parallel market has surpassed 1,800 Lebanese pounds for every dollar-a spike from the pegged rate of 1,500. On Friday, S&P said, "diminishing confidence in Lebanon's governance and economy have led to a reversal in bank deposit inflows, which have historically financed Lebanon's elevated fiscal and external deficits."

"Bank closures and unofficial foreign currency transfer restrictions raise questions about the sustainability of the exchange rate regime, further eroding confidence," it added in a statement on its website. Even before the protests began, growth in Lebanon had plummeted in the wake of repeated political deadlocks in recent years, compounded by the war in Syria. Public debt stood at more than \$86 billion, or higher than 150 percent of GDP, according to the finance ministry.

S&P on Friday said it expects the general government deficit will average 11.6% of GDP over 2019-2022 and gross general government debt will increase to 169% of GDP by 2022. It also called for the formation of a technocratic government-a key demand of the country's protest movement. "If a new, largely technocratic government is formed within the next month and is able to introduce immediate policy reforms... this could help defuse social tensions and support depositor confidence." — AFP

## Ahli United Bank congratulates the Al Hassad winners

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank announced on the 13th of November 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period. The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Abdullah Saleh Alshamari.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Maasouma Abdulrahim Al Saffar, Adel Saad Al Salahat, Mamdouh Malbas Al Enezi, Shifa Abbas Hussan, Lamya Mohamed Alameer, Fatemah Mubarak Abutaiban, Fahad Abdullah Al Suwaileh, Hamzah Abbas Al Qallaf, Heirs Barges Homod Al Barges, Nabil Zaki El Issa, Balqesia Ayoub Yousef, Shaikhah Abdulaziz Yousef Al Muzaini, Hesham Dayel Al Otaibi, Jack Kouyoumjian, Sadiqa Mohamedali Yusuf, Rawdha Hameed A.Hussain, Salman Mohamed Ahmed, Abdulla Yousef Mattar, Abdulshaheed Abdulla Hasan, Fathiya Hasan Al Alwani .

On the occasion Ahli United Bank congratulate its winning customers, and commented that there are many chances to win waiting for our customers. Draws are held every Wednesday at AUB Kuwait or AUB Bahrain depending on the draw plan. On public holidays, the draw is postponed to the next business day. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 4 quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000.

One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid ul Fitr and Eid Al Adha, when the winning customers will receive the eid prizes of KD 100,000 each. May the Eid always bring prosperity and blessings to the Islamic nation. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 21 weekly prizes comprised of a grand prize of KD 10,000 and 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each

In addition to the highly attractive package of the prizes, there will be the annual expected profits on, which makes the Al Hassad account a useful tool for family and other savings, both for the short term and for the longer term - a fact which well appreciated by a large multitude of new and old customers. It is worth mentioning that there is possibility to open the account online for non-customers and there is possibility to transfer the salary to Al Hassad account. In addition Al Hassad customers can issue an ATM immediately and have the freedom to deposit and withdraw any time

To be eligible to participate in the draw, the customer should have a minimum balance of KD 100, whereby the customer has two chances to participate, with a maximum of 30,000 chances per draw, in addition to annual profits for all participants. Every KD 50 invested for at least 15 days entitles the customer to one chance in the each draw. The longer the customer keeps his balance the bigger the changes of participation in the draw.

For more information on Ahli United Bank's products and services, customers are invited to visit any of the Bank's branches or dial the customer service "Hayakom" or log on the Bank's website [www.ahliunited.com.kw](http://www.ahliunited.com.kw)

Travel



View of the Cactus Garden, created in 1991 by Spanish artist and architect Cesar Manrique, in the village of Guatiza, on the island of Lanzarote in the Canary Islands.



A view of Timanfaya National Park, near Yaiza, on the island of Lanzarote in the Canary Islands.



View of the swimming pool in the house of Spanish artist and architect Cesar Manrique in Tahiche, on the island of Lanzarote in the Canary Islands.

The man who saved Lanzarote from overdevelopment

Roadside billboards and high-rise hotels are banned on Spain's holiday island of Lanzarote—a legacy of visionary artist Cesar Manrique, whose birth a century ago is being celebrated this year. Part of the volcanic Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago located in the Atlantic Ocean off the northwestern coast of Africa, the arid island welcomes some three mil-

lions of tourists a year. But, thanks to Manrique's influence, it has avoided the same fate as the concrete jungles of the Costa del Sol on mainland Spain. While there has been a large amount of construction, dwellings on Lanzarote, home to around 150,000 people, largely retain a minimalist simplicity. They are whitewashed with green or blue woodwork, in keeping with local tra-

dition. After working in New York as a painter and sculptor, Manrique returned in 1966 to his native Lanzarote, where he built a series of original buildings that merged with the island's unique landscape and have become part of its attraction. He also worked closely with the local government on regulations that protected Lanzarote from the ravages of rampant development and encouraged sustainable tourism. The efforts to preserve Lanzarote's natural heritage were acknowledged by UNESCO, which designated the island as a World Biosphere Reserve in 1993 — a year after Manrique died in a car accident aged 72. "I always intended to return, because I knew that on my island there are a series of landscapes that are not normal," Manrique once said.

**Volcanic bubbles**

To mark the centenary of his birth, Spain's King Felipe VI inaugurated last month a major retrospective of Manrique's works at the Caesar Manrique Foundation in the artist's former home in the town of Tahiche. The building, built on a lava outflow, uses the lower level of a natural formation of five volcanic bubbles to create a liveable space. Using dynamite, Manrique opened pathways connecting the five bubbles, which were then converted into rooms with whitewashed walls. The upper level has sweeping views of Lanzarote's petrified lava streams and volcanos. "The relationship between art and nature is Manrique's genetic axis," the foundation's director, Fernando Gomez Aguilera, told AFP, adding that for the late artist, "luxury comes from nature". Highly sociable and hedonistic, as a child Manrique liked to draw in the sand on the beach and had the "gift of noticing everything", his brother Carlos, 94, told AFP.

care of it, don't let it crumble, it is good architecture," said Tonin Ramos, an electrician who worked with Manrique.



**Would be a disaster**

Marcial Martin, a former director of a network of cultural centers set up by Manrique, said "people are still aware that their home, their surroundings, must be cared for... that environmental awareness is still in force." Manrique started developing his projects just as Lanzarote began to develop its tourism sector, which now dominates its economy after centuries of relying on subsistence farming and fishing. "He sensed that if the island was not controlled, its growth and development would be a disaster," said musician and painter Ildefonso Aguilar, 74, who worked with Manrique.

Two women visit the 'Jameos del Agua', a Culture and Tourism Centre created by artist and architect Cesar Manrique, near Punta Mujeres, on the island of Lanzarote in the Canary Islands.

While no "original works" have been built on Lanzarote since Manrique's death, and there is a "standardization" of building styles in tourist centers, the late artist's vision for the island has been respected, Marcial Martin said. "It is a very fragile territory, if you break it even just a little, it is really hard, if not impossible, to restore it. We have to take care of it," he said. — AFP



Spanish artist Ildefonso Aguilar de la Rua poses at his workshop in Tahiche, on the island of Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. — AFP photos



These pictures show the Royal Cemeteries of Meroe Pyramids in Begrawiya at River Nile State, Sudan.— Reuters

Portuguese architect Tania Monteiro and her husband are almost alone as they tour Sudan's pyramids, a world-class attraction long neglected by the world. "People are really, really nice, always very welcoming," Monteiro said on a recent visit to Meroe, an ancient city on the east bank of the River Nile about 200 km northeast of the capital Khartoum. Sudan has more – though smaller – pyramids than Egypt, but attracted only about 700,000 tourists in 2018 compared to some 10 million in its northern neighbor. Conflicts and crises under veteran ruler Omar al-Bashir, a tough visa regime and a lack of roads and decent hotels outside Khartoum have made Sudan an unlikely tourist destination. But Bashir lost power in April, and the new civilian transition government is easing visa rules to attract more visitors with their hard currency to places such as the Royal Pyramids of Meroe. A

film crew was shooting a promotional video for a travel agency in Khartoum. Like the Egyptians, the Nubian Kush dynasty that ruled in the area some 2,500 years ago buried members of the royal family in pyramid tombs. Near Meroe's pyramids lie an array of temples with ancient drawings of animals and the ancient city of Naga, and there are more pyramids further north at Jebel Barka.

**Rise in tourist numbers**

The new government has already started relaxing the visa system, including dropping a permit required for travel outside Khartoum, said Graham Abdel-Qadir, undersecretary of the ministry of information, culture and tourism. "There has been already a rise of tourists in October and November thanks to the new system," he told Reuters. Arrivals fell this year because of unrest but numbers are

expected to exceed 900,000 next year and might reach up to 1.2 million in 2021, he said. Sudan needs tourists after decades of isolation and hyperinflation. This week the pound fell on the black market to 81 per dollar. The official rate is 45. At Meroe, thanks to money from Qatar and German expertise, a visitor's centre has been set up explaining the history of Sudan and the pyramids. There are walking tracks and a new reception centre. Visitors can for first time enter the pyramids' interior and will soon be able to go into tombs underneath, part of Qatar's \$135 million aid. Several pyramids will be restored after decades of neglect. Sudanese tourists are also coming. "We had three buses (of Sudanese alone) yesterday," said Mahmoud Suleiman, head of the site. — Reuters



## Health &amp; Science

# Scarier than fiction: Climate worry driving 'cli-fi' boom

**PARIS:** Imagine a world where storms inundate coastal megacities, entire species become extinct in the blink of an eye, and conflicts are fought over dwindling natural resources. Not so difficult in 2019, perhaps. After a year of devastating extreme weather and worldwide unrest over the emergency posed by climate change, topics that used to belong to the realm of science fiction are finding their way into mainstream storytelling. Back in 2004, Roland Emmerich's disaster flick "The Day After Tomorrow" depicted a global weather catastrophe, with coastal areas devoured by the sea amid general meteorological mayhem.

Just 15 years on, scenes from the movie resemble images taken from real-life weather events today. And as climate change makes superstorms, flooding, wildfires and droughts more likely, a new genre is gaining fatalistic fans the world over: "Cli-fi". "It's catching on like wildfire," said US writer and cli-fi aficionado Dan Bloom. He credited US President Donald Trump, who has said he will withdraw from the Paris climate deal, with helping promote the genre.

"There's a lot of people who say that climate change is not real," said Bloom. "These people are making the rest of us very angry and as a result cli-fi is getting more and more power." Andrew Milner, a professor of comparative literature at Melbourne's Monash University, said that cli-fi was yet to break out from sci-fi's yoke-most people get into the new genre

because they like the old one. "Both its texts and practitioners-writers, readers, publishers, film directors, fans-relate primarily to the science-fiction tradition," he said. "(But) it is very clear that the sub-genre has grown very rapidly in recent years."

## Global appeal

Global protest movements such as the Youth Strike for Climate and Extinction Rebellion have heightened public awareness of the issue. For JR Burgmann, co-author of "Science Fiction and Climate Change: A Sociological Approach", cli-fi films and novels are a logical expression of an increasingly knowledgeable and concerned society.

"This rise is a response to real-world concerns," he said. "And though I would argue that literature has been rather slow to respond to manmade climate change, it certainly appears to be making up for lost time." And, because climate change is a truly global problem, cli-fi has become a worldwide, multi-lingual phenomenon.

In France, two major television series focusing on dystopian but conceivable futures have received popular and critical acclaim. "The Last Wave" tells the story of 10 surfers who go missing in bad weather. When they return they can't remember what happened but some have strange new powers. And "The Collapse", set in a post-apocalyptic world where fuel is scarce, nuclear sites are threatened and medicines are rationed, debuted this week. Recent cli-fi works from

around the world include "Blackout Island" by Icelandic author Sigríður Hagalín Björnsdóttir, a Canadian adaptation of Jean Hegland's "Into the Forest" and "Water Knife", by US author Paolo Bacigalupi. In "The History of Bees", Norwegian author Maja Lunde's 2017 bestseller, humanity is forced to pollinate their crops by hand after pesticides have wiped insects off the face of the Earth. "People are more and more worried about climate change and authors write about what scares them," Lunde told AFP last year.

## 'Hard to ignore'

Novels and films about climate change are nothing new, of course. JG Ballard's "The Burning World" (1964) and John Brunner's "The Sheep Look Up" (1972) depicted a world ravaged by environmental damage decades before scientists fully understood manmade climate change. Even John Steinbeck's generational "The Grapes of Wrath" (1939) is essentially a tale of the harrowing ordeal undergone by climate migrants from the Oklahoma dust bowl.

But, as leading cli-fi author Jean-Marc Ligny explained, greater public awareness and a seemingly unending string of drought, wildfires and heatwaves have made climate a topic that's "hard to ignore". "Climate change needs stories, and readers need them to be told," he said. "There are figures, statistics, but these don't really say anything. Cli-fi makes people more aware of the situation." — AFP

## Apple bans vaping apps from Store

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple said it is banning vaping-related apps from its App Store due to concerns that e-cigarette use can damage lungs or even kill people. Apple vets what is allowed on the shelves of its virtual shop that serves as the sole outlet for apps available to its popular mobile devices, including some 900 million iPhones in use around the world.

