



6 Police round up students in Delhi as fee protests grow



11 Airbus beats Boeing with two mega deals at Dubai air show



20 Explosive prose: Translation of Pakistani satire hits bookstores



25 Verstappen wins crazy race as both Ferraris crash out



Amir warns no one will evade crimes against public funds

Sheikh Sabah says issue will have his 'personal attention'

Amir removes top ministers; PM declines post



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives outgoing Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Kuwait was yesterday rocked by a series of political developments after HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah respectfully declined the PM's post after the Amir renamed him for the job. The Amir also sacked two senior ministers - defense minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and interior minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah - for feuding in public and trading accusations.

But the main development was the denial of Sheikh Jaber to form the new Cabinet, which means his resignation as head of the government, paving the way for appointing a new prime minister. Sheikh Jaber was appointed to the post some eight years ago following anti-corruption street demonstrations against the former prime minister HH Sheikh Nasser

Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who resigned.

Sheikh Jaber was highly praised by HH the Amir for doing a great job and serving the country. In his letter of denial, the outgoing premier said what prevented him from accepting the offer to form the new Cabinet is scores of accusations and fabrications that filled media outlets and social media that falsely and wrongly undermined his integrity and reputation.

He said those baseless accusations "regrettably originated from a colleague and a brother with whom we have been enjoying strong relations for the past 40 years, which could lead to grave consequences at all levels." Sheikh Jaber said he felt he needed to prove his innocence and honesty, and therefore he decided to apologize for not accepting the offer to form the next Cabinet.

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addresses the nation yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday reaffirmed no one "whatsoever" would evade punishment related to public funds crimes, and said this file "will be under my personal attention", urging the media and public to refrain from dealing with issues being examined by the judiciary.

"We reaffirm our relentless keenness on preserving public funds, and our commitment to protecting them, and affirm that no one, no matter his position, will evade punishment if convicted in public funds crimes. There shall be no protection to the corrupt, and this file will have my personal attention," the Amir underlined.

He noted that Kuwait is a state of institutions and rule of law, whose constitution states that "all people are equal in human dignity, and in public rights and duties before the law." HH the Amir, who regretted the exchange of accusations in the media and social media which "are rejected by our faith and tradition of Kuwaiti people", affirmed that the judiciary in Kuwait is independent and integral and respected by all.

The Amir added that an issue was at the judiciary, so the "media should refrain from dealing with this

issue until a verdict is issued...and it will be executed once issued". He urged the people to "be wise and abide by values of our Kuwaiti society, which is keen on refraining from tarnishing people and their reputation, and not unleashing unfounded accusations".

HH the Amir reiterated his commitment to freedom of speech and expression, "but will not allow anything to undermine security and stability of the nation, or trigger devastating chaos". "I call upon my fellow citizens to be aware of the interests of our dear nation and the protection of its security and stability, stand united against whoever tries to undermine national unity, and stay away from assemblies that might deviate from their objectives and lead to chaos," the Amir said, urging them to learn lessons from others.

HH the Amir hoped the new government would meet the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people, a matter that requires "serious cooperation" between the government, parliament and people. He said he is confident the Kuwaiti people are capable of overcoming all hardships towards national unity and achievements. — KUNA

Iran 'calmer' despite riots over petrol

TEHRAN: Iran said it still faced riots even though the situation was "calmer" yesterday after days of violent protests sparked by a shock decision to hike petrol prices in the sanctions-hit country. Major roads have been blocked, banks torched and shops looted in the nationwide unrest since Friday that has left at least two dead - a civilian and a policeman. Masked young men were seen on debris-strewn streets setting buildings ablaze in footage that has been aired on state television, which rarely shows any signs of dissent.

Continued on Page 24

Guterres hails Amir, Kuwait; Pompeo, Pence praise ties

WASHINGTON: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "is a living symbol of wisdom and compassion... being the only personality in the world that the UN has recognized as a humanitarian leader of the world," UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said.

Delivering his speech about Kuwait and its generosity at the Kuwait-America Foundation's gala dinner for UNHCR held at the Kuwait Embassy - an event attended by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Vice President Mike Pence, and other officials - Guterres praised Kuwait and its leader for commitment to humanitarian causes around the globe, affirming that he is very fond of Kuwait's efforts.

Pence said it was an "honor" for him and his wife to be part again of the Kuwait-America Foundation's annual gala dinner, what he said is "becoming a family tradition". Pompeo was the recipient of this year's Kuwait-America Foundation's Humanitarian Award. "Kuwait doesn't just write the cheques...they hold conferences to get others to contribute to these important causes. They mobilize others in the finest tradition of global leadership," he affirmed. Pompeo praised the bilateral relationship between the US and Kuwait, saying, "these two countries have a long history together and a very special history." — KUNA (See Page 3)



WASHINGTON: (From left) US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, US Vice President Mike Pence and Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah are seen during the Kuwait-America Foundation gala dinner for UNHCR held at the Kuwait Embassy. — KUNA

Facial recognition making subtle advance in UK

LONDON: The experiment was conducted discreetly. Between 2016 and 2018, two surveillance cameras were installed in the Kings Cross area of London to analyze and track passers-by using facial recognition technology. The deployment of the cutting-edge technology at one of the British capital's busiest transport hubs, which was first revealed in the Financial Times, has fuelled controversy in Britain where its use does not yet have a legal framework.

The company in charge of the project argued it has acted "only to help the police... prevent and detect crimes in the area", and that it had no

Continued on Page 24

MoI launches online driving license renewal

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The interior ministry yesterday launched the system of renewing driving licenses online for expats at The Avenues mall in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs and Operations Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh and other senior officials. It said the traffic and operations sector in cooperation with the IT department launched the service of renewing driving licenses through the interior ministry's website. The ministry added that the renewal procedure involves logging on to www.moi.gov.kw and following the instructions. The license can then be collected from self-service kiosks located at The Avenues mall (Rai), Kout mall (Fahahel) and interior ministry service centers.

Well-informed security sources told Al-Anbaa daily that those who prefer personal transactions will still be able to do so by visiting relevant traffic departments and service centers. The sources added that the interior ministry is working on deploying enough machines to deliver the driving licenses after sending holders text messages directing them to certain kiosks in certain locations to collect the new licenses using their civil IDs for identification along with the expired licenses.

"However, getting replacements for lost or damaged licenses requires a visit to the concerned traffic department," the sources said. They added that more online services will be launched soon, since the online residency visa renewal infrastructure has already been completed.



KUWAIT: Interior ministry officials inaugurate the new system of online driving license renewal for expats at The Avenues mall yesterday.

Local

Amir to Sheikh Jaber: You served well and shouldered a huge burden

Sheikh Sabah meets parliament speaker, former premier for consultations



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

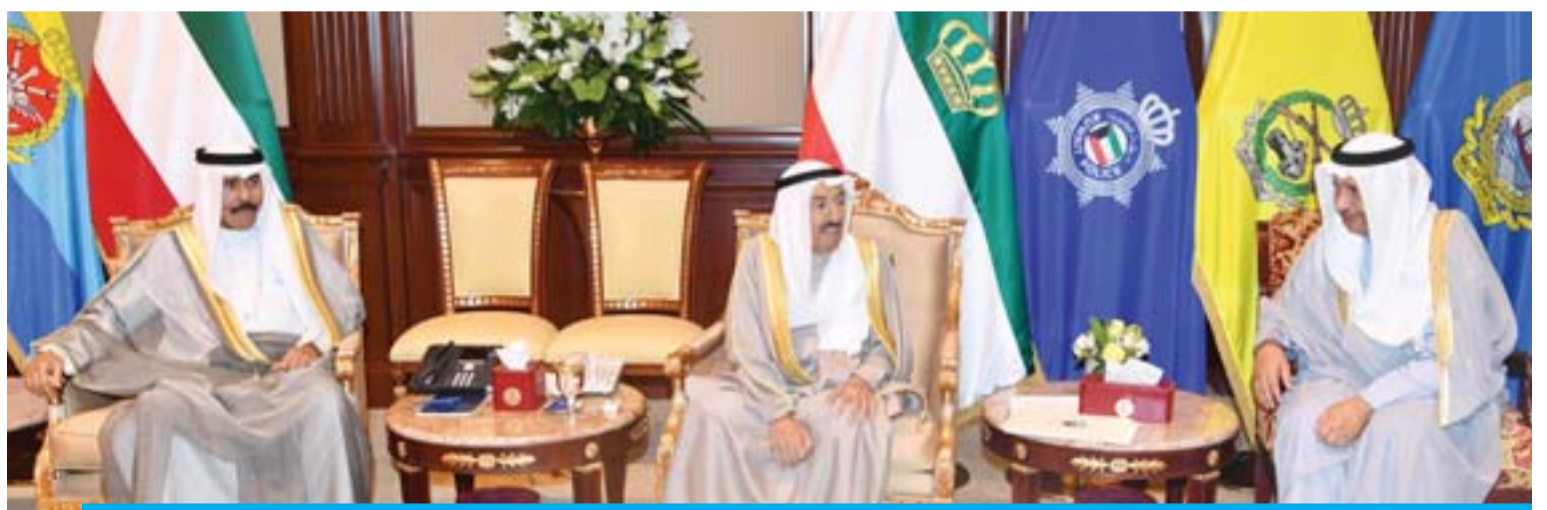
KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

During the reception, His Highness the Amir said: "I feel sorry that you have turned down the position of Prime Minister, at the same time you have to know that you are bigger than the position and stronger than everything. You are Jaber Al-Mubarak that we all respect and revere. May Allah bless you, and let the people know things as they are."

His Highness the Prime Minister then replied: "By Allah's will and it was my aim to serve your Highness." His

Highness the Amir then said: "You served well and shouldered a huge burden. Thank you and May Allah bless you." His Highness the Prime Minister then replied: "Who matters is your Highness and His Highness the Crown Prince." Earlier yesterday, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak respectfully declined the position of Prime Minister after an Amiri order was issued, tasking him with choosing members of cabinet.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received at Bayan Palace earlier yesterday National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and the former Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as part of the common consultations to form new government. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Kuwait Amir receives new envoys' credentials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Germany.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Kazakhstan. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Georgia.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Italy.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Zimbabwe.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Mauritanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ismail Weld El-Sheikh.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday the newly appointed Ambassadors of Kazakhstan, Germany, Zimbabwe, Italy, and Georgia to the State of Kuwait. His Highness

the Amir also received Mauritanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ismail Weld El-Sheikh, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah,

Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Undersecretary at the Amiri Diwan and head of His Highness the Amir's office Ahmad Al-Fahad, and head of Amiri Protocols Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-

Sabah attended the meetings. In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a cable of congratulations from President of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades. In the cable, the President expressed sincere

joy and warm sentiments over the return of His Highness the Amir back home after completing medical examinations in the US. His Highness the Amir in return sent a letter of gratitude, expressing appreciation for the kind gesture. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received yesterday the President of Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Dr Bandar Hajjar and his accompanying delegation, on the occasion of their official visit to the country. The meeting was attended by MP Askar Al-Enezi, IDB's Secretary General Ghassan Albaba, and Director General of Islamic Development Bank Group Dr Waleed Al-Wuhaib. — KUNA

Kuwait's FM receives Mauritanian counterpart

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Mauritanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ismail Weld El-Sheikh at Bayan Palace on the occasion of visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed enhancing deep bilateral relations in all fields.

They also discussed latest developments on regional and international scenes, in addition to other issues of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by the Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Abulhassan, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Arab World Affairs Ambassador Fahad Al-Awadi, and other senior officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Mauritanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ismail Weld El-Sheikh. — KUNA

Local

United States, Kuwait share very special relationship: Pompeo

Kuwait Amir symbol of wisdom, compassion: UN Secretary General



WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Ambassador Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah (left) and his wife Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah (second from left) with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (right) and his wife Susan Pompeo. — KUNA photos

Kuwait's Ambassador Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah (right) and his wife Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah (second from right) with US Vice President Mike Pence (left) and his wife Karen Pence.

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised the "very special" relationship the US and Kuwait share together, affirming that President Donald Trump and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "value" this relationship that "benefits the world." This came in a speech Pompeo gave as the Humanitarian Award recipient for his commitment to "safeguarding and promoting peace around the world" at the Kuwait-America Foundation Gala Dinner for UNHCR held at the Kuwait Embassy, which was attended by Vice President Mike Pence and his wife Karen Pence, in addition to top UN officials including Secretary General Antonio Guterres. In his remarks, the US top diplomat praised Kuwait for its generosity, saying "it is absolute the case that Kuwait's generosity, in helping the refugees in countries like Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq makes Kuwait an example to other nations around the world."

"Kuwait doesn't just write the checks... they hold conferences to get others to contribute to these important causes. They mobilize others in the finest tradition of global leadership," he affirmed. He also highlighted the humanitarian work the US has done around the world, saying "It is who we are as Americans... they exemplify the work that we do with our friends from Kuwait all around the world. It is what America does. It is what Kuwait does. It is what we will keep doing."

Pompeo also shed light on his visit to Kuwait last March, saying "it was an amazing experience" and that he had a "great conversation" about the relationship of the two countries, "how we deliver on behalf of our two countries, on behalf of the broader Middle East and behalf of the world together." "We know that our two leaders both value this relationship and that relationship benefits the world as the two of them work for the world together," he remarked.

In an exclusive statement, Pompeo praised the bilateral relationship between the US and Kuwait, saying, "These two countries have a long history together and a very special history." He said, "The work that we did together in the early 1990s is something that neither nation will forget and the Kuwaiti people are so wonderful to the people of the United States." He added, "An important part of what President Trump does is to make sure is we do everything we can, for everything we can, for every person who is struggling or in a humanitarian crisis."

"So it is a privilege and an honor to receive this award on behalf of the State Department and the Trump Administration indicative of the work we do and the work

that Kuwait and America do together to try and take care of those that are in really difficult places," he affirmed. He stressed, "His Highness the Amir does this humanitarian work out of love for these people and for the world and he has such a deep commitment that has demonstrated over so many years. There are few like him the world and America thanks him and the world should thank him for that."

In his speech, Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah affirmed that Kuwait is "proud to be a longstanding supporter of UNHCR." He noted that Kuwait's contributions to the agency have helped provide emergency humanitarian aid and protection to millions of men, women, and children in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. "What we are witnessing today is nothing short of a catastrophe. One that undoubtedly requires the attention and work of all of us," he stressed. He shed light on Kuwait's humanitarian role, saying Kuwait is "a proud leader in humanitarian action, serving as a role model for other countries in its philanthropic activism."

He added, "A result of these initiatives and generous support, and in recognition of our leading regional and international philanthropic role, Kuwait has been designated as a 'humanitarian hub.'" He affirmed that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "exemplifies this commitment." Furthermore, he noted, "In Kuwait, the United States has found an extremely reliable partner in our commitment to peace and security around the world."

"As has been the case for decades, our two nations are working hard to resolve disputes throughout the Middle East and to plan for a more secure and prosperous future for our peoples," he remarked. Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who also attended the event, spoke about Kuwait and its generosity. He said Kuwait is a country that he loves and a country that its leader, His Highness the Amir "is a living symbol of wisdom and compassion... being the only personality in the world that the UN has recognized as a humanitarian leader of the world."

Meanwhile, the Ambassador's wife, Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah shed light on the refugees' crisis globally, saying, "Sadly, we are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record, an unprecedented 70.8 million people around the world have been forced from their homes by violence, war, and persecution." Introducing Secretary of State Pompeo as the 2019 Kuwait-America Foundation Humanitarian Award recipient, Rima Al-Sabah noted that "in the face of one of the most complex foreign policy landscapes in history, his measured, steady leadership has enabled

the US to make inroads on a host of critical issues."

In the meantime, Vice President Mike Pence expressed what an "honor" it is for him and his wife to be part again of the Kuwait-America Foundation annual gala dinner, for what he said is "becoming a family tradition." Pence thanked the "incredible leaders" who are so

generous for these efforts, saying it is "remarkable to think" of what the KAF has helped raised in the past 13 years for humanitarian causes. He also thanked Sheikh Salem and his wife Sheikha Rima "for the generosity and the spirit that you reflect in all that you do." The gala dinner was attended by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi,

Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin, Secretary of Interior David Bernhardt, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, as well as Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar, Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway and National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien. — KUNA



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Kuwait eager to revamp its maritime laws

VIENNA: Kuwait is determined to set in place a major overhaul of its maritime transport laws, said an official yesterday, ahead of the opening of a new major port in the country: Mubarak Al-Kabeer. The Kuwaiti government is hard at work to ensure that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision of transforming the country into a financial and commercial hub ultimately comes to fruition, said Hanan Al-Eedan, an advisor at Kuwait's fatwa and legislation department. Amid talks involving the United Nations



Hanan Al-Eedan

Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), she highlighted such gatherings as a learning experience for Kuwait to develop its economic legislations. As a UN body, UNCITRAL helps monitor and facilitate international trade and investment. —KUNA

Local

Civil movements demand end of 'widespread' corruption in Kuwait

Calls for parliament that brings back the 'constitutional rights of the people'

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Reacting to the recent political situation in Kuwait including the government's resignation last week, various civil movements held a symposium to express the opinion of the people. "This parliament will merely remain a tool controlled by the government, but we won't allow this, as it should be a tool of the nation. The corrupt system in the country should be changed and the parliament should be stronger to perform its duty. We demand the government's performance should be realistic in developing the country, and a parliament that brings back the constitutional rights of the people," said Abdulaziz Al-Shaban, Head of the Kuwait Liberal Movement, during the political symposium titled 'A Crisis of Two Powers or a Nation' held on Sunday.

Basher Al-Sayegh, Secretary General of the National Democratic Alliance, said the political situation is the worst today. "Today, people have reached a stage of despair due to the present situation. There is a crisis between two powers, in addition to a crisis of governance caused by conflicts among the ruling family," he noted. "We are facing a corruption of the legislative and executive powers. The first is the corruption of MPs, who are representing companies and contractors, who work for their own benefit. This proves that the accusations against these MPs are true. The power of corruption has taken over legislative power, so we are facing a crisis in the parliament," added Sayegh.

Dr Hamad Al-Ansari from the Kuwait Progressive Movement sees many crises here. "We have laws that are not applied, regulatory institutions not doing their duty, bad political leadership and wrong systems. All these lead to a crisis of nation and power. This caused the drop of our country in all indicators and led to a decline in performance. Corruption has spread in all institutions. The recent resignation of the government was expected, as from the beginning it wasn't in harmony and wasn't stable. We see corruption very frequently, so this wasn't surprising, and various ministers admitted it," he said.

"The problem is in not applying article 6 of



KUWAIT: A general view of the audience at the symposium. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

“ Assembly should be a tool of the nation ”

the constitution, which says the regime in Kuwait is democratic, and that people are the source of all powers. This article is the solution to all of our problems," said Ansari. "People's role is to expose all corruption cases so corrupt officials are punished, as this is public money. We need a new government that applies reforms that people can trust. We also demand the amendment of the elections law to be fairer for all people. The parliament should be a stage for people's awareness. We need more freedoms,

especially freedom of speech, and we don't accept having prisoners who expressed their opinion on social media," he concluded.

Bandar Al-Kheiran, Head of the Central Committee at Kuwait Democratic Forum, highlighted the need for awareness of electing the right MPs. "Unfortunately, corruption is in both the parliament and the Cabinet. The conflicts in the ruling family is one of the main reasons of the corrupt situation in the country. But people are the main reason, as they vote for the MP who processes their paperwork," he pointed out.

The role of the citizen is minimized. "According to the law, it's not a condition for the prime minister's post to be occupied by a sheikh from the ruling family. We demand a popular government. Why are regular citizens distanced from this post, although citizens can rule the country, as we did during the Iraqi invasion? We also demand equity in elections, so instead of having headquarters and tents that not all people can afford to rent, co-ops should set locations for candidates to present their programs and meet with voters," he said.

Rights and freedoms lead to development

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Najla Al-Naqi Cultural Forum hosted a seminar entitled "Rights and Freedoms" on Sunday in Salmiya. Sheikh Meshal Al-Sabah said people sometimes don't know their rights and the ones who do face a lot of challenges. "If we see developed countries and compare their government with ours, we will see that they have a developed economy and advanced life because they gave their people their rights and freedom," he said.

He added that there are several types of rights such as basic rights, legal rights, human rights and work rights - everyone should not only have a job offer, but also a decent salary, with qualified people engaged in productive work. "There is a monopoly on some jobs, which is obvious corruption, where there is a clear distinction between citizens in their levels and social classes," he noted.

"We must look to the element of education that represents the civilization of the state and that creates a conscious generation, where the enemy is ignorance. If you see members of the government and parliament get medical treatment and education outside the country, this is proof that there is no quality in education and medical treatment in the country. If you see them boasting about foreign policies without promoting their economy and diversifying sources of income of the country, this is not a successful parliament. If you see frequent resignations and lack of cooperation between the government and the parliament, this is not a real government and not a successful parliament," Sheikh Meshal said.

Writer and journalist Ayed Al-Manna

spoke from the legal perspective about rights and freedoms. "Rights are a set of needs that must be met without distinction between members of society for considerations related to gender, religion, etc. These are basic rights that cannot be waived by the individual," he explained.

"There are 30 articles on human rights. The Kuwaiti constitution, which is taken from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, affirmed basic rights in which everyone has the right to enjoy all rights and freedoms without discrimination of any kind. But according to the law, all rights and freedom must have limitations in the form of by-laws and rules. Article 30 says personal freedom is guaranteed," he added. "We have a problem that employment is social employment and not professional employment, which led to inflating the administrative system, which harms the work environment. We must demand rights and freedoms, but within the constitution and laws," Manna said.

Jassim Al-Jazaa, PhD researcher in business administration, said: "I believe that there are no solutions to our current problems except by going back to history. The present problems have past roots. For countries that have fallen in the past, this was because of economic and legal corruption. So it is a fact that corruption will make any country vanish."

He noted that applying Islam is not bad for the system. "There is a difference between theory and practice. If people practice it wrongly, it doesn't mean that the theory is wrong. Islam brought a new economic and political system to states, such as freedoms (no compulsion in religion) and shura (consultation). Our religion is full of intellectual freedoms - even when the Muslims won a war, the Jews and Christians remained. They did not force them to convert to Islam, but the opposite happened in non-Muslim victories," Jazaa said. Jazaa affirmed that citizens' rights can be found in Islamic rights, such as the right to security, financial rights, justice rights and many more.

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KUWAIT: Walid Al-Bader and K Jeeva Sagar honor Amjad Al-Saleh.

KNPC honors Reliance Worldwide for 'excellent' public service

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), represented by Walid Khalid Al-Bader, KNPC CEO, and the Ambassador of India to Kuwait, K Jeeva Sagar, honored the Kuwaiti company 'Reliance Worldwide' for its initiative during 2018-2019 for applying advanced solutions that served the full stream public sanitation, food and the environmental health in the industry.

Reliance Worldwide CEO Amjad Al-Saleh mentioned that Reliance was honored during the conference organized by Tamilnadu Engineers Forum (TEF) in Kuwait earlier this month at the Radisson Blu Hotel. The excellence in applying advanced technology in catering services and the associated logistics, operations in conformity to international standards in the field of health, safety and environment friendly technologies.

Saleh added in a press release that the appreciation of Reliance Worldwide by local and international companies in Kuwait comes as a result of long-lasting efforts and devotion of Reliance team and stakeholders contributed in this level of operational and engineering excellence "transformation and inventions in renewable energy" serving as arm-wing to mega projects growth.

He added, "the company has accomplished diverse share in serving projects throughout worldwide strategic alliances and collaborations with major recognized renewable energy technologies, research and development and patents to cope with the rapid growth in innovations of the world offering breakthrough into sanitation and renewable energy processes food - environment friendly techniques at cost effectiveness which adds great values to development sectors."

He pointed out the most prominent new innovation of Reliance Worldwide was "Smart Mobile Electronic Toilets (eToilet)" manufactured by Eram Scientific Solutions Pvt. The first Indian smart eToilet to the world with IoT based system and mobile capabilities. Also, it introduced food recycling solutions for reuse in soil enhancement and irri-



Amjad Al-Saleh speaks at the conference.

gation, and reducing costs of water and electricity through clean energy solutions. In addition, it introduced waste management and environment friendly anaerobic septic tanks solutions.

Saleh said, "the company's excellence awards came after the audit visits in Reliance field by TEF Engineering Group to evaluate the operation at remote sites with external laboratories testing. The results of the audit highlighted the satisfaction level of the company services at remote sites to public and the environment, in terms of both efficiency and cost."

Saleh pointed out, "the company during the conference has provided demonstration for the innovations and the benefits of applying its process in the industry to meet with the future advanced technologies and continual development plans for human health, environment friendly solutions and to reduce energy costs and prevent pollution." Major companies and individuals whom are in the full stream have attended 10th conference of technological innovations with innovation interests were actively interacting with Reliance's technical team answering there technical questions.

Local

Assembly panel approves quotas for expat teachers' recruitment in Kuwait

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliament's educational affairs committee yesterday approved a proposal by MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei to set certain quotas per nationality of public education teachers with the aim of diversifying expertise and enrich the educational process, said parliamentary sources. The sources added that the committee also recommended that expat teachers should be recruited from countries with a high education quality ranking.

The sources added that a previous international report assessing Kuwait's educational system had blamed the Ministry of Education (MoE) for hiring a large number of teachers from a certain country with low educational ranking and warned that those teachers are behind students' poor standards. The report also urged Kuwait to rely more on local teachers, and if needed, hire teachers from countries with highly-ranked educational systems with a limited number of teachers from each country. The sources also noted that MoE had already adopted this recommendation before the committee approved it and stopped hiring teachers from that "certain" country.

KJA appoints legal advisors



Bader Al-Aloush



Athraa Al-Rifae

KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association's (KJA) Board of Directors appointed general assembly members lawyer Bader Mohammad Al-Aloush and lawyer Athraa Mohammad Al-Rifae as KJA's legal advisors. The lawyers expressed their willingness to defend any KJA member facing press-related cases in Kuwaiti courts, and give legal advice free of charge. Meanwhile, the board commended the efforts of lawyer Khalil Ibrahim Al-Qattan, who remains a legal advisor at KJA.



Khalil Al-Qattan

KD 880,000 to develop Jahra seafront

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi stressed he is supporting the New Kuwait 2035 vision through executing various projects that support the youth and the state's development projects. Speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony held to sign a contract with Khatib & Alami Company (an offshore consultant) and local partner Dar Al-Kuwait Company to develop Jahra seafront, Manfouhi said the municipality does its best to ensure executing projects through a flexible process that would protect public funds.

Municipality Deputy Director Nadia Al-Sherida said she is working hard to enhance the private sector's role in the development process. She added the project will cost KD 880,000 and will be finished within one year to be ready to serve the residents of Jahra and its surrounding areas. Khatib & Alami Chairman Faisal Al-Alami promised to take environmental, economic and social factors into consideration while planning and executing the project.

Meanwhile, the Municipal Council's legal and financial affairs committee yesterday approved a ministerial draft law regulating funeral and burial services in Kuwait and the proposal made by councilmember Abdul Salam Al-Randi to amend article 39 of the new municipal law number 33/2016 and reactivate the old article of law number 5/2005.

In the meantime, the Municipal Council's complainants and petitions committee is scheduled to discuss the reply it received from minister of public works and minister of state for housing affairs concerning public works ministry representatives' absence during the committee meetings. The committee will also discuss in the meeting headed by member Meshaal Al-Hamadhan a complaint by coastal road residents about turning their neighborhood into one full of commercial complexes and shopping malls, in addition to several other complaints.

Fire drill at Shuhada health center

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A mock drill was carried out at Shuhada health center and the scenario included a fire that prompted response from Mishref fire station under the supervision of its chief Col Rifaa bin Ali. The fire was on the ground floor, so firemen split into two teams - one for search and rescue and the other to fight the fire. The building was evacuated and firemen put out the blaze, which was in the equipment room. Two injuries were discovered - one critical and one light. Both were handed to paramedics.

Meanwhile, the public relations and information department at Kuwait Fire Services Directorate said fire centers dealt with nine incidents due to rain in Jahra governorate, most of which involved cars submerged in water in Abdaly, Subiya and Sabriya. Twelve persons were rescued, all in good health.



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Indonesia arrests dozens after IS-linked bombing

Romania's forests under heavy threat — along with its rangers



WASHINGTON DC: A tweet from US President Donald Trump about US Ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, is displayed during her testimony before the House Intelligence Committee hearing as part of the impeachment inquiry into US President Donald Trump on Capitol Hill. —AFP

Trump will 'strongly consider' testifying

President insists impeachment process is a 'witch hunt'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said yesterday he is "strongly" considering accepting a challenge from opposition Democrats to testify in his own impeachment investigation. After the speaker of the lower house, Nancy Pelosi, upped the ante by suggesting that Trump come forward to tell the "truth," the Republican president said he was keen.

Pelosi suggested "that I testify about the phony Impeachment Witch Hunt. She also said I could do it in writing," Trump tweeted. "Even though I did nothing wrong, and don't like giving credibility to this No Due Process Hoax, I like the idea & will, in order to get Congress focused again, strongly consider it!" It was unclear what kind of testimony the president had in mind.

His defense team would likely be highly resistant to the idea of him appearing before the House Intelligence Committee delving into the allegation that Trump pressured

Ukraine to dig up dirt on a political rival to help his 2020 reelection chances. During the lengthy probe led by special prosecutor Robert Mueller into accusations that Trump worked with Russians to boost his 2016 election chances, the president refused a face-to-face meeting and instead answered questions in written form.

Even so, his lawyers negotiated strict limits on what kind of questions could be put. In dozens of instances, Trump then said he could not "recall" the facts. The Mueller report ultimately found that Russian agents sought to influence the US election but that there was no evidence of collusion with the Trump campaign.

Trump's frustration

Any testimony by Trump would potentially be risky and his tweet could be nothing more than a tactical move in the tussle with Pelosi's Democrats. Trump has become increasingly angry and frustrated over

the impeachment process, which he insists is a "witch hunt." Democrats say they are steadily revealing corruption and abuse of office at the heart of the real estate magnate's presidency.

This week will see another stream of witnesses come before the Intelligence Committee, where they face questions from Democrats and Republicans. Although the action is happening at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, Trump watches closely — so closely that on Friday he tweeted an attack on one witness as she testified.

Former Ukraine ambassador Marie Yovanovitch was telling lawmakers how she had been forced out of her post in oddly abrupt circumstances around the time of the alleged Trump scheme in the ex-Soviet republic. In mid-testimony, Trump tweeted that "everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad." This caused widespread consternation in the hearing room and Yovanovitch called the president's

intervention "very intimidating."

Trump and his supporters have argued that the allegations against him so far are not supported by first hand witnesses. That will change, however, on Wednesday when the US ambassador to the European Union, Gordon Sondland, takes questions. Sondland was in direct contact with Trump during the time when he was meeting with Ukrainian officials, allegedly as a key player in efforts by a small group of Trump confidants to push for the dirt on Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

The House, where Democrats hold a majority, is expected to impeach Trump, although Republicans will likely vote solidly against. A trial would then be scheduled in the Senate where the Republican majority is expected to toss out the case. However, Trump in this case would still be only the third president ever impeached and the fight is likely to have unpredictable fallout in the 2020 election. —AFP

Israel's Gantz races to form government

JERUSALEM: After weeks of talks over a new Israeli government have gone around in circles, Benjamin Netanyahu's rival Benny Gantz had just two days left yesterday to form a coalition and become prime minister. Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party and Gantz's centrist Blue and White coalition achieved near parity in September's repeat elections, but even with allied parties both fell short of the 61 seats needed to form a majority in parliament.

Netanyahu was first given 28 days to form a coalition government but failed, so President Reuven Rivlin granted Gantz a similar timeframe. It is due to expire at 11:59 pm on Wednesday, and the former army chief has been engaged in a negotiation blitz in a bid to avoid a third general election in a year. Polls in April also led to a stalemate in a political system reliant on coalition building.

Gantz's task may have been further complicated by a flareup between Israel and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip last week, as his potential premiership likely rests on Arab support in parliament. Gantz has been desperately trying to convince Avigdor Lieberman, head of the nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party, to join his coalition. But even if he did they would fall short of a majority — needing at least the tacit support of the Arab Joint List, which has 13 seats, to govern.

'Arab government'

The Arab parties would be unlikely to take ministries but could support a minority Gantz government in key votes in Israel's parliament, the Knesset. But Lieberman, a right-winger known for his tough rhetoric towards Gaza, has reiterated his opposition to allying with Arabs. The former nightclub bouncer has been a defiant kingmaker, with his eight parliamentary seats potentially enough to put Netanyahu or Gantz into power.

Netanyahu, facing losing office for the first time since 2009, has upped his anti-Arab rhetoric in a seeming bid to increase pressure on Lieberman. On Sunday he warned of a "dangerous government" backed by parties that "support terrorist organisations." Gantz, Lieberman and Netanyahu all supported the Israeli assassination of an Islamic Jihad leader in Gaza that prompted a deadly flareup last week, while the Joint List opposed it.

"The Arabs ... are not Zionists and do not support Israel. To be dependent on them all the time, especially at the present time, is an enormous danger to Israel," Netanyahu said during a demonstration against a minority government. Gideon Rahat, a political science professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, said negotiations were likely to go down to the final moments. —AFP

Police round up students in Delhi at fee protests

NEW DELHI: Indian police said they briefly detained around 50 students in New Delhi yesterday as protests against proposed fee hikes at a prestigious public university entered a second week and degenerated into clashes. Police erected barricades around the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) as hundreds of students marched down the campus seeking the rollback of a hike in annual fees they say would make education there unaffordable for many.

JNU has produced some of India's most prominent academics, and has a history of left-wing activism. Many at the university have also rallied to accuse Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of curbing free speech. Yesterday, students tried moving out of the campus towards central Delhi, but baton-wielding police pushed them back. One student had blood pouring down his face after a scuffle.

"This isn't just about JNU, we need to reject fee hikes at all government universities," said protester and languages student Kushal, saying many would be unable to finish their studies if the proposed raises went through. Another languages student Shivraj Jagtap said university costs would be roughly



NEW DELHI: Security personnel hold a Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student during a students protest against accommodation fee hike, as security measures have been reinforced from JNU campus along the road to the march protest. —AFP

tripled, reaching 12,000 rupees (\$167) per month for some.

Vice-chancellor urges return to classroom

With students refusing to leave until detainees were released, a police official in Delhi, M.S. Randhawa said they were being freed later on Monday. University authorities could not be reached for comment on Monday's unrest or the fee hike proposals. But vice chancellor M. Jagadish Kumar on Sunday urged students to return to university for approaching exams. The government's

Human Resource Development ministry, which oversees public universities, has appointed a three-member panel to address the student concerns. The protests began at JNU a week ago, with some students injured when police fired water cannons to disperse them. Nearly half of the university's students come from families with incomes of less than 144,000 rupees (\$2,018.22) annually, according to the JNU Students Union. That means many students from poor and low-income families would not be able to afford the new costs, the union says.

The students are also protesting against what they say are "regressive" hostel rules on clothing and timings and are demanding that the vice chancellor be sacked. "The vice chancellor isn't meeting us," said Abhimanyu, a PhD student at JNU who like most preferred not to give a last name for fear of being identified. "The administration hasn't spoken to us even once." Students at other Indian universities have expressed solidarity with JNU colleagues, though the protests have not spread. —AFP

International

Observers slam Belarus polls for flouting democratic norms

'Parliamentary elections are in danger of becoming a formality'

MINSK: Parliamentary polls in Belarus did not show respect for democracy, international observers said yesterday, after the opposition to authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko failed to win a single seat. "These elections have demonstrated an overall lack of respect for democratic commitments," Margareta Cederfelt, leader of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) short-term observer mission, told journalists in Minsk.

She warned that "parliamentary elections are in danger of becoming a formality" in the ex-Soviet country ruled since 1994 by strongman Lukashenko. Opposition observers had already denounced Sunday's vote as a fraud and said it was rife with violations. Official results released yesterday showed parties loyal to Lukashenko taking all 110 seats in the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of a parliament dubbed a rubber stamp by critics. The opposition previously held two seats in the chamber.

More than half of the new deputies are government employees, including officials and journalists working for state media. Among the most prominent new lawmakers was the 22-year-old Miss Belarus 2018, Maria Vasilevich, who has frequently accompanied Lukashenko at official events in recent months. The 65-year-old Lukashenko — who has been dubbed "Europe's last dictator" — has overseen a series of elections that international observers have deemed unfair.

The country is set to hold a presidential election next year and as he cast his ballot on Sunday Lukashenko confirmed he would again be a candidate. Lukashenko has made efforts recently to reach out to the West, and he said he understood that Western countries would be watching the parliamentary vote. But said it was the Belarusians who would have the last word. "We hold this vote in our country for our people, to make things better, and we hold it in the way we understand," he said.

'Shameless falsifications'

Those critical of Lukashenko faced little choice at the ballot box, with the main opposition leaders

and the only two previous opposition MPs barred from standing. Nikolai Kozlov, the leader of the United Civic Front opposition party and a failed candidate in the vote, denounced the election as a sham. "With these shameless and cynical falsifications, the authorities are leaving people no choice — they are pushing people out into the streets," he told AFP on Monday.

An election monitoring campaign organized by opposition parties reported multiple violations on voting day, including officials inflating voter numbers. "The Belarusian system of election falsifications has been honed to perfection," Pavel Usov, head of the Warsaw-based Centre for Political Analysis and Prognosis, told AFP. "No one votes, no one counts the votes, but there is a result which no one is able to contest."

There was an "atmosphere of intimidation" during the campaign and "even temporary detention of some opposition candidates," Corien Jonker, head of the mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, said in Minsk. According to the authorities, more than 35 percent of the 6.8 million electorate voted ahead of polling day, while overall turnout reached 77 percent.

Reaching out to the West

In recent months Lukashenko has been making renewed attempts to reach out to Western nations, which have been critical of his record on human rights and democracy. He made a rare visit to western Europe this month, meeting Austrian leaders in Vienna and saying he wanted the European Union to be "an important political and business partner" for his country.

He also hosted then White House national security advisor John Bolton for rare talks in Minsk in August, saying a "new chapter" was opening in ties with Washington. Lukashenko is seeking a counterweight in relations with giant neighbor Russia, which is keen to ensure Belarus remains in its sphere of influence. The countries have formed a nominal "union", with close trade and military cooperation, but Lukashenko has opposed outright unification. —AFP



KREVA: Members of a local electoral commission empty a ballot box to count votes at a polling station after the Belarus' parliamentary election in the village of Kreva, some 10 km northwest of Minsk. —AFP

Four killed in California backyard shooting

LOS ANGELES: Four people were shot dead and six others wounded while watching a football game in the backyard of a central California home on Sunday, police said. Police were called to the scene after at least one person opened fire into a crowd of about 35 people gathered outside the house in Fresno, around 200 miles north of Los Angeles.

"Three people died on scene," Fresno deputy police chief Michael Reed told reporters, adding that a fourth

was rushed to hospital in critical condition and succumbed to his injuries there. All four of the dead and the six treated for "non life-threatening" gunshot wounds were men aged between 25 and 35, Reed said. "Our heart goes out to the families of the victims... this is senseless violence, he added. "We are doing everything we can to bring the perpetrators to justice."

Reed said it was unclear how many perpetrators had been involved in the shooting and that there was "no indication" the incident was gang-related. Police spokesman Bill Dooley said officers were looking for surveillance footage and witnesses to track the suspects. He said the victims were a group of family and friends who had gathered at the residence to watch a football match. Fresno councilor Luis Chavez, who represents the district where the shooting took place, said the incident was "not a reflection of our community." —AFP

West backs Georgia opposition protests

TBILISI: The United States and European Union expressed solidarity yesterday with Georgia's anti-government protesters who took to the streets after the ruling party backtracked on promises of electoral reforms. In the biggest anti-government protest in years, more than 20,000 demonstrators rallied on Sunday outside the parliament building in the capital Tbilisi urging the government to resign and calling for new legislative elections.

But the ruling Georgian Dream party general secretary and Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze flatly ruled out the possibility of early polls yesterday. Speaking during a news conference, he accused the opposition of "destabilizing political processes with cheap and destructive performances." In a joint statement earlier yesterday, the US and EU embassies said they "recognize the deep disappointment of a wide segment of Georgian society at the failure of parliament to pass the constitutional amendments required to move to fully proportional parliamentary elections in 2020."

"We fully support the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression," they said. On Sunday night, the rally dispersed peacefully but entrances to the parliament building remained blocked by dozens of protesters who say no lawmakers will be allowed to pass through. Yesterday morning, Georgian Dream MPs were not allowed into the building by a crowd of protesters who shouted "Rats!" and "Slaves!" and denounced Georgia's richest man and party leader Bidzina Ivanishvili. As of yesterday afternoon, traffic remained blocked by protesters on Tbilisi's main thoroughfare, Rustaveli Avenue, and several other streets. At a protest on Thursday, some 10,000 people rallied in Tbilisi, vowing to press ahead with "permanent" protests until their demands for snap polls are met.

Plummeting popularity

Opposition parties called for the rallies after forming a rare united front against the ruling party, whose MPs last week voted down legislation to hold parliamentary



TBILISI: Georgian riot police disperse protesters demanding the government's resignation and early parliamentary polls outside the parliament. —AFP

elections next year under a new proportional voting system. The opposition accused oligarch Ivanishvili — who is widely believed to be the man in charge in Georgia — of being behind the move. Twelve ruling party lawmakers — including two deputy parliament speakers — have left Georgian Dream to protest the controversial vote. The US and EU embassies said the failure to pass the legislation "has increased mistrust and heightened tensions between the ruling party and other political parties and civil society."

Protesters say the ruling party unfairly benefits from the current voting system. The Georgian Dream party won nearly 77 percent of seats in the 2016 parliamentary election despite garnering only 48.7 percent of the vote. The opposition at the time denounced the polls as rigged. Ivanishvili announced "large-scale political reform" following a summer of protests that saw 240 people injured in a police crackdown.

Two peaceful protesters including a teenaged girl lost an eye at the time. In power since 2012, the ruling party has seen its popularity plummet amid widespread discontent over economic stagnation and perceived backsliding on its commitment to democracy. Critics accuse Ivanishvili of persecuting political opponents, suffocating critical media, and creating a corrupt political system where his private interests dominate government decision-making. —AFP

the United Nations to send a team to investigate. Amnesty International has also sent a mission.

"There will be no impunity, not for those who committed acts of unusual violence, nor for those who committed excesses and abuses. We will do what is best for the victims," he said, referring to protesters first and then the security forces. The crisis is Chile's biggest since its return to democracy in 1990 when long time dictator General Augusto Pinochet yielded to democracy. More than 200 of those injured have sustained serious eye injuries, some even going blind in one eye, after being shot by police.

Pinera praised an agreement reached last week under which Chile will draft a new constitution to replace the current one that dates back to the dictatorship of Pinochet, who ruled from 1973 to 1990. Many in Chile see this step — getting rid of a charter that smacks of a dark, repressive chapter in the country's past — as a way to help end the crisis. It is a key demand of the thousands of protesters that have been taking to the streets in Santiago and elsewhere almost daily for a month. —AFP

Chile's prez condemns police violence after four weeks of unrest

SANTIAGO: President Sebastian Pinera condemned on Sunday for the first time what he called abuses committed by police in dealing with four weeks of violent unrest that have rocked Chile. "There was excessive use of force. Abuses and crimes were committed, and the rights of all were not respected," the president said in a speech to the nation as it marked a month of turmoil that has left 22 people dead and more than 2,000 injured.

Furious Chileans have been protesting social and economic inequality, and against an entrenched political elite that comes from a small number of the wealthiest families in the country, among other issues. Accusations of police brutality and human rights violations have been levelled since the protests broke out, prompting

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International

Romania's forests under heavy threat — along with its rangers

Ancient forests are under strong pressure from organized crime groups

VALEA REA: Like thick wrinkles, a multitude of dirt roads cut through barren slopes in Romania's mountainous Valea Rea region, showing the impact of aggressive illegal logging — which is not just threatening its rare forests but human life too. In a recent escalation of violence, two rangers were killed within a month of each other in different parts of the country while trying to stop alleged timber thieves.

The latest tragedies have brought thousands of Romanians, including hundreds of rangers, into the streets to demand the government does more to protect the forests and their guardians. Environmental groups say Romania's woodlands, home to some of the last virgin forests in Europe and diverse wildlife species, are under threat. Greenpeace estimates that up to 20 million cubic meters of wood are illegally harvested each year. Dominated by the Austrian company Holzindustrie Schweighofer, the timber sector is estimated to be worth more than six billion euros (\$6.6 billion) in the EU member country, where forests cover some seven million hectares (17,300 acres), or almost a third of the country.

'Very dangerous job'

But logging has disfigured many mountains and foothills, and rangers face threats and violence. In October, a 30-year-old ranger in Maramures county in northern Romania was found dead with a bullet wound in his back, shortly after the father-of-three made a phone call to say he caught three people illegally cutting trees.

A month earlier, his 50-year-old colleague from Iasi county in the northeast was beaten to death with an axe. A 17-year-old has been arrested for murder. Romsilva, the state company that manages the public forests, says 185 rangers have been hurt since 2014. A dozen rangers interviewed by AFP say they have been beaten, chased or threatened while on duty at least once. The average monthly wage of a ranger is just 2,000 lei (420 euros, \$460), they say.

"It's a very dangerous job, especially given the fact that I have to monitor a thousand hectares alone," says Valentin Dirig, 43, who has been guarding the forests in Neamt in the northwest for 15 years.

Marinel Ivanescu, a ranger from Teleorman county in the south, denounces "overlapping interests" between local authorities and loggers in a country where 3.2 million households are heated with wood.

Ancient forests under pressure

Forest sector crime generates up to 152 billion dollars a year globally, ranking fourth in terms of profitability after drug trafficking, counterfeiting and human trafficking, according to Sasha Braun of Interpol. In Eastern Europe "the ancient forests that shelter many species of animals and plants are under strong pressure from organized crime groups," Braun told a seminar hosted by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Bucharest in late October.

A report by Romania's Court of Auditors estimated in 2015 that 80 million cubic meters of timber worth \$5 billion were illegally cut between 1990 and 2012. In the Fagaras Mountains, which peak at 2,544 meters (8,346 feet) in central Romania, hundreds of hectares of forests were cut between 2008 and 2012. Authorities insist that after legislation was tightened in 2015, limiting the amount of wood that companies can log and allowing the gendarmerie to check trucks carrying timber, the phenomenon is now under control.

According to Romsilva, just 206,000 cubic meters were cut illegally in 2018, 31,000 from public forests. Holzindustrie Schweighofer, the Austrian company that works with smaller Romanian timber suppliers, was investigated after a 2018 NGO report accused it of disregarding the wood's origins, leading to police raids on its sites.

'Deforestation out of control'

Private land ownership accounts for about half of all forests. "The problem is with the private landowners who bought or recovered forests after the fall of the communist regime and think they can do whatever they want," ranger Dirig says. In 2015, the government commissioned expert Gheorghe Marin to carry out a forest inventory.

He and his team found 20 million cubic meters of wood that disappear yearly from the forests,



A picture taken on October 31, 2019 near Nucsoara, central Romania, shows a view of Fagaras mountains in Valea Rea (the Bad Valley) region. —AFP

compared to 19 million cubic meters that are cut legally, according to the report leaked to the media last month.

Authorities have disputed the number. Marin told AFP that the inventory was suspended and that his contract was not extended.

Greenpeace also accuses the environment ministry of delaying the implementation of a national system to track wood transport, which would use satellite images and CCTV to monitor the forests and the trucks leaving it. "Just look at the number of trucks carrying wood to understand that deforestation is out

of control," says Romania's Greenpeace spokesman Cristian Neagoe. Radu Melu of the WWF says some companies use the same document, authoring one timber transport, for two different transports out of the forests.

In Romania's Carpathian mountains in the Valea Rea region, forest engineer Midorel Badescu, 59, knows every path. He says three private owners have been under investigation for several years over the barren slopes. "It doesn't matter if they are convicted or not," he says. "I want them to be obliged to reforest the mountains." —AFP

Russia hands ships back to Ukraine ahead of summit

KIEV: Russia yesterday handed over three navy ships it seized a year ago from Ukraine, Moscow and Kiev authorities said, in the latest move to ease tensions between the two countries ahead of a crucial summit. After an exchange of prisoners in September and the withdrawal of some frontline forces over the last few weeks, the handover marked another step in trying to resolve the five-year conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Efforts have been building since the election of Volodymyr Zelensky as Ukraine's new president, and on Friday France announced he would hold his first face-to-face talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Paris on December 9. The talks, which will be mediated by French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, will be the highest-level negotiations on the conflict since 2016. Russia's foreign ministry said on Monday that the ships — two gunboats and a tugboat — had been handed over to Ukraine. It said they had "illegally crossed the Russian border" and been held as evidence but were no longer needed.

Ukraine confirmation

Ukraine confirmed the handover of the "Nikopol", "Berdiansk" and "Yany Kapu" vessels. Ukraine's Navy said the ships "had begun moving towards mainland Ukraine". The Ukrainian vessels were seized in November last year in the most serious confrontation between the two countries since the start of the conflict in 2014. Russian forces took control of the vessels as they headed through the Kerch Strait, a narrow waterway giving access to the Sea of Azov that is used by Ukraine and Russia.

They captured 24 Ukrainian sailors, who were returned to Ukraine as part of the September prisoner swap. Television on Sunday showed footage of the ships being towed by the Russian coastguard through the Kerch Strait. The election of Zelensky, a television comedian who shocked the country's elites by winning the presidency in April, has raised hopes the conflict can finally be resolved. Zelensky has said ending the war — which has left more than 13,000 dead — is his top priority.

First talks in years

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed yesterday the talks would go ahead on December 9 but appeared to downplay hope of a major breakthrough. "There was a long delay, a long break in work under the Normandy format, and so we should not set expectations too high," he said. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas was expected to arrive in Kiev later Monday to help prepare the summit.

In Berlin, a foreign ministry spokesman said that for the first time in a long time there has been "some movement" in the conflict. "We want to seize this momentum," he said. The four-way summit was initially announced by Macron for September, after talks with Putin in France, but was held up until the troop withdrawals took place. The structure for the talks is known as the "Normandy format" after a first meeting brought together the four heads of state in France's Normandy region in 2014. —AFP

French 'yellow vests' shut down department store

PARIS: French "yellow vest" demonstrators occupied a top Parisian department store on Sunday, a day after clashes in the capital on the first anniversary of the protest movement. The glitzy Galeries Lafayette store in the Opera shopping district was evacuated after dozens of protesters chanting anti-capitalist and anti-government slogans took over the third floor.

"(President Emmanuel) Macron is destroying France and your rights, don't criticize us. We're here for you," one placard read. The protesters were expelled shortly afterwards by security staff. The store — one of the top destinations in Paris for moneyed foreign tourists, which was targeted by the demonstrators as a "consumerist temple" — said it would remain closed for the rest of the day.

The protest came on a second day of demonstrations to mark the anniversary of a leaderless revolt that badly rattled President Emmanuel Macron's centrist government. Twenty people were arrested Sunday in Paris but in most places the protests were peaceful. On Saturday, police in Paris had bat-

oned rioters for hours around the southeastern Place d'Italie square, where a yellow vest march was shut down by the authorities after turning violent. Several cars were overturned or set alight, bus shelters were smashed and a monument to a World War II hero Marshal Alphonse Juin was defaced by demonstrators dressed in black, who wore masks to hide their faces.

'Thugs' and 'brutes'

Police checked thousands of demonstrators over the weekend. On Sunday, prosecutors said 169 were held in custody including eight minors. Castaner claimed that there were "few demonstrators" among the protesters in Paris, who he said were mainly "thugs, brutes who came to fight the security forces and prevent the emergency services from doing their work". But leftist TV historian Mathilde Larrere wrote on Twitter that she and two friends were prevented from leaving the protest after the clashes began because of police crowd control tactics.

She accused the police of tactics "unworthy of a democratic state", citing "the repeated teargassing and (stun) grenades going off everywhere". In rural France, by contrast, the mood of the anniversary was more festive. Many yellow vests returned to the traffic roundabouts they occupied last year when they began rebelling against

'You can't forget the bomb'

The August 6, 1945 bombing of Hiroshima and of Nagasaki three days later contributed to Japan's surrender and the end of the Second World War on August 15, months after Nazi Germany capitulated. Father Yoshio Kajiyama, director of the Jesuit social centre in Tokyo, was born in Hiroshima shortly after the war and is eagerly awaiting the pope's anti-nuclear speech.

"My grandfather died the day of the bomb in Hiroshima, I never knew him. Four days later my aunt died when she was 15 years old," said the 64-year-old. "If you grow up in Hiroshima, you can't forget the bomb." The pope will make "as vigorous an appeal as possible in favour of concerted measures to completely eliminate nuclear weapons," Vatican number two Cardinal Pietro Parolin told the United Nations in September.

A previous member of Japan's diplomatic mission to the Vatican, Shigeru Tokuyasu, said he hoped the visit would pull the world back from "the globalisation of indifference" over nuclear weapons. But, said Tokuyasu, the pope should avoid discussing the politically sensitive issue of nuclear energy. Francis is also to meet victims of the devastating 2011 earthquake that struck northeastern Japan and the subsequent tsunami that between them killed 18,500 people and sparked the nuclear power catastrophe at Fukushima.

Fear of nuclear war

Francis is used to railing against countries



PARIS: A protester wearing the DC comic Joker character's make up holds a banner on place d'Italie in Paris on November 16, 2019, during clashes on the sidelines of a demonstration marking the first anniversary of the "yellow vest" (gilets jaunes) movement. —AFP

Macron's economic policies. But at the town of Le Pont-de-Beauvoisin in the southeast Savoie region, around 60 people paid tribute to a yellow vest protester who died a year ago. Chantal Mazet was knocked over by a car at a roundabout on the first day of the protests.

The interior ministry put the number of demonstrators on Saturday at 28,600 nationwide but the organizers said nearly 40,000 people had rallied — a far cry from the estimated

282,000 who took part in the first big day of protests on November 17, 2018. The yellow vests, who accuse Macron of ruling on behalf of the urban elite — the spark for the protests was a series of fuel price hikes that squeezed card-dependent rural-dwellers — are adamant that they have not gone away. They are now looking to join forces with the trade union movement, which is planning a major transport strike over pension reforms starting on December 5. —AFP



VATICAN CITY: Worshipers greet and take photos of Pope Francis (C) as he arrives for an audience with the Parish Cells of Evangelization yesterday at Paul-VI hall. —AFP

that make money from weapons and has already voiced his fear of a nuclear war. In January last year, he printed cards with a photo of a Nagasaki bomb victim, inscribing the words "the fruit of war" above his signature. The 1945 photo, captured by American photographer Joe O'Donnell, showed a small boy standing ramrod straight carrying his dead younger brother on his back while waiting for his turn at a cremation site.