"Recently, experts ranging from the CDC to the American Heart Association have attributed a variety of lung injuries and fatalities to e-cigarette and vaping products, going so far as to call the spread of these devices a public health crisis and a youth epidemic," Apple said in response to an AFP query prompted by an Axios report.

"We agree, and we've updated our App Store Review Guidelines to reflect that apps encouraging or facilitating the use of these products are not permitted." Apple has pulled 181 vaping-related apps from the App Store worldwide. Tobacco along with vaping cartridges were never allowed at the virtual shop, so the apps involved social networks, news, games, hardware or stores, according to the California-based

company. "We are grateful that Apple is joining with us and others on this historic day to stand against big Vape and their lies by removing all vaping apps in the App Store," American Heart Association chief executive Nancy Brown said in a released statement. "Our hope is that others will follow our lead and follow with their own powerful message that nicotine and nicotine addiction caused by e-cigarette use are leaving thousands sick and dying across the globe." People who already have the now-banned apps on their Apple gadgets will be able to continue using them.

US President Donald Trump said this week that he plans to meet with vaping industry representatives as he considers whether to ban flavored e-cigarette products following a deadly epidemic of vaping-linked lung injuries. Vaping, already criticized as a "gateway" to tobacco or other addiction, is facing unprecedented scrutiny amid a mysterious epidemic linked to e-cigarette use that has killed 39 and sickened more than 2,000 mostly young people in the US. — AFP

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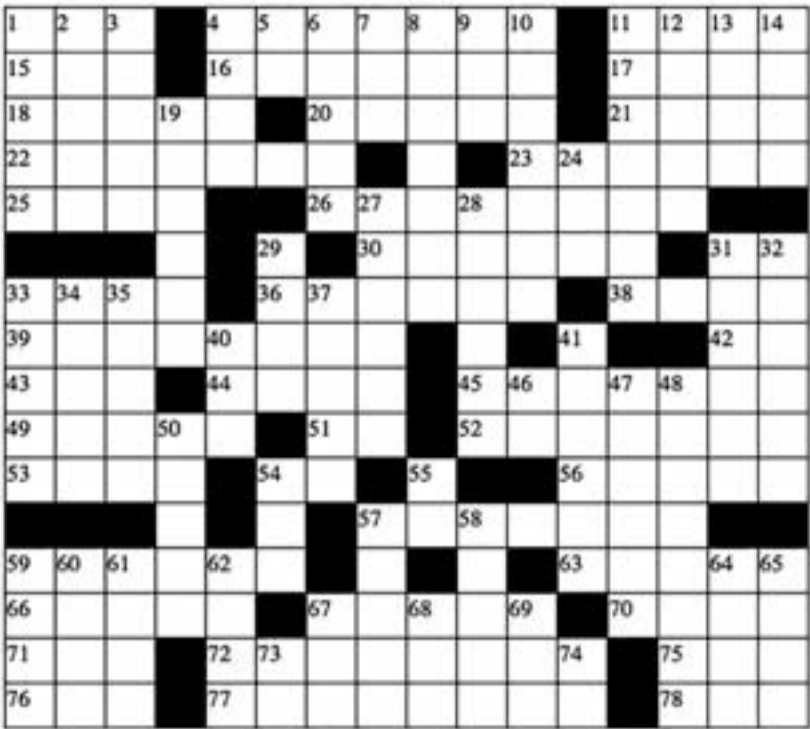
- Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- (IFSO) member .
- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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CROSSWORD 2361



ACROSS

1. A very small circular shape.  
4. The part that is left when a cone or pyramid is cut by a plane parallel to the base and the apical part is removed.  
11. Spanish cubist painter (1887-1927).  
15. A type of submachine gun that is designed and manufactured in Israel.  
16. Having a dusty purplish pink color.  
17. An extravagantly enthusiastic review.  
18. Tropical American tree producing cacao beans.  
20. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.  
21. A primeval personification of air and breath.  
22. City in southwestern South Korea.  
23. Be fully aware or cognizant of.  
25. River in eastern Asia.  
26. Capital and largest city of Yugoslavia.  
30. A member of an agricultural people in southeast India.  
33. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.  
36. A pen for cattle.  
38. Small cubes with 1 to 6 spots on the faces.  
39. Maneuvers of a horse in response to body signals by the rider.  
42. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.  
43. 10 grams.  
44. The probability of a specified outcome.  
45. Become steeper.  
49. Make improvements or corrections to.  
51. A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.  
52. A city in northern Nigeria.  
53. Not widely known.  
56. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.  
59. A non-aromatic saturated hydrocarbon with the general formula CnH(2n+2).  
63. An honorary arts degree.  
66. United States physicist (born in Austria) who proposed the exclusion principle (thus providing a theoretical basis for the periodic table) (1900-1958).  
70. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.  
71. Term of address for a man.  
72. Notched like a saw with teeth pointing toward the apex.  
75. A light touch or stroke.  
76. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.  
77. Any of various plants of the genus Vernonia of tropical and warm regions of especially North America that take their name from their loose heads of purple to rose flowers that quickly take on a rusty hue.  
78. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A special loved one.  
2. United States conductor (born in Japan in 1935).  
3. The basic unit of money in Thailand.  
4. Any of various tailless stout-bodied amphibians with long hind limbs for leaping.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are happiest when the goals for each day are understood. Honest, straightforward people have a special place in your heart. It is easiest to work under a boss that has clear expectations. Revising or reassessing your work responsibilities and scheduling may take up most of this day. You could be helping to change several methods of operation. In-depth discussions and probing conversations find you at your mental best. You have a chance to show off your analytical abilities now. Social gatherings are fun and much more interesting than you expected. Take an opportunity to network at this social event . . . You will be pleased with the outcome.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This morning is for planning and this afternoon is for carry-through regarding those plans. Later, this afternoon, you will reap the rewards for your hard work. This may also mean a raise or promotion for some past, long-term accomplishment that you may think was forgotten. The people with whom you work are congenial and fun to be with away from work, as well as working as teammates-you are very appreciative. Love and friendships grow closer than ever. Although it is your birthday, you may have to revise a few of your own plans to accommodate old friends that want to stay the night.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your career can end up at right angles to your own need for growth and change. Emotional material welling up from within you may challenge and threaten the current path, causing you to stop and consider it with care. You will be successfully examining ideas, thoughts and concepts-with an eye to getting rid of those unwanted debts. There is much searching, research, detective work and such. You are in a planning mood and are very clearheaded and able to view the alternate paths. Move forward now. You can see the road ahead and will make the right choices. You may find yourself serving to guide someone younger than you in matters of importance tonight. Perhaps you will be able to encourage him or her to move forward with a special talent.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Careful; you may be very forceful in what you say today. With all of this emotional energy, you could speak or communicate very well but perhaps a little abruptly. Proud, you have an inner need to express feelings and emotions to others. You are driven to leadership positions by a sense of your own inner worth. You have learned to listen carefully when you see someone needs a listening ear; this makes you popular and loved. You have the mental drive to get much accomplished. Heed a warning you may hear from someone in a senior position-do not take roads that go nowhere just for the ride. Pay attention to your dreams and enjoy sharing them.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is the perfect time to take risks and dare to be a little eccentric. You will prosper through new insights, inventions and an independent point of view. You have good ideas and co-workers and higher-ups will often stop what they are doing to hear your input. You will be wise to know your subject matter before approaching higher-ups. Challenging authority and striving for success are on your agenda; you tread softly. Ambition is a powerful motivation and can lead you into conflict if you let it get out of control. Properly channeled, it results in great achievements and brings recognition. Events may make it easy for you to be original, have breakthroughs and find new solutions to old problems. This evening is good for friendships.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Keep up your pace in the business world-attention to detail may keep you in demand. Competition is high and your energies match any challenges you come across now. Put your visions and dreams to work. You can be intense, passionate and very personal. You may rush past superficialities and right to the heart of any matter. Your imagination drives you to make your inner vision a reality. Careful-there is aggressiveness in your emotions that may cause you to be prone to emotional outburst. Do not misuse your aggression. This, again, is a period of hard work, both in salvaging some endeavors that appear to be failing and in branching out in new directions. A relaxed atmosphere this evening will put you in the mood for romance.

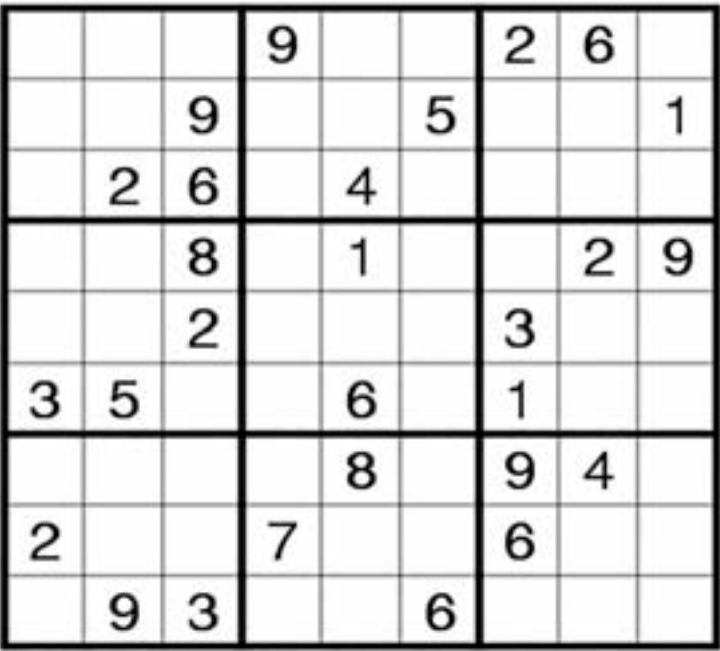
Wordsearch Puzzle

Nursing Home 1

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 47 letters spell a Mother Theresa quotation.

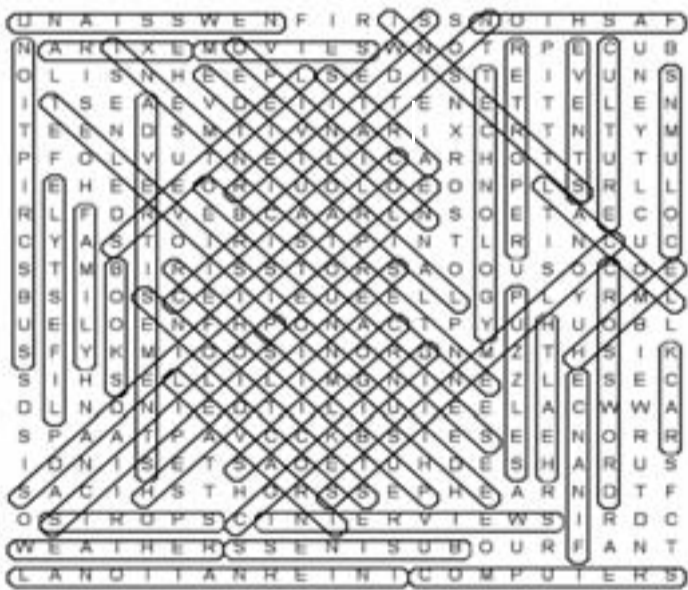


Daily Sudoku



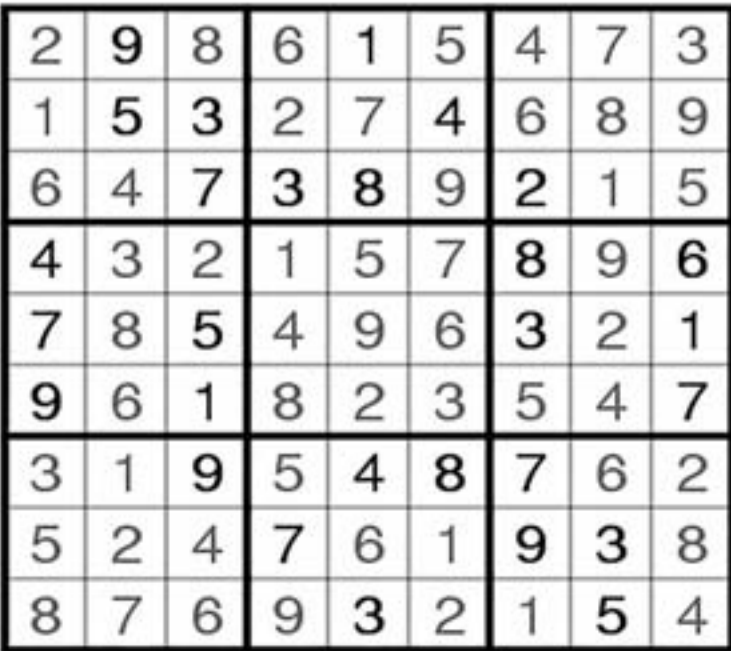
Friday's Solution

Newspaper



The hidden message is: FIRST PUBLISHED IN SEVENTEEN SIXTY FOUR THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY PUBLISHED NEWSPAPER IN THE USA IS THE HARTFORD COURANT.