The late pope John Paul II visited Japan in

1981, where at Hiroshima's peace monument he pointed to war as "the work of man". In August, the city of Hiroshima called on Japan to sign the UN treaty calling for a ban on nuclear weapons, something that all the world's nuclear powers have refused to do. Japan's 1967 its pacifist constitution commits to the principle of "not producing, possessing or allowing nuclear weapons on its territory," despite counting on the US nuclear umbrella for protection. —AFP

International

Symbolic swearing-in for Sri Lanka's new president

Rajapaksa put his success down to the 'extraordinary blessings of the Buddhist monks'

ANURADHAPURA: Sri Lanka's new president and scourge of the Tamil Tigers Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday urged minorities unnerved by his election victory to work with him, as he was sworn in at a ceremony steeped in symbolism for his core supporters. Having spearheaded the brutal end of the Tamil separatist war a decade ago, Rajapaksa is a divisive figure but popular among his own majority Sinhalese-Buddhist community.

His landslide win split the island nation of 21.6 million on religious and ethnic lines as never before, seven months after deadly Islamist attacks. Unusually, his inauguration was held at a revered Buddhist shrine with an imposing stupa — reputedly built by a Sinhalese king who vanquished invading Tamils over 2,000 years ago. At the ceremony, Rajapaksa put his success down to the "extraordinary blessings of the Buddhist monks".

"The main message of the election is that it was the Sinhala majority vote that allowed me to win the presidency," the 70-year-old retired lieutenant colonel said. "I knew that I could win with only the votes of the Sinhala majority. But I asked Tamils and Muslims to be a part of my success. Their response was not what I expected. However, I urge them to join me to build one Sri Lanka," he said.

Rajapaksa was defence chief under his brother Mahinda's 2005-15 presidency, when the military conducted a no-holds-barred campaign to end the 37-year war in which 100,000 people perished. This makes the brothers heroes among Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority and the powerful Buddhist clergy. But around 40,000 Tamil civilians were allegedly killed in the closing stages of the conflict, which ended in 2009, and Saturday's election saw Tamils — who account for about 15 percent of the population — vote overwhelmingly against Rajapaksa.

War crimes

As defense secretary Gotabaya had unfettered control over the security forces, while "death squads" that abducted dozens of dissidents, opponents, journalists and others also allegedly reported to him. Many people were never found again after being bundled into feared white vans, while some were killed and dumped by roadsides. The new president has denied any involvement and has resisted international calls to investigate the alleged war crimes.

At his only press conference during a three-month election campaign, Rajapaksa reiterated that he will not allow Sri Lankan troops to be tried by any war-crime tribunal, foreign or local. He had also pledged to exonerate the dozens of military personnel accused of abductions, extortion and killings during his brother's decade in power. The island's Tamils have been campaigning for accountability for war crimes and greater autonomy in areas where Tamils are concentrated. Tamil youth took up arms in 1972 demanding a separate state and their violent guerilla campaign at its height saw them control a third of the country.

Comeback

After being in opposition for nearly five years, Rajapaksa announced his intention to run for the presidency just days after Islamist attacks on April 21 that killed 269 people, promising to protect the nation. The Easter Sunday suicide bombings on three upscale hotels and three churches was carried out by a home-grown outfit from among Sri Lanka's Muslim minority, who make up 10 percent of the population.

It shocked the nation, and the world, just as Sri Lankan tourism was booming and as the nation prepared to celebrate a decade since the end of the Tamil separatist war. Rajapaksa insisted that extremists



ANURADHAPURA: Sri Lanka's new president Gotabaya Rajapaksa (C) speaks after taking the oath of office during his swearing-in ceremony at the Ruwanwelisaya temple. — AFP

would not have carried out any attacks if he had been in power. He blamed the government of Prime Minister

Ranil Wickremesinghe for weakening the intelligence apparatus he had built. — AFP

Indonesia arrests dozens after IS-linked bombing

JAKARTA: Dozens of suspected Indonesian militants have been rounded up after a suicide bomber linked to the Islamic State group killed himself and wounded six others in a police station attack last week, police said yesterday. Some 45 suspects have been arrested since the Wednesday bombing in Medan on Sumatra island, while two bombmakers were shot dead during a raid, according to authorities.

"The pair resisted arrest and tried to attack police with sharp weapons and an air gun," National Police spokesman Dedi Prasetyo told reporters in Jakarta yesterday. They had built a low-intensity bomb that the 24-year-old attacker strapped around his body, Prasetyo added. Authorities had earlier said they suspected the bomber



DELI SERDANG: Indonesian bomb disposal squad detonate a bomb that was seized following a recent attack. — AFP

was a "lone wolf", following the blast that wounded four police officers and two civilians.

Police stations are frequent targets for radicals in the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation, which has long

struggled with Islamist militancy. About 20 other suspects arrested since the bombing — including the bomber's wife and the couple's religious mentor — played what police described as direct roles in the attack and had links to Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). The outfit is a local extremist group that has pledged allegiance to IS and carried out previous attacks, including suicide bombings at several churches last year that killed a dozen congregants.

"The wife together with her husband (the bomber) were members of the JAD network," Prasetyo said. "They had also attended military camp training... and were taught how to buy guns and sharp weapons," he added. Yesterday, some residents in Medan protested plans to bury the bomber's body in their city. The police station attack was revenge for earlier militant arrests by Indonesia's elite anti-terror squad Densus 88, Prasetyo said.

Last month, President Joko Widodo ordered beefed-up security after two JAD-linked militants stabbed his chief security minister, who survived the attack. The Southeast Asian nation of some 260 million has significant numbers of religious minorities — including Christians, Hindus and Buddhists — who have been targeted by radical Islamist groups amid concerns about rising intolerance. — AFP

Nigeria's ruling party wins election in key oil state

YENAGOA: Nigeria's ruling party yesterday won the key oil-rich state of Bayelsa, the electoral body said, a sign of President Muhammadu Buhari's growing influence in opposition strongholds. Residents cast their ballots in hotly-contested gubernatorial elections in Bayelsa and central Kogi state on Saturday in polls marred by sporadic violence and abuses including killings, abductions, vote-buying, the snatching of voting materials and intimidation.

Bayelsa has been ruled by the opposition Peoples Democratic Party since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999. It is a key political battleground because of the lucrative oil and gas sector that is largely based in the southern Delta region. David Lyon of Buhari's All Progressive Congress (APC) won more than twice the number of votes as his closest rival Douve Diri of the PDP, said the Independent National Electoral Commission.

APC supporters celebrated across the state when the results came in, dancing and singing. Major roads in the capital were blocked by jubilant APC sympathisers, AFP correspondents saw. In a statement yesterday, the president congratulated the new governor, while deploring the violence that characterized the vote. "Violence during elections vitiates our commitment to demonstrate to the world and upcoming generation that we are a people capable of electing leaders in a peaceful and orderly manner," he said. Those unhappy with the results should seek legal redress rather than resort to violence, he added.

Govt wins in Kogi state

Political analysts see the APC's victory in an opposition stronghold as a sign of Buhari's growing influence. "The victory is a big boost for APC and Buhari," said Dapo Thomas, a politics and history lecturer at Lagos State University. "It's a measure of acceptance and popularity of the president and his party in the core oil-rich region, of which Bayelsa is a part," he added. "I think it is also a reflection of the changing voting pattern of the people in the region who want to be part of the central government headed by Buhari."

Bayelsa and Kogi are among seven states where gubernatorial elections are being held at different times from the general election, due to court rulings. Yesterday afternoon, INEC announced that incumbent APC governor Yahaya Bello had claimed a second term in charge of Kogi state after a vote that also saw deadly violence and electoral malpractice. Police said three people were killed while voting materials were snatched and election officials harassed by gangs loyal to the rival parties.

Bello was returned with 406,222 votes, beating his main opponent Musa Wada of the PDP, who scored 189,704. State elections are fiercely contested in Nigeria, where governors are powerful figures, controlling state finances and responsible for key areas from education to health. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with 190 million people, has a long history of electoral violence. More than 50 people were killed during the February and March 2019 general election which returned Buhari to power. In 2011, hundreds of people were killed in post-election violence, mostly in northern Nigeria. Buhari has promised to reform the electoral system to make future polls free, fair, credible and violence-free. — AFP

Folau claims bushfires 'God's judgement' for gay marriage

SYDNEY: Sacked Wallabies rugby star Israel Folau yesterday sparked outrage by suggesting destructive bushfires and drought ravaging Australia were "God's judgement" for the legalization of same-sex marriage and abortion.

The devout Christian, who is pursuing legal action against Rugby Australia after being fired in May for posting on Instagram that "hell awaits" gay people and others he considers sinners, made his latest outburst in a Sydney church sermon on Sunday. The comments were slammed as "appallingly insensitive" by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, himself an evangelical Christian. Folau said the devastating drought and timing of fires across swathes of New South Wales and Queensland, which have left six people dead and destroyed hundreds of homes, were no coincidence. "I've been looking around at the events that's been happening in Australia, this past couple of weeks, with all the natural disasters, the bushfires and the droughts," he said. Folau, Super Rugby's record try-scorer who has played for Australia 73 times, then talked to the congregation about same-sex marriage and abortion.

"God's word says for a man and a woman to be together, one man and one woman in the covenant of marriage," he said, while adding: "Abortion, it's OK now to murder, kill infants, unborn children." Folau continued: "Look how rapid these bushfires, these droughts, all these things have come in a short period of time. Do you think it's a coincidence or not?"

'Button up'

"God is speaking to you guys. Australia you need to repent and take these laws and turn it back to what is right by God." Same-sex marriage became law in Australia following a referendum in 2017 while New South Wales became the last state to decriminalize abortion in September this year. In the sermon posted on The Truth of Jesus Christ Church's Facebook page, Folau said he was sharing his message "out of love" and warned the fires were "only a little taste of God's judgement coming".

While Folau has gained the support of prominent conservatives in the past, Morrison was quick to criticize. "They were appalling comments and he is a free citizen, he can say whatever he likes. But that doesn't mean he can't have regard to the grievous offence this would have caused to people whose homes have been burnt down," said the prime minister.

Even one of his most staunch allies, former Wallabies coach and conservative radio host Alan Jones, was unimpressed. "Israel is a lovely human being, I know him well. But, Israel, button up," Jones said on his 2GB radio program. — AFP



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un poses with members of the Air and Anti-Aircraft Force of the Korean People's Army during an airborne insertion training at an undisclosed location. — AFP

N Korea 'no longer interested' in summits with US

SEOUL: North Korea is "no longer interested" in summits with the US unless Washington offers new concessions in their nuclear negotiations, Pyongyang said yesterday, hours after Donald Trump hinted at the prospect. "You should act quickly, get the deal done," Trump tweeted Sunday, referring to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. "See you soon!"

Kim and Trump have met three times since June last year, but talks have been gridlocked since their Hanoi summit in February broke up in disagreement over sanctions relief, while October's working-level talks rapidly broke down in Sweden. Pyongyang has set Washington a deadline of the end of the year to come forward with a fresh offer, and foreign ministry advisor Kim Kye Gwan said the US was stalling while "pretending it has made progress".

He interpreted Trump's tweet as a signal for a new summit, he said in a statement carried by state news agency KCNA, but declared: "We are no longer interest-

ed in such talks that bring nothing to us." "We will no longer gift the US president with something he can boast of," he went on, adding the North should be compensated for the "successes" that President Trump touted as his own achievements.

The implied criticism of Trump by name is a departure for Pyongyang, which has long limited its frustration to other administration officials. Last month, adviser Kim declared: "Contrary to the political judgment and intention of President Trump, Washington political circles and DPRK policy makers of the US administration are hostile to the DPRK for no reason," using the initials of North Korea's official name.

In September he was fulsome in his praise for the US leader, saying that Trump was "different from his predecessors" and that he placed his hopes in "President Trump's wise option and bold decision". But as the North's deadline approaches it has issued a series of increasingly assertive statements — while also carrying out a number of weapons launches. Washington should withdraw its "hostile policy" if it wants dialogue to continue, Kim said yesterday, without elaborating further. Trump's tweet came after Washington and Seoul agreed to postpone annual joint aerial exercises to create space for diplomacy with Pyongyang, which condemns such drills as preparations for invasion. — AFP

Niger oppn figure jailed after return

NIAMEY: A leading opposition figure in Niger who returned from self-imposed exile last week was jailed yesterday to serve out the rest of his time for a conviction of baby smuggling, his family told AFP. Hama Amadou, 69, who had flown home last Thursday after

his mother died, "was incarcerated early today in Filingue," 180 kilometers north of the capital Niamey, a relative said. "He went to court voluntarily and was taken to prison."

A former premier and parliamentary speaker, Amadou has been nicknamed "the Phoenix" for his political comebacks. In November 2015, he was arrested on his return from abroad and charged with baby-trafficking — a case that supporters said was trumped-up. He campaigned for the March 2016 presidential elections from behind bars, gaining 17.7 percent of first-round votes behind President

Mahamadou Issoufou, who won 48.4 percent. He was released on medical grounds four days before the runoff ballot, flew to France and remained abroad until his return last week. In March 2017, 20 people, including Amadou, were convicted in the case, which allegedly entailed smuggling babies from Nigeria via Benin for wealthy couples in Niger.

He was given a 12-month sentence in absentia, of which eight months have still to be served, after time spent in prison is taken into account. One of his wives was also sentenced. — AFP

Analysis

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In war-ravaged Kabul, women throng parks for peace and picnics

The sound of women laughing and singing in public is rare in Kabul, where four decades of war have left a population anxious and on edge as they go about their daily lives - except on Wednesdays, when hundreds of Afghan women head to the parks. In recent years, more than half a dozen of Kabul's gardens and parks have been restored or are being upgraded, with a special focus on making them safer and more accessible to women.

"There are very few public spaces in Kabul where women are safe from harassment, so we like to come to the gardens," said Salma Mohamedi, a high school student who had skipped classes to hang out with her girlfriends in Chihilisiton Garden, which admits only women and families on Wednesdays. "The security situation in Kabul is not so good, and many places are not safe. But it is peaceful and secure here, and we can be ourselves," she said, as her friends played a game of catch on the grassy lawn, shrieking with laughter.

More than 75 percent of Kabul is informally settled, so there are few public places, and fewer still that are women friendly, said Frozan Abdullah at UN-Habitat's Afghanistan Urban Peace Building Program that works with communities and authorities in eight cities. The settlements agency is renovating some neighborhood parks as part of a program to upgrade informal settlements, and is conducting the first audit of 60 public spaces in Kabul.

The survey, to be published next year, gauges how safe residents feel in public spaces, and includes an inventory of facilities such as benches, streetlights, toilets and security guards to assess how women-friendly they are, said Abdullah. "Decades of war have led to depression, anxiety and other physical and psychological problems, particularly among women as they are largely housebound," she said. "They also faced harassment, and a lack of facilities such as separate toilets and adequate lighting," she added.

Benches, lights

Forty years of war, from the 1980s' Soviet occupation to internal fighting and the war against the Taliban, destroyed much of the city of Kabul, wedged in a narrow valley between the Hindu Kush mountains. While rebuilding damaged infrastructure took precedence after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, plans were also made to restore Kabul's once famed gardens - not just as much-needed green spaces, but also to heal pent-up anxieties, said Abdullah.

Recent research has shown that time spent in a park results in less negativity among city residents. But across Asia, cities are losing green spaces at a fast pace as a construction boom gobbles up land for offices and apartments, worsening the effects of rising temperatures. In Chihilisiton Garden, women sat on benches and read books, families spread out picnic lunches, and a rowdy group of girls sang at the top of their voices and posed for selfies.

The 12.5-hectare park, Kabul's biggest historic public garden, was heavily damaged in fighting in the 1970s and '80s. It lay in ruins until the non-profit Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) took over its renovation in an agreement with the city. Its restoration followed AKTC's upgrade of the 16th century Bagh-e-Babur, or Babur's Gardens, where the first Mughal Emperor Babur is buried. The 11-hectare walled and terraced expanse now draws hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

The Chihilisiton Garden renovation was completed last year, and included upgrades to the surrounding neighborhood where a busy market is located, and jobs in construction and restoration for residents, according to AKTC. "These parks and gardens are important social spaces. For a war-torn society, these gardens can help heal the wounds and scars in the human psyche as well as in the urban fabric of the city," said Luis Monreal, general manager at AKTC.

Market, cinema

During their strict Islamist rule from 1996-2001, the Afghan Taliban banned music and movies, and kept women from education, voting and most work. Women were not allowed to leave their homes without permission and a male escort. After the Taliban rule, women still hesitate to go by themselves to a park, so it helps to have adequate facilities, and designated days, said Abdullah of UN-Habitat. "Otherwise, you will only see men in the parks. But women are just as entitled to recreational opportunities and open spaces in the city," she said. The audit of Kabul's public spaces is part of a worldwide recognition that the urban planning process often ignores women's inputs, which results in spaces that exclude them. So-called gender mainstreaming in urban planning not only makes public spaces more inclusive, but also has a favorable effect on women's safety and wellbeing. — Reuters

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Iraqi demonstrators gather in the capital Baghdad's Tahrir Square during ongoing anti-government demonstrations yesterday. — AFP

Washington silent as Iraq regime under fire

It posted tens of thousands of troops in Iraq, huddled with its leaders and helped craft its laws - but with the country swamped by deadly protests, Washington is staying out of the fray. Its apparent absence during a key turning point in Iraq lays bare how much its interests and influence have waned since the 2003 US-led invasion that opened the door to fellow Shiite-majority neighbor Iran. "The (US-Iraq) gulf has never been so big, and keeps getting bigger," a senior Iraqi official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

After the invasion, the US effectively dismantled and rebuilt the Iraqi state, ushering in a new class of political elites with whom it crafted close personal links. It trained a new military, deploying more than 170,000 troops to Iraq at its peak before withdrawing in 2011. Since then, American soldiers helped Iraq defeat jihadists and US officials conferred closely with their counterparts on the 2017 Kurdish independence referendum, the 2018 parliamentary vote and the ensuing cabinet formation.

Now, protesters across Baghdad and the Shiite-majority south are demanding an overhaul of the US-crafted system, but the US has remained comparatively restrained. It has issued a half-dozen statements condemning violence but stopped short of using its diplomatic muscle to resolve the crisis. In the past, Washington would have been "much more overt," the top Iraqi official told AFP. "The US back in 2003 shaped this current Iraqi government structure, which delivered this political class," he said. "Do they want to be engaged in rectifying it? I think the jury is still out."

Fraying friendships

"The bottom line is that the US state-building project in Iraq has failed," said Kirk Sowell, an analyst who writes the Inside Iraqi Politics newsletter. Since protests erupted on Oct 1, more than 330 people have died, authorities have imposed an internet blackout, and activists have been threatened and kidnapped. Last week, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo telephoned Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi and "deplored the death toll", but four protesters were killed the next day.

Perhaps most worrying for the US is the role of Major General Qasem Soleimani, Iran's pointman for Iraq, in brokering deals among political forces in Baghdad. "US influence is not really zero, but it is negligible during the current crisis," said Sowell. That is partly because Iraq has filled out its own institutions and US troop numbers have drastically dropped, said Robert Ford of the Middle East Institute.

Ford was a diplomat at the sprawling US embassy in Iraq between 2004-2006 and 2008-2010. But the mission now sits mostly empty after an ordered US withdrawal in May, as tensions rose between Tehran and Washington over the former's nuclear ambitions. "That in and of itself shows US interests are reduced," he told AFP.

There is also little shared history between current Iraqi officials and the administration of President Donald Trump, unlike with previous US governments. "I don't think President Trump could pick up the phone, talk to Abdel Mahdi and rely on old times together or face-to-face meetings," said Ford.

'Kiss of death'

In fact, Iraqi and US officials say ties between the White House and the premier's office are at their "coldest" since 2003. They say the White House has postponed a bilateral meeting at least three times because it was "angry" Abdel Mahdi was not distancing himself more from Iran. But among a political class with deep, decades-old ties to Iran, Abdel Mahdi is "probably the best we could hope for", a senior State Department official told AFP. Tehran and its Iraqi allies, including armed groups, depict any party seen as close to the US as a "conspirator" seeking instability, making it politically costly to cozy up to Washington. "Iraqi actors used to want others to know they had access to the US. Now, it's the kiss of death," said Ramzy Mardini of the United States Institute of Peace. That logic also applies to the current anti-government demonstrators, which Iran-backed parties have sought to paint as US-backed "agents".

Western officials in Baghdad told AFP they were wary of signaling open support for the protesters because of such claims. Demonstrators have directed their ire at the governing political class but also on perceived Iranian overreach, a dimension Washington has welcomed without explicitly backing the rallies. Direct criticism of the US, surprisingly, has been rare - even though it was the main architect of the system. That could change if rallies continue to be met with violence. "The legacy for the younger generation is that it will see the US put out talking points, but not take action," said Mardini. "It makes it harder for US policymakers to regain the trust of the future political class." — AFP

5-Star's crisis threatens Italy govt's survival

The 5-Star Movement, senior partner in two coalitions since last year's national election, is struggling with internal strife and falling support which threaten the survival of Italy's two-month old government. The anti-establishment party won 34 percent in the March 2018 election, twice that of its nearest rival, but is now polling at half that level. Surveys show a downward trend that is fuelling party anxiety and dissent towards its leader, Luigi Di Maio.

Investors are becoming jittery. The spread between Italian benchmark government bonds and German Bunds, which had narrowed sharply after the government was formed, increased last week to its widest for three months. Fourteen 5-Star lawmakers defied Di Maio last month by voting down a government plan to save a heavily polluting steel plant in southern Italy by granting legal immunity to its owners while they carried out a clean-up plan.

Di Maio, who is Italy's foreign minister, said last week

that his internal critics who speak anonymously to the press were driven by personal ambition and should leave the party. The lack of discipline in 5-Star's ranks and a trickle of lawmaker defections are a danger to the government, which has only a thin majority in the upper house Senate.

5-Star's problems are also hurting relations with its coalition partners - the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) and small centrist and leftist groups - as Di Maio, 33, tries to dictate policy to regain support. The ensuing tensions undermine coalition cohesion and reduce support for all its parties. "My baseline scenario is that the government will fall in the spring and there will be new elections," said Francesco Galfetti, head of political risk consultancy Policy Sonar. "The coalition's only clear aim seems to be to keep the (main opposition) League out of power but that may not be enough to hold it together."

'Declining path'

5-Star steadily shed support in coalition with Matteo Salvini's hard-right League and briefly recovered when Salvini brought down the government in August. The slide has now resumed in its partnership with the PD. 5-Star was founded 10 years ago by comedian Beppe Grillo as a grassroots protest movement against the corruption and cronyism of Italy's political and business elite. It seems that for many voters it has lost its purpose since it

became a part of that elite. "My concern is that they are now on a very severe declining path," said Lorenzo Pregliasco, head of polling and political analysis firm YouTrend. "With the League they at least had in common that they were both seen as challengers of the old political system, but the PD is a symbol of the establishment 5-Star has always fought. I think this will be very damaging for them."

5-Star calls itself post-ideological. It attracts left and right-wing voters alike, setting it apart from other European anti-system parties such as the leftist Podemos in Spain or the far-right National Front in France. This was an advantage in opposition, but to gain power it had to ally itself first with the right and then with the left, alienating much of its voter base on both occasions.

It has pushed through flagship measures such as a "citizens' income" poverty relief scheme, curbs on temporary contracts and a cut in the number of parliamentarians, but most Italians remain unimpressed. Italy's chronically sluggish economy has stagnated and voters have proved far more receptive to the League's relentless focus on immigration and promises of tax cuts.

Di Maio has been overshadowed by the more charismatic Salvini, whose League is now polling at about 33 percent. Technocrat Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte was always seen as close to 5-Star, though he is not a party member. — Reuters

New era or false dawn? Tsitsipas win invites caution

Stefanos Tsitsipas said he was ready for a breakthrough Grand Slam victory after winning the ATP Finals in London - but a glance at recent history invites caution. The 21-year-old Greek was in bullish mood after he beat Dominic Thiem, having ousted Roger Federer in the semi-finals, to become the season-ending event's youngest winner since 2001. "I believe I'm really close to being crowned a Grand Slam champion," he said, after his 6-7 (6/8), 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) triumph in London on Sunday. "I know these are strong words that I say but I do feel I belong there."

But although Tsitsipas's victory feels significant, he is the fourth first-time champion in as many years at the season finale, which has proved a poor predictor of future success. Last year, young German Alexander Zverev pummeled Novak Djokovic in the final but he had a miserable time at this season's Slams - while the Serb, 32, picked up the Australian Open and Wimbledon titles to take his overall tally to 16.

Rafael Nadal, 33, won a barely credible 12th French Open title and added the US Open, underlining the fact that the old guard were still very much in charge. No member of the "Big Three" - also featuring Federer - has won the season-ending ATP Finals since 2015, when

Djokovic picked up his fifth title. Djokovic was also the last ATP Finals champion to go on to win a major title.

Injury-plagued Andy Murray has won only two trophies since he secured his sole ATP Finals title in 2016, crowning his strongest season. And the lavishly gifted but inconsistent Grigor Dimitrov has not won a tournament since his 2017 success at the season finale. The fact remains that despite all the razzmatazz surrounding the ATP Finals, it is the Grand Slams that are the true yardstick in tennis.

Since 38-year-old Federer won his first Grand Slam title in 2003, the Big Three have collected an astonishing 55 out of the 66 majors on offer, with Murray and Stan Wawrinka also winning three apiece. There has long been speculation over who would have the guts and talent to overthrow the established order. Players such as Milos Raonic, Dimitrov and Kei Nishikori - members of a previous supposed "next generation", consistently failed to challenge the dominant trio.

'Incredible tennis'

However, that is not to say that there's no hope for the younger players, who now appear to be getting closer. Russia's Daniil Medvedev, 23, pushed Nadal all the way in the US Open final in September, and should have avenged the loss at the ATP Finals but he collapsed from an seemingly impregnable position against the Spaniard. Zverev demolished Nadal to reach the semi-finals in London, but was disappointing in a straight-sets defeat against Thiem.

Tsitsipas' impressive win against Federer in the semi-finals also felt like a statement of intent - backing up his victory against the Swiss at the Australian Open. Zverev, 22, predicted next year will bring a new Grand Slam cham-



Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas poses with the winner's trophy after winning the men's singles final match on day eight of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Sunday. — AFP

pion, saying the "young guys are playing incredible tennis". But Tsitsipas warned that it was crucial to dislodge Federer, Nadal and Djokovic in the early rounds as they tend to improve as tournaments progress, adding that the five-set format also played into their hands. "For the young guys it's all about time," he said. "I don't know. We will have to beat them or wait for them."

Federer says he has heard it all before, although even he senses a possible shift at the top of the men's game. "It's the same question every year at the end of the year, and I feel like I'm answering it the same way," he said. "But does it feel like this year might be the best (closest) year yet? Possibly." — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019

12 Shares grind towards record high as China trims key rate



13 Euro relief as US-China trade deal hopes hit dollar; 'traders nervous'



14 Altcoins - Crypto backed by crypto: Dai seeks to change the 'stablecoin'



DUBAI: An Embraer Phenom 300 is pictured at the Dubai Airshow yesterday. —AFP

Airbus beats Boeing with mega deals

Emirates Airline inked a \$16 billion agreement at Dubai air show

DUBAI: Airbus signed two mammoth deals for its A320 and A350 aircraft worth \$30 billion at Dubai's air show yesterday, with Boeing managing only a \$1.2 billion sale of its troubled 737 MAX. The deal with Turkish carrier SunExpress was "the first firm order" for the 737 MAX since it was grounded in March, a source at Boeing said.

Emirates Airline, the largest carrier in the Middle East, inked a \$16 billion agreement to buy 50 Airbus 350-900 widebody aircraft, as it reorganizes its fleet after cutting orders of the A380 superjumbo. Emirates' fleet stands at a whopping 261 large aircraft, including 113 Airbus A380 superjumbos and 158 Boeing 777 planes. Its move earlier this year to cut 39 aircraft from its total A380 orders prompted Airbus to pull the plug on the costly plane, which airlines have struggled to fill to its capacity of 500-850 people.