Friday's Solution



# Lifestyle

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2019



US actress and singer Sofia Carson arrives at the 20th Annual Latin Grammy Awards in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

## Taylor Swift-label feud underscores tensions over music ownership

Unleash the Swifties: Taylor Swift has tapped her millions-strong social media fan base to pressure the heads of her former label, who she says are wielding “tyrannical control” over her music. The global superstar’s latest chess move has reignited her months-long public feud with Big Machine Label Group, spotlighting the music industry’s age-old issue of who keeps the keys to an artist’s work. The 29-year-old pop singer known for her calculating social media strategy dropped a Tumblr post late Thursday accusing the Big Machine heads of blocking her from performing on television—she’s set to do a career-spanning medley at this month’s American Music Awards, where she’ll receive an Artist of the Decade honor—and releasing a Netflix documentary.



In this file photo Singer/songwriter Taylor Swift arrives on the red carpet for the Time 100 Gala at the Lincoln Center in New York. — AFP

She implied Big Machine—which has rebuffed the accusations—was reacting to her plans to re-record her early albums, by saying that performing on television “would be re-recording my music before I’m allowed to next year.” This summer Swift began publicly sparring with industry mogul Scooter Braun over his company’s purchase of her previous label of a decade, which gave him a majority stake in the master recordings of her first six albums.

Swift vowed to regain command of those albums by making her own new masters, which she says she’s contractually allowed to start on in November 2020. In her post pleading for support from fans and fellow artists, Swift alluded to bullying from Braun and Big Machine CEO Scott Borchetta. Both parties have referenced a dispute over millions of dollars but voiced disagreement over who owes what.

“The message being sent to me is very clear,” Swift said. “Basically, be a good little girl and shut up,” she wrote in her post. “Or you’ll be punished.” Swift is now at Universal, with a contract under which she owns her work.

### Counterintuitive

Performing for a television broadcast creates an “ephemeral recording,” which could be subject to Big Machine’s green light—though pinpointing legal specifics is impossible without reading Swift’s contract with Big

Machine, which has not been made public. Susan Genco, a music industry lawyer and lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles, said if the contract contains a typical re-record provision, the label may have a “technical argument” that a taped television performance could violate her agreement.

“But it is certainly not the intent of the re-record provision and, to my knowledge, not a position that a label has taken before,” she told AFP. “Keeping an artist from performing her songs on television seems counterintuitive and against the label’s interest—as it promotes the catalog which they own.”

### Master Prince

Swift’s case highlights the schism between a new breed of artists adamant about holding the reins, and members of music’s old guard who have long gripped them. The owner of lucrative masters—one-of-a-kind source material used to create vinyls, CDs and digital copies—is able to dictate how songs are reproduced and sold. Record companies have almost always kept those rights, justified by the financial risks labels take by supporting performers throughout their contracts.

The late legend Prince famously championed artists’ rights to their work in the 1990s, rebelling against his label Warner over money and control of his music. He took the battle public by etching the word “slave” on his cheek and changing his name to an unpronounceable “love symbol” to take control of his image, with many media outlets began referring to him as “the artist formerly known as Prince.” “If you don’t own your masters, your master owns you,” the superstar told Rolling Stone in 1996.

### Demanding autonomy

Swift has revived debate over music ownership in an era where streaming rules, and young artists who are savvy with social media increasingly are demanding more autonomy. “Signing and retaining the biggest acts in the world—or even a brand new act that there’s a bidding war for—has gotten a lot more expensive,” said Larry Miller, director of New York University’s music business program. “Some companies are occasionally willing to do things that have been contrary to the way their business model works.”

Still, Miller said the major labels retain leverage when it comes to creating top stars: “In 2019 anyone can make a piece of music today on their laptop and smash it out.” But “there’s a big difference between being theoretically discoverable and having an army of people... to make you the biggest artist,” he said. Swift, certainly a top global artist, says her stand is in part to give a voice to less powerful musicians. “I feel very strongly that sharing what is happening to me could change the awareness level for other artists and potentially help them avoid a similar fate,” she said. — AFP

## Beyond Baby Shark: Creator of viral hit eyes China with dinosaurs

The creator of the children’s song “Baby Shark,” which has become a global phenomenon, says the firm is eyeing the Chinese market, where the tune did not quite catch on, with a brand new character featuring dinosaurs. The popular song about a family of sharks has been a rallying cry at Lebanese anti-government protests, played at the White House and praised by President Donald Trump and become the unofficial anthem of the baseball World Series champions Washington Nationals. It has also prompted parodies and a dance craze.

The co-founder and the chief financial officer of the South Korean publisher behind the viral song and video, the fifth-most viewed of all time, said it is targeting China next to make sure that it doesn’t end a one-hit wonder. “Who would have thought sharks could become this popular?” Ryan Lee of SmartStudy told Reuters in an interview. “Children who like dinosaurs definitely exist around the world, but there’s no brand name attached to them.”

The Baby Shark song, which has had 3.9 billion views on YouTube, is a under copyright to SmartStudy, a South Korean company that is planning an IPO. Lee said the company sees the song to Baby Shark as “evergreen content”. It is planning a Baby Shark-themed animated TV series with the Nickelodeon television network. For Asia’s fourth largest but maturing economy, the so-called “kids industry” has been a bright spot with a five-fold growth to 40 trillion won (\$34.3 billion) in revenue in 2017 from 2002, according to eBEST Investment & Securities, even though its birth rate is one of the lowest in the world.

SmartStudy sees the limitation of the domestic market and is eyeing China, where the absence of YouTube, and the clunky local word for shark, did little for Baby Shark’s appeal. Dinosaurs, on the other hand, will be a different story, Lee said, citing China’s active research into the reptiles as a sign of great interest. “China is not an easy market, but there’s no market more attractive other than China. More than a billion people speaking a single language and this is a country that evolved into a market from a factory.”

SmartStudy eventually plans an initial public offering, the company said, hoping to capitalize on its 2019 sales projected at more than 60 billion won, eight times the figure five years ago. Backed by Baby Shark’s popularity, shares of Samsung Publishing, SmartStudy’s second-top shareholder, have jumped 60% this year, versus the wider market’s 4 percent rise. — Reuters

## Literary stars call on Modi to restore critic’s citizenship

Top prize winners Margaret Atwood, Orhan Pamuk and J.M. Coetzee led more than 250 literary and journalist luminaries who called Thursday on India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi to revoke an order stripping writer Aatish Taseer of his “overseas citizenship”. Salman Rushdie and leading Indian writer Amitav Ghosh also signed the letter which said Taseer “appears to have been targeted for an extremely personal form of retaliation” for his criticism of the Indian government.

Taseer, 38, born in Britain but raised in India, lost his Overseas Citizenship of India last week. The home ministry announced on Twitter that the journalist had “concealed” the fact that his father was Pakistani. Critics have, however, called the move a response to a Taseer cover story on Modi in Time magazine during the Indian election titled “India’s Divider in Chief”.

“Denying access to the country to writers of both foreign and Indian origin casts a chill on public discourse,” said the letter, published by the free speech platform PEN America. “It flies in the face of India’s traditions of free and open debate and respect for a diversity of views, and weakens its credentials as a strong and thriving democracy.”

Taseer was raised in India by his mother, Tavleen Singh, an Indian columnist and journalist. His father, Salman Taseer, was governor of Pakistan’s Punjab province until he was assassinated in 2011. The letter said the decision by the Indian government was discrimination against single mothers. Taseer said he learned about the decision on Twitter. He later wrote: “It was not hard to feel, given the timing, that I was being punished for what I had written.”

Time has also condemned the move. “Journalists like Aatish Taseer should be allowed to do their work without harassment or retribution,” a spokesperson told AFP. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said Taseer’s fate showed that Modi’s conservative ruling party is “intolerant of criticism and freedom of the press”. — AFP



In this file photo, Indian author Amitav Ghosh poses for pictures with his book ‘Sea of Poppies’ at a photocall in London. — AFP



Puerto Rican singer Kany Garcia



Musician El Guincho



Spaniard singer Rosalia

# Latin Grammys bring rhythm, glitz and protest



US/Peruvian musician Tony Succar

An undercurrent of protest streaked through the 20th annual Latin Grammys Thursday, where Spanish flamenco futurist Rosalia scored Best Album and led the night with five wins. Chilean singer Mon Laferte—who snagged a trophy for Best Alternative Music Album—walked the red carpet in a long black trenchcoat before dropping it to reveal her bare breasts, emblazoned with a message that read “In Chile they torture, rape and kill,” referring to the violent anti-government protests that have rocked the South American country for weeks.

“Chile, your pain hurts me,” the balladeer said in accepting her award at the gala in Las Vegas, reading a poem from the Chilean poet La Chingana. Nicaraguan singer Luis Enrique also seized the moment in scooping the Latin Grammy for best folk album, a collaboration with the C4 Trio. “Nicaragua is still at war,” he said. “Nicaragua continues fighting to be free.”

Puerto Rican Residente, member of the iconic band Calle 13, dedicated his short form video award for “Banana Papaya,” to “equality.” “Although it has nothing to do with the video, this is for all the people fighting in Latin America,” Residente said. “We can’t continue to allow our governments to take us for fools.” “We need to continue fighting.”



Puerto Rican musician Residente



Musician Pedro Capo

## Long live reggaeton

Fellow Puerto Rican Bad Bunny—considered the face of Latin trap, a booming genre that fuses reggaeton with elements of hip hop from the US south—received the award for Best Urban Album. In accepting the trophy, he spoke to the anger of fellow artists who decried the nominations as discriminatory against reggaeton. “There are people who still have trouble accepting that reggaeton is a genre established for more than two decades,” the 25-year-old told reporters.

“At the same time, I tell many colleagues that they have become a bit monotonous, passion has been lost, music is made just to generate numbers and views and the essence is being forgotten.” The superstar left an exclamation point on the gala with a rousing, elaborate performance accompanied by an orchestra. The award for Best Song went to “Calma” by Pedro Capo, Gabriel Edgar Gonzalez and George Noriega, as Alejandro Sanz and Camila Cabello won Best Recording for “Mi Persona Favorita.”

Rosalia, donning extra-long bedazzled nail extensions and a grill over her teeth, wowed with a medley performance that included her smash “Con Altura.” “It’s the last thing I expected,” the performer told the audience as she picked up her award for Best Album for “El mal querer,” her fifth award of the six categories she was nominated in. “I really try and work very hard to live up to this love and support.”

Colombian singer Juanes received the prestigious Person of the Year award, and performed a rollicking medley of some of his top hits. Metallica’s Lars Ulrich surprised the artist and the crowd by appearing to present Juanes with the award. The gala began with an homage to Latin music legends including Celia Cruz, Juan Gabriel, Joan Sebastian and Soda Stereo. — AFP



Mexican musician Victoria Kuhne



Singer Nella



Musician Bad Bunny



Juanes



Musician Alejandro Sanz

Lifestyle | Awards

Sunday, November 17, 2019



Ximena Sarina performs onstage.



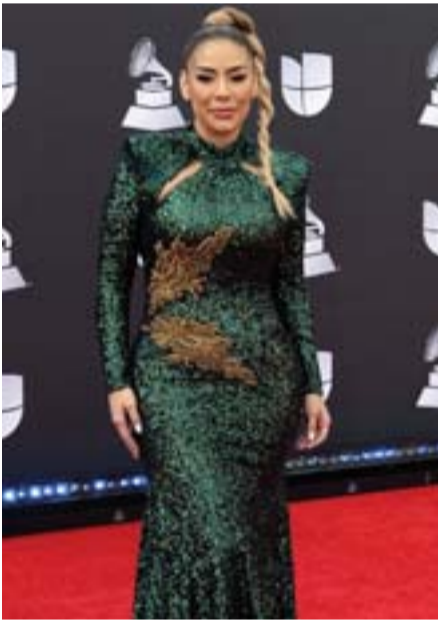
Ricky Martin performs onstage.



US musician Alicia Keys



Mexican singer Roselyn Sanchez



Evelyn Sicaïros



Thalia



Chilean singer Mon Laferte performs onstage.



Brazilian singer Anitta



Musician Chesca



Alicia Keys and Miguel perform onstage during the 20th annual Latin GRAMMY Awards at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP photos



Sebastian Yatra and Reik perform onstage.



Spaniard singer Natalia Jimenez



Canadian singer Alessia Cara



Luis Fonsi performs onstage.

# Oscar Wilde's stolen ring found by Dutch 'art detective'



Arthur Brand, also dubbed the 'Indiana Jones of the Art World', poses at his apartment in Amsterdam.