At the time, Emirates said it would buy smaller A330 and A350 models instead in a deal worth \$21.4 billion. The airline said that yesterday's announcement replaces an agreement from February when Emirates had announced its intent to purchase 30 A350s and 40 A330Neos. Sheikh Ahmed said the decision "follows a thorough review of various aircraft options and of our own fleet plans" but he did not rule out the possibility of discussions on the A-330Neos in the future.

The airline said the A350 would enable it to serve a range of new markets, including on long-haul routes up to 15 hours of flying time from its base in Dubai. "It is very good news for Airbus," the European aerospace giant's CEO Guillaume Faury said at the air show, adding he was "very proud that

Airbus 350 has been selected by Emirates". In the second big deal of the day, Air Arabia said it would buy 120 Airbus A320s in a purchase worth \$14 billion that represents a major expansion for the United Arab Emirates low-cost carrier.

Air Arabia, which currently operates 53 Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft, will triple in size after the new planes arrive from 2024, allowing it to move ahead with plans to add new routes to its network which takes in 170 destinations. "We are glad to announce today one of the region's largest single-aisle orders with Airbus to support our growth plans," said CEO Adel al-Ali. Air Arabia last month announced an agreement with Abu Dhabi-based giant Etihad Airways to launch a new low-cost airline based in the UAE capital, to be known as Air Arabia Abu Dhabi.

Boeing blues

In a consolation prize for Boeing, Turkish carrier SunExpress said it was buying 10 Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, on top of a previous order for 32 of the aircraft, in a show of support for the grounded model. "We have full confidence that Boeing will deliver us a safe, reliable and efficient aircraft," the airline's CEO Jens Bischof said. "However, it goes without saying that this requires the undisputed airworthiness of the model, granted by all relevant authorities."

The 737 MAX has been grounded since March following the second of two crashes that left a total of 346 people dead. The crisis is one of the most serious in Boeing's 103-year history, and has already cost it tens of billions of dollars, amid multiple investigations by US authorities and complaints from vic-

after their reality TV show "Keeping up with the Kardashians" became a smash hit, started her make up line with lipstick and lip liner kits in 2015. The kits sold out within minutes of launching, an early sign of her power as a social media influencer, and Coty said Kylie Cosmetics had an estimated \$177 million in net revenues over the past 12 months. Forbes, making her the youngest self-made billionaire on its 2018 list, said Jenner's line of cosmetics brought in sales of an estimated \$360 million in 2018. Coty will hold 51 percent of Jenner's business, valuing her company at about \$1.2 billion. "Kylie is a big brand in beauty today. She's very influential ... (but) Coty remains financially leveraged," D A Davidson retail analyst Linda Bolton Weiser said.

Celebrities, including Jenner, are leveraging their huge social media following to launch their cosmetics and lifestyle brands and compete with established players in the market. Social media-powered beauty brands such as Glossier, Jessica Alba's Honest Beauty and Huda Beauty



DUBAI: Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, CEO and chairman of the Emirates Group, and Guillaume Faury, Airbus CEO, pose for a picture after the signing of an agreement during the Dubai Airshow yesterday. —AFP

ties' families. Boeing has said at the Dubai Airshow that it is working with regulators to make the necessary changes to the 737 MAX aircraft to ensure their safe return.

In more bad news for Boeing, Emirates Airline boss Sheikh Ahmed pointed to delays in the delivery of 150 Boeing 777-X, the US manufacturer's new long-haul aircraft. The planes were due to be delivered in June 2020, but Emirates is not expecting to receive the first batch before the second quarter of 2021, he said. Sheikh Ahmad said he anticipates some word on the delivery date over the next few days, and quipped that there is "a lot to be said on the Boeing deal."

have all notched up about \$1 billion in valuation, according to media reports. "I look forward to continuing the creativity and ingenuity for each collection that consumers have come to expect and engaging with my fans across social media," Jenner said in a statement. Coty has been doubling down on its skin care and fragrance products, rolling out new luxury fragrances and lipsticks, while spending more on marketing to combat falling sales.

The company, which is majority owned by German conglomerate JAB Holdings, has struggled to integrate about 40 beauty brands, including Covergirl and Max Factor, that it bought from Procter & Gamble in 2016, forcing it to take billions of dollars in writedowns and outline a four-year restructuring plan. The partnership will add to Coty's net revenue growth of its core fragrance, cosmetics and skin care business by more than 1 percent per year over the next three years, the company said. The deal is expected to close in the third quarter of fiscal year 2020, Coty said. —Reuters

Germany pumps 1 billion euros into 'embarrassing' mobile dead zones

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German ministers agreed yesterday to spend more than one billion euros plugging gaps in its mobile phone networks, whose patchy coverage has been blasted as "embarrassing" for the advanced industrial nation. Berlin will unlock 1.1 billion euros (\$1.2 billion) to build up to 5,000 new cell towers by 2024, bringing coverage up to 97.5 percent of the country's surface area, and wants to simplify planning rules.

Telecom companies have also promised to build 6,000 new masts. Economy minister Peter Altmaier said last year that "I find it utterly embarrassing if I have to call back ministers abroad three or four times when the connection drops" on long car journeys. Illustrating the continuing problems, public broadcaster ARD's live signal from the Meseberg palace near Berlin failed yesterday during an early afternoon news show about the cabinet meeting.

"There's no lack of money for investment at the moment," Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters afterwards. "The problem is much, much more that it takes a very long time to plan" new masts. Projects to build new base stations for the phone network also often meet resistance from local people who fear negative health effects from the radio signals. The government plans a new communications campaign to soothe such fears.

Merkel stuck to her line that Chinese telecoms equipment maker Huawei should not be shut out from building parts of Germany's next-generation 5G network, batting aside objections from within her own party. The US and Germany's own security services have warned about Huawei's close links with Beijing. "We're convinced that we need to improve security levels... but that's not about individual companies, it's about security standards. It's about the certification we'll do ourselves," the chancellor said. —AFP

Coty takes \$600m bet on reality star Kylie Jenner's beauty brands

NEW YORK: Coty Inc said yesterday it would pay \$600 million for a majority stake in Kylie Jenner's make-up and skincare businesses, as it looks to tap into the reality TV star's huge social media reach, sending its shares up as much as 5 percent. One of the cosmetics world's older names, Coty is seeking to revitalize sales on the back of its broad global distribution and is banking on Jenner's more than 270 million social media followers to attract a younger audience.

Jenner, 22, the youngest sibling of the wildly popular Kardashian-Jenner clan, a household name a decade

Business

Shares grind towards record high as China trims key rate

China trims short-term interest rate, in surprise move

LONDON: World shares were close to a record high yesterday, after Beijing surprised markets by trimming a key interest rate for the first time since 2015. In the latest show of support for its economy, China's central bank cut rates on seven-day reverse repurchase agreements by five basis points to 2.50%.

The news helped Asia's main markets close higher and Europe followed suit, though 0.1% to 0.3% moves showed the initial reaction was cautious. It did nudge MSCI's 49-country world share index 0.12% higher to leave it less than 1% off the record high it set back in early 2018. "It is a slow start to a slow week, but risk is marginally on," said Societe Generale strategist Kit Juckes.

He added it was now hard to avoid concluding that China was slowly easing monetary policy, having held off in recent months, perhaps wary of drawing fresh criticism from US President Donald Trump during trade talks. "Maybe that's what 5 basis points is all about. It's not rocking the boat, but it's a shift." The pan-European STOXX 600 index was extending its six-week winning streak. The index is only 8 points short of its own record high of 415.18 points hit in mid-April.

Japan's Nikkei gained 0.5% and was just short of its recent 13-month top. E-Mini futures pointed to S&P 500 adding to Friday's record highs. Beijing's latest policy bolstered to hopes it might also be more serious about making progress in trade talks with the United States. On Saturday, Chinese state media said the two sides had "constructive talks" on trade in a high-level phone call that included Vice Premier Liu He, US trade representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

"More than in previous rounds, we see momentum toward reaching at least a limited trade deal, and certainly

a mini-deal would remove some of the negative sentiment overhang for the real economy and markets," said Patrik Schowitz, global multi-asset strategist at JP Morgan Asset Management. "We have upgraded our outlook on equities as an asset class," he added. "Emerging-market equities are now our most favored region alongside US large-cap equities."

Looking to the Fed

The dollar was little changed against other major currencies yesterday and within recent trading ranges. Volatility in the market has been the lowest in decades recently and shows no sign of shifting. The dollar rose against the safe-haven yen to 108.94 <JPY. Chart support lies at 108.23 with resistance at 109.48. The euro traded at \$1.1063 having found support at \$1.0987 last week. Investors are waiting for the first major speech by European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, due on Friday, for clues on future policy.

Sterling gained to \$1.2952 as more polls showed the Tories ahead in the campaign for Britain's Dec 12 election. The dollar and bonds are likely to be sensitive to minutes of the Federal Reserve's last policy meeting, set to be released on Wednesday. "The minutes are likely to reiterate that the US economy is 'solid' and that current monetary policy settings are 'appropriate', which would support the dollar," said Joseph Capurso, a currency analyst at Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

However, he noted a report on October US retail sales released on Friday suggested previously strong consumption might be slowing. "Any further weakness in consumption could warrant a material reassessment of the outlook by the FOMC. Under our baseline, the FOMC would most likely start cutting interest rates again in 2020," said



ISLAMABAD: Artist Freed Ahmed works on a traditional 'khussa' shoe to be sold at a shop in Islamabad yesterday. — AFP

Capurso. Spot gold fell to \$1,459 per ounce. Oil prices also fell, after Brent touched a seven-week high on Friday. Brent crude futures dropped 18 cents to \$63.12 a barrel. US crude slipped by 4 cents to \$57.69. — Reuters

Euro zone bond yields edge higher

LONDON: Government bond yields in the euro area were just a touch higher yesterday as stock markets rallied, with caution over US-China trade talks continuing to support fixed income markets. Borrowing costs in Germany and France notched up their biggest weekly falls since September last week but were in a slightly defensive mode as a new week brought a better tone to risk assets. World shares were close to a record high, after Beijing surprised markets by trimming a key interest rate for the first time since 2015. Ten-year bond yields across higher-rated debt markets were around one basis point higher on the day, but analysts said selling was limited by uncertainty surrounding US/China trade talks.

President Donald Trump had not yet agreed to remove any tariffs as part of a trade deal, and the size of China's commitment to purchase US farm products was not yet clear. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said on Friday. "Sentiment globally is a bit better today, but the way bond markets are trading right now is really around trade war headlines," said Pooja Kumra, European rates strategist at TD Securities.

In Germany, the euro zone's benchmark bond issuer, 10-year yields were up 1.1 bps at -0.32%, but not far off more than one-week lows reached last week at -0.35%. The yield fell almost 7 bps last week in its biggest weekly decline since September. "The market clearly took back some positivity last week. This seems to be driven in part by rising scepticism on the timing of a phase-one (trade) deal," said Henry Ocleston, a rates strategist at Mizuho. "We see relative strength in the Bund persisting, particularly against Spanish and Italian bonds."

In a note, analysts at UniCredit said that if a phase-one trade deal occurs, 10-year US Treasury and German bond yields could rise another 10 to 20 bps before questions are raised about the next phase of talks. But if the current discussions fail and tariffs are increased, US Treasury yields - currently around 1.84% - could fall to around 1.5% and Bund yields could drop closer to -0.6%, they said. While higher-rated bond markets such as German, French and Dutch ones rallied last week, pushing borrowing costs lower, southern European debt markets have sold off. Analysts say this is because of renewed political uncertainty, a desire by investors to lock in profits before books are closed for the year, and a growing sense that the bar to further European Central Bank stimulus is high. Southern European bond yields fell in yesterday trade, with the Italian/German 10-year yield gap at 162 basis points - down from last week's two-and-a-half-month highs above 170 bps. — Reuters

Oil price rally squeezes bears; bulls keep powder dry

LONDON: Hedge fund managers continued to scale back short positions in crude last week amid receding fears of a global recession and increasing signs of a slowdown in US oil production growth next year. Hedge funds and other money managers were net buyers of positions equivalent to 41 million barrels in the six major petroleum futures and options contracts in the week to Nov 12 (https://tmsnr.rs/32RR4RK).

Funds have purchased 176 million barrels in the last five weeks, after selling 206 million in the previous three weeks, according to ICE Futures Europe and the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission. In the most recent week, funds reduced existing bearish short positions by 31 million barrels while adding 10 million barrels of new long positions. Portfolio managers were buyers of NYMEX and ICE WTI (+40 million barrels) and Brent (+28 million) but sold US gasoline (-8 million), US heating oil (-6 million) and European gasoil (-13 million).

But the preponderance of short positions closed, rather than long positions opened last week, suggests most recent changes are being driven by reduced pessimism rather than any great optimism about the economy. The rotation out of refined fuels and towards crude also suggests caution about the health of oil demand and a focus on production losses as a result of



REICHESTETT: Photo shows the deep geothermal well on the site of the former oil refinery in Reichstett, eastern France. — AFP

the slump in prices over the last year. Short positions in NYMEX WTI have fallen by almost 62 million barrels (49%) since Oct 22 as fund managers' have become less pessimistic about the price outlook.

Hedge funds' bullish long positions outnumber bearish short ones by a ratio of 3.76:1, but that is down from 4.39 at the end of September and far below 8.68 in April, underlining fund caution. From a fundamental perspective, the balance of price risks looks skewed towards the upside, with the potential for oil con-

sumption to surprise on the upside next year while production growth could disappoint. From a positioning perspective, too, the balance looks tilted to the upside, though less so than a few weeks ago, given how many shorts have already been squeezed out, especially in NYMEX WTI. But with so much uncertainty around the global economy and the prospects for a trade truce between the United States and China, few hedge fund managers want to bet heavily on a big rally in prices yet. — Reuters

Investors step up pressure on global energy watchdog

LONDON: Fatih Birol, the head of the International Energy Agency (IEA), faced renewed pressure yesterday to overhaul the organization's influential projections for fossil fuel demand from investors and scientists concerned about climate change. Pension funds, insurers and large companies were among 65 signatories of a joint letter to Birol, seen by Reuters, urging him to do

more to support the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement to avert catastrophic global warming.

"The year 2020 marks a turning point for the world - the year when we either grasp the challenges and opportunities before us, or continue delaying and obstructing the low-carbon transformation," the letter said. The letter represented the first coordinated response by investors, scientists and campaigners pushing Birol to rethink the Paris-based organization's flagship annual outlook since the latest edition was launched on Nov 13. Known as the World Energy Outlook, the document, which runs to hundreds of pages, helps shape expectations in financial markets over how quickly the world could transition from a fossil fuel-dominated energy system to cleaner sources of power.

Since the start of this year, various networks of institutional investors, asset owners, scientists and cli-

mate advocacy groups have been urging Birol to change the way the report is produced and presented. These critics argue that a revised approach could help unlock faster investment in renewables and better identify possible risks to the value of oil, gas and coal companies posed by the prospect of rapid action to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The IEA made several changes to the last edition of the outlook, including providing what officials describe as a more "stringent" scenario showing how the world could fully achieve the goals of the Paris agreement than in the previous edition. In interviews with Reuters this month, Birol and other senior IEA officials argued that the criticism of the outlook was misplaced, saying it was based on misunderstandings of how its scenarios work and what they aim to demonstrate. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.400
Euro	339.860
Sterling Pound	396.180
Canadian dollar	232.190
Turkish lira	53.880
Swiss Franc	311.410
US Dollar Buying	296.950

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.800
Indian Rupees	4.245
Pakistani Rupees	1.976
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.684
Nepali Rupees	2.647
Singapore Dollar	225.480
Hongkong Dollar	38.894
Bangladesh Taka	3.542
Philippine Peso	6.020
Thai Baht	10.108
Malaysian ringgit	77.852

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.227
Qatari Riyal	83.661
Omani Riyal	791.163
Bahraini Dinar	808.820
UAE Dirham	82.931

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.400
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.902

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	111.090
Jordanian Dinar	429.670
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.178

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.190
Canadian Dollar	230.060
Sterling Pound	391.895
Euro	336.045
Swiss Frank	303.805
Bahrain Dinar	808.955
UAE Dirhams	83.220
Qatari Riyals	84.460
Saudi Riyals	82.015
Jordanian Dinar	430.325
Egyptian Pound	18.877
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.688
Indian Rupees	4.220
Pakistani Rupees	1.955
Bangladesh Taka	3.536
Philippines Peso	5.994
Cyprus pound	18.100
Japanese Yen	3.795
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.688
Malaysian Ringgit	74.030
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	43.775
Thai Bhat	11.055

Turkish Lira	53.150
Singapore dollars	223.375
Singapore dollars	223.375

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
EUROPE		
British Pound	0.386032	0.399932
Czech Korune	0.005125	0.014425
Danish Krone	0.040949	0.045949
Euro	0.328923	0.342623
Georgian Lari	0.101981	0.101981
Hungarian	0.000914	0.001104
Norwegian Krone	0.029434	0.034634
Romanian Leu	0.053583	0.070433
Russian ruble	0.004761	0.004761
Slovakia	0.009099	0.019099
Swedish Krona	0.027507	0.032507
Swiss Franc	0.300783	0.311783
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.198820	0.210820
New Zealand Dollar	0.188277	0.197777
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224789	0.233789
US Dollars	0.300300	0.305600
US Dollars Mint	0.300800	0.305600
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003000	0.003801

Chinese Yuan	0.042010	0.045510
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036787	0.039537
Indian Rupee	0.003629	0.004401
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002711	0.002891
Korean Won	0.000251	0.000266
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069402	0.075402
Nepalese Rupee	0.002625	0.002965
Pakistan Rupee	0.001294	0.002064
Philippine Peso	0.005844	0.006144
Singapore Dollar	0.218210	0.228210
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001319	0.001899
Taiwan	0.009854	0.010034
Thai Baht	0.009721	0.010271
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801277	0.809335
Egyptian Pound	0.018636	0.021377
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.423351	0.432351
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021374	0.045374
Omani Riyal	0.785919	0.793818
Qatar Riyal	0.082955	0.083789
Saudi Riyal	0.080087	0.081387
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.102791	0.110791
Turkish Lira	0.046187	0.056032
UAE Dirhams	0.082300	0.083126
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

Business

Euro relief as US-China trade deal hopes hit dollar; traders nervous

Sterling stronger on predictions of Conservative win

LONDON: The euro jumped to an 11-day high against the US dollar yesterday, driven by expectations that Washington and Beijing can soon sign off on a deal to end a damaging trade war. Europe's export-oriented economy has suffered from the 16 month long dispute between the world's two largest economies, which has taken a toll on global manufacturing.

Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported on Sunday that the two sides had "constructive talks" over the weekend. "Market participants remain optimistic that a partial US-China trade deal will be signed soon and have welcomed tentative signs of economic improvement outside of the US, especially in the euro zone, both of which are eroding the relative appeal of the US dollar," Lee Hardman, currency analyst at MUFG, said.

European equities have seen inflows of \$3 billion over the past two weeks, ending a record run of 85 weeks of persistent outflows. EPFR data showed last week. The euro was up 0.1% at \$1.1060, having earlier reached \$1.1068, its highest since

Nov 7. The index which tracks the green-back against six major currencies was flat at 97.95 after easing to an earlier low of 97.82.

Hedge funds have increased their short positions on the US currency slightly in the week to Nov 12. CFTC data showed on Refinitiv. Against the Japanese yen, however, the dollar was stronger by 0.3% at 109.05. The offshore Chinese yuan, however, remained below 7 per dollar, last falling 0.2% to 7.0175. The yuan is the most sensitive currency to the trade dispute. "Dollar/yuan above 7 suggests that the market is not yet convinced a solution is near," said Marshall Gittler Chief Strategist at FX analysis firm ACLS Global.

The liveliest mover was the pound, up 0.5% against the dollar to \$1.2966 and rising against the euro to 85.30 pence. It has surged to a four-week high of \$1.2985 versus the dollar and a six-month high of 85.22 pence versus the European common currency. Sterling was boosted by expectations that the

Conservative (Tory) Party could win a majority in the Dec 12 election.

It was also supported by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying that all Tory candidates in the election have pledged to back his Brexit deal, which could open the door to getting the agreement through parliament. Johnson's Conservatives have a 14 point lead over the opposition Labor Party, a poll published yesterday by Good Morning Britain showed. "Anyone firmly believing in a Tory victory can expect further potential in sterling," said Commerzbank analysts in a note to clients, though they added that "the FX market is still quite skeptical" about a Tory win.

Danger on both left and right

In another development, there is a threat to British business from both the left and the right of politics, the country's biggest business lobby group the CBI warned yesterday, a month before voters head to the polls to elect a new government. "I believe we are facing a danger that could get in the way of a bright future, and it takes the form



LONDON: Britain's Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn speaks at the annual Confederation of British Industry (CBI) conference in central London yesterday. — AFP

of extreme ideology. And we see it on both sides of the political divide," said CBI Director General Carolyn Fairbairn. "On the right we have the threat of, even a preference for no deal as the end point of our Brexit negotiations," she said. — Agencies

Joyalukkas bags the Best Indian Diamond Jewelry of the Year

DUBAI: World's favorite jeweler, Joyalukkas, continued its winning streak with yet another prestigious honor to its name. At the recently concluded Retail Jeweler Dubai Forum 2019, Joyalukkas was chosen as the best Indian Diamond Jewelry of the Year under Retail Jewelry Middle East Innovation Awards.

Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group, received the award. The high-profile event, which witnessed participation from all major retail jewellery brands in the Middle East was held on 12th November in Dubai. Elated at the honor, Joy Alukkas said, "Every award motivates us and this one has just set the bar higher for us to innovate and elevate the art. We are confident that we will continue to deliver products and services that will bring more joy to our patrons.

I would like to thank Retail Jeweler Dubai Forum for creating this unique platform that brings retail jewelers together to share our insights and work together to scale retail jewelry business." Joyalukkas was one of the early adopters to envisage the demand for diamond jewelry. Taking advantage of the trend, Joyalukkas mes-



merized shoppers with its range of amazing diamond jewelry collection at affordable prices.

An in-house brand, Pride, was created to cater specifically to diamond patrons. The world's best diamonds go into the Pride and are intricately designed by master craftsmen from Joyalukkas. From casual everyday designs to splendid wedding jewelry, Pride has the perfect collection for every occasion and every emotion. Other than Pride, Joyalukkas houses various other

diamond jewelry collections like Eleganza, Allove etc.

Retail Jeweler Dubai forum 2019 was organized by The Retail Jeweler Magazine for the first time in Dubai. The forum has been set up to gather industry insights from the Middle East's gem and jewelry industries. The forum also discussed factors on how to sustain and scale business. The forum ended with an awards ceremony where the Middle East's leading retailers for innovation in design, marketing and retail were honored.

UK MP blames HSBC, Stanchart, Baroda in S Africa corruption

JOHANNESBURG: Corruption under South Africa's former president Jacob Zuma was enabled by international banks, companies and governments which should now seek to recover the loot they helped to launder, British lawmaker Peter Hain told an inquiry yesterday. HSBC, Standard Chartered and India's Bank of Baroda as well as their senior directors were "directly culpable" in the looting of South Africa's treasury under Zuma, Hain said in his submission to the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture.

Hain was invited to give evidence because he had already named several corporates he was investigating under parliamentary privilege in 2017 as complicit in state capture. HSBC said it fully supported the commission's inquiry. Standard Chartered and Bank of Baroda did not immediately respond to a request for comment. "They're all up to their neck in this," he told the inquiry at his appearance.

"They continued because of course the corporates concerned, including the banks, were making money out of it...The Guptas could not have amassed this illicit wealth without the corporates and the banks ... being their little helpers." Zuma, who was removed as president last year over corruption allegations, is facing a judicial inquiry. He has agreed to cooperate but has dismissed the probe as prejudiced. Part of its brief is to investigate accusations that the Guptas - prominent businessmen brothers Atul, Ajay and Rajesh - influenced Zuma over political appointments and state contracts.

Hain, a labour lord and former anti-Apartheid activist, called on the banks, global corporates and foreign governments to cooperate better so all those involved are brought to justice. In his submission he said a number of international banks helped the Guptas cloak the source of their funds - by allowing them to open and maintain bank accounts, even after allegations of their involvement in corruption became public, and also by allowing them to transfer illicit funds into these accounts.

"The warning signs were there and they did very little about it," he said of the banks, adding that when he had tried to question the banks after he had named them in parliament as complicit he "found a great reluctance, citing ... client confidentiality, which is the excuse they hide behind.... The international banks, HSBC, Standard Chartered and Bank of Baroda are hiding behind this principle to conceal their complicity." The role of global finance in facilitating corruption, fraud and money laundering has come under increasing scrutiny over the past decade, but the fight against financial crime is mostly dealt with by national authorities who often fail to cooperate effectively. Among his recommendations are to improve transparency around the beneficial owners of companies. He also proposes better programs for auditing the due diligence conducted by banks to ensure that they are complying with anti-money laundering laws, and stiffer penalties for individuals and organizations that fail to do so.—Reuters



KIB 'exclusive partner of 2019 IFN Kuwait Dialogues'

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) participated in the 2019 Islamic Finance News (IFN) Kuwait Dialogues as an exclusive partner. Organized by REDmoney, the event took place at the JW Marriott Hotel on 12 November aimed at shedding light on investment, financing, and the local Islamic banking and capital markets.

On behalf of KIB, Ajai Thomas, Chief Financial Officer participated in the event's panel discussions. The dialogues' speakers included a group of senior specialists, decision-makers, bankers, fintech specialists as well as regulators who discussed shariah-compliant banking and investment environment in Kuwait, development of Islamic capital markets and asset management, uses and applications of Waqf in Kuwait, shariah-compliant investment opportunities, and fintech developments.

He agreed with the panel on the rising role of fintech in the financial sector. As part of his participation in this event, Ajai discussed shariah-compliant banking and investment services in Kuwait, as well as global sharia-compliant finance and investment from the viewpoint of the Kuwaiti market. Additionally, he shed light on where deals flow, where investments come from and where they are directed.

He also pointed out that KIB seeks to issue more Islamic capital products such as sukuk and syndicated financing, which it has issued over the last few years to meet financing needs, improve investment flow and diversify its capital base. He stressed on the prudent oversight of various regulators including the Central



Bank of Kuwait enabling the consistent growth in the Islamic banking sector outpacing many of the GCC peers.

Moreover, Ajai noted that this event is particularly important, as it provided an opportunity for various market participants to meet and discuss how to develop the Islamic banking sector in the country; thereby enabling participants to share in-depth analysis, experience, information and views in a small, more exclusive environment. He added that the dialogues will allow market players and regulators to provide bi-lateral feedback and suggestions on how participation can be taken forward: what steps should be taken by regulators and how market players can assist in achieving their goals.

The panel also pointed out that Islamic capital markets are growing rapidly across the globe and have witnessed a rapid development in the form of products within the banking industry in Kuwait. Islamic banking products play a necessary role in the growth, stability and diversification of the local economy compared to the financial market as a whole, as they act as an effective tool in economic development.

Turkish Airlines' load factor: 83.3%

KUWAIT: Turkish Airlines, which has recently announced the passenger and cargo traffic results for October 2019, recorded 83.3% load factor in that month. According to the October 2019 Traffic Results: Total number of passengers carried increased by 1.9% to 6.6 million. - Domestic load factor was 86.2% and international load factor was 82.9%.

International-to-international transfer passengers (transit passengers) increased by 8.0%, and international passengers excluding the international to international transit passengers increased by 9.7% compared to the same period of last year. The total number of international passengers increased by 8.8% in October compared to same month of last year, which is the highest growth since the beginning of the year.

In October, the national flag carrier realized double digit increases in number of passengers in Middle East and Far East by 11.5% and 11.4%, respectively. - In October, cargo/mail volume increased by 7.9%, compared to the same period of 2018. Main contributors to this growth in Cargo / mail volume are Europe with 10.9%, Far East with 10.2%, and North America with 4.6% increase.

According to the January-October 2019 Traffic Results: During January-October 2019, the total number of passengers carried is around 63.1 million. - During January-October 2019, total load factor reached 81.6%. International load factor was recorded as 80.9%, while domestic load factor reached 86.4%. - International-to-international transfer passengers carried increased by 4.3%. - Cargo/mail carried during the first ten months of 2019 increased by 9.3% and reach to 1.3 million tons.

Nearly 20% of Japan households using e-money

TOKYO: Almost a fifth of Japanese households use electronic money for small purchases, a survey by a central bank-affiliated research institute showed, up from a year ago and a sign the country's cash-hoarding culture is changing. In the survey published yesterday and conducted between June and July, 18.5% of households said they use electronic money, such as smartphone apps and debit card payments, on shopping trips where 1,000 yen (\$9.17) or less is spent, up from 15.4% in the previous year.

Among single-person households - 43% of whom are in their 20s and 30s - the ratio was much higher at 35.6%, suggesting government efforts to prod Japanese to go cashless may be paying off, at least among the younger generation. Despite the growth in electronic payments, Japan's "cash-is-king" mentality remains entrenched with the survey showing 84% still use notes and coins for small purchases. And for payments exceeding 10,000 yen and up to 50,000 yen, 48.5% of households said they pay by cash and 3.4% by electronic money, the survey showed.

A low crime rate, years of ultra-low interest rates and a nationwide network of automatic-teller machines (ATMs) have long made cash appealing in Japan, giving people few reasons to shift to cashless payments. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is pushing to make more Japanese switch to cashless payments to allow stores to automate sales estimates and banks to cut back on costly ATMs. Shoppers have recently been encouraged to ditch cash for e-money after the government introduced a rebate program to ease the pain of a sales tax hike on Oct 1.—Reuters

Business

Altcoins - Crypto backed by crypto: Dai seeks to change the 'stablecoin'

Stablecoins including Libra in regulators' sights

LONDON: Some are backed by dollars. Others by gold. But this "stablecoin" isn't tied to any major asset - it's backed by another cryptocurrency. Stablecoins, such as Facebook's Libra, are a new breed of cryptocurrencies that aim to escape the wild price swings that make bitcoin unworkable for commerce. They base their value on more stable underlying assets, typically traditional currencies or commodities.

But Dai, in a major divergence from others, uses a volatile digital currency - etherum - to maintain a steady value. This might appear to defy common sense, but its advocates say the way it works - with "smart contracts," blockchain-based covenants with terms set in code - means Dai will always keep a stable value while offering transparency.

Stablecoins like Libra and Tether are in global regulators' sights, partly because of concerns over how the companies behind them manage the reserves that back them. Dai, launched in 2017, seeks to dodge such concerns by giving up control of the etherum coins its value is tied to, locking them instead in the blockchain contracts run by algorithms. That, supporters say, offers the benefits of stablecoins - instant transactions and steady value - while avoiding governance risks.

It is gaining some traction: the Oxfam aid agency is testing it for distributing aid on a Pacific island, while some Argentinean savers desperate to avoid inflation are using it. How regulators treat Dai could help shape how, and if, cryptocurrencies can evolve from speculative use to a de

facto money of the internet. But their response is still unclear. Reuters is tracking the emergence of contenders to bitcoin - the "altcoins" - as they attract increasing attention from investors, regulators, companies and individuals. The fourth in the series looks at Dai.

How does it work?

Like bitcoin, Dai hopes to power a digital economy where people can bypass banks and other financial firms to transact directly with one another. Its workings are complex. Dai is effectively pegged to the dollar, and backed by etherum cryptocurrency locked in publicly viewable contracts that are stored on the blockchain.

Many stablecoins are trusted because their value is underpinned by central bank currencies. Users trust Dai, on the other hand, as the etherum that is locked in the contracts always exceeds the value of Dai in circulation. When Dai's value strays too far from the dollar, balancing mechanisms kick in to guide it back. "With a decentralized stablecoin, you can see everything on the blockchain," said Rune Christensen, founder of the protocol that Dai runs on, MakerDAO. "Anyone can go and do a real-time audit."

Who's in control, then?

Dai is not yet entirely decentralized. The Cayman Islands-registered Maker Foundation, run from Copenhagen, oversees the technology. The foundation, also headed by Christensen, develops code and other projects it hopes will allow Dai and MakerDAO to be

entirely controlled by its users. Mariano Conti, head of smart contracts, said he hoped the foundation could cease to exist within two to three years. "The purpose is to bootstrap the system until it's no longer needed," said Conti, who is based in Buenos Aires.

But risks exist in the governance model. Flaws in smart contracts, for instance, could leave it vulnerable to exploitation and the theft of assets stored on the blockchain, said Timothy Stranex, co-founder of Luno, a crypto exchange in London. MakerDAO says an "emergency shutdown" mechanism guards against attacks. Should users seek to take over the protocol, it says, the shutdown would be triggered to protect collateral and return funds.

How do regulators see it?

It's unclear. Cryptocurrency-backed stablecoins fell outside the scope of a G7 report last month that said their ability to keep a steady value in the medium term was questionable. US regulators declined to comment on Dai. Britain's Financial Conduct Authority said it did not use the term "stablecoin," given stability was purely an aspiration, and that a thorough case-by-case analysis was needed. Stablecoins like Dai present a new front for regulators as they strive to tame the fast-moving world of cryptocurrencies, experts said. "The regulators are trying to fit the existing framework onto these new technologies," said Phil Angeloff, a lawyer at Clifford Chance in Washington who has worked on stablecoins.

How's it fared in real world?

Better than many cryptocurrencies used mainly for speculation, Oxfam has tested Dai this year for distributing aid in the Pacific island state of Vanuatu, prone to natural disasters. It gave Dai to around 200 people and 30 vendors on one of Vanuatu's 80-plus islands, building a mini Dai-based economy. "It allows us to control more, and interact economically more directly with each other - and more quickly - after a disaster," said Oxfam's Sandra Hart, speaking from Vanuatu's capital Port Vila.

Another larger version of the trial is planned in Vanuatu next year, Hart said, spread across multiple islands. Dai is also attracting attention in inflation-hit Argentina. Data is scarce, but a Telegram messaging group for Dai users in the country has doubled in size to over 450 members in recent weeks, the Maker Foundation's Conti said. Reuters spoke to five users in cities across the country, who said Dai offered a chance to protect their savings against the peso's falling value.

"My mom and I started to save a part of our money in Dai," said Romina Sejas, a law student in the western city of Mendoza. "We can't save our money in pesos. Every month we have inflation. We have to be creative to survive to the decisions of our politicians." Dai's decentralization made it an attractive alternative to other stablecoins, said Jose Villar, a software program manager in Buenos Aires. "All others, there is some entity behind that can be a bank, and we don't know who is really behind them." — Reuters

ABK's Credit Cards: Make travel 'simple & rewarding'

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) launched its 'Simpler Banking' strategy almost five years ago, and has since continued to develop and innovate products and services to meet its clients' needs, making life as easy and simple as possible. With the travel season approaching, ABK clients are now privy to exclusive benefits which they can avail when using their credit cards.

ABK's partnership with Emirates Airline is a gateway to a multitude of benefits, including access to the Skywards loyalty program. In addition, there is a whole host of complimentary services to be enjoyed including airport concierge services, full multi-trip travel insurance and 24/7 Global Customer Assistance Service. Clients can also take advantage of discounts across a number of luxury hotels.

Through an alliance with Visa, there is an additional opportunity to take advantage of discounts and rewards at a number of fine dining outlets. Cardholders can benefit from the added convenience of the free unlimited meet and assist service to fast-track through security and immigration at Kuwait airport, along with the luggage delivery service offered by Pearl Assist, which transports bags direct from the airport to your home, saving valuable time during trips.

There is also Lounge Key's complimentary Airport Lounge Access for the ABK cardholder and one guest to be utilized across 1000 airports worldwide. To fully enjoy your travel experience, ask about ABK credit cards or logon to www.eahli.com. Alternatively, contact your closest branch or Customer Service on 18998999.

Burgan Bank announces Yawmi account winners

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced today the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000. The lucky winners are: Mahmoud Mahmoud Alemam Hasheesh; Maryam Reja Huwail Alsahali; Ali Awadh Abdullah Alshatti; Aeshah Abdulrahman Ali Abdulraheem and Abdullah Hameed Hamdan Almutairi.

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date.

Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws. Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080. Customers can also log on to Burgan Bank's www.burgan.com for further information.

Internet giant Yandex to restructure under pressure

MOSCOW: Yandex, the internet giant said to be Russia's answer to Google, unveiled planned governance changes Monday as authorities seek to tighten control over the Internet. The company that operates Russia's largest search engine and news aggregator said it would create a Public Interest Foundation able to block any single entity from accumulating 10 percent or more of its economic or voting interests.

The foundation's board is to consist of just three members of Yandex's management team, including company founder and chief executive Arkady Volozh, as well as representatives of top universities and non-governmental organizations. Yandex's announcement came after a Russian lawmaker proposed limits on foreign ownership of top Internet companies to tighten online control.



the group has activities in two of the key systems that govern our world - transportation and the climate. These systems are complex and inter-connected, and developing

sustainable solutions is critical for the future. It is only by working together that we can achieve the transformation that is necessary for a sustainable world."

Nepal Ambassador attends launch of first Jazeera Airways flight to Kathmandu

KUWAIT: His Excellency the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Kuwait, Durga Prasad Bhandari, attended today the take-off of the first Jazeera Airways to Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport (KTM). Jazeera Airways had announced the launch of the first direct route between Kuwait and Nepal, serving the Nepalese capital with four return flights weekly. The direct flights offer connecting flights to cities in the Middle East and Europe. The first Jazeera Airways flight to Kathmandu took off from the Jazeera Terminal T5 at Kuwait International Airport at 9:05 am with 150 passengers, including 79 transiting passengers from the region.



Gulf Bank announces winners of Al Danah Weekly Draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 17th November 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 10 - 14 November 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week. The winners this week are: Iqbal Siddique Mohammad Sadiq Siddique; Muneera Khaled Yousef Al Mutawa; Anwar Atalla Malfy Alotaibi; Abdullah Saleh Ismaeel Al Khazaal and Sameerah Jasem Hussain Alwazzan.

Gulf Bank's final Al Danah draw for KD1,000,000 will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event. Gulf Bank encourages

customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances.

Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al Danah customers in 2018, have been added to their 2019 chances, and the same process will take place in 2020, and so on. Terms and conditions apply. Gulf

Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws.

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

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

Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied any talks with the company. Peskov nonetheless told reporters that the Kremlin was looking at the restructuring plan "with great interest". He praised Yandex's management for understanding that the state would give "special attention" to the company because of its size and significance. All the proposed changes are subject to shareholder approval at a meeting on Dec 20. — AFP

What's On



'Speedmate' from Al Babtain launches service centre in Kuwait

Speedmate, operated by Al Babtain's automotive retail channel, recently opened its first service center in Kuwait. Speedmate currently operates 700 automotive service centers in Korea and supplies OE equivalent auto spare parts for Asian vehicles in the global market. The products which are 100% Korean and mostly supplied by OE manufacturers is the first result of an 18th month initiative by Al Babtain to rebrand their existing 'Gulf Express' tire centers into 'Speedmate' tire and automotive centers.

By launching 'Speedmate' in Kuwait, Al Babtain has cemented their vision of bringing local customers top notch-quality aftermarket parts solutions and quality services under one roof. 'Speedmate' will offer original parts for every model while also stocking aftermarket options for the value-conscious consumer. The host of quick auto services includes painting, dent repair, window film, detailing, tyre services, wheel alignment, battery, oil change, quick check drive, mechanical & electrical repairs, periodic maintenance, car wash & much more.

'Speedmate' will provide the newest automotive technology including Kuwait's first Hunter Quick Check - the Hunter Quick Check will scan any vehicle's wheel alignment, tire tread depth, battery health and wet stopping

distance in just five minutes. Customers can relax in the pleasant auto lounge and enjoy complimentary coffee and Wifi while getting a soothing massage from one of our brand-new massage chairs.

Gulf Express General Manager, Kenneth Arnold said, "The Speedmate strategy is simple. Give the educated customer a good, better, best solution for their tire and automotive service needs while offering all of the services in one location for all car brands. This will be backed up by the best in-house employee mechanics and service advisors well-versed in all of the automotive brand backgrounds. Customers also receive the bonus of a competitive price advantage and enjoy a premium customer journey. We welcome you to Speedmate, we welcome you to a Happy Auto Life".

'Speedmate' invites everyone to visit their first 'Speedmate' showroom, a premium workspace equipped with state-of-the-art technology featuring the perfect ambiance, and topped with high-level auto services for all brands of vehicles. Located in the heart of Shuwaikh, opposite Sun City, the ground-breaking service center is a reflection of the brand's commitment to placing its customers at the forefront of innovative auto solutions and ensuring positive customer engagement experiences.



ACK launches Engineers Australia Student Society Chapter

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) officially established the Engineers Australia (EA) Student Society Chapter. The official launch ceremony was attended by Jeff Hughes, Engineers Australia's Executive General Manager Member Services, Prof Isam Zabalawi President of ACK, Dr Mohamad Abdul Niby - Dean of School of Engineering, ACK staff members and engineering students.

During the launch, Hughes shared Engineers Australia's support for the

Student Society and congratulated ACK's student committee members for their commitment to promoting the engineering profession on campus. Professor Isam Zabalawi and Dr Mohammed Abdul Niby also delivered speeches to show their support for EA's Student Society and its first student committee which represents ACK's engineering disciplines of Civil, Petroleum, Electrical and Mechanical.

During his speech, Dr Abdul Niby congratulated the committee members and highlighted that being involved in a student

society is an important vehicle for facilitating professional and personal development as a student engineer. The key role of the newly launched Student Society is to promote and support Engineers Australia membership provided to students throughout their tertiary journey, and to organize professional development and industry networking events for student engineers. The Student Society also provides leadership and project management opportunities for its committee members.

Parliamentary elections to be held according to the new Election Code

Elections are one of the oldest institutions of democracy, determining the form and methods of governing the state. Democracy can't exist without elections. Nowadays, free and fair elections are the key factor in the process of democratization and one of the main means of expressing the will of the people all over the world.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the formation and development of a modern electoral system that meets democratic requirements has been gradual. In accordance with generally recognized principles and norms of international law a legislative framework has been formed that provides guarantees of free will of citizens and the right of every citizen to elect and be elected to representative bodies of state power.

The Election Code of Uzbekistan came into force on June 26, 2019. This legal document combines the laws that regulates the organization and conduct of presidential, parliamentary elections and elections to local representative bodies into one document, and represent important political significance of the elections in the country's public life. The code consists of 18 chapters and 103 articles. The conceptual basis of the electoral system of the Republic of Uzbekistan is freedom of elections. The new election code is permeated by such fundamental principles as:

Universality of suffrage (article 4) - Citizens have the equal suffrage regardless of their sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal and social status, education, type and nature of occupation.

Equal suffrage (Article 5) - Every citizen participating in the election shall have one vote.

Direct suffrage (Article 6) - The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, deputies of the Legislative Chamber, deputies of the local Kengashes shall be directly elected by citizens.

Secret ballot (Article 7) - The secret ballot shall be ensured by creating appropriate conditions that exclude any possibility of control over the will of the voter.

Openness and publicity of elections (Article 8) - preparation

Observers from the political parties which nominated the candidates for the Presidency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, deputies of the Legislative Chamber, deputies of the local Kengashes, from citizens' self-governing bodies, representatives of media, overseas observers and observers of the international organizations have the right to be present in all events associated with the preparation and conducting of elections, at voting premises on election day and at the counting of votes.

On December 22, 2019, the elections for deputies to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and for deputies to the local Kengashes of people's deputies will be held. It should be noted that, this event will be held for the first time in accordance with the new Election Code of Uzbekistan. In this regard, I would like to highlight a number of important new additions in the electoral law.

So, the institution of quotas for deputy seats for representatives of the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan in the Legislative Chamber of the

Oliy Majlis is excluded. The participation of all 150 deputies of the Legislative Chamber in the popular elections has been fixed. Thereby a healthy inter-party competition has been created in the country with equal conditions for all political parties. And each political party can nominate its own candidate.

The Election Code also provides for the Single Electronic List of Voters of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is a state information resource containing information about citizens who participates in the voting, addresses of their permanent and temporary residency. The main goal of the Single Electronic List of Voters is to implement the most important principle of equal suffrage that expressed in the Code that every citizen participating in the elections has one vote.

The Election Code introduced a single ballot for voting on election day, including ahead of schedule, and accordingly the term "ballot paper" was abolished. It should be noted that the Election Code has been developed taking into account the recommendations of the Office for Democratic Institutions and human rights of the OSCE, the World Association of Electoral Authorities and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Thus, the modernization of the electoral system and accordingly, the adoption of the Election Code is justified by the demand of the times.

New Election Code Helps Organize and streamlining the rules of national suffrage, increases the clarity and accessibility of the electoral law, creates a stable legal basis for the formation of independent election commissions with broad powers and modern technical equipment, as well as broadens the guarantees of electoral rights ensuring the free expression of the will of citizens.

Monitoring of the elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (parliament) of Uzbekistan scheduled for December 22 this year will be conducted by more than 600 observers from about 50 states and international organizations, Mirzo-Ulugbek Abdusalomov, chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Republic, told TASS on Monday.

"We expect that more than 600 foreign observers from about 50 states of America, Europe, Asia and Africa, as well as from all international organizations of the world whose activities are related to monitoring of the elections will conduct monitoring of the election campaign and election itself. For example, the OSCE / ODIHR plans to direct to upcoming elections the mission which includes nearly 300 observers from the Central Executive Committee of Russia and the CIS Parliamentary Assembly that they are ready to participate in the elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis," said Abdusalomov.

"In addition, the arrival of the mission of the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, representatives of several independent civil society institutions from the United States is expected." According to him, during the election campaign (that has begun) and directly on the voting day, there will not be closed any single polling station to foreign observers.



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium Piet Heirbaut hosted a reception on the occasion of King's Day at his residence. Higher officials, diplomats and media person attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Health & Science

Fate of bigeye tuna in the balance in set quota meet

PARIS: The fate of big-eye tuna, over-fished and in decline, could be decided this week when fishing nations meet to set quotas after failing last year to agree on safeguard measures for the valuable food resource. Scientists warn that unless the catch is reduced, stocks of *Thunnus obesus* — prized for sashimi in Japan and canned worldwide — could collapse within years.

A scientific report prepared for last year's meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) showed that numbers had plummeted to less than 20 percent of historic levels. This was only about half what is needed to support a "maximum sustainable yield" — the largest catch that can be taken without compromising the long-term stability of a species.

ICCAT, which groups more than 50 parties including the European Union, convenes in Majorca, Spain, yesterday for another review of the situation in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, having failed last year to agree quotas or how to include all members in the system. Previously, ICCAT has a headline quota of 65,000 tons, but in practice the catch was nearer to 80,000 tons, well into the danger zone, according to NGOs.

The EU yesterday proposed a quota of 62,500 tons through to 2022 which would include 17 countries currently catching more than 1,250 tons a year. Ivory Coast, Gabon, Ghana and Guinea Bissau, meanwhile, back a quota of 57,500 to 60,000 tons, while the Latin American states of

Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Mexico are pressing for no change.

Quota key to recovery

For the Pew Charitable Trusts, "a quota of 60,000 tons would be too high," fisheries expert Grantly Galland told AFP, suggesting 50,000 tons instead. A quota of 60,000 tons would make the stock recovery period "too long," Galland said. Some experts have calculated that cutting the total catch to 50,000 tons per year would give bigeye tuna a 70 percent chance of recovery by 2028.

ICCAT will also be looking at other species at risk — albacore tuna and sharks. For albacore, it suggests a quota of 110,000 tons for 2020. For its part, the World Wide Fund for Nature recommends that no-go zones be established for certain periods so as to reduce the number of juvenile tuna caught. The International Pole and Line Foundation (IPLF), which promotes artisanal line fishing for tuna, wants the meeting to take on board the special concerns of developing coastal countries.

As for sharks, which have suffered massive human predation, Senegal is pushing for all shortfin mako sharks caught to be released, dead or alive. The shortfin mako, also known as the blue pointer or bonito shark, is among the most at risk and is already protected under international trade by the wild fauna and flora CITES convention aimed at controlling trafficking in endangered species. — AFP



In this file photo taken on March 13, 2019 an Indonesian fisherman unloads yellowfin tuna after returning from sea at Banda Aceh, Aceh province. — AFP

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PAGE







248 33 199

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248 33 199

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- Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

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Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

مسشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555

DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

- 1-Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

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Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

- Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the British Laryngological Association
- Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- Thyroid surgery.
- Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
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- Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- Breast surgeries
- Hernia repair
- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- Surgery for reflux disease
- Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com
Tel: 1886677

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- Single Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abdomen
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- WART Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistaloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve-Gastroctomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernia Surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- American Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- American Board of Colo-Rectal Surgery
- American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo-Rectal Surgeon

مسشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

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

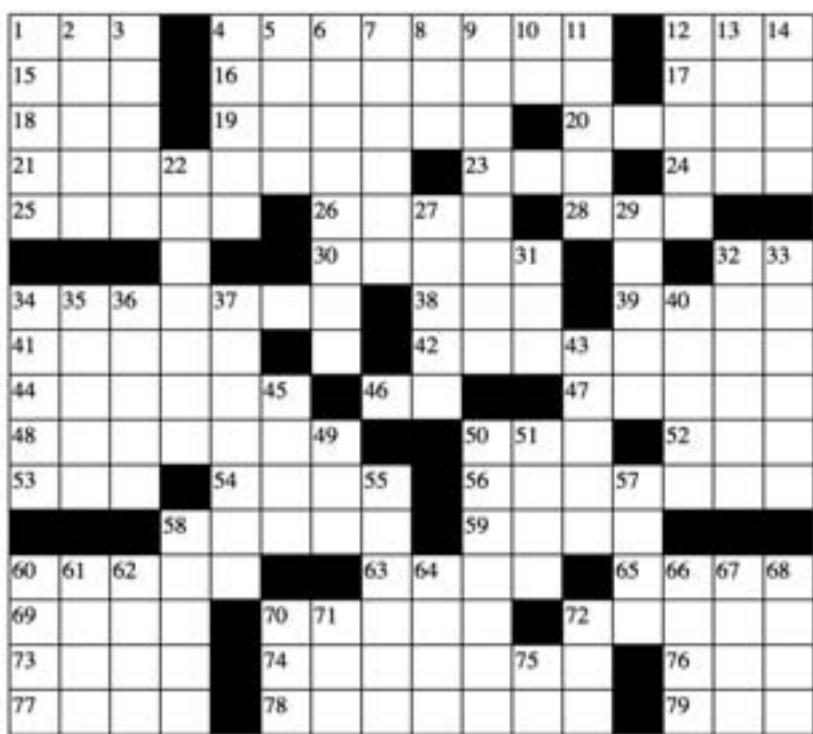
Scope of clinical Practice.

- Bariatric surgeries.
- Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- G.I. surgeries.
- Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com
Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228
Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Closer Center Mazaya Building

Stars

CROSSWORD 2363



ACROSS

1. Standard time in the 8th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 120th meridian west.
4. A murderer (especially one who kills a prominent political figure) who kills by a treacherous surprise attack and often is hired to do the deed.
12. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
15. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
16. Skeleton shrimp.
17. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
18. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
19. The capital and largest city of Niger.
20. A territory in southwestern Germany formerly ruled by the counts palatine.
21. A throne that is the official chair of a bishop.
23. Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
24. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
25. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
26. Edible starchy tuberous root of taro plants.
28. Make amends for.
30. A synthetic silklike fabric.
34. Small smooth-haired breed of African origin having a tightly curled tail and the inability to bark.
38. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
39. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
41. Intense feelings of suffering.
42. Type genus of the Ustilaginaceae.
44. Decorate with, or as if with, gold leaf or liquid gold.
46. A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
47. A program that is broadcast again.
48. Having ones attention or mind or energy engaged.
52. An unabridged dictionary constructed on historical principles.
53. A field covered with grass or herbage and suitable for grazing by livestock.
54. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
56. The easing of tensions or strained relations (especially between nations).
59. A facial expression of contempt or scorn.
60. A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.
63. Flesh of fish found in colder waters of northern Atlantic coast of the United States.
65. The content of cognition.
69. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
73. A landlocked republic in northwestern Africa.
74. A genus of Scolopacidae.
76. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
77. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
78. Only extant member of the order Rhynchocephalia of large spiny lizard-like diapsid reptiles of coastal islands off New Zealand.
79. A doctor's degree in education.