A golden ring once given as a present by the famed Irish writer Oscar Wilde has been recovered by a Dutch "art detective" nearly 20 years after it was stolen from Britain's Oxford University. The friendship ring, a joint gift from Wilde to a fellow student in 1876, was taken during a burglary in 2002 at Magdalen College, where the legendary dandy studied. At the time it was valued at £35,000.

The trinket's whereabouts remained a mystery for years and there were fears that the ring-shaped like a belt and buckle and made from 18-carat gold-had even been melted down. But Arthur Brand, a Dutchman dubbed the "Indiana Jones of the Art World" for recovering a series of high-profile stolen artworks, used his underworld connections to finally find it.

Mark Blandford-Baker, home bursar of Magdalen College, said they were "very pleased to have back a stolen item that forms part of a collection relating to one of our more famous alumni." "We had given up hope of seeing it again," he told AFP. The ring will be handed back "at a small ceremony" on December 4, said Blandford-Baker, adding "we are extremely grateful to Arthur Brand for finding it and returning it to us."

### Gift of love

The ring was an important part of Magdalen's large collection of memorabilia related to Wilde, who penned classics such as "The Picture of Dorian Gray" and "The Importance of Being Earnest". It was a present from Wilde and fellow student Reginald Harding to their friend William Ward in 1876 while the Irishman was a student at Magdalen, one of the three dozen colleges that make up Oxford University.

The ring bears the inscription in Greek that says "Gift of love, to one who wishes love." It also has the initials of: "OF OF WW + RRH to WW"

on the inside. Disaster struck in 2002 when a former college cleaner named Eamonn Andrews broke into Magdalen, got drunk on whisky from the college bar, then stole the ring and two unrelated medals. The college at the time offered a £3,500 reward for the ring's safe return-but after he was caught, the burglar told a court that he had sold the golden band to a scrap dealer for £150.

That might have been that, had Brand not



These pictures taken at the apartment of Arthur Brand in Amsterdam show a close-up of the 18-carat golden friendship ring with an engraving, which is said to have belonged to Irish playwright Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). — AFP photos



### Twist in the tale

The Dutchman then started to put out feelers. Together with a London-based antiques dealer named William Veres, their enquiries eventually led them to George Crump, a man whom Brand described as a "decent man with knowledge of the London criminal underworld because of his late uncle, a well-known casino owner." Through Crump, Brand and Veres finally managed to track

were it not for another heist, when a gang of elderly criminals raided a vault in London's jewelry district in 2015 in what was described as the "biggest burglary in English legal history."

"There are very strong indications that the appearance of the ring is linked to the 2015 burglary at Hatton Garden Safe Deposit. Rumors that the ring has reappeared first started a few weeks after the burglary," said Brand. "And I was given

the ring right in front of the Hatton Garden Safe Deposit... which I thought was a bit of English humor." — AFP

picked up the scent a few years back. "Rumors started in 2015 in the art underworld that a Victorian ring has surfaced 'with some Russian writing on it,'" Brand told an AFP correspondent, who saw the ring at an apartment in Amsterdam. "I knew that Oscar Wilde's ring was stolen from Magdalen College at Oxford and that it had a Greek inscription on it. It could have only been the same ring," he said.

down and negotiate the safe return of the stolen ring.

Brand has previously hit the headlines for returning stolen artworks including a Picasso painting stolen from yacht in France, and "Hitler's Horses", two bronze statues made by Nazi sculptor Joseph Thorak. And the story of his latest find may have a final twist worthy of one of Wilde's tales. Wilde's ring may have never been discovered

# Banderas opens his Malaga theatre with 'A Chorus Line'

Hollywood star Antonio Banderas throws open the doors of his own theatre in his hometown of Malaga in southern Spain on Friday, with an inaugural performance of "A Chorus Line". When the curtain goes up, the musical will be the first work shown at the Teatro del Soho, a former cinema which has been completely revamped by the 59-year-old actor, who like Picasso, was born and raised in Malaga.

The musical, which will be performed entirely in Spanish, was specially chosen by Banderas, who in May won best actor at the Cannes film festival for his role in Pedro Almodovar's "Pain and Glory" in which he played the celebrated director's alter ego. A Broadway hit dating back to 1975, the story focuses on a group of aspiring dancers as they audition for a role in a new musical, putting the focus on the unsung heroes working in the industry.

"There are no stars, the focus is on those people who really sustain the musical theatre industry but who don't have their name in lights and who are unknown," Banderas told reporters earlier this week. Describing the musical as "a classic", Banderas said it told a story about

"those involved in performing arts and all the suffering that goes on behind the scenes". On accepting his award at Cannes, Banderas admitted he himself had struggled over the years, saying: "There is a lot of sacrifice and... pain behind being an actor or being an actress, but also there are nights of glory."

### Central role

The Andalusian actor, who began acting in the early 1980s, will also take part in Friday's show, playing choreographer Zack who auditions the other artists in a performance involving 26 actors and accompanied by a 22-piece orchestra. The musical will play to a full house when it opens on Friday with every ticket sold in the newly-revamped theatre, which has more than 800 seats.

After two months in Malaga, the show will then head to the northern port city of Bilbao, then Barcelona and finally Madrid. "Afterwards we'll consider the possibility of taking it to America," said Banderas who dreams of seeing his Spanish version on Broadway. "I would love that to happen," he admitted, saying "conversations were already under way" about taking it across the pond.

His involvement in the Malaga theatre really took off after he survived a heart attack in 2017 that saw him endure three operations. Theatre is "really my passion", Banderas said at Cannes, explaining he was spending a lot of time with his 600 students in Malaga and saying he ultimately wanted to stage something based on "my own writing". For him, the Soho Theatre is a venture in which he is both emotionally and financially invested, pledging more than 200,000 euros (\$220,000) a year to the project which is sponsored by Spanish lender Caixabank.

And as director, Banderas has brought in Lluís Pasqual, a giant of Spanish and European theatre, who formerly served as artistic director at Spain's National Drama Centre, Barcelona's Lliure Theatre and the Odeon Theatre in Paris. For Banderas this also has significance, recalling it was Pascual who "changed my life" when he took him on at Madrid's National Theatre in 1981. And while in Madrid, he met Almodovar who gave him a small role in his 1982 screwball comedy "Labyrinth of Passion", starting a relationship which has lasted until today. — AFP



Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar



Nicole Kimpel



Spanish actresses Rosi de Palma, left, and Loles Leon



Spanish actress Paula Echevarria



Spanish actor Juan Diego Ruiz



Spanish actor and director Antonio Banderas poses during a photocall for the 'A Chorus Line' musical premiere, as part of the opening of the Teatro del Soho Caixabank in Malaga. — AFP photos

# Victoria Beckham knew fashion industry would dismiss her as a wannabe

Former pop-star Victoria Beckham knew she'd have to win over hard-to-impress fashion critics when she launched her first clothing line a decade ago, but the one-time Spice Girl said the industry was much harder to crack than she had ever imagined. Speaking in Paris on Friday at a conference organized by Vogue magazine, Beckham, whose collections have since gained critical acclaim and won fashion awards for their fluid, sharp tailoring, said she was expanding her empire with make-up and skincare ranges.

"I was very aware of the preconceptions, being married to David Beckham, being a Spice Girl, all of a sudden here's a collection, I knew that eyes would roll," she said, adding she'd focused on "making it all about the clothes and not listening to any of that." Beckham cited late Chanel creative chief Karl Lagerfeld and Italy's Valentino Garavani as two designers who had helped her, but said the notoriously cutthroat industry had surprised her. "If I'd known then what I know now, I don't know if I'd have the courage to do it," she joked.

According to the latest British company filings, Beckham's brand, which is privately owned by the designer, David Beckham and agent Simon Fuller, was still in the red in 2017. It raised 30 million pounds two years ago from NEO Investment Partners to revive the brand. Beckham said on Friday that as well as a recently launched make-up line, her brand would be turning out skincare products, as well as fragrances, possibly next year.

Cosmetics are an often highly profitable sideline

for luxury labels, and large rivals, from Kering and Gucci to Hermes, have expanded their ranges, which are accessible to a wider range of shoppers. Known as "Posh Spice" when she was in the 1990s girl band, Beckham, dressed on Friday in a green tweed suit, said she did not regret any of her previous fashion choices - including stage outfits such as the PVC cat-suits she once sported. — Reuters

# Classifieds

Sunday, November 17, 2019



STATE OF KUWAIT  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south westerly wind changing to south easterly wind, with speed of 10 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind to southerly wind, with speed of 10 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART
KUWAIT CITY	27 °C	19 °C	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28 °C	13 °C	
ABDALY	27 °C	12 °C	
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C	
JAHRA	27 °C	17 °C	
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C	
SALMIYAH	27 °C	21 °C	
AHMADI	27 °C	20 °C	
NUWAISIB	28 °C	17 °C	
WAFRA	27 °C	13 °C	
SALMY	25 °C	14 °C	

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	11/17	Unstable causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	24 °C	14 °C	SE	20 - 50 km/h
Monday	11/18	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	23 °C	13 °C	NE	15 - 38 km/h
Tuesday	11/19	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	24 °C	13 °C	NE-NW	15 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	11/20	Fair	23 °C	10 °C	NW	15 - 42 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:51
Sunrise	06:13
Zuhr	11:33
Asr	14:32
Sunset	16:53
Isha	18:13

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	30 °C
MIN. Temp.	14 °C
MAX. RH	65 %
MIN. RH	16 %
MAX. Wind	SW 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mathu** Thadathil Mathew, holder of Indian Passport Number J 0976591, do hereby change my name to (Given name: Mathu, Surname: Thadathil Mathew) as per my Adhar Number 3826 2249 3565 for all purpose. I also undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents.

I, **Melita** Mathu Mathew, holder of Indian Passport Number P 9484735, do hereby change my name to (Given name: Melita, Surname: Mathu Mathew) as per my Adhar Number 2190 5103 3734 for all purpose. I also undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents.

I, **Sherwin** Mathu Mathew, holder of Indian Passport

### REQUIRED

For a Company

**1- Car Body Technician**  
**2- Driver**  
**3- Auto Mechanic Technician**

Transferable Residence Article 18 Experience is a must

Tel: **9 6 0 0 0 0 1 4** and whatsapp

Number T 5334952, do hereby change my name to (Given name: Sherwin, Surname: Mathu Mathew) as per my Adhar Number 2472 9763 6887 for all purpose. I also undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents.  
**(C 5472) 13-11-2019**

## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 17/11/2019				Departure Flights on Sunday 17/11/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	JZR	215	Jeddah	00:05
FEG	241	Alexandria	00:30	QTR	1093	Doha	00:25
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
NIA	561	Asyut	00:45	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:45
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	AIC	990	Mumbai	01:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
KAC	102	London	00:55	FEG	342	Sohag	01:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:55	NIA	364	Alexandria	01:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	119	Dubai	01:55
ETH	3424	Addis Ababa/Bahrain	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:55
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	JZR	111	Doha	01:55
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:00
PGT	840	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	THY	773	Istanbul	02:20
JZR	002	LGW	01:55	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:30
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	KAC	417	Manila	02:30
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	PGT	841	Istanbul	02:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	ETH	3425	Addis Ababa	02:55
RBG	551	Alexandria	02:25	IGO	1765	Delhi	02:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	RBG	552	Alexandria	03:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	854	Dubai	03:40
OMA	643	Amman	02:55	KAC	621	Doha	03:50
RJA	648	Muscat	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	04:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	JZR	713	Sohag	04:30
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KKK	1269	Istanbul	04:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	707	Luxor	04:40
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	KAC	103	London	05:00
JZR	406	Kochi	04:45	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:30
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	JZR	113	Doha	06:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	LGW	001D	Amman	06:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	RJA	649	Dubai	06:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
QTR	8511	Doha	05:45	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	216	Jeddah	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55	QTR	8512	Doha	07:45
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	IGO	1767	Frankfurt	08:00
KAC	344	Chennai	06:10	KAC	165	Mumbai	08:10
JZR	120	Dubai	06:50	KAC	161	Rome	08:15
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	FDB	054	Geneva	08:20
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	KAC	545	Cairo	08:35
BAW	157	London	07:10	BAW	156	London	08:50
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:00
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	KAC	163	MXP	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	539	KTM	09:00
KAC	622	Doha	08:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	671	Dubai	09:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	101	Doha	09:40
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	KAC	561	London	09:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	561	Amman	09:45
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	117	New York	10:00
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	791	Madinah	10:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	KAC	613	Bahrain	10:05
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	JZR	301	Istanbul	10:05
JZR	114	Doha	10:20	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:20
JZR	714	Sohag	10:50	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:35
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	JZR	211	Jeddah	10:40
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JZR	611	Tbilisi	10:45
GFA	209	Bahrain	12:05	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
MSR	610	Cairo	12:25	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	741	Dammam	11:05
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50				
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15				

# Gunmen attack buses with Muslim Sri Lankan voters

**COLOMBO:** Gunmen fired at buses carrying minority Muslim voters yesterday as Sri Lankans elected a new president, with the powerful Rajapaksa clan eyeing a comeback seven months after Islamist extremists staged deadly bombings. Minority Tamils and Muslims are seen as crucial in the close election, and the attack in the north-west of the island - in which no one was injured - was likely aimed at deterring people from heading to the polls.

Election chief Mahinda Deshapriya said the shooting may not have prevented voting as just over 80 percent of the 15.99 million electorate was estimated to have turned out Saturday, compared to 81.5 percent at the previous presidential poll in 2015. "Comparatively this is the most peaceful presidential election we have had in this country," Deshapriya told reporters at the end of a 10-hour voting period.

Assailants set fire to tyres on the road and set up makeshift roadblocks before shooting at and pelting with stones two buses in a convoy of more than 100, police said. After casting ballots, the voters were given

an armed escort back home. In the Tamil-dominated northern peninsula of Jaffna, meanwhile, police said they arrested 10 men they suspected of "trying to create trouble", while also complaining that the army had illegally set up roadblocks that could stop people getting to polling stations.

Such tactics are nothing new in Sri Lanka, which emerged from a horrific civil war only a decade ago. At the 2015 election, there was a series of explosions in the north. Supporters from rival parties meanwhile clashed in a tea plantation area 90 km east of the capital Colombo, with two people taken to hospital with cut injuries, the election commission said.

**Terminator vs Padman**

Some 85,000 police were on duty for the election with a record 35 candidates running for president, an office with considerable power similar to the French political system. Results could come as early as midday (0630 GMT) today if there is a clear winner. One of the

two frontrunners is grey-haired retired army lieutenant colonel Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 70, younger brother to the charismatic but controversial Mahinda Rajapaksa, president from 2005-15.

Dubbed the "Terminator" by his own family, "Gota" is promising an infrastructure blitz and better security in the wake of the Islamist attacks in April that killed 269 people. "Gotabaya will protect our country," construction worker Wasantha Samarajjeev, 51, said as he cast his ballot in Colombo.

His main rival is Sajith Premadasa, 52, from the governing liberal United National Party (UNP), son of assassinated ex-president Ranasinghe Premadasa. He is also pushing development and security as well as free sanitary pads for poor women, earning him the nickname "Padman" after a famous Bollywood movie.

The Rajapaksas are adored by Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority for defeating Tamil Tiger separatists and ending a 37-year civil war in 2009. They are detested and feared by many Tamils, who make up 15 percent of the

population. The conflict ended with some 40,000 Tamil civilians allegedly killed by the army.

During Mahinda Rajapaksa's presidency, Gotabaya was defense secretary and effectively ran the security forces, even allegedly overseeing "death squads" that bumped off political rivals, journalists and others. He denies the allegations. What also concerns Western countries, as well as India, is that strategically located Sri Lanka moved closer to China under Mahinda Rajapaksa, even allowing two Chinese submarines to dock in Colombo in 2014.

Under its Belt and Road Initiative spanning Asia and beyond, China loaned and granted Sri Lanka billions of dollars for infrastructure projects, many of which turned into white elephants and mired in corruption allegations. Mahinda says credit was unavailable elsewhere. Western capitals "should give a fair chance to us", Basil Rajapaksa, another brother, told reporters. "They can't be monitors of this country. They must be partners." — AFP

## Lebanon protesters angered by PM pick

**BEIRUT:** Lebanese protesters demanding radical reform have reacted with anger to the reported designation of a new prime minister they regard as emblematic of a failed political system. According to senior officials speaking on condition of anonymity and Lebanese press reports, key political players agreed that Mohammed Safadi should be tasked with forming the next government. Outgoing Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned on Oct 29 - nearly two weeks into the unprecedented nationwide protests demanding the removal of a ruling elite seen as corrupt and incompetent.

President Michel Aoun has said he will support the formation of a government including technocrats but has not yet announced consultations over a new line-up, and there was no official confirmation that Safadi had been designated. Demonstrators in his hometown of Tripoli wasted no time in rejecting Safadi, however, and gathered on Friday in front of one of his properties to protest against a reported nomination they regard as a provocation.

"Choosing Mohammed Safadi for prime minister proves that the politicians who rule us are in a deep coma, as if they were on another planet," said Jamal Badawi, 60. Another protester said that as a business tycoon and former minister, Safadi epitomised the political class that the protest movement wants to remove. "He's an integral part of this leadership's fabric," said Samer Anous, a university professor. "Safadi does not meet the aspirations of the popular uprising in Lebanon."

Demonstrators also rallied Friday night outside Safadi's home in Beirut. "Mohammed Safadi is corrupt and we are here to say that the revolutionaries are cate-

gorically opposed to see him at the head of the government," said protester Ali Nouredin.

### Bank strikes

A protest was also planned at Zaytuna Bay, a luxury marina in central Beirut run by a company that Safadi chairs and that many say encroaches on public land. Several dozen private hospitals across the country closed their doors to patients - except for emergencies - to protest shortages of essential goods following delays in payments by the state. Last week, the head of the syndicate of private hospitals, Suleiman Haroun, said that medical "stocks in the country will not last more than a month". A lack of access to the US currency meant the situation could deteriorate fast, he warned.

Banks, which have restricted access to dollars since the start of the protests, remained closed after employees went on strike over alleged mistreatment by customers, while many school and university classes were disrupted again. For two decades the Lebanese pound has been pegged to the greenback at around 1,500 to the dollar, with both currencies used interchangeably in daily life.

On Friday, S&P Global Ratings downgraded Lebanon's sovereign debt, lowering its credit ratings to "CCC/C" from "B-/B" with a negative outlook. It said the twin political and economic crisis had hit investor confidence and constrained the government's funding model, which relies on deposit inflows. The move came after Moody's rating agency also downgraded Lebanon's sovereign debt earlier this month.

The army, meanwhile, said it had arrested 20 demonstrators on Friday after soldiers were targeted as they attempted to reopen roads closed by protesters. Nine were later released, seven were held for questioning and four were transferred to the custody of military police, the army said without giving further details. — AFP



BEIRUT: A Lebanese anti-government protester waves the national flag as she prepares to head to the south of Lebanon on a 'revolution' bus from central Beirut yesterday. — AFP

## Venice braced for more floods...

Continued from Page 1

immediate government aid, while restaurant and shop owners can receive up to €20,000 and apply for more later. Mayor Brugnaro on Friday also announced the opening of a fund where people in Italy and around the world could contribute to the historic city's repair.

One tourist, Italian Nicole Righetti, said she would be willing to pitch in. "It would be a shame to no longer be able to see these places, and I think everyone should give," Righetti said. Most of the city's cash machines were no longer working because of the water, making life even more difficult for tourists and Venetians.

Despite being used to the inconvenience of their city's rising waters, some inhabitants expressed frustration. "All

the stock in the basement is lost," lamented Luciano, a worker at a shop along St Mark's Square. He said he remembered well the infamous "acqua alta" of 1966, when the water rose to a level of 1.94 m, the highest since records began in 1923. "These so frequent high waters have never happened before... this time there's so much more damage than in the past," he said.

Hotels reported cancelled reservations, some as far ahead as December, following the widespread diffusion of images of Venice underwater. Tuesday's high waters submerged around 80 percent of the city, officials said. Many, including Venice's mayor, have blamed the disaster on global warming and warned that the country prone to natural disasters must wake up to the risks posed by ever more volatile seasons.

The Serenissima, as the floating city is called, is home to 50,000 residents but receives 36 million visitors each year. A massive infrastructure project called MOSE has been under way since 2003 to protect the city, but it has been plagued by cost overruns, corruption scandals and delays. — AFP

The scheme comes at a sensitive time as Iran prepares for a February parliamentary election. The head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organisation, Mohammad Bagher Nobakht, said the price hike was agreed by the High Council of Economic Coordination made up of the president, parliament speaker and judiciary chief, implying it had across-the-board approval. The council met again yesterday and, according to the government's official website, urged the "cooperation of all branches to successfully implement the plan".

Lawmakers were unhappy to have been circumvented, with Tehran MP Parvaneh Salahshouri tweeting that parliament had "lost its authority". In 2015, during his first term, Rouhani had voiced opposition to a dual-price petrol regime adopted by his predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, saying "it caused corruption and that is why we made a unified rate". His administration also scrapped Ahmadinejad's fuel card scheme, only to revive it this year while still denying it was a precursor to rationing and price hikes. — AFP

inspired everyone to get involved with gardening; she taught us how growing our own produce is great for our family's dietary health, as well as improving the air quality in our homes, and being a small step toward sustainability that we can take for the environment."

Self-taught gardener and mastermind behind the Plant'n'More website and Instagram page @itallgrows, Babbain added: "It's an honor to have been involved in this historic event and to pass on my love for gardening and organic produce to so many participants. Thank you to HGTV, beIN and Shaheed Park for this opportunity."

HGTV - an acronym for Home and Garden Entertainment and part of Discovery Network's real-life entertainment portfolio - is the Middle East's leading home and garden channel. Available to viewers on beIN channel 357, HGTV's line-up includes globally-popular home improvement and transformation shows such as 'Property Brothers', 'House Hunters' and 'Flip or Flop'.

## Trump 'intimidating' to ex-envoy as new...

Continued from Page 1

investigators, reportedly outlining how he overheard a phone call on which Trump asked about "investigations" he had requested from Ukraine into domestic political rivals. Trump's Twitter outburst highlighted the intensity of the public hearings that seek to establish whether the president abused the power of his office for personal political gain.

The impeachment hearings kicked off Wednesday with testimony by two senior diplomats including the current top envoy to Ukraine, William Taylor. Friday's testimony proved richer in drama, with the president leveling attacks from afar as Yovanovitch explained to lawmakers how "dangerous" it was for US diplomats not to have the backing of their own administration.

House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff, who presides over the impeachment inquiry, hit out at "witness intimidation in real-time by the president". Witness tampering including intimidation is a crime, but Schiff would not say whether it was an impeachable offense, or if Democrats would make it the subject of an article of impeachment. Trump defended his tweet, telling reporters: "I have the right to speak. I have freedom of speech just like other people do."

The ongoing inquiry in the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives centers on accusations that Trump froze US military aid in an effort to get Ukraine to launch political investigations against potential 2020 election rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter. The investigation threatens to make Trump the third US president to be impeached, although the Republican-controlled Senate would need to convict him to remove him from office.

Prior to her May ouster, Yovanovitch claims she was targeted by a smear campaign orchestrated in part by Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, who is accused of helping to coordinate the president's effort

to pressure Kiev. Yovanovitch told lawmakers her inexplicable removal plunged America's Ukraine policy into "disarray" and damaged Washington's global standing.

And when she read the memorandum of Trump's July 25 call with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky - in which the US leader called her "bad news" and said she was "going to go through some things" - she said "it sounded like a threat". Yovanovitch was "shocked" and "devastated" to learn how Trump had personally disparaged her, she added.

But above all Yovanovitch expressed alarm that envoys could be so easily "kneecapped" by false accusations and corrupt foreign influences. "Our Ukraine policy has been thrown into disarray, and shady interests the world over have learned how little it takes to remove an American ambassador who does not give them what they want," she said. Yovanovitch leveled criticism at State Department leadership, and by extension Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, for failing to push back against forces that "apparently hijacked our Ukraine policy", or to support her in the face of "dangerously wrong" attacks against her.

Pushing back, Republicans grilled Yovanovitch on Hunter Biden's association with Ukrainian energy company Burisma while his father was vice president - leading her to acknowledge it "could raise the appearance of a conflict of interest". No evidence of Biden wrongdoing related to Ukraine has emerged. Yovanovitch's testimony came amid more bad news for Trump. His longtime aide Roger Stone was convicted Friday for lying to Congress and witness tampering related to the probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Taylor's aide David Holmes meanwhile testified in closed session that he overheard a previously unreported call between Trump and US Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, in which Trump asked about the status of the "investigations". That July 26 call was just one day after the Trump-Zelensky conversation in which Trump asked his counterpart to investigate the Bidens. Sondland told Trump that Zelensky "loves you're a\*\*" and "will do 'anything you ask him to,'" according to a copy of Holmes's opening statement obtained by CNN. — AFP

accused the defense minister of deliberately failing to reveal the full facts to the Kuwaiti people and choosing this time to raise the issue and refer it to the public prosecution after the resignation of the Cabinet, "which indicates political ambitions".

The clash of the two ministers in public is almost unprecedented in Kuwait's history and especially between two members of the ruling family, indicating the extent of the political crisis that the country is facing.

Islamist MP Mohammad Hayef called yesterday for dissolving the National Assembly and holding snap polls because the country could be facing another graft scandal, bigger than that of 2011, and "this requires a new National Assembly". HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday had accepted the resignation of the Cabinet and asked the premier to continue as a caretaker PM until the new Cabinet is formed.