DOWN

1. Type genus of the Percidae.
2. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
3. Repeated too often.
4. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
5. Being the one previously mentioned or spoken of.
6. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
7. A large fleet.
8. The seat within a bishop's diocese where his cathedral is located adv.
9. A shifty deceptive person.
10. Being nine more than forty.
11. Greek mythology.
12. A republic in southern Europe on the Italian Peninsula.
13. A strong wind moving 45-90 knots.
14. An ancient Egyptian city on the west bank of the Nile opposite Cairo.
22. Genus of herbs of Eurasia and the Americas.
27. God of the sky.
29. The sacred writings of the Christian religion.
31. Remaining after all deductions.
32. Narrow French stick loaf.
33. Being or having light colored skin and hair and usually blue or gray eyes.
35. A yellow pungent volatile oil (trade name Agene) formerly used for bleaching and aging flour.
36. Soaked with moisture.
37. Large Indian antelope.
40. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
43. Feeling or showing extreme anger.
45. A notable achievement.
49. An informal term for a father.
50. 1 species.
51. A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
55. An archaic name for Easter or Passover.
57. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
58. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
61. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
62. Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
64. A heavy open wagon usually having two wheels and drawn by an animal.
66. Any of a group of Indic languages spoken in Kashmir and eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan.
67. Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
68. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
70. Annual grass of Europe and North Africa.
71. (computer science) The part of a computer (a microprocessor chip) that does most of the data processing.
72. The cry made by sheep.
75. A lustrous gray strong metallic element resembling titanium.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Strong psychic impressions about absent friends or family members may come to you today. All are apt to be positive, though you might find it disconcerting. You might even think it more so if you learn your intuition was right! This tendency may continue for a while. Your sensitivity to others' thoughts and feelings is increasing. It can contribute to your understanding of them. Make the most of it.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today you could intuit powerful feelings of affection from someone you might be romantically attracted to. You could feel a rush of exhilaration from this experience before your skeptical side kicks in to say it's all wishful thinking. A little skepticism is healthy, but don't let it overpower your positive impression. All signs say that what you sense is true. Follow your heart.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your kindness and good manners could pay off today. Someone who respects you a great deal might offer you an opportunity to advance that increases your income. You may have known this person for a long time, and the two of you work well together. This opportunity should be welcome and not intimidating. Go for it! If you do, the future will be rosy.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Love and romance are going marvelously well today. If you're attached, affection continues to grow between you and your partner. A strong sense of unity could lead to a firm commitment. If you aren't currently involved, don't be surprised if someone you like but don't know well suddenly seems attracted to you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You tend to be intellectually inclined. Today you might put some of your knowledge to work in a creative way. Your intuition and imagination are working overtime. If you've been thinking about starting a new project, this is the day to do it. The only downside is that you could get so obsessed with your work that you can't concentrate on anything else. Pace yourself so you don't burn out.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A loving, supportive letter or call from a close friend could be just what the doctor ordered today. You may feel overworked and a little pessimistic about any plans you've made. Your friend should lift your spirits and motivate you to push on ahead in spite of whatever obstacles you encounter. Remember this kindness. Your friend may need the same from you sometime in the future.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today you may come up with some attractive new ideas to advance your career and increase your income. The only question is whether or not you can follow through. Some of them may be workable and some may not, but if you're serious, you should do some research to figure that out. The future looks good if you take the necessary steps to turn your ideas into reality.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today you might experience a rush of spiritual insights. Whatever comes to you seems clear and right, and it could inspire music, poetry, or painting. The only problem might be that these insights may disappear if you don't write them down right away. Visions from the other side can be ephemeral. If you like what's coming to you, keep a record of it. You'll be glad you did.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you could receive some unexpected good news regarding the impending arrival of money that you've anticipated for a long time. This will be very welcome news and worthy of a celebration, although you still might not believe it. Believe it! Your long wait is over. Now you have to resist the temptation to spend it all in one place.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A social event today could put you in contact with some old friends who mean a great deal to you. The occasion will be very warm and friendly, though you may feel a little subdued. Never mind! Sometimes companionable silence is preferable to forced talk. Just bask in the presence of cherished companions and listen to what others say. You'll enjoy yourself that much more.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Working closely with someone might bring up some strong, warm affection between you. It may or may not be a romantic attraction, but if it is, don't read too much into it now. The situation is creating the emotions. There's the chance that the attraction could pass by tomorrow. But you've probably found someone with whom you can collaborate harmoniously. That's important!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Love, affection, and romance seem to be all around you. Strong unity with close friends, family members, and your romantic partner may well up throughout the day. You can also expect a rush of imagination and artistic inspiration, perhaps generated by the support of those around you. Any relationships formed now will last a long time. Recall this day when times get tough.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old TV Shows 1

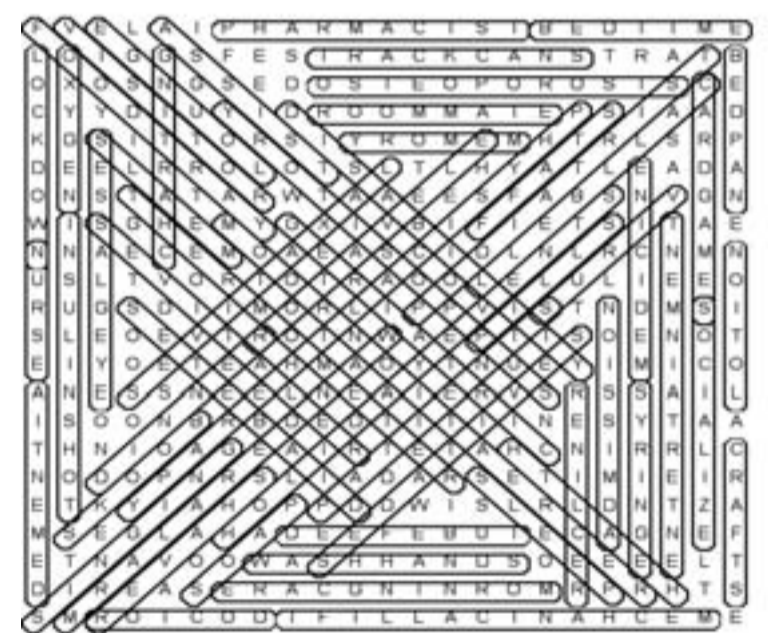
Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ALICE | FLYING NUN | L.A. LAW | ODD COUPLE |
| BEN CASEY | FUGITIVE | LASSIE | PEYTON PLACE |
| BEVERLY HILLBILLIES | GOMER PYLE | LOVE BOAT | RAWHIDE |
| CHIPS | GOOD TIMES | MAD ABOUT YOU | RIFLEMAN |
| CANNON | GREEN ACRES | MAUDE | RIN TIN TIN |
| CAPTAIN KANGAROO | GREEN HORNET | MEDICAL CENTER | SOAP |
| DOBIE GILLIS | HOWDY DOODY | MIAMI VICE | TAXI |
| DONNA REED | I SPY | MOD SQUAD | ST. ELSEWHERE |
| DR. KILDARE | IRONSIDE | MOONLIGHTING | THREE'S COMPANY |
| EMERGENCY | JETSONS | MURPHY BROWN | WALTONS |
| FLIPPER | KOJAK | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Nursing Home 2



- | | | | | |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| ADMISSION | DISABILITY | LOTION | PHYSICAL THERAPY | SOAP |
| ASSIST | DOCTOR | LOUNGE | PILLS | SOCIALIZE |
| BEDPAN | ELEVATOR | MEALS | PODIATRIST | STAFF |
| BEDTIME | ENTERTAINMENT | MECHANICAL LIFT | RECLINER | SUPPOSITORY |
| BOOKS | EYEGASSES | MEDICINE | RECREATION ROOM | SYRINGE |
| CALL BELL | FOOD TRAY | MEMORY | RELATIVES | THERMOMETER |
| CARD GAMES | GERIATRIC | MORNING CARE | ROOMMATE | TUBE FEED |
| CHARTING | HEALTH | NURSE | SEATBELT | VIRUS |
| CRAFTS | HOLIDAY EVENTS | OSTEOPOROSIS | SHOWER | VISITOR |
| DEMENTIA | INSULIN SHOT | OXYGEN | SINGING | WANDER ALARM |
| DIABETES | LAXATIVES | PATIENTS | SLEEP | WASH HANDS |
| DINNER | LOCKDOWN | PHARMACIST | SNACK CART | |

The hidden message is:
LIFE'S TRAGEDY IS THAT WE GET OLD TOO SOON AND WISE TOO LATE

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



very hard

Yesterday's Solution



medium

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019



A visitor walks past an art installation titled 'Our Color Reflection' on the inaugural day of the Bengaluru ByDesign 2019, held at the Bangalore International Centre, in Bangalore. — AFP

Cambodian Princess who rebuilt 'Apsara' dance dies aged 76

Cambodian Princess Norodom Bopha Devi, a former culture minister who helped resurrect traditional Apsara dance from the ashes of the brutal Khmer Rouge rule in the 1970s, died yesterday at the age of 76, premier Hun Sen said. Daughter of late king Norodom Sihanouk and half sister of current monarch Norodom Sihamoni, Bopha Devi died from an illness in a Bangkok hospital, according to family. In a condolence letter shared on the prime minister's Facebook page, Hun Sen said her death marked "the greatest loss of a multi-skilled actor in the cultural sector". He later declared November 20 a national day of mourning and for flags to fly at half-mast.

Tributes praising her contribution to the arts flooded Cambodian social media. Prominent Cambodian filmmaker Rithy Panh tweeted "RIP Princesse Bopha Devi" with two black and white photos of her in elaborate Apsara costumes. A classical ballet performed with slow, twisting movements and arched fingers, Apsara has been performed in Cambodia for more than 1,000 years and bas-reliefs of dancers are seen on Angkorian temple walls.

The series of gestures carry the wishes of the Khmer kings to the heavens, according to ancient custom, and was largely confined to royal circles. It was in Cambodia's palace that Bopha Devi started dancing as a young princess, becoming the premier Apsara dancer in the 1960s and promoting the art to global acclaim. Apsara nearly vanished in the 1970s



These photos show Cambodian Princess Norodom Bopha Devi, training students during an Apsara dance rehearsal at the Department of Performing Arts in Phnom Penh. — AFP photos

under Cambodia's Khmer Rouge communist regime, which wiped out much of the country's heritage along with up to two million people.

After the regime fell the princess turned to training the next generation, and served as minister of culture and fine arts from 1998 to 2004. The dance is now ubiquitous in the country, featuring in advertisements, concerts and cere-

monies. Bopha Devi's cousin Prince Sisowath Thomico told AFP the nation would remember her works to rebuild the royal ballet troupe. "Thanks to the Princess's efforts, Cambodian Royal Ballet has been listed as world heritage," he said, referring to a United Nations list recognizing "Intangible Heritage". — AFP

'Ford v. Ferrari' roars to front of North American box office

New Fox release "Ford v. Ferrari" roared to the front in North American box offices over the weekend, taking in an estimated \$31 million on an overall slow weekend, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said Sunday. The film is based on the true story of how a team at Ford under legendary designer Carroll Shelby (Matt Damon) and working with British driver Ken Miles (Christian Bale) builds a car to challenge Ferrari's longtime dominance of France's classic 24-hour Le Mans race.

The film garnered a rare A+ CinemaScore from viewers, the highest among new nationwide offerings, which should help it recoup its \$100 million production cost, Variety reported. In second was last week's leader, Lionsgate's "Midway," with \$8.8 million in Friday-to-Sunday ticket sales, just half its opening-weekend take. The PG-rated film looks at the pivotal naval battle between US and Japanese forces in the Pacific in June 1942.

A new chapter in the "Charlie's Angels" saga opened in third place, taking in what analysts called a disappointing \$8.6 million. The Angels' last big-screen film, in 2003, debuted to a

far more impressive \$37 million. Kristen Stewart, Naomi Scott and Ella Balinska star as the trio of glamorous spies with a mission to save the world.

Paramount's comedy "Playing With Fire" placed fourth at \$8.55 million. John Cena, Keegan-Michael Key and John Leguizamo portray a crew of tough firefighters who rescue three unruly siblings and end up having to babysit them. Fifth place went to Universal's early-arriving "Last Christmas," at \$6.7 million. Emilia Clarke plays Kate, who is none too happy about her job as a department store elf until she meets handsome Tom (Henry Golding), who seems-perhaps is? — too good to be true.

Overall, it was a strikingly anemic showing for the weekend's top five, which took in a total \$63.6 million, less than half the \$143.4 earned by the top five in the year-earlier period, Exhibitor Relations said. Rounding out the top 10 were:

"Doctor Sleep" (\$6.2 million)
"The Good Liar" (\$5.7 million)
"Joker" (\$5.6 million)
"Maleficent: Mistress of Evil" (\$5.2 million)
"Harriet" (\$4.8 million) — AFP

Qantas backs legal action against will.i.am over racism claim

Australia's Qantas yesterday rejected accusations of in-flight racism from US performer will.i.am, with the airline saying it would back legal action against the Black Eyed Peas frontman. The multiple Grammy-winning artist had lashed out at a Qantas flight attendant and named her on Twitter after she called the police over an altercation during a flight from Brisbane to Sydney. In his tweets, the star said the crew member had been "overly aggressive" and unnecessarily escalated the situation after he didn't hear an on-board safety briefing because he was wearing headphones.

Using the hashtag #RacistFlightAttendant, he said she was "beyond rude" and "took it to the next level by calling the police", five of whom were waiting for him when the 90-minute flight landed on Saturday. "Thank god the other passengers testified that SHE was

out of control," tweeted William Adams, better known by his stage name will.i.am, adding that the police had "finally" let him go. He said he had complied "quickly & politely" with instructions from the woman to put his laptop away.

"I don't want to believe she racist. But she has clearly aimed all her frustrations only at the people of color," he wrote. A spokesman for the Australian flag carrier said Qantas "completely" rejected the suggestion that race was a factor in the incident. "There was a misunderstanding on board, which seems to have been exacerbated by will.i.am wearing noise-cancelling headphones and not being able to hear instructions from crew," he said.

The airline initially said over the weekend that it would be "following up with will.i.am and wish him well for the rest of the tour". But on Monday a spokesman said the airline would be willing to support legal action against the star. "Absent a retraction, and if the crew member wanted to take the matter further, we'd certainly be willing to provide legal support for them to do this," he said. Australia has extremely strict defamation laws and courts routinely rule in favor of those claiming reputational damage. — AFP



This file photo shows cars on display at the Premiere of FOX's 'Ford V Ferrari' at TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP



In these pictures Mohammed Hanif, center, the former fighter pilot turned journalist, is surrounded by fans during a literature festival in Islamabad. — AFP photos

Explosive prose: Translation of Pakistani satire hits bookstores

Featuring bumbling generals, assassination plots, and homosexual romance, Pakistani military satire "A Case of Exploding Mangoes" by Mohammed Hanif has finally been released in the country's official language Urdu—even as the army tightens its grip on freedom of expression. The former fighter pilot turned journalist, novelist and librettist is best known for the 2008 novel which chronicles the final days of hardline dictator General Zia-ul-Haq's rule and the myriad conspiracies behind the plane crash that killed him in 1988.

Zia, a pious and far-right dictator in real life, is portrayed by Hanif as a paranoid buffoon backing the Afghan jihad against the Soviets while battling a case of rectal worms. Although "Mangoes" is generously salted with heavy doses of humor, the book also unleashes harsh criticism at Pakistan's military establishment. In the book, the military relies on torture, extrajudicial murder, and covertly supports a jihadist insurgency to pursue its goals—accusations made by rights activists in real life, but which the military denies, and rarely allows to be repeated by the Pakistani press.

"I love the army. Some of my best friends have died in combat. I have nothing against the institution," explains the 55-year-old, whose own years in uniform provided much of the granular details of military life featured in the book. "But if the military does something wrong, if they

get involved in politics, if they disappear people, then I have to write about it," he adds. While "Mangoes" was set in Zia's Pakistan, it was first released in English—the language of Pakistan's small, educated elite—during the violent rule of another military dictator, Pervez Musharraf.

Backlash

It coincided with Hanif's return to Pakistan after spending nearly 12 years in London with the BBC. "Some of my journalist friends were scared for me," he recalled. "I was lucky because 2008 was a particularly bad year in Pakistan with a lot of bloodshed," including the onset of the Pakistani Taliban insurgency, which likely "distracted" potential censors, he tells AFP. Internationally, the novel earned glowing reviews and was longlisted for the Booker Prize, with critics comparing Hanif to famous satire writers Joseph Heller and Kurt Vonnegut.

Despite the widespread praise, more than a decade passed before the novel was translated into Urdu—Pakistan's other official language, and more widely spoken by the masses. Works written in English have a narrower, elite audience and so often have greater leeway, while Urdu content tends to be more carefully censored. According to Hanif, a publisher "sat" on the Urdu translation of the book for years, citing potential repercussions.

But "the time for a backlash has passed", said the book's publisher Hoori Noorani. "The book had been translated into all major languages of the world. Even though it is a satire and humor can be subversive, it depicts a dark part of our history." Even so, the book's Urdu release last month comes as authorities have increasingly cracked down on all forms of dissent. Journalists have complained of the worst censorship since Zia's time, while opposition leaders are rounded up in a controversial anti-corruption campaign.

Censorship and fear

As such, the Urdu edition of "Mangoes" is "very timely," says Harris Khalique, a poet and rights activist. "Thirty years after the assassination of Zia, writers and journalists are experiencing similar pressures," he adds. Noorani is hoping to sell a few thousand copies—a decent number in a country with low literacy rates and an ongoing economic downturn that he says has forced some people to "choose between buying a book or food".

Since "Mangoes" success, Hanif has gone on to publish two more novels: "Our Lady of Alice Bhatti"—the story of a nurse from the Christian minority fighting against patriarchy—and last year's "Red Birds", which focuses on war and refugees. Hanif has also helped co-create a much anticipated opera about the late Pakistani Prime Minister



Benazir Bhutto, all while pumping out regular op-eds for the New York Times.

As a columnist, Hanif has established himself as one of the premier voices on all things Pakistan—from the gender politics of making roti to criticism of the army, which saw one of his columns replaced with a blank page in the Pakistani print edition of the paper in 2017. He admits there are limits—saying his 2013 book about human rights abuses in restive Balochistan province "would be difficult to write now". Like most in Pakistani media, he admits to "self-censoring" mostly out of fear of putting his family at risk. "I have pushed the boundaries," says Hanif. "But I'm now more careful than I've ever been in my life." — AFP

GOSSIP



Kanye West wants to tackle prison reform

The 42-year-old rapper insisted his path is dictated by "what God wants", and he looks set to follow in wife Kim Kardashian West's footsteps by doing what he can to tackle some "immediate" issues with the justice system in the US. Speaking to TMZ, he said: "It's all what God wants. World peace, how about it? One in three African Americans are in prison. Figuring out ways to free people, free the minorities, free the people with mental health, to go and open up and have conversations... "Some people are locked up for a year, sometimes five years, because they can't afford a thousand dollars bail. These are some immediate things that are on our mind today." The 'Jesus is King' rapper - who has been open about his faith and bringing his Sunday Service to followers in the US - explained how he tries to listen to God, and he's willing to embrace whatever direction he's moved in. He added: "Well, man makes plans and God laughs - it's all up to him. I really empty my mind, feel my spirit and leave room for God to guide me. So, I can't tell you what the plans are. "I do see visions of expanding and changing the shape, like I've been changing the shape of choir set up with Sunday Service. I like that, my architecture and my art background are changing just the shape of the course that we use... What we're applying with this music that we're doing on our album with the Sunday Service.

Millie Bobby Brown launches collection of shoes in collaboration with Converse

The 15-year-old actress teamed up with the sneaker brand to release her own custom collection earlier this summer, and she's set to launch another capsule in her Millie By You range. Millie's first line was inspired by the ocean, and whilst this collection doesn't follow the same underwater theme, it instead features bright colors and bold accessories that are inspired by the 70s and Millie's love for crafting and DIY. Writing on Instagram, the 'Stranger Things' star said: "So excited to share with you my next collection with @converse - launching on 11/18/19. I designed these with all of YOU in mind. (sic)" The new collection features an all-pink pair with attached patch hearts, a white and pink style with patch accessories that read "Be You", and a black pair that come complete with rainbow hearts. Converse themselves also took to Instagram to show off the new range, with a quote from Millie that read: "I want this collection to tell people to embrace themselves no matter what." Meanwhile, Millie recently said she's keen to start wearing "fitted" clothes that show off her "womanly" figure now that she's getting older.



Serena Williams' daughter judges her fashion looks

The 38-year-old tennis star has two-year-old daughter Alexis Olympia with her husband Alexis Ohanian, and has said the tot looks set for a career in fashion, because she already has opinions on the clothes her mother wears. Serena recently launched her Serena Williams Jewelry line, and although she won't be allowing her tot to wear any of the pieces from the collection just yet, she's already a budding fashionista. When asked if Olympia will wear anything from the line, Serena said: "Well, we got her a small version of our iconic heart. But other than that, no. They're mine. Fall back, right now. Not yet. In due time. I do wonder what that's going to be like when she's a little bit older. I have no idea. We'll see. I can't wait. "So far, she's been wearing my heels, so I'm like, 'She's going to be in fashion!' I could've sworn today, she looked at me, and she was like, 'Gee, gah, yeah.' I was like 'You like what mommy's wearing today?' When I come out sometimes, she's like, 'Oooh! Ma!' " And whilst Olympia will have to wait to get her hands on some of her mother's jewellery, Serena will be sending pieces out to the people in



her "circle". She added: "We were just talking about, 'Okay, so who should we send it to? This is going to be exciting.' We definitely plan on sending some of the pieces to a few different people in my circle." Serena's collection features two different heart design necklaces, which the sporting superstar says are sentimental to her because of the heart pendant she always wears when she plays tennis. Serena Williams Jewelry is a collection of diamond encrusted necklaces, earrings, rings, and bracelets, with prices ranging from \$299 to \$9,999. — Bang Showbiz

France, the most attractive country in Europe in 2018

According to Business France's attractiveness dashboard, published in October 2019, France becomes more and more attractive every year. A finding that corroborates the Kantar Public study published in January 2019: 88 percent of foreign business leaders consider France attractive (4 points more than in 2017) and 61 percent believe that its attractiveness has improved in the last two years.

Produced for the tenth year running, France's attractiveness dashboard - based on internationally recognized sources - draws a diagnosis of the attractiveness of France by comparing it to thirteen other member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on all key economic indicators, be it the size of the market, human capital, research and innovation, infrastructure, the administrative and financial environment, the cost of capital and labor or the quality of life.

Frederic Szabo, Managing Director, Business France Middle East stated: "Proof of this renewed attractiveness, France - the world's sixth-largest economy - confirms its position as the leading host country for production investment in Europe and in 2018 became the first host country for R&D activities. The German software giant SAP, for example, has announced a five-year investment of more than two billion euros for innovation in France, including the opening of an incubator at the end of 2018 in Paris."

France reinforces its structural assets

High quality transport and telecommunications infrastructure, hourly productivity ranked 9th in the world, one of the most competitive electricity costs in Europe, a modern e-administration ... France - the world's 4th largest exporter of services and the world's 7th largest exporter of goods - has a very large number of structural assets.

Strengths that are also the result of a proactive public policy. The high speed broadband Plan France, launched in 2013, is based on an investment of 20 billion euros over ten years to fully connect the territory to very high speed internet (over 30 mbps) by 2022. The intermediate objective to cover 50 percent of the territory by 2017 has been achieved by the end of 2016 (51.2 percent). In addition, through the new Railway Pact adopted in June 2018, the State has committed to invest 3.6 billion euros per year over ten years to modernize its rail network.

A strong entrepreneurial dynamic

The numbers bear this out year after year: France is a land of entrepreneurs. It ranks third in the business creation rate. There were almost 200,000 new business creations in 2017, an increase of more than 5 percent, while the business exit rate is one of the lowest in European countries. In the manufacturing industry, the number of net creations in France increased by 3.2 percent in 2017, or 7,999 net creations. France offers the most advantageous tax treatment in R & D for companies. According to the estimates of the national association of technology research, for the companies studied, the CIR (Research Tax Credit) and associated subsidies would decrease the cost of a researcher by 28 percent in France.

France is well on its way to carbon neutrality

In the European Union, France stands out through the originality of its energy mix. Electricity, largely from nuclear energy, is particularly low carbon. As for greenhouse gas emissions, they decreased by 46 percent in industry between 1990 and 2016. France is therefore well on track to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 set by the climate plan. This is a factor of undoubted attractiveness at a time when ecological issues are becoming more and more pressing.

Green growth also brings economic and job opportunities, especially in green energy. According to EurObserv'ER, France was the 3rd largest European employer in renewable energies in 2017, with 140,700 jobs (0.5 percent of its active population). The leading country in this field is Germany with 290,700 jobs (0.7 percent of its active population), followed by Spain with 168,800 jobs (0.7 percent).

However, France still has a way to go to be paradise for foreign companies and the Dashboard also points out a number of weaknesses, for example: taxation, labor costs or the regulatory environment. Weaknesses that are not, however, inevitable, as evidenced by the recent improvements achieved in these areas thanks to the reforms carried out over the last two years, according to Christophe Lecourtier, General Manager of Business France.

The Luxury Collection makes landmark debut in Qatar

The Luxury Collection announced the opening of Al Messila, A Luxury Collection Resort & Spa in Doha, marking the debut of the brand in Qatar. Only 25 minutes from Hamad International Airport and 15 minutes from Doha's city centre, West Bay, Al Messila is an urban oasis designed to respect the area's natural surroundings. The 'private palace' setting is a celebration of a verdant retreat in the heart of the desert, offering attentive service infused with age-old Qatari hospitality. A cherished reflection of the local spirit, Al Messila is anchored by holistic wellness and epicurean journeys for each guest to embark on during their stay.

"Doha today is a world-class city with a burgeoning arts and culinary scene, rooted in tradition and a rich heritage," said Anthony Ingham, Global Brand Leader, The Luxury Collection. "We are delighted to welcome Al Messila Resort & Spa to The Luxury Collection's ensemble of hotels. True to our brand's mission and informed by Qatar's foresight and commitment to sustainability, Al Messila offers global explorers a palatial retreat in a lush haven, guiding our guests on transformative journeys that touch their spirits and enrich their lives."

A regal retreat in a historical oasis

With an expansive botanical backdrop in Doha's historic 'oasis' district, Al Messila is visually dramatic and equally inspiring. Guests arriving through the stately porte-cochere will be transported to their own private palace. Understated opulence hints at its 21st-century



roots, where the three-story, light-filled lobby adjoins a lounge offering expansive views of the resort. Sculpted marble sits alongside mashrabiya, detailing original Arabic patterning with the contrast producing a warm and welcoming ambience, perfectly infusing modern design with Qatari accents.

The resort has 152 rooms and suites, including 30 premium Villas, each with their own pool, garden and personal butler service. Landscaped with native Mimosa and Acacia trees, alongside an abundance of vibrant flora and fauna, Al Messila is the ultimate oasis escape within a dynamic city.

Acclaimed dining, epicurean exploration

With eight unrivalled dining venues expertly overseen by Michelin Star Chef Pino Lavarra, Al Messila Resort & Spa offers an unrivalled international epicurean experience. Snoull features a Nordic gourmet experience inspired by friluftsliv, the Scandinavian philosophy of 'reconnecting with nature.' Dishes are crafted using naturally nourishing, raw and biodynamic produce. Veritas offers a refined Northern Italian menu inspired by seasonal ingredients. Caravanserai will serve hearty, comforting dishes that reinterpret the flavors of the Maghreb and Europe for a contempo-



rary audience. Those seeking a spirited, convivial atmosphere can thrive in the down-to-earth Greek estiatorio, Siga-Siga, with its healthy menu of authentic mezze and fresh seafood. This is complemented by a signature Deli Kitchen where guests can shop, learn and enjoy under the same roof.

An original approach to wellness and family

The resort's comprehensive Al Messila Wellness facility is an extensive female-only facility with 26 treatment rooms and advanced hydro-thermal facilities. Al Messila hosts the region's largest wellness retreat of its kind,

including three therapy pools and four hydro wellness 'Worlds' - Oriental, Mystic, Mineral and Floral - equipped with flotation tanks, cocoon beds, oxygen rooms, Kneipp walks, Hammams, salt rooms, and an elite range of exclusive treatment products and protocols.

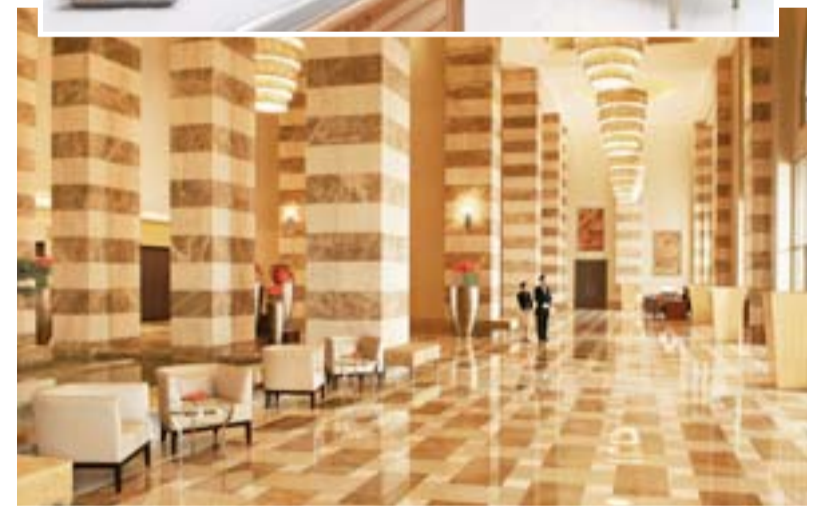
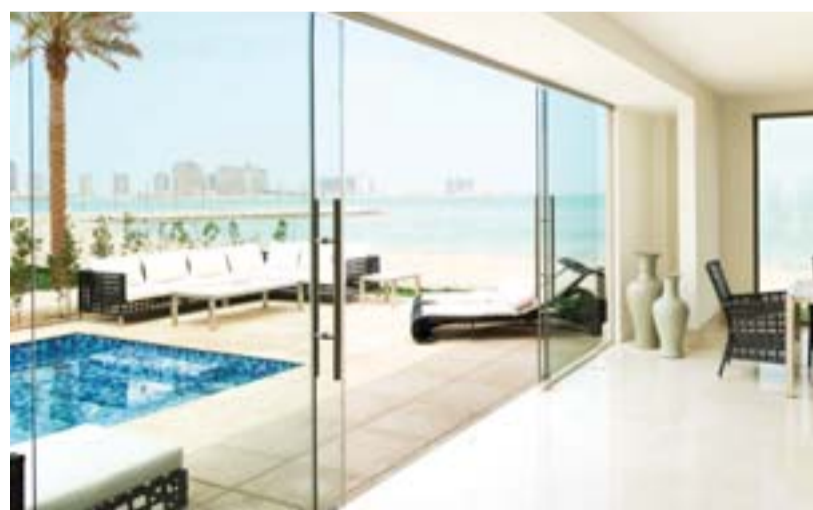
Suitable for families, Al Messila also hosts the innovative Little Explorers' Club - the first 'edu-tainment' facility of its kind in Doha. This includes a gym with kids-fit equipment, a cinema, an educational play area, an outdoor playground with interactive water fountains, and a shaded outdoor pool with hot-dip trampolines.