## Green thumbs set record for 'largest...

Continued from Page 1

achievements, attended the event to verify the attempt and presented a Guinness World Records certificate to HGTV, beIN and Babbain. "It's been a pleasure to see the community come together to achieve this record title. I can confirm a new world record has indeed been set today, and that Kuwait is Officially Amazing," Gabr said.

Commenting on the successful record attempt, Nahla El-Mallawany, Head of Content at Discovery at HGTV, said: "We are delighted that HGTV has broken a Guinness World Records title today at Shaheed Park. Alzainah really

# Vettel tops times as Ferrari bounce back with one-two

## Verstappen third ahead of Valtteri Bottas

**SAO PAULO:** Sebastian Vettel topped the times despite a “scruffy” lap on Friday as Ferrari delivered a resounding one-two to prove they are back on form in second free practice for this weekend’s Brazilian Grand Prix. The four-time champion clocked a best lap in one minute and 9.217 seconds to outpace Charles Leclerc by 0.021 seconds in a close finish to a session that, like the first, ended with a red flag and two cars off the track.

Red Bull’s Max Verstappen was third ahead of Valtteri Bottas in the leading Mercedes, six-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes and Kevin Magnussen for Haas. “It was not a very tidy lap,” said Vettel, who felt satisfied at his efforts, before turning his attention to the way in which Ferrari had been linked to unconfirmed allegations of “cheating” in the aftermath of the United States Grand Prix.

“I just said earlier that opinions swing so quickly nowadays,” he explained. “In one race, in one and a half hours, it can be so different - and in one race can change again. I just think we can provide all our answers on the track.” Verstappen said he also felt he had a “bit of a messy day because of the changing weather”.

He added: “I think the lap times are not really representative as the track and ambient temperatures are pretty different to what it looks like for today. “It’s positive that the car was straight away working well, there are of course always things you can improve, but it was a good start and we have a good basis for tomorrow.”

His Red Bull team-mate Alex Albon, who was resigned by the team for 2020 this week, was fastest and then crashed in the rain in the opening session, before winding up ninth behind Renault’s Daniel

Ricciardo and Kimi Raikkonen of Alfa Romeo. Both Mercedes men were satisfied with their limited running in the conditions.

“I am feeling cool about it,” said Hamilton. “We did a lot of work and it was all nice and smooth. We have some more to do and we have to compact it, but I am not sure we can find three-tenths to catch Ferrari. They are just quicker on the straights.”

After overnight rainstorms and a wet morning, the second session began in dry conditions with the teams keen to gain some track action as soon as the lights went green. Bottas was soon fastest in 1:10.812, a full six seconds quicker than Albon’s best lap in the morning.

After six minutes, the session was red-flagged when Robert Kubica, in his penultimate race weekend for Williams, went off at Turn Three, smashing the front and left rear of his car in the barriers. The action was halted for six minutes and re-started.

Verstappen went top after 15 minutes before Hamilton took over followed by Leclerc and then Vettel, the Ferrari men making the most of his power on the straights a the Italian team responded to their disappointing weekend in Texas two weeks earlier.

After 45 minutes, a flowing and fast lap from Hamilton was upset when he came upon his team-mate Bottas idling on the racing line. “Valtteri was just sitting there,” said Hamilton on team radio, as the Finn did much the same to Vettel seconds later.

As the temperature threatened to fall at the Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace, there were more quick times as Ferrari and Mercedes set the pace, pursued closely by Verstappen’s Red Bull in the top five.

With 20 minutes remaining, Pierre Gasly pulled up when his Toro Rosso’s Honda engine failed and a brief



SAO PAULO: Ferrari's German driver, Sebastian Vettel at the Interlagos racetrack in Sao Paulo, Brazil, ahead of the upcoming Formula One Brazilian Grand Prix today. —AFP

Virtual Safety Car period was deployed.

That stoppage completed, there were only five minutes remaining when the session ended, like the early opening period, with another red flag when Gasly’s team-mate Daniil Kvyat smacked the barriers

at Turn 12, the rear of his Honda-powered car burst- ing into flames.

This brought the session to an end with no further action on track as rescue vehicles cleared away the two Toro Rosso machines. —AFP

## Heroes’ welcome to Kuwait shooters

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait shooters got a heroes’ welcome after the delegation arrival from the 14th Asian Championship that was held in Qatar. They qualified for the Tokyo Olympics and collected nine medals.

Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Humoud Fulaiteh Al-Shimmari, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Secretary General of Asian Shooting Confederation Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi and Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi along with other officials were on hand upon the arrival of shooters at Kuwait International Airport.

Kuwait shooter Talal Al-Rasheedi won the gold medal of the trap competi- tion, and with it he qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The trap team of Talal Al-Rasheedi, Khalid Al-Mudhaf and Nasser Al-Miqid also won the team trap gold medal. Shooters Sarah Al-Hawal and Abdelrahman Al-Faihan won the mix trap gold medal.



KUWAIT: Group photo of shooters and officials.

Meanwhile Khalid Al-Mudhaf won the trap’s silver while teammate Nasser Al-Miqid won the bronze of the same event. The team of Abdallah Al-Rasheedi, Mohammad Al-Daihani and Al-Alban won the silver medal of the team skeet event.

The team of Ahmad Al-Afasi, Jarrah Al-Shuwaier and Saad Al-Mutairi won the team’s double trap.

On his part shooter Saud Habeeb won the skeet bronze medal and qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics giving Kuwait its fourth seat.

The juniors trap team of Bader Al-Adwani, Salah Al-Rasheedi and Yousuf Al-Rasheedi won the bronze medal, while the juniors bronze medal was won by the team of Hamad Al-Ablani, Salem Al-Rasheedi and Saud Al-Hamly.

PAS Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh said the Kuwait Shooting Sport Club, as always, makes Kuwait proud in international arenas, and thanked chair- man of the board, board members and shooters who qualified for four seats in the upcoming Olympic games, as they promised.

He said this shows that the sport of shooting is on the right track, and we expect to win Olympic medals in Tokyo in the name of Kuwait.

Dr Fulaiteh thanked KSSC for its efforts and hoped that clubs and federa- tions to follow example.

Chairman of the Board of KSSC Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said the board is happy to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics with four players and congratulated shooters Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, Talal Al-Torqi, Saud Habeeb and Mansour Al-Torqi for their achievement, adding “we are happy with the results of men and women in addition to the good results the juniors made, and described it as promising.

Eng Al-Otaibi thanked PAS and its Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh who was keen on being on hand with the shooters.

Al-Otaibi said “on behalf of the shooting community, we dedicate this achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-



Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi said that as we receive our shooting heroes who won nine medals and two additional qualifications to Tokyo Olympics, we find, with great regret, people who conspire against Kuwait shooting sport in order to fail the successes and

achievements. He said details of those conspiracies were sent in writing to the board of directors of Public Authority for Sports. He said that “we at the Kuwait Shooting Federation have confi- dence in the PAS board of directors to foil the conspiracies.

He said we keep our full rights to take the necessary measures to maintain achievements of Kuwait shooting.

## Samarin wins Russian figure skating Grand Prix

**MOSCOW:** Russian Alexander Samarin led a clean sweep of the podium for the home nation at the figure skating Grand Prix event in Moscow on Saturday, as Olympic silver medallist Shoma Uno could only finish fourth.

Samarin produced a spectacular free skate to win with a total of 264.45 points, having also posted the highest score in Friday’s short programme. The 21-year-old, who took the European championships silver medal in Minsk earlier this year, saw off compatriot Dmitri Aliev by 4.57 points.

Aliev’s strong free skate to Simon and Garfunkel’s “The Sound of Silence” earned 169.24 points, enough to secure second place ahead of Makar Ignatov. Japanese star Uno’s difficult season con- tinued as he ended 12.21 points behind Samarin overall.

The 21-year-old, who took 2018 Olympic silver behind Yuzuru Hanyu, was looking to bounce back after falling sever- al times and posting his lowest-ever finish of eighth in Grenoble earlier this month.

But he could only muster 164.95 points on Saturday and failed to climb onto the podium after his disappointing short programme. Later, two-time world champion Evgenia Medvedeva will look to hold off rising star Alexandra Trusova in the women’s event after taking a 2.72- point lead over her fellow Russian on Friday. —AFP



## Jones admits error but wants to turn England into rugby ‘powerhouse’

**LONDON:** England coach Eddie Jones wants his team to become the “powerhouse of world rugby” but has admitted he made a mistake in his selec- tion for the World Cup final. The 59-year-old Australian, who has committed to seeing out his contract which runs until 2021, is not renowned for owning up to errors.

But he says part of the blame for the 32-12 defeat by South Africa in the final lay with his decision to start with George Ford and Mako Vunipola ahead of Henry Slade and Joe Marler. “I had been right against Australia and New Zealand but, as it turned out, in the biggest game of our four-year cycle, I got it badly wrong,” writes Jones in his soon-to-be-published autobiography ‘My Life and Rugby’ which is being serialised in The Times.

“Hindsight is a wonderful teacher.” Jones has turned England’s fortunes round after taking over following their humiliating pool-stage exit in the 2015 World Cup. A crushing victory over two- time defending champions New Zealand in the semi-finals last month has given Jones plenty of enthusiasm to continue, but he has stopped short of committing to taking the team to the 2023 World Cup.

“I am definitely staying as England’s coach for another two years,” says Jones. “My contract runs until 2021. I’m excited by what our young team can achieve. “The potential is massive. Not only are they great rugby players but they are better people with outstanding character.

“I believe I can keep making a difference with them over the next two years. We want to become the powerhouse of world rugby. “After that? We’ll see. It’s too early to know and, right now, I am happy to just hit the pause button.”

Jones, who says the win over the All Blacks is one of four matches in his long career that stand out for him, including Japan’s epic victory over the Springboks in the 2015 World Cup, accepts his days as a national coach are drawing in.

“I know the clock is ticking on my time at the top of international coaching,” he said. “But I feel privileged to coach England and, for however long that lasts, I will give my best effort every day.

“We’ve taken a side that couldn’t get out of the group stage in a home World Cup to being the second-best team in the world. “There was one team ahead of us, and 18 behind us.” In spite of England’s failure in the final, Jones — who con- cedes the Springboks were “outstanding” — remains fiercely proud of what they achieved.

“In the final minutes my mind starts to wander,” he writes. “My first thoughts are for the players. They will be distraught. “They have been brilliant, coming together as a powerful, united England team which has done everything asked of it and more.”

Jones believes the squad have given the coun- try a welcome distraction from the divisions creat- ed over Brexit. “They have played with flair and tenacity and, during a difficult and uncertain time at home, they have given people something to smile about,” he says.

“The subsequent news that the final was watched by the biggest television audience in the UK this year (over 12.5 million), and that supplies of replica jerseys had sold out, proved the boys had made a lasting impact.” —AFP

# Shami stars in India’s crushing Test win over Bangladesh

## India’s opening batsman Agarwal played a key part in the win with 243

**INDORE:** Mohammed Shami took four wickets as India crushed Bangladesh by an innings and 130 runs inside three days of the opening Test yesterday.

SCOREBOARD	
<b>INDORE:</b> Final scoreboard on day three of the opening Test between India and Bangladesh in Indore yesterday:	
<b>Bangladesh 1st innings</b> 150 (Mushfiquer Rahim 43; M. Shami 3-27)	
<b>India 1st innings</b> (overnight 493-6 dec, M. Agarwal 243, A. Rahane 86, A. Jayed 4-108)	
<b>Bangladesh 2nd innings</b>	
Shadman Islam b I. Sharma	6
Imrul Kayes b Yadav	6
Mominul Hauque lbw Shami	7
Mohammad Mithun c Agarwal b Shami	18
Mushfiquer Rahim c Pujara b Ashwin	64
Mahmudullah c R. Sharma b Shami	15
Liton Das c & b Ashwin	35
Mehidy Hasan b Yadav	38
Taijul Islam c Saha b Shami	6
Abu Jayed not out	4
Ebadat Hossain c Yadav b Ashwin	1
Extras (b2, lb9, nb1, w1)	13
Total (all out, 69.2 overs)	213
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Imrul), 2-16 (Shadman), 3-37 (Mominul), 4-44 (Mithun), 5-72 (Mahmudullah), 6-135 (Liton), 7-194 (Mehidy), 8-208 (Taijul), 9-208 (Mushfiquer), 10-213 (Ebadat)	
Bowling: I. Sharma 11-3-31-1, Yadav 14-1-51-2 (w1), Shami 16-7-31-4 (nb1), Jadeja 14-2-47-0, Ashwin 14-2-6-42-3	
<b>Result:</b> India won by an innings and 130 runs	
<b>Series:</b> India lead the two-match series 1-0	

Bangladesh were bowled out for 213 in the final session in Indore after their gamble to bat first after winning the toss backfired badly against the Indian pace attack.

Shami's fellow fast bowlers Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma shared three wickets between them after India declared their first innings on 493 for six, with a lead of 343 runs. "The captain gave me the freedom to bowl the way I wanted and it went well," Shami said after the game. "Having Umesh and Ishant alongside me is a plus."

Bangladesh batsman Mushfiquer Rahim offered some resistance, hitting 64 after Rohit Sharma dropped him on four off Shami. Mushfiquer, who scored 43 in Bangladesh's 150 in the first innings, finally became one of three wickets taken by off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

Ashwin, who reached 250 wickets in home Tests in the first innings, got last man Ebadat Hossain for one to spark India's victory celebrations. India were dominant with the bat and ball against Bangladesh.

Opening batsman Mayank Agarwal played a key part in the win with his 243 — his second double century in four Tests — as India amassed 407 runs on the second day. The bowlers kept up the pressure when Bangladesh started their second innings.

Yadav drew first blood, taking Imrul Kayes for six on a ball that curved into the left-hander and rattled the leg stump. Ishant Sharma got Shadman Islam for six in the next over. Shami then trapped skipper Mominul Haque lbw for seven.

Mominul was given not out by the on-field umpire but India skipper Virat Kohli successfully reviewed the decision with replays showing the ball would have hit leg stump. Shami, who also took three wickets in the first innings, took Mohammad Mithun for 18.



**INDORE:** India's Mayank Agarwal (L) celebrates after scoring a double-century (200 runs) as teammate Ravindra Jadeja looks on during the second day of the first Test cricket match of a two-match series between India and Bangladesh at Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore. —AFP

Bangladesh skipper Mominul said the batting of Mushfiquer and bowling of Abu Jayed had been the only "positives" in the disappointing defeat. Abu Jayed stood out with his four wickets in the Indian

innings but got little support from his teammates.

The second and final match is a day-night clash, with India hosting its first-ever pink-ball Test at Kolkata's Eden Gardens from November 22. —AFP

## Browns prepare for playoff push without suspended Garrett

**NEW YORK:** The NFL's suspension of Cleveland Browns defensive end Myles Garrett on Friday dealt a severe blow to the team's playoff hopes but they are determined not to let the incident define their season. Cleveland kept their hopes alive with a win over the Pittsburgh Steelers on Thursday but lost Garrett, one of the game's top defenders, for at least the rest of the 2019 season after he used a helmet to attack another player.

Browns head coach Freddie Kitchens, who is trying to steer the team to their first playoff berth since 2002, said losing a player of Garrett's caliber makes things tougher but that he feels his players are ready for the challenge.

"There has been adversity hit it seems like all year so these guys have answered the call of adversity, and I expect them to do the same moving forward," Kitchens said on a conference call. "There will not be any excuses. We will have 11 out on the field, and those 11 will be expected to do their job."

With their victory over the visiting Steelers, the Browns improved to 4-6 on the season and remain very much alive in the playoff picture, but will have to keep their focus on the task at hand. "Sometimes in the biggest storm, that is when people come together the closest," Browns guard Joel Bitonio said on the conference call.

"We have a decision to make as a team. It is not one day everybody is saying, 'Yeah, we are in it together,' but it is your actions through the week of practice, through games that we have to make that collective choice."

Garrett, a former first overall draft pick who on Friday apologized for his actions, is tied for fourth in the NFL with 10 sacks through 10 games this season and could have been Defensive Player of the Year candidate if not for the ban. —Reuters

## Kiwi Lee fires sizzling 62 to seize one-stroke PGA Mexico lead

**MEXICO CITY:** New Zealand's Danny Lee, seeking his first US PGA Tour title in more than four years, fired a nine-under-par 62 Friday to grab the first-round lead at the Mayakoba Classic. The 29-year-old South Korean-born player made eight birdies and an eagle against a lone bogey in jumping to the top of the leaderboard at Playa del Carmen, Mexico, after play was entirely rained out on Thursday.

Americans Brendon Todd and Adam Long shared second on 63 with a US pack of Vaughn Taylor, Mark Hubbard, Zach Johnson and Chris Baker on 64 and Americans Billy Horschel and Harris English on 65.

Lee opened with a birdie, made another at the par-3 fourth and then eagled the par-5 fifth hole before running off a streak of three birdies in a row from the sixth through eighth holes. Lee ran off another three in a row from the 11th to par-5 13th holes before a three-putt bogey at 14 and four closing pars.

"For some reason, starting from three, my game felt really really good," Lee said, noting how he has changed his swing to add driving distance. "The new swing is working into my body now. I'm feeling better with all my clubs and wedges. It has been showing me a lot of good results." —AFP

## Habs use 4-goal period to top Caps

**WASHINGTON:** Tomas Tatar had a goal with three assists, and Phillip Danault recorded one goal and two helpers as the visiting Montreal Canadiens used a four-goal second period to beat the Washington Capitals 5-2 Friday. The Canadiens won their third straight while ending the Capitals' 13-game point streak. Shea Weber, Jordan Weal and Nick Suzuki also scored for the Canadiens, who have earned at least one point in five consecutive games (4-0-1) and are 7-1-1 in their last nine. Carey Price made 26 saves for Montreal. Alex Ovechkin scored his 14th on the power play and Evgeny Kuznetsov also delivered in the third period for Washington, but by that time it proved too late. The Capitals, who entered Friday an NHL-leading 32 points, were amid an 11-0-2 stretch before falling Friday.

### BRUINS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 2

Brad Marchand scored two goals in the third period to help Boston win at Toronto. Charlie Coyle added a goal and an assist, and Zdeno Chara scored a goal for the Bruins, who ended a four-game losing streak. Auston Matthews and Kasperii Kapanen scored for the Maple Leafs, who have lost four in a row. Boston's Tuukka Rask made 29 saves, and Toronto's Frederik Andersen stopped 30 shots. Marchand gave the Bruins a 2-1 lead with a wrist shot only 11 seconds into the third period after going around a defenseman. Kapanen tied the game less than four minutes later, but Marchand put Boston on top again at 5:08 when he scored on a wrist shot off his own rebound. Chara's empty-netter ended the scoring.

### DEVILS 2, PENGUINS 1

MacKenzie Blackwood made a season-high 38 saves and New Jersey held on to top Pittsburgh in Newark, N.J., for its fourth win in seven games. The Devils avoided losing for the fifth time when holding a lead through two periods. They held on two nights after allowing three goals in the final 6 1/2 minutes against Ottawa. Travis Zajac and Blake Coleman scored in the opening two periods for the Devils, who are 4-0-4 in



**WASHINGTON:** Phillip Danault #24 of the Montreal Canadiens skates past Chandler Stephenson #18 of the Washington Capitals during the third period at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC. —AFP

one-goal games this season. Defenseman Jack Johnson scored in the third period for Pittsburgh, which has trailed by at least two goals in five straight games. The Penguins lost their first game since announcing Sidney Crosby would be out at least six weeks with a core muscle injury.

### BLUE JACKETS 3, BLUES 2

Zach Werenski scored an overtime power-play goal to lead Columbus past visiting St. Louis. The Blue Jackets, who also got goals from Vladislav Gavrikov and Pierre-Luc Dubois, won for just the second time in nine games (2-5-2). Joonas Korpisalo made 25 saves for the victory. The Blues, who got goals from Mackenzie

of making the country a superpower in the sport.

The former Juventus and Italy boss, who was broadly popular in China, reportedly earned 180 million yuan (\$25 million) per year, making him one of the best-paid coaches in the world.

He first quit the post in January after taking China to the Asian Cup quarter-finals, where they lost 3-0 to Iran, and his compatriot Fabio Cannavaro took over. But Cannavaro lasted only two matches — both 1-0 defeats — before saying that balancing the job with managing Chinese Super League side Guangzhou Evergrande was too much. That saw Lippi return in May with the aim of taking China to the World Cup.

China languish 69th in the FIFA world rankings and have reached the World Cup only once, in 2002, when they left without a point or scoring a goal. Lippi, who began his first spell as China coach in October 2016, was accused earlier this month by local media of delivering "a slap in the face" to Chinese football, amid grumblings that he was not doing enough to justify his hefty salary.

It came after the CFA announced that former Everton midfielder Li Tie would temporarily take charge of the national side at the East Asian championships next month in South Korea, with Lippi opting to remain home in Italy.

The 42-year-old Li, who is coach of CSL side Wuhan Zall, will now be in pole position to succeed Lippi. China have begun naturalising foreign players, such as the Brazilian forward Elkeson, but their squad remains limited.

That lack of quality was the "core" problem, said Xinhua in a commentary, refusing to blame Lippi, who lifted the 2006 World Cup with Cannavaro as his skipper.

"How many times have we blamed the loss on the head coach, the national team management etc.," said Xinhua. "But when we invited a World Cup winner... the result was still disappointing." —AFP

MacEachern and Brayden Schenn, extended their points streak to nine games (7-0-2). They have lost just three times in regulation during the first 20 games of the season.

### SENATORS 2, FLYERS 1

Tyler Ennis and Filip Chlapik scored second-period goals to lift host Ottawa past Philadelphia. Goaltender Anders Nilsson made 26 saves, and the Senators won for the second straight game and the fourth time in five contests. Tyler Pitlick scored the lone goal for the Flyers, who had their seven-game points streak snapped (5-0-2). It was their first regulation loss since an Oct. 29 setback at Pittsburgh. —Reuters

## Liverpool Gomez’s difficult week ends on low note

**LONDON:** Liverpool full-back Joe Gomez's roller-coaster week, from the high of beating Manchester City last Sunday to being booed at Wembley, ended with him missing England's final Euro 2020 qualifier in Kosovo due to a sore knee.

The 22-year-old — whose Liverpool team-mate Jordan Henderson also misses the trip to Kosovo with a viral infection — featured in the headlines earlier in the week after City striker Raheem Sterling confronted him at England's training centre on Monday, the day after Liverpool's 3-1 victory over City.

Gomez was booed when he came on as a substitute in the 7-0 mauling of Montenegro, while Henderson missed it due to a one-match ban. Victory assured England of a place at the finals.

"Jordan Henderson and Joe Gomez will miss England's final UEFA EURO 2020 qualifier in Kosovo on Sunday," read a statement from the Football Association (FA). "Henderson arrived in camp with a viral infection that has not fully cleared.

"Meanwhile, his Liverpool team-mate Gomez sustained a knock to the knee in training on Friday and has not recovered sufficiently enough to travel. "The pair have returned to their club meaning the Three Lions will head to Pristina on Saturday with a 23-man squad." —AFP

## Sports

# Superb Spain destroy Malta 7-0 to clinch top spot in Group F

## Italy win record 10th match in a row with Bosnia rout

**CADIZ:** Spain clinched top spot in Group F in style by hammering Malta 7-0 at home on Friday for their biggest win of their Euro 2020 qualifying campaign as seven players got on the scoresheet. Spain had sealed their place at next year's tournament last month in unconvincing fashion by drawing 1-1 with both Norway and Sweden but they created a party atmosphere in Cadiz with a superb display of attacking football.

The Spaniards lead the standings with 23 points from nine matches, five more than second-placed Sweden who booked their place at Euro 2020 with a 2-0 win over Romania. Alvaro Morata put the Spaniards on their way to a resounding victory over Malta by netting midway through the first half, scoring for the seventh consecutive game for club and country.

Santi Cazorla doubled the lead shortly before half-time with his first goal for his country in over four years, a special moment for the much-loved 34-year-old who has staged a remarkable recovery from a career-threatening foot injury.

Robert Moreno's side turned on the style in the second half, with defender Pau Torres marking his debut with a goal in the 62nd minute and Pablo Sarabia also netting for the first time for Spain less than a minute later. Dinamo Zagreb striker Dani Olmo then came off the bench to make his Spain debut and moments later marked the occasion by scoring his side's fifth goal, while Gerard Moreno soon followed by netting his first goal for Spain.

Jesus Navas produced the most impressive strike of the evening for goal number seven, finding the top corner from outside the area, while substitute Paco Alcacer was not far away from hitting goal number eight when he rattled the post.

"I leave here feeling very satisfied because we never lost our desire. Every time Malta took a centre to restart the game we felt compelled to go looking for another goal," said Moreno. "It's great when new players come in and bring fresh air with them. I'm very happy for the lads that made their debuts and scored because it shows the team is ready to renew itself."

Malta coach Raymond Farrugia endured a painful night in more than one sense as he accidentally banged his head against the dugout in the second half and

required medical assistance, although he remained on the sidelines until full-time.

"I barely remember anything about the last 20 minutes," said Farrugia, who was part of the Malta side who were infamously trounced 12-1 by Spain in a decisive qualifier for Euro 1984. "We were playing against the best team in the world. With these players Spain have the best team around and I think these players could easily go on to win the European Championship."

Meanwhile in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy won 10 internationals in a row for the first time in their 109-year history when goals from Francesco Acerbi, Lorenzo Insigne and Andrea Belotti gave them a 3-0 victory at Bosnia & Herzegovina in a lop-sided Euro 2020 qualifier on Friday.

The Italians, who were already assured of advancing, top Group J with a maximum 27 points and were joined by second-placed Finland (18 points) who earlier reached their first major tournament with a 3-0 home win over Liechtenstein.