The St. Regis Doha



The St. Regis Doha is part of Al Gassar Resort, located at the heart of the rising city, adjacent to the Pearl-Qatar, Katara Cultural Village and West Bay business district. The St. Regis Doha exterior and interior spaces feature a strong design concept that supports both the history of Doha and the legacy of The St. Regis brand. Local influences are brought to life throughout the hotel using design details like the Middle Eastern-inspired archways and balance of soft and hard furnishing to create a unique guest experience.

The St. Regis Doha features 12 dining venues, modern meeting spaces and lavish function rooms in addition to a variety of recreation facilities and activities such as the legendary 5-star Remede Spa. The hotel encompasses 336 elegant guest rooms with sea view, including a wide range of suites. The guest rooms and suites were designed by internationally acclaimed interior architectural firm, Wilson Associates.



The Ritz-Carlton, Doha welcomes Asprey beverage trolley

Shaken not stirred, with a dash of pizzazz in between, The Ritz-Carlton, Doha welcomed the bespoke Asprey beverage trolley for a celebration of craftsmanship and a partnership between two iconic brands. The preview event complemented by an exclusive trunk show highlighting Asprey leather bags, jewelry and watches, was the epitome of unique style, unsurpassed quality and innovative design. Made exclusively for The Ritz-Carlton brand, the Asprey trolley draws inspiration from the most creative and innovative bar designs from the 1920s and 1930s when craft libations marked the height of fashion and also when Asprey first started creating beverage shakers.

Celebrating this golden age of unique concoctions and Art Deco glam-



our, the silver-plated and tempered glass trolley will be on display at the elevated Ritz-Carlton Doha Club Lounge until the end of the month. Fitted with the most exclusive of luxury accessories, the trolley features customized ice buckets, beverage coolers, ice tongs, and decanters, in addition

to handmade shakers and mouth-blown, hand-engraved glassware. Expert guest mixologists served up handcrafted drinks, using local ingredients for regionally curated beverages. Throughout the month, guests can visit The Ritz-Carlton Doha and partake in the experience throughout the hotel.

Having made its debut at The Ritz-Carlton hotels across Europe and North America, the trolley is currently on its maiden tour across the Middle East. From Bahrain to Oman and now in Doha, each stop on the international tour has inspired mixologists to create locally inspired beverages that bring back the early 20th-century art of crafting the perfect libation. Served from this bespoke trolley, it pays tribute to the heritage of great craftsmanship and speaks to the partnership between The Ritz-Carlton and Asprey.

Located on its own exclusive island in the prestigious West Bay Lagoon district, The Ritz-Carlton, Doha offers sweeping views of the Arabian Gulf, the iconic Pearl and the emerging skyline of Lusail City. The award-winning hotel offers 374 guest rooms including suites, a Club Lounge, five restaurants and lounges including the chic steakhouse STK, and Sel&Miel, the modern French brasserie among others. In addition, guests can recharge at the world-class Ritz-Carlton, Spa or simply relax at the magnificent indoor or outdoor swimming pools. State-of-the-art facilities, flexible meeting spaces, and flawless attention to detail produce a framework that ensures success.



Models present creations during the presentation of Giorgio Armani's Women's pre-Fall 2020/2021 fashion collection at Armani's theater in Milan. — AFP photos



Italian fashion designer Giorgio Armani acknowledges applause following the presentation of his Women's pre-Fall 2020/2021 fashion collection in Milan.

Giorgio Armani's Women's pre-Fall



Classifieds

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind changing to north easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 38 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate north easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

WEATHER WARNING			Drop in Visibility	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 18/11/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	17 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25 °C	16 °C		
ABDALY	25 °C	15 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	26 °C	15 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	25 °C	17 °C		
AHMADI	25 °C	18 °C		
NUWAISIB	27 °C	17 °C		
WAFRA	26 °C	16 °C		
SALMY	24 °C	14 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	11/19	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	24 °C	15 °C	NW	12 - 38 km/h
Wednesday	11/20	Sunny	23 °C	12 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Thursday	11/21	Sunny	23 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	11/22	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	24 °C	13 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:51
Sunrise	06:13
Zuhr	11:33
Asr	14:32
Sunset	16:52
Isha	18:12

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	86 %
MIN. RH	49 %
MAX. Wind	SE 53 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
Khalidiya	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

ANNOUNCEMENT

Union Trading Company W.L.L declares no liability for any home or electrical appliance submitted to the company for repair in the workshop and not collected by owners.

UTC will not be held liable after two weeks from the date of this announcement since the items will be destroyed after the specified duration.



Address: Ardiyah, Block 2, street 6, Behind Best Al Yousifi, Kuwait

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mitra Vinda Nalladeega, holder of Indian Passport Number: P9486193, do hereby change my name to (Given Name): Mitra, Surname: Paul) as per my Adhar Number: 9297 6016 6997 for all purpose. I also

undertake of effect the change in all my other public documents. (C 5473) 19-11-2019



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



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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 19/11/2019				Departure Flights on Tuesday 19/11/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00
AIC	989	Mumbai	00:10	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00
JZR	716	Sohag	00:35	KAC	515	Tehran	12:10
JZR	254	Amman	00:45	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	JZR	115	Doha	13:00
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSR	611	Cairo	13:00
KAC	102	London	01:25	GFA	210	Bahrain	13:05
DLH	625	Dammam	01:30	KAC	781	Jeddah	13:30
RJA	642	Amman	01:40	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
IGO	1759	Delhi	01:55	KAC	541	Cairo	13:45
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	02:15	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:45
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05	SAW	501	Jeddah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:30
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:35
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:45
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	103	Bahrain	17:00
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	04:40	KAC	619	Doha	17:35
JZR	702	Asyut	04:50	KAC	357	Kochi	17:35
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	358	Kochi	05:10	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:20	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:20	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	SAW	511	Riyadh	18:20
JZR	112	Doha	05:35	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:45	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:55	KAC	301	Mumbai	18:35
KAC	106	London	06:00	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
FEG	341	Sohag	06:05	KAC	381	Delhi	18:45
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:55
KAC	332	Trivandrum	06:05	SYR	341	Damascus	18:55
KAC	362	Colombo	06:30	JZR	253	Amman	19:20
THY	6376	ISL	06:30	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	544	Cairo	07:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	120	Dubai	07:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:35
BAW	157	London	07:05	FEG	342	Sohag	19:55
KAC	678	Dubai	07:05	JZR	653	Sohag	20:05
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	RJA	641	Amman	20:10
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:10	NIA	162	Bengaluru	20:30
KAC	622	Doha	08:30	KAC	353	Muscat	20:35
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	JZR	501	Muscat	20:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	OMS	226	Dubai	20:45
JZR	102	Bahrain	08:55	FDB	058	Dubai	20:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
GOW	061	CNN	09:30	QTR	1091	Doha	21:00
KAC	304	Mumbai	09:30	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
KAC	384	Delhi	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	21:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:55
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	410	Delhi	10:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:25
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	10:40	AZQ	4565	Baku	22:30
JZR	714	Sohag	10:50	ICV	6752	Hong Kong	22:35
JZR	122	Dubai	11:15	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
MSR	610	Cairo	12:00	RBG	214	Sohag	23:10
GFA	209	Bahrain	12:05	KAC	783	Jeddah	23:15
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	383	Delhi	23:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:25
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	KAC	795	Madinah	23:30
				KAC	543	Cairo	23:30
				KAC	303	Mumbai	23:40

Iran spy agency leaks reveal vast sway in protest-hit Iraq

BAGHDAD: Reports yesterday on a trove of leaked Iranian intelligence documents drove home the depth of its influence in Iraq, where anti-government protesters have accused Tehran of meddling and overreach. The New York Times and online publication The Intercept reported that the hundreds of documents from Iran's ministry of intelligence and security painted a rich picture of Iran's clout in Iraq.

Among the revelations, they said, was how Iran had recruited former CIA informants after the United States pulled out its troops in 2011, leaving the assets "jobless and destitute" and ready to share their knowledge. And in one meeting between military intelligence officers from both countries, the Iraqi side had reportedly signaled to Iran: "All of the Iraqi Army's intelligence - consider it yours."

Iraq has had close but complex ties with its large eastern neighbor, whose sway among Iraqi political and military actors grew vastly after the US-led invasion of 2003. The new reports served to confirm the sentiment of protesters across Baghdad and the Shiite-majority south who oppose the current government and its backers in Iran.

"Iran is intervening in our country," one demonstrator told AFP. "But we, the people, are the decision makers." The demonstrator, a veiled Iraqi woman in her sixties, also greeted the fact that Iran had been hit by its own wave of protests since Friday, triggered by a sharp rise in petrol prices. "The spark that started in Iraq has reached Iran," she said.

The New York Times and The Intercept said they had verified around 700 pages of reports written mainly in 2014 and 2015, received from an anonymous source. The source had said they wanted to "let the world know what Iran is doing in my country Iraq". The media outlets said the leaked documents "offer a detailed portrait of just how aggressively Tehran has worked to embed itself into Iraqi affairs, and of the unique role of General (Qasem) Soleimani".

Soleimani, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' elite Quds Force, is Tehran's point man on Iraq and travels there frequently during times of political turmoil. As Iraq faces its largest and deadliest protests in decades, Soleimani has chaired meetings in Iraq in recent weeks. As a result of those talks, sources have told AFP, Iraq's rival political parties have agreed to close rank around their embattled prime minister.

In one of the Iranian leaks, Adel Abdel Mahdi is described as having had a "special relationship" with Tehran when he was Iraq's oil minister in 2014. The prime minister's office told AFP it had "no comment" for the time being on the report.

Iran and Iraq fought a devastating war from 1980 to 1988 and were ferocious foes under dictator Saddam Hussein. Many Iraqi dissidents under the Saddam regime sheltered in Iran but returned to political life in Baghdad following the brutal ruler's ouster in 2003. Iran has therefore enjoyed close ties with the new generation of Iraqi politicians and has helped train military actors including in the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary network. It is also a major trading partner, selling crucial electricity and natural gas to supplement Iraq's gutted power sector as well as goods ranging from fruit to carpets and cars.

Iran has used wide-ranging intelligence operations to maintain that deep influence, the NYT and The Intercept reported. Its major goals were to "keep Iraq from falling apart and prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdistan, among other strategic aims". The "greater focus," the NYT report said, was "on maintaining Iraq as a client state of Iran and making sure that political factions loyal to Tehran remain in power".

Iran's outsized influence has come under fire from protesters who accuse it of propping up a corrupt and inefficient system they want to bring down. Crowds again hit the streets, and schools and government offices remained shut, in Iraq's southern hotspots of Kut, Najaf, Diwaniyah and Nasiriyah yesterday. Protesters also burnt car tyres



NAJAF, Iraq: A masked Iraqi protester flashes victory signs as he stands before burning tyres at a roadblock in this central holy shrine city yesterday. — AFP

and blocked roads leading to oil fields south of the port city of Basra.

In Baghdad, crowds again swelled in Tahrir (Liberation) Square, and on the nearby Al-Sinek and Al-Ahrar (Free Men) bridges, said an AFP correspondent. Security forces set up cement barriers around the central bank building, several kilometers away, to protect it from

attacks, said a police source. Across Tahrir, demonstrators expressed solidarity with what they saw as a new sister protest movement in Iran. "Today, the Iranian people are just like the Iraqis," 55-year-old protester Abdullahi told AFP. "Both are demanding their stolen rights and (mobilizing) against the rule of our neighbor and against corrupt leaders." — AFP

Girl dies, truck driver missing after French bridge collapse

MIREPOIX-SUR-TARN, France: A 15-year-old girl died and a truck driver was missing after a suspension bridge over a river in southwest France collapsed yesterday, reigniting a debate over infrastructure safety in the wake of last year's disaster in Genoa. A truck and a car plunged into the Tarn river after the bridge between the towns of Mirepoix-sur-Tarn and Bessieres, 30 km north of Toulouse, gave way.

The bridge collapsed from the suspension cables and crashed into the waters of the Tarn, where only a small portion was left exposed above

the river. The girl was travelling in the car with her mother, who was plucked from the water by bystanders, Toulouse public prosecutor Dominique Alzeari said. Five people, including two rescue workers and some local people who tried to save the victims, were seriously injured, according to the region's security department.

Over 60 rescue workers, including divers, were searching for the driver of the truck and also checking whether any other vehicles were on the bridge at the time of the accident. The bonnet of the sunken car could be seen sticking out of the water as helicopters circled overhead. The authorities had earlier said that a van might also have fallen into the river and that "several" people might be missing. But Alzeari said "that does not appear to be the case."

An investigation into the cause of the collapse was under way. The environment ministry said that recent inspections of the bridge had "shown no security defects". The council of the local Haute-Garonne area said the bridge, which dated to 1931 and had been renovated in 2003, underwent a

"thorough" inspection in 2017 showing "no structural problem". A visual inspection of the 155-m structure, some 6.5 m wide, confirmed that conclusion in 2018, the environment ministry said.

Mirepoix-sur-Tarn mayor Eric Oget described it as a "very important crossing point" for people going to work in the regional capital Toulouse on the other side of the river. Many pedestrians used the bridge, he said, describing its collapse as a "real trauma" for the local population. Audrey Laujac, a 36-year-old woman who lives 100 m from the scene of the accident, told AFP her son had just taken the school bus across the bridge before it collapsed. "We never imagined that the bridge might collapse," she said, her voice choked with emotion.

Oget said articulated lorries were not allowed onto the bridge but that some had nonetheless been seen crossing over in the past. Police yesterday searched the premises of the drilling company that owned the truck to try to establish whether it was within the 19-tonne load limit allowed on the bridge. — AFP



MIREPOIX-SUR-TARN, France: Rescuers sail near a suspension bridge which collapsed yesterday. — AFP

Iran 'calmer' despite riots...

Continued from Page 1

The Basij militia, a volunteer force loyal to the establishment, also reported looting. Its commander Brigadier General Gholamreza Soleimani accused Iran's arch-enemy the United States of instigating the unrest and said "America's plot failed", according to semi-official news agency ISNA. Demonstrations broke out on Friday after it was announced the price of petrol would be raised by 50 percent for the first 60 liters and 200 percent for any extra fuel after that each month.

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. The authorities say they have arrested more than 200 people and restricted Internet access. Netblocks, a website that monitors net shutdowns, tweeted: "40 hours after #Iran implemented a near-total internet shutdown, connectivity to the outside world remains at just 5% of ordinary levels".

Government spokesman Ali Rabieci said the situation was "calmer" yesterday. He said there were still "some minor issues" but predicted that "tomorrow and the day after we won't have any issues with regard to riots", without elaborating. "There have been gatherings in some cities, in some provinces." Pressed to give figures on casualties in the unrest, he said: "What I can tell you today is that gatherings are about 80 percent less than the previous day."

The situation on the streets has been unclear largely due to the internet outage that has stemmed the flow of videos shared on social media of protests or associated acts of violence. The US on Sunday condemned Iran for using "lethal force". "The United States supports the Iranian people in their peaceful protests against the regime that is supposed to lead them," said White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham.

Iran slammed US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo after he tweeted "the United States is with you"

Saturday in response to the demonstrations. The foreign ministry said it was reacting to Pompeo's "expression of support... for a group of rioters in some cities of Iran and condemned such support and interventionist remarks". "The dignified people of Iran know well that such hypocritical remarks do not carry any honest sympathy," said its spokesman Abbas Mousavi. "It's curious that the sympathizing is being done with the people who are under the pressure of America's economic terrorism," he said, referring to sanctions.

Germany called yesterday for dialogue between the government and "legitimate" protesters in Iran. France, for its part, reiterated its support for the right to peaceful demonstration and voiced regret for the death of "several" protesters. Iran announced the decision to impose petrol price hikes and rationing at midnight Thursday-Friday, saying the move was aimed at helping the needy with cash handouts.

The plan agreed by a council made up of the president, parliament speaker and judiciary chief comes at a sensitive time ahead of February parliamentary elections. It won support on Sunday from Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Khamenei blamed "hooligans" for damaging property and said "all the centers of the world's wickedness against us have cheered" the unrest.

President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday defended the petrol price hike whose proceeds are to be used to make welfare payments to 60 million Iranians. But he also warned that Iran could not allow "insecurity". "Protesting is the people's right, but protesting is different from rioting. We should not allow insecurity in the society."

The intelligence ministry said it has identified those behind the unrest and that measures would be taken against them. Forty people have been arrested in the central city of Yazd and another 180 in the southern province of Khuzestan, according to Iranian news agencies. The Revolutionary Guards arrested 150 protest "leaders" in Alborz province, said Tasnim news agency, adding they had confessed to having "received money" to torch buildings. In a statement carried yesterday by state news agency IRNA, the Guards warned that if necessary it will "confront decisively... the continuation of any insecurity and actions disrupting people's peace and calm". — AFP

should be commended for to clear his name in the court of law. Ghanem said HH the Amir will start new consultations to appoint a new premier either today or tomorrow.

Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said the move by Sheikh Jaber is a step in the right direction which should be praised, especially after the issues that have been raised and following grillings submitted against him. He called on the new prime minister to form a strong Cabinet that is capable of fulfilling the aspirations of the people and which has a comprehensive reform program.

Facial recognition making subtle...

Continued from Page 1

commercial use. But data watchdog the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) seized on the case. It opened an investigation and expressed concern about the increasing use of facial recognition, which allows for faces captured on camera to be compared with images stored to databases.

The Kings Cross case is not isolated, with shopping centers in Manchester and Sheffield, and a museum in Liverpool, also reportedly trialing the technology. Privacy group Big Brother Watch has denounced the trend as an "epidemic", with other critics warning it risks undermining fundamental rights.

Ed Bridges, 36, has sued Welsh police for targeting him with this technology while he was Christmas shopping in 2017 and at a protest in 2018, with his case working its way through the High Court in Cardiff. This is the first time that such action has been brought in British courts. Although the police use was authorized and advertised, the Cardiff University employee told AFP it felt like "being robbed". "This is not something I had consented to," Bridges said. "People have a reasonable expectation of privacy and the state should be supporting the right... not undermining it."

Megan Goulding, his lawyer from the human rights organization Liberty, said facial recognition creates concerns about "self-censorship and free expression". "We think it's wrong that people are made to change how they live to try to protect themselves from unwarranted police surveillance," she added. However, according to a survey commissioned by ICO earlier this year, facial recognition enjoys widespread public support, with more than 80 percent of respondents apparently backing its use by the police.

When using facial recognition police utilize a "watch list" of wanted suspects. The surveillance cameras translate the facial features of passers-by into a digital version, which is compared to the data on the list. If the "similarity score" is high enough, police perform a check. In Bridges' case, the Cardiff court dismissed his complaint, finding the watchlist was "clearly targeted" on people "suspected of involvement in crimes".

He is appealing the decision and UK Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham has warned it should not justify indiscriminate use of the technology. She has called on the authorities to "slow down" its development pending the rollout of a clear framework for its use.

London is a potential hotspot for the deployment of facial recognition, with its 420,000 surveillance cameras, according to a 2017 study by the Brookings



LONDON: People walk past a CCTV camera operating on Oxford Street on Aug 16, 2019. — AFP

Institution think-tank. That places the British capital just behind the 470,000 cameras found in China's capital, Beijing. London's Metropolitan Police has carried out a number of trials of the technology. "Anyone can refuse to be scanned," the force states in its guidance posted online. "It's not an offence or considered 'obstruction' to actively avoid being scanned."

But Daragh Murray, a human rights specialist at the University of Essex, is skeptical. "People who refused consent, who covered their face to (avoid) the camera's system, their behavior was treated as suspicious and they were engaged by the police," he told AFP. Murray called the technology "a fundamental shift in the balance of power between the state and the citizen". Echoing ICO, he is pressing for a legal framework, including an oversight agency. "We have seen the first generation of facial recognition technology when you're using it to identify people who already know," Murray said. "The next generation, you'll be able to use it to identify people who you don't know." — AFP

Amir removes top ministers; PM...

Continued from Page 1

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said he understood the motives of the outgoing premier declining to form the next Cabinet, a step that he

Sports

Verstappen wins crazy race as both Ferraris crash out

Frenchman Gasly came home 0.062 seconds ahead of Hamilton

SAO PAULO: Max Verstappen underlined his potential as a champion of the future on Sunday with a commanding victory for Red Bull in an astonishing and crash-hit Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos.

The 22-year-old Dutchman twice passed newly-crowned six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton in a thrilling contest that had two safety car interventions and saw the Ferraris of Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc clash and retire, before clinching the eighth victory of his career.

His third win this season also made up for his disappointment in last year's race in Brazil when he looked certain to win before a late accident wrecked his hopes of victory. He made the most of pole position and finished a dominant winner ahead of his former Red Bull team-mate Pierre Gasly, now with Toro Rosso, as they delivered a Honda-powered one-two for the Japanese company for the first time since the heyday of local hero Ayrton Senna.

Frenchman Gasly came home 0.062 seconds ahead of Hamilton, who finished third for Mercedes but was demoted to seventh following a post-race stewards' investigation after crashing with luckless Thai driver Alexander Albon, the man who replaced Gasly at Red Bull, in the final laps.

Hamilton's demotion gifted McLaren's Carlos Sainz his first Formula One podium, subject to several other stewards' inquiries. "Lewis was very quick," said Verstappen. "So I had to keep pushing all the time. He pitted early so we had to be on top of our pit-stops and we had a good move on him."

"I could control the race with the tyres I had, so for me, it was unbelievable. It was a lot of fun out there and great to win the race."

VERSTAPPEN 'FLAT OUT'

He said his decisive second overtake of Hamilton was achieved thanks to his superior speed in the rarefied atmosphere of the 700-metre altitude Interlagos circuit. "I was behind so I was pushing flat out on my out lap," he said. "We knew we had great top speed the whole weekend — but that was a guess — and I'm very happy to have got past him!"

Gasly screamed with delight at his good fortune on his slow-down lap. "This is my first podium in F1 and, for sure, I will never forget it," he said. It's such a special moment. So emotional... "Toro Rosso have given me such a fantastic car since I came back. This is an amazing day... I was praying for the engine to give everything it had — without Honda, it would not have been possible."

Hamilton was handed a five-second penalty and two points on his racing licence. "I fully accept it was my fault and I accept the penalty," said the Mercedes driver. "I was the driver behind and it was my mistake. I apologise massively to Alex — the gap was there, but it closed pretty quickly. It was completely my fault and I hold my hands up."

Albon, who looked certain to finish on the podium, came home 15th. Sainz finished fourth on the road for McLaren ahead of the two Alfa Romeos of Kimi Raikkonen and Antonio Giovinazzi, seventh-placed Daniel Ricciardo of Renault and Lando Norris in the second McLaren.

Sergio Perez of Racing Point finished ninth and Daniil Kvyat was 10th in the second Toro Rosso, but all of the results were subject to revision as the stewards investigated a string of incidents late into the evening. —AFP



SAO PAULO: Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen (L) and Toro Rosso's French driver Pierre Gasly celebrate with their trophies after getting the first and second place of the F1 Brazil Grand Prix, at the Interlagos racetrack in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

Vettel, Leclerc summoned to explain collision

SAO PAULO: Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto has called drivers Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc to a clear-the-air meeting after their collision wrecked the team's hopes at the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The pair, who collided while fighting for fourth place on Sunday, were forced to retire from the race, leaving Ferrari embarrassed and pointless and the drivers arguing about who was to blame.

"There will be time (for us all) together at Maranello to understand what happened," said Binotto, in the wake of a tempestuous race won with authority by Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

"It's not for me to blame them, it's for them to recognise it." Speaking to reporters in the aftermath of a costly race for the scarlet scuderia, Binotto said he needed time to take stock and review the crash, on lap 66 of the 71-lap race.

Both cars were damaged and forced to retire in the incident, which came after a Safety Car restart when Vettel 'closed the door' on a challenging Leclerc. It resulted in Ferrari's first scoreless race since the 2017 Singapore Grand Prix and refocused criticism on the team's habit of generating self-

inflicted damage — and the fractious relationship between their drivers.

"I have not reviewed yet, I don't want to do it yet," insisted Binotto, "I think doing things in the heat of the moment, we may have the wrong conclusion. I heard both drivers, but they will come as well together to discuss again what happened and there will be time for the team to analyse all the video and the data."

"Whatever will be the judgement, more important is we are disappointed and sorry for the team. "But first, the two drivers should be sorry for the team — as it has been a very small crash with big consequences... "They are silly things that should not happen."

"It's a matter of recognising eventually what have been the actions and mistakes.

It's important, because that can only make you better." He said the Maranello meeting would not be about apportioning blame and punishment.

"It's not a matter of fining or blaming," he said. "They were free to fight, we let them race and the reason for that is that we have the second place in the constructors' (championship) ..."

"Free to fight doesn't mean to do silly actions, especially between the two teammates and the two Ferraris. For me, it was simply a silly action. "There is always something you can do better, but today the mistakes were from the drivers. As a team, what could we have done better? We need to think... "And, certainly, we need to improve that for the future and that it is not to happen anymore." —AFP

Zain strategic partner of GulfRun

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of GulfRun, the GCC's most popular motorsport event, for the fourth time. The event will be held at Kuwait Motor Town's race circuit during 21 - 23 November 2019.

Zain strongly believes in the important role the private sector plays in developing the youth and sports sectors in Kuwait. The company makes this concept a reality by sponsoring and supporting various major sporting events in Kuwait, including this regional event, as well as sponsoring and encouraging many Kuwaiti athletes who represent Kuwait in local, regional, and international arenas. Many of these athletes, who achieve great titles that Zain takes pride in, are motorsports champions.

This year's GulfRun program includes three main

activities: the Time Attack Race, which will feature over 90 cars from 4 different classes participating in two days of racing to secure the fastest results in their classes. The Auto Show, where automotive dealerships will be hosting their private garages to display vehicles and offer taxi-rides to visitors. The Race Market, where a festival market will showcase several local and international brands that will display their latest offerings alongside several restaurants, cafes, and a play area dedicated for children.

Zain's support to GulfRun comes in line with its keenness on encouraging the various efforts that contribute to developing the Kuwaiti youth and sports sectors. The company puts the support of Kuwaiti sports at the forefront of its priorities under the umbrella of its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, and Zain's support of Kuwaiti champions results in many achievements that the company is proud of one year after another.

GulfRun is considered an ideal and safe alternative to street racing, which threatens the lives of many peo-



ple, many of them young drivers. Motorsport enthusiasts are able to showcase their talents within professional and certified grounds at the Kuwait Motor Town's race circuit and Bahrain International Circuit, in addition to having taken advantage of the opportunity to gain valuable insights with the help of qualified trainers and experienced professional instructors.