The result meant coach Roberto Mancini improved on Vittorio Pozzo's run of nine straight wins between 1938 and 1939. "Let's remember that he won five trophies with the national team so there is still a long road ahead," said Mancini, who took over after Italy missed out on last year's World Cup and has overseen a remarkable turnaround.

"Of course, I'm pleased to have bettered a legend such as him." Under Pozzo, Italy won the 1934 and 1938 World Cups, the 1936 Olympic Games as well as the now defunct Central European International Cup twice.

Italy's current streak includes a friendly win over the United States followed by nine matches in Euro 2020 qualifying so far. They finish by hosting Armenia on Monday. Bosnia dropped to fifth on 10 points and, while Finland's victory dashed any slim hopes they had of finishing in the top two, the Balkan country can still progress to next year's tournament via the Nations League playoffs in March.

With Finland's success reducing the Bosnia-Italy game to a dead rubber, it was played at walking pace for long spells but the gulf in class was apparent as defender Acerbi fired the visitors ahead with a fine



Spain's midfielder Pablo Sarabia (R) vies with Malta's midfielder Juan Corbalan during the Euro 2020 Group F football qualification match between Spain and Malta at the Ramon de Carranza stadium in Cadiz, on November 15, 2019. —AFP

individual effort in the 21st minute. Insigne doubled Italy's lead with a bouncing shot on the turn in the 37th, while goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma denied Bosnia's Ermin Bicakcic and Adnan Kovacevic with a pair of excellent saves at the other end.

Disgruntled home fans treated Belotti to a standing ovation after the striker made it 3-0 with a spectacular 53rd-minute goal, as he took a through ball in his stride and beat Ibrahim Sehic with a thunderbolt from 18 metres. — Agencies

## Sweden clinch Euro 2020 spot



BUCHAREST: Romania's midfielder Ionut Mitrita (L) vies for the ball with Sweden's midfielder Kristoffer Olsson during the Euro 2020 Group F qualification football match Romania v Sweden in Bucharest, Romania. — AFP

**BUCHAREST:** Sweden sealed a place at Euro 2020 after goals from Marcus Berg and Robin Quaison secured a 2-0 win away to Romania on Friday. The result secured second spot in Group F for Sweden with 18 points. Spain, who sealed a place at the finals last month, top the standings with 23 points from nine games after thrashing Malta 7-0. Romania are third with 14 points.

Sweden coach Janne Andersson was moved to tears by his side's performance, saying: "This is so fantastic, it can't be true. What players I have, I am so incredibly happy and proud. "I had tears in my eyes

when there was two minutes to go. That we are going to the Euros is one thing, that the players did it together is fantastic, unbelievably fantastic."

Striker Berg, also speaking to Sweden's TV4, added: "There was a lot of pressure today, there weren't many that thought we could come here and beat them 2-0... I'm completely empty, it's going to take a while before it sinks in."

Berg put the Swedes ahead in the 18th minute with a trademark header past goalkeeper Ciprian Tatarusanu following a cross from Emil Forsberg. It was his 21st interna-

tional goal. Midfielder Quaison wrapped up the points with a cool finish 16 minutes later, with Berg turning provider.

The visitors continued to dominate after the break with Albin Ekdal rattling the crossbar with a thundering shot midway through the second half. Romania, lacking ideas and urgency, failed to create any clear-cut chances at the National Arena.

The match was halted for a couple of minutes late in the second half by the match referee after alleged racist chanting from the stands and a public announcement was made. — Reuters

## Southgate to bring Sterling back from England exile

**PRISTINA:** Gareth Southgate is set to bring Raheem Sterling back from his brief England exile in today's Euro 2020 qualifier against Kosovo as he seeks to end the controversy over the Manchester City star's row with Joe Gomez.

Sterling was dropped for Thursday's 7-0 rout of Montenegro after clashing with England team-mate Gomez in the Three Lions' training base canteen. It is believed Sterling was unhappy with Gomez following an altercation with the Liverpool defender during City's Premier League defeat at Anfield last weekend.

Although Sterling was left out of the Montenegro game as punishment for his attack on Gomez, Southgate has confirmed the winger will return for England's final Group A fixture. Sterling and Gomez, left with a scratch under his eye after the incident, are said to have patched up their relationship, but the centre-back was jeered by England fans at Wembley when he came on as a substitute against Montenegro.

Both Southgate and Sterling expressed their support for Gomez and criticised the booing supporters, with the England manager reportedly comforting the shocked 22-year-old and his family after the match. Now Southgate could include Gomez against Kosovo in a show of support for the Liverpool player. With England already guaranteed to qualify for Euro 2020 in first place in their group, Southgate already planned to make changes, although he is keen to ensure

England finish with a win as they eye a top-six seeding in next year's tournament.

"We will make some changes, for sure, but the seeding in the group could be critical and we know it's a big night for the Kosovans," Southgate said. "It's a shame for them that they're now out of this part of the qualification, although they've still got the play-offs in which I think they'll be a huge threat in that format."

"So, it will be a good test for us because it will still be a lively environment. "The enthusiasm for the game is high and we want to finish the group with as many points as we can." Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson could return following a one-match ban, while Southgate has to decide whether to keep faith with Ben Chilwell ahead of Danny Rose at left-back. Harry Kane may have scored a hat-trick against Montenegro but it was Leicester's Chilwell who was named England's man of the match following a fine display in which he provided three assists in the opening 24 minutes.

"Ben, I liked the hunger in his game, the enthusiasm to get forward," Southgate said. "The whole team pressed well but he also pressed well from that full-back position, got into overlaps, his quality of delivery was excellent."

Although England have cruised through their qualifying group, Southgate believes the 2018 World Cup semi-finalists still have room for improvement as they chase a first major title since 1966. "There were a couple of chances we conceded that just shouldn't happen, so that's still part of our game that we've got to improve upon," he said.

"If we are to be a team that are going to challenge seriously, although we're young, we've got to manage games well. "We've got to make sure that, although we're such a fantastic attacking threat, the rest of the team is right as well. There are things we've got to be better at." — AFP

than their own ingenuity.

Winger Robert Skov opened the scoring in the 11th minute after Gibraltar's diminutive goalkeeper, Kyle Goldwin, twice failed to hold on to the ball but for the rest of the half the hosts battled to break down a determined defence. Straight after the break, Goldwin mistimed coming out to cut off a long kick upfield from the Danes and the pace of striker Christian Gytkjaer allowed him to get to the pass first and slide it home.

Martin Braithwaite converted an easy tap in 4 minutes later after Goldwin parried Christian Eriksen's square pass into his path and Skov grabbed a second for himself in the 64th minute as Gibraltar's defence failed to clear a cross.

Eriksen scored the fifth with a shot from outside the penalty area 6 minutes from time and then added another with the last kick of the match as a clearance was kicked straight at him. Denmark have 15 points from seven matches, one more than second-place Switzerland, who finish their campaign away at Gibraltar on Monday. Ireland must beat Denmark to qualify. — Reuters

## Messi scores on Argentina return to sink Brazil

**RIYADH:** Lionel Messi struck on his return to international duty Friday following a three-month ban as Argentina defeated fierce rivals Brazil 1-0 in a friendly in Riyadh. The Barcelona forward was suspended by CONMEBOL for accusing South American football's ruling body of "corruption" after he was sent off in July's third-place play-off with Chile at the Copa America.

Messi netted the only goal of the

game at the King Saud University Stadium on 13 minutes, tapping home the rebound after his penalty was saved by Brazil goalkeeper Alisson.

His effort came shortly after Manchester City striker Gabriel Jesus rolled a spot-kick wide for Brazil, who were playing without the injured Neymar. Messi, who scored with a pair of free-kicks in his last game with Barcelona, twice threatened from set pieces in the second half before Liverpool 'keeper Alisson beat away a powerful drive from Leandro Paredes.

Rodrygo, the 18-year-old who scored a sensational Champions League hat-trick with Real Madrid this month, made his Brazil debut as he replaced Willian for the final 20 minutes. However, Brazil were unable to find an equaliser as their winless run since capturing the Copa America title extended to five matches.

"It's important to win and it is always nice to beat Brazil, for the rivalry, which feels a lot of late," said Messi. "It's good for everything that is to come, to continue growing while looking towards the qualifiers and the next Copa America (in 2020)."

The meeting between the two South American giants was the second in Saudi Arabia in little over a year. Brazil beat Argentina 1-0 in Jeddah in October 2018.

Brazil also defeated Argentina 2-0 at home in the semi-finals of this year's Copa America, a controversial match that left Messi complaining the hosts had benefited from favouritism.

Brazil will play a friendly against South Korea in Abu Dhabi on November 19, in their final game before South American qualifying starts for the 2022 World Cup in March. — AFP

## Denmark's victory sets up crunch qualifier in Dublin

**COPENHAGEN:** Denmark got off to a slow start before overwhelming Gibraltar 6-0 on Friday to take over the top of Group D and set up a decisive Euro 2020 qualifier in Dublin tomorrow.

Denmark will qualify for next year's European Championship if they avoid defeat against Ireland at the Aviva Stadium, after moving 3 points clear of the Irish. But they will need to sharpen up their play after making heavy weather of beating tiny Gibraltar, whose population is not much more than the 24,033 who watched the game at Copenhagen's Parken Stadium.

Denmark, unbeaten in the qualifiers, were ahead only 1-0 at halftime and had lapses of concentration by the part-timers to thank for their goals rather

**25** Heroes' welcome to Kuwait shooters



**26** Shami stars in India's crushing Test win over Bangladesh



**27** Superb Spain destroy Malta 7-0 to clinch top spot in Group F



## Nadal bows out on top of the world

Rafael is now on 19 majors, just one behind Federer

LONDON: Rafael Nadal was unable to crown his season with a first ATP Finals title but he ends it as world number one and with a chance to lead Spain to Davis Cup glory. The Spaniard, who came to London under an injury cloud, had a terrible start to his week at the O2 Arena, crushed in straight sets by defending champion Alexander Zverev in his first round-robin match.

But he produced a performance of astonishing grit to recover from 5-1 and match point down against Daniil Medvedev and saw off Stefanos Tsitsipas in three sets on Friday. It was not quite enough to reach the semi-finals but Nadal leaves London after securing the year-end number one ranking for a fifth time, pulling level with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

Nadal was in the strange position after his win against 21-year-old Tsitsipas of not knowing whether he would be heading home or playing Federer in the knockouts. Later, Zverev's win against Medvedev confirmed his tournament was over.

The 33-year-old, who was presented

with the trophy for securing the number spot on court, said it was difficult to compare the achievement with winning a Grand Slam. Nadal is now on 19 majors, just one behind Federer after winning his 12th French Open this year and his fourth US Open crown.

"I know it is something so important because to achieve this you have to play well for 11 months," he said. "To win a Grand Slam you have to play well two weeks. But it's difficult to compare. For me personally, when you win a Grand Slam, you win a Grand Slam winning the last point, and that feeling you, can't have it here. That's the big difference."

But he said finishing on top of the world was a great achievement after his struggles with injuries earlier in the season. And he was delighted to pull level on five year-end finishes with Djokovic and Federer — the other two members of the "Big Three".

Nadal can look back on another staggering year in which he has shown remarkable consistency, winning four trophies including two Masters titles. He reached the semi-

finals at all four Grand Slams in a season for just the second time in his illustrious career.

But it did not start too promisingly for the veteran, who was plagued by injuries early in the season, including a thigh strain and right knee injury.

The injury jinx struck again late on, forcing him to miss October's Shanghai Masters with a wrist injury and his participation at the ATP Finals was in doubt after he withdrew from the Paris Masters at the semi-final stage with an abdominal strain.

But now the dust has settled, Nadal can look back on another staggering season in which he overtook Djokovic in the final stretch to top the rankings. "My decision or our decision is to try to do the things to play as long as possible, so that's why I tried to do the conservative calendar in terms of saving the body and everything," said Nadal.

"But the thing is when I have been playing, I have been playing very well. I achieved almost every single time the last rounds of every tournament. "So that's why I'm put in a position that I am where I am



LONDON: Spain's Rafael Nadal holds up the 2019 ATP Tour Year-End Number One trophy at a presentation ceremony on day six of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London. — AFP

today, having this trophy with me." And it is not over yet for the Spaniard. Nadal has the chance to lead Spain to glory in the new-look Davis Cup in Madrid next week and he is raring to go. Changes to the tournament's format mean 18 teams will be vying for the title over the course of a week.

"Let's see how the thing works," he said.

"I am sure that they did great and it is going to be something really special. And playing at home even more. "So excited about it. I really hope that the team is working the right way during these previous days of the tournament, so I really expect to find a team very well-prepared when I arrive there." — AFP

## CONDOLENCES

**Kuwait Times owners,  
management and staff  
convey their deepest condolences to**

**Al-Banwan family  
on the sad demise of  
Ahmad Imran Ahmad  
Al-Banwan**

*May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him*