Carlos Sainz claims McLaren's first podium since 2014

SAO PAULO: Carlos Sainz's patience and determination was repaid in more ways than one on Sunday when his first podium finish was confirmed by the race stewards, more than two hours after the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The highly-rated young Spaniard came home fourth on the road for McLaren in Sunday's tumultuous race, but was promoted to third when six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton was penalised — and then made to wait while his own race was investigated. Finally, the stewards said he and McLaren had not contravened any regulations in the use of Drag Reduction System (DRS) under yellow flags during the race — to the delight of the team's long-suffering fans and Sainz's many admirers and supporters. The result secured McLaren their first podium since both Jenson Button and Kevin Magnussen were classified in the top three at the 2014 Australian Grand Prix, ironically the first race in the current V6 turbo hybrid era.

"Good things come to those who wait... 2,072 days, 118 races, one group of loyal fans," McLaren said on Twitter. The result secured fourth place in the constructors' championship for McLaren, their best finish since 2012. It was an extraordinary effort by Sainz who had failed to set a time in qualifying and started from last place on the grid, the team choosing to take a new engine. He went for a one-stop strategy which worked out in a race of two safety car interventions and many accidents. "A podium!" said Sainz on Twitter. "A bit weird not being there after the race, but still extremely happy. "Today's race was just unbelievable — the one-stop strategy was difficult, but it paid off." Rivals Renault commented on Twitter: "Huge, huge congratulations to McLaren and Carlos Sainz. Both extremely dear to our hearts and both hugely deserving." His compatriot and former McLaren team-mate Fernando Alonso said: "Fantastic! Well done team." —AFP

Todd, Vaughn share PGA lead at Mayakoba Classic

MEXICO CITY: Brendon Todd, coming off a victory two weeks ago in Bermuda, shared the lead with fellow American Vaughn Taylor on Sunday when darkness halted the final round of the US PGA Mayakoba Classic. Taylor and Todd, both on 20-under par with four holes to finish, were among seven top-10 players yet to finish their final round when sunset fell at Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

Mexico's Carlos Ortiz and American Harris English were on 19-under, Ortiz with one hole to play and English with four remaining. American Adam Long was on 18-under with three holes remaining. Competition will resume at 7:30 a.m. local time (12:30 GMT) with 12 players set to complete their 72 holes after heavy rains washed out play Thursday.

To win, it might take matching or breaking the 72-hole tournament record of 22-under par set last year by Matt Kuchar. Todd seized the lead with a six-under par 65 in Sunday's third round and players went directly into the last round, rushing in a failed bid to complete 36 holes on the final day.

Todd, 34, won his first US PGA crown at the 2014 Byron Nelson Championship then ended a five-year win drought during which he battled the full-swing yips by taking the Bermuda Championship two weeks ago. This is his first start since that triumph.

"I feel great about my game. Happy to have a chance to win this after winning in Bermuda," Todd said. "I'm excited for the



PLAYA DEL CARMEN: Brendon Todd of the United States plays his second shot on the 17th hole during the continuation of the final round of the Mayakoba Golf Classic at El Camaleon Mayakoba Golf Course yesterday in Playa del Carmen, Mexico. —AFP

opportunity." Taylor, 43, seeks his fourth PGA title after taking the 2004 and 2005 Reno-Tahoe Opens and the 2016 Pebble Beach Pro-Am. "I'm just trying to hang in there best I can," Taylor said. "Didn't feel too great. I'm tied for the lead. I'm pleased." Taylor birdied the third hole in his final round, made back-to-back birdies at the ninth and 10th holes and sank another at the par-5 13th.

Todd birdied the par-3 fourth, par-5 sev-

enth and par-4 ninth and 12th holes to stay on top but could only par the 13th and took a bogey at 14 in the twilight before stopping on the 15th green alongside Taylor.

"I wanted to hit it in there close and come back tomorrow and make a birdie," Todd said. "There was probably no benefit to me playing after making two fives in a row." While his playing partners raced to the 18th tee so they could finish, Ortiz decided

against teeing off on the final hole due to the darkness. "The last shot, it was hard to see," Ortiz said. "The decision I took not to play, I think was the right one. I have a really good chance to win. Winning in front of my family and crowd would be a dream come true."

Kuchar made a hole-in-one on the par-3 eighth hole in the final round while US compatriot Brian Gay aced the par-3 10th hole. —AFP

Joseph renews contract with Japan to 2023

TOKYO: Jamie Joseph has renewed his contract as coach of Japan until the end of 2023 after leading the side to their first Rugby World Cup quarter-final last month, the Japanese Rugby Football Union said yesterday. The 49-year-old New Zealander, who was thought to be one of the main contenders to replace Steve Hansen as All Blacks coach, said he was excited about taking the 'Brave Blossoms' to the next World Cup in France.

"I have great expectations for rugby in Japan and I'm very honoured that I can lead the team towards the next World Cup," Joseph said. Japan won all four of their pool stage matches on home soil, including victories over top-tier nations Ireland and Scotland, to top their group before losing to eventual champions South Africa in the last eight. "We highly appreciate that (Joseph) built up the skills of the Japan players to the world level in just three years since taking over as head coach of the men's national team on Sept. 1, 2016," JRFU President Shigetaka Mori said in a statement. "By leading us to the best eight for the first time at this year's Rugby World Cup in Japan, we were able to glimpse the backs of the world's best. "I'm really looking forward to seeing how strong Japan can be under the guidance of Mr. Joseph." —Reuters

Sports

Vikings survive Denver Broncos on 20-point rally

Gurley, Rams outlast Bears in defensive battle

MINNESOTA: The Minnesota Vikings made up for three bad quarters of football with a dominant one on Sunday. Kirk Cousins was 29-of-35 passing for 319 yards and three touchdowns to lead Minnesota to a come-from-behind 27-23 home win over the Denver Broncos. The Vikings (8-3) trailed 20-0 at halftime and 23-7 after three quarters, but scored three touchdowns in the fourth quarter to rally and win for the sixth time in their past seven games. Cousins hit Kyle Rudolph for a 32-yard touchdown pass with 6:01 remaining to give the Vikings a 27-23 lead, their first of the game. Denver (3-7) took the ball and put together a 19-play drive to the Minnesota 4-yard line in the final seconds, but the Broncos couldn't connect on three consecutive passing plays before time ran out.

PATRIOTS 17, EAGLES 10

Wide receiver Julian Edelman threw a touchdown pass, Nick Folk kicked three field goals and visiting New England scored 17 unanswered points to defeat Philadelphia in their first meeting since the Eagles won Super Bowl LII. The win clinched the 19th consecutive winning season for the Patriots (9-1), one behind the Dallas Cowboys' all-time record of 20 from 1966-85. Patriots quarterback Tom Brady finished 26 of 47 for 216 yards. Quarterback Carson Wentz was 20 of 40 for 214 yards and a touchdown pass to Dallas Goedert, but the Eagles dropped back to .500 at 5-5 and had their two-game winning streak snapped.

RAVENS 41, TEXANS 7

Lamar Jackson passed for four touchdowns and produced 308 total yards as Baltimore turned a high-profile matchup with Houston into a rout at home. Though the Ravens (8-2) failed to score on their opening drive for just the second time this season, Jackson caught fire with two long second-quarter scoring drives that provided Baltimore a 14-0 halftime lead, en route to its sixth consecutive win. The Ravens' top-ranked rushing offense finished with 263 yards on 7.3 yards per carry. Deshaun Watson passed for 169 yards and was sacked six times. Carlos Hyde scampered 41 yards for a score with 7:10 remaining in the game to help Houston avoid the shutout.

49ERS 36, CARDINALS 26

Jimmy Garoppolo passed for a career-high 424 yards and tied a career high with four touchdowns, including the game-winning 25-yard score to Jeff Wilson Jr. with 31 seconds remaining, as host San Francisco rallied past Arizona in Santa Clara, Calif. The 49ers overcame a 16-point deficit, beating the Cardinals for the second time in three weeks. San Francisco (9-1) rebounded from its only loss on Monday night to take a one-game lead over idle Seattle (8-2) in the NFC West. Larry Fitzgerald and Pharos Cooper had touchdown receptions for the Cardinals (3-7-1), who have lost a season-high four in a row entering a bye week.

COWBOYS 35, LIONS 27

Dak Prescott threw for 444 yards and three touchdowns, while Ezekiel Elliott added a pair of TDs as visiting Dallas notched a victory over short-handed Detroit. Prescott completed 29 of 46 passes, while

surpassing 400 yards for the third time this season, and Michael Gallup caught nine passes for 148 yards as the Cowboys (6-4) remained in first place in the NFC East. The Cowboys have won three of their last four games since a three-game losing streak, rebounding from a defeat at home against the Vikings last Sunday.

SAINTS 34, BUCCANEERS 17

Drew Brees threw three touchdown passes, and visiting New Orleans recorded four interceptions of Tampa Bay quarterback Jameis Winston. Brees completed 28 of 35 passes for 228 yards. Michael Thomas, the leading receiver in the NFL, caught eight of Brees' passes for 114 yards and a touchdown that helped the Saints (8-2) build a 20-0 lead. The Buccaneers (3-7) pulled within 20-10 when Matt Gay kicked a 55-yard field goal on the first possession of the second half, but Brees responded on the ensuing possession with a 75-yard drive that ended with a 6-yard touchdown pass to Ted Ginn Jr.

COLTS 33, JAGUARS 13

Jonathan Williams rushed for 116 yards, and Marlon Mack ran for 109 yards and a touchdown as Indianapolis beat visiting Jacksonville to move into a first-place tie in the AFC South with Houston. Quarterback Jacoby Brissett ran and threw for a touchdown in the third quarter in a successful return from a knee injury that forced him to sit out last week's 16-12 loss to Miami. Brissett completed 15 of 24 passes for 148 yards for the Colts (6-4). It wasn't quite as nice a return for quarterback Nick Foles, making his first start for Jacksonville (4-6) since suffering a broken clavicle in a Week 1 loss to Kansas City. Foles hit on 33 of 47 passes for 296 yards with two touchdowns and an interception.

FALCONS 29, PANTHERS 3

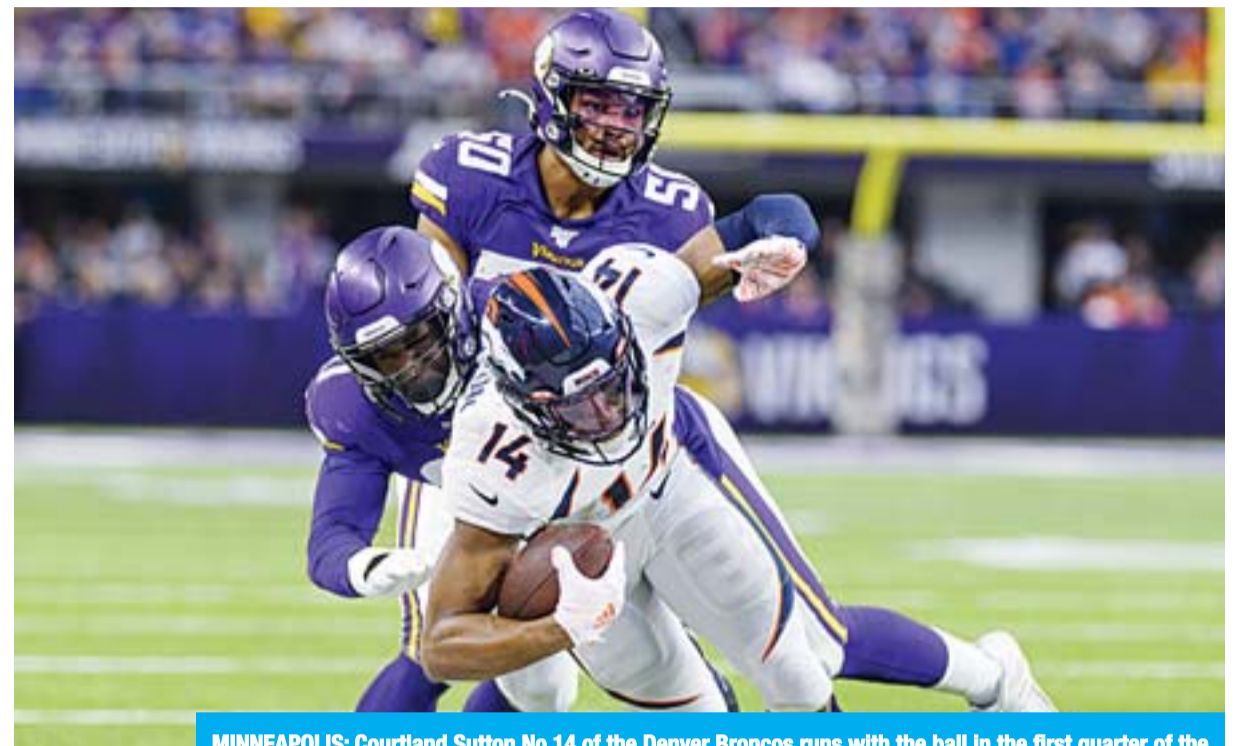
Atlanta intercepted four passes and defeated a second NFC South rival in as many weeks, clobbering host Carolina in Charlotte, N.C. Quarterback Matt Ryan threw for 311 yards and a touchdown, and the Falcons took advantage of some stellar work on special teams, including a 78-yard punt-return touchdown by Kenjon Barner. A week after knocking off the New Orleans Saints on the road, the Falcons (3-7) didn't give Carolina quarterback Kyle Allen many open looks. Allen, who had never lost at home when starting for the Panthers, finished 31 of 50 for 325 yards with four interceptions.

RAIDERS 17, BENGALS 10

Derek Carr threw one touchdown pass and ran for a second score as Oakland used a strong defensive performance to hold off visiting Cincinnati. Josh Jacobs rushed for 112 yards on 23 carries. The Raiders' defense limited the Bengals to a total of 246 yards en route to a third consecutive win that completed a homestand hat trick after a rough travel start to the season. Carr finished 25 of 29 for 292 yards with the one score and one interception. The interception, by the Bengals' Jessie Bates III, was the first thrown by Carr in his last four games.

BILLS 37, DOLPHINS 20

Josh Allen passed for three touchdowns and ran for



MINNEAPOLIS: Courtland Sutton No 14 of the Denver Broncos runs with the ball in the first quarter of the game against the Minnesota Vikings at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minnesota. —AFP

another as Buffalo defeated host Miami. Allen completed 21 of 33 passes for 256 yards with no interceptions. His top receiver was John Brown, who is from the Miami area and caught nine passes for 137 yards and two touchdowns. Brown also recovered a Buffalo fumble. Jakeem Grant's 101-yard kick-return touchdown was a highlight for the Dolphins, but it wasn't enough as the Bills (7-3) swept their two-game season series with Miami (2-8). Grant also ran for a 7-yard touchdown and had 237 total yards.

JETS 34, REDSKINS 17

Sam Darnold threw a career-high four touchdown passes as visiting New York cruised past Washington to win a second consecutive game for the first time since Oct. 7-14, 2018. The Redskins (1-9) have lost four straight but snapped a franchise-record touchdown drought of 254 minutes and 49 seconds when rookie quarterback Dwayne Haskins Jr. threw a 45-yard touchdown pass to Derrius Guice in the fourth quarter. Darnold finished 19 of 30 for 293 yards. Le'Veon Bell rushed 18 times for 59 yards and scored a 1-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter for the Jets (3-7). Safety Jamal Adams recorded three sacks.

RAMS 17, BEARS 7

Todd Gurley matched a season high with 97 yards rushing and scored a touchdown, Malcolm Brown added a score, and the Rams returned home to win a defensive tussle against the Bears. The elite Rams defense, behind tackle Aaron Donald, held the Bears scoreless in the first half and kept Chicago to 193 yards passing and 74 yards rushing. The Bears missed field goals on two of their first three possessions. Jared Goff passed for 173 yards but it was enough for the Rams (6-4) to win for the third time in their past four games following a three-game losing streak. —Reuters

England's Archer takes aim at Kookaburra ball before NZ Test

WELLINGTON: England's Jofra Archer says it has been a challenge adjusting to the Kookaburra ball ahead of Thursday's first Test against New Zealand but hopes a bit of pace off the surface at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui will help level the playing field. Archer made his Test debut in the Ashes series against Australia earlier this year, taking 22 wickets in four matches, and is England's main strike bowler in New Zealand in the absence of the injured James Anderson.

The two Test series is Archer's first overseas tour and his chief concern is the Australian-made ball, which has a far less pronounced seam than he is used to. "I'd never bowled with the red Kookaburra before, but I knew it was going to be tough and so it proved," he wrote in a column for the Daily Mail <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/cricket/article-7695441/Jofra-Archer-says-Kane-Williamson-tough-Steve-Smith-ahead-New-Zealand-test.html>.

"People say it has a smaller seam than the Dukes ball we use in England but I'm not sure it has a seam at all. It isn't pronounced on any part of the ball. It doesn't hold its shine either and gets very old, very fast."

Archer is pinning his hopes on the speed of the pitch in Mount Maunganui after playing on the "flattest" of his life in Whangarei in England's final warm-up match. "We've heard conditions at Mount Maunganui might be more helpful and there could be a bit more pace so ... that may be something to work with," he added. "When there's nothing on offer from the conditions, you have to try whatever you can. You have to be inventive over here, which is one of the things we've spoken about as a group." —Reuters

Root's England put new philosophy to test in NZ

WELLINGTON: England's two-match series in New Zealand is not part of the World Test Championship but will be no less significant for the tourists as they prepare to showcase a more patient brand of cricket under their new coach in Mount Maunganui on Thursday.

With Australia retaining the Ashes earlier this year, England, under new coach Chris Silverwood, have embarked on a two-year project to reclaim the urn in 2020-21. Jettisoning the aggressive style championed by his predecessor Trevor Bayliss, Silverwood has advocated a more conservative approach to test cricket, with skipper Joe Root emphasizing the importance of patience ahead of the series. "We have to try to bat longer. It doesn't matter how long it takes to get a good score on any given wicket," Root said. "It would be nice to get used to batting for 120 overs more regularly, especially in the first innings."

"And it doesn't just apply to our batting. It's with the ball as well. We have to be prepared to go at two an over and build pressure in different ways."

England are also leaning more toward youth, packing seven under-25 players in their 15-man squad. Four of them — Ollie Pope, Sam Curran, Dominic Sibley and Jofra Archer — could see action in Mount Maunganui this week.

Root will be back at his preferred number four against New Zealand, ahead of Ben Stokes, while Dom Sibley will partner Rory Burns at the top, but England's bowling unit looks less intimidating in the absence of James Anderson and Mark Wood.

Archer, playing his first overseas test series, might have to shoulder the extra burden.

Currently ranked second in the world, one place above England, New Zealand have lost only one of their last 15 tests on home soil. Their batting has been bolstered by skipper Kane Williamson's timely recovery from a hip injury ahead of the inaugural test at his home ground. —Reuters

Paine hits out at Stokes for 'cheap shot' at Warner

BRISBANE: Australia captain Tim Paine has blasted England all-rounder Ben Stokes for taking a "cheap shot" at David Warner, claiming he was using the controversial opening batsman to spike sales of his new book.

In his book, which is being serialised in a British newspaper, he claims Warner's sledging motivated Stokes during his match-winning heroics in the third Ashes Test this year. Stokes's incredible unbeaten 135 at Headingley steered England to a record run chase and thrilling one-wicket win to square the five-match series at 1-1.

"He just wouldn't shut up for most of my time out there," Stokes said of

Warner, who insists he has reformed and is no longer the brash character who was banned for a year over a ball-tampering scandal.

"I could accept it from just about any other opponent. Truly. Not from him, though," Stokes added. "The changed man he was adamant he'd become, the one that hardly said boo to a goose and even went as far as claiming he had been re-nicknamed 'Humble' by his Australia team-mates, had disappeared."

Paine disputed the characterisation and was adamant Warner did nothing wrong. Asked if it was a cheap shot by Stokes, Paine replied: "Oh absolutely. I was obviously standing next to David the whole time (at first slip) and you are allowed to talk on the cricket field," he told reporters on Sunday in Brisbane ahead of a Test series against Pakistan.

"But by no means was he abusing him or sledging him. It just seems to be a common trend in England that they like to use Davey's name to spike book sales." —AFP

Smith, Warner to test young Pakistan quicks

MELBOURNE: Australia's Steve Smith and David Warner will look to give Pakistan's raw attack a baptism of fire in a two-match series starting Thursday as the batsmen play their first tests on home soil since serving bans for ball-tampering.

Former captain Smith and Warner have not been seen in Test whites at home since January 2018 when both scored half-centuries at the Sydney Cricket Ground at the end of a triumphant Ashes series.

Much water has since passed under that bridge, with the pair sidelined for 12 months for their roles in the Newlands scandal and a much-reduced Australia condemned to struggle in their absence. They have since made successful returns to the international arena on foreign shores.

Warner plundered 647 runs as Australia reached the

one-day World Cup semi-finals in England, while Smith amassed 774 runs in a magical Ashes series that saw Tim Paine's team retain the urn in September.

But both batsmen will be eager to make their mark in front of home fans at the Gabba on Thursday, and in the day-night test in Adelaide from Nov. 29. Lefthander Warner will be particularly keen to fire after a poor Ashes series boasting a solitary half-century.

That could spell trouble for a rebuilding Pakistan squad that have a pace unit featuring three teenagers as well as Mohammad Abbas and Imran Khan. While Abbas and Imran both have experience bowling against Australia, much faith has been placed in 19-year-old left-arm Shaheen Afridi and the uncapped duo of Muhammad Musa and Naseem Shah.

Though highly rated, the tall Shaheen has only three Tests to his name and is on the comeback trail after suffering a bout of dengue fever. Throwing the untested Musa, another 19-year-old beanpole, into the Gabba fortress, let alone the 16-year-old Naseem, would seem an even bigger gamble.

"It looks like (Naseem) Shah bowls with some good pace," Smith told reporters in Brisbane. "Being as young as he is, he probably hasn't bowled lots of overs consistently, so it'll be about making him come back

and bowl as many spells as he can and see if he can maintain it."

Australia have never lost a test series to Pakistan on home soil but surrendered their first to an Asian side over the 2018/19 home summer when beaten by Virat Kohli's India.

Australia are a lot stronger with Smith and Warner in the side, however, even if question marks hang over some of their batting team mates. The recalled Joe Burns will again try to lock down a long-term gig as Warner's opening partner, while middle order batsman Travis Head is under scrutiny after being retained in the wake of his lean Ashes series.

Pakistan coach Misbah-ul-Haq, who captained them to a 3-0 whitewash defeat in their last trip to Australia in 2016/17, will have faith that skipper Azhar Ali and the top six batsmen can produce competitive totals against Australia.

Getting 20 wickets in both tests will be another matter, though, on taxing pitches that demand pace and patience. "It's hard work on these big fields, hard pitches," said Pakistan bowling coach Waqar Younis.

"It takes a lot out of you as a teenager and we have to keep our fingers crossed that they stay fit and can challenge the Australians." —Reuters



Tim Paine

Sports

Ronaldo scores 99th Portugal goal as holders seal Euro 2020 spot

World champions France wrapped up top spot in Group H

PARIS: Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 99th international goal as reigning champions Portugal secured their place at the Euro 2020 finals on Sunday with a 2-0 victory away to Luxembourg, while France ended their qualifying campaign with victory.

Bruno Fernandes struck the opening goal on 39 minutes before Ronaldo tapped in a scrappy second late on to clinch second place in Group B behind winners Ukraine, who drew 2-2 in Serbia.

Iranian striker Ali Daei holds the world record with 109 international goals scored in 149 appearances between 1993 and 2006.

"All records must be broken and I will beat that record," said Ronaldo. Portugal became the 17th nation to qualify for next year's multi-host tournament, which kicks off in Rome on June 12, joining the likes of world champions France, Spain, Italy and England.

"We can't give the match high marks for style," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos, who admitted the heavy pitch made life challenging for his team. "I'm very happy for my players because the qualifying campaign has been more difficult than we expected.

"We're through to the finals of a major tournament for an 11th straight time. You've got to believe in these players." Portugal knew they would book their place at Euro 2020 with a win or by matching Serbia's result from their game in Belgrade.

But they were made to work hard by a Luxembourg team ranked 96th in the world that notably held France to a 0-0 draw in 2018 World Cup qualifying. Sporting Lisbon midfielder Fernandes broke the deadlock before half-time, controlling Bernardo Silva's pinpoint pass expertly before lashing in from 20 yards.

Ronaldo, who smacked in a hat-trick in Thursday's

6-0 thrashing of Lithuania, moved to the brink of his international century four minutes from time. Silva's far-post cross was forced towards goal by Diogo Jota, with Luxembourg goalkeeper Anthony Moris getting a hand to the ball before Ronaldo turned in from the goalline.

FRANCE SIGN OFF WITH WIN

Later on Sunday, world champions France wrapped up top spot in Group H as goals from Corentin Tolisso and Antoine Griezmann sealed a 2-0 win over Albania in Tirana. "I'm very dependent on the players," French World Cup-winning coach Didier Deschamps said after his 100th game in charge.

"It's a personal pride. But it's good to see what the players do together. At times, it can be a bit more difficult with changes to the players, injured players, but the spirit is there."

The French national anthem was roundly booed before kick-off as retribution for the error that saw the Andorran anthem played instead of the Albanian one when the teams met in September at the Stade de France. The visitors made a quick start on the pitch, though, as Bayern Munich midfielder Tolisso headed Griezmann's free-kick into the bottom corner.

The Barcelona star slotted in the second himself on the half-hour mark, before the dead rubber petered out in the second period, with Olivier Giroud going closest to a third by striking the post.

The other games in the group saw Turkey, who had also already sealed qualification, beat Andorra 2-0, while Iceland edged to a 2-1 victory at Moldova. England rounded off an impressive campaign with a 4-0 thrashing of Kosovo.

Goals from Harry Winks, Harry Kane, Marcus

period for the previous year thanks to more sponsorship income and two extra home games compared to the same stage of last season.

Broadcasting revenue fell by nearly £10 million due to a lack of Champions League football, which will make an even bigger impact in figures for the second quarter of the year when five of the six group games are played.

United are expecting the 2020 annual revenue to fall to between £560-580 million, compared to £627 million for the year ending June 30, 2019 due to the lack of Champions League revenue. However, the failure to qualify for the competition is also reflected in a 6.8 million drop in the club's wage bill for the first quarter of the season.

Net debt rose £137 million to £384.5 million due to

The semi-finals and final will be held at Wembley and after reaching the last four in last year's World Cup in Russia, it would be a major letdown if Southgate's side did not improve on that finish.

Southgate believes his side have progressed since the semi-final loss to Croatia in Moscow but hopes that, as with two years ago, his squad can come together even more in the final months of preparation.

"We're definitely further ahead than we were heading into Russia, but we made massive strides in this period when we went into Russia," he said after Sunday's 4-0 win over Kosovo in Pristina.

"We've got to make sure that, to get the level of performance next summer, we're going to have to improve in the way that we did over that spell as well," he added. Southgate will have no concerns about his attacking options — skipper Harry Kane has 12 goals in qualification, Raheem Sterling and Marcus Rashford have established themselves on the flanks with Jadon Sancho and Callum Hudson-Odoi backing them up. Chelsea striker Tammy Abraham is the likely cover for Kane in the central striker role.

The midfield is less settled but Harry Winks has ended qualification in excellent form and looks a good bet to be the link-man. The defensive holding role remains up for grabs with Liverpool's Jordan Henderson the most established player for that position with Declan Rice yet to totally convince and Eric Dier in need of an upturn in form to regain his slot.

The defence has not yet been truly tested, however, with the attacking nature of Southgate's full backs leaving them potentially vulnerable to counter-attacks.



LUXEMBOURG: Luxembourg's defender Dirk Carlson (L) vies with Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo (C) during UEFA Euro 2020 qualification football match between Luxembourg and Portugal at the Josy Bartel Stadium in Luxembourg. —AFP

Rashford and Mason Mount ensured England finished at the Group A summit, having scored 37 goals in just eight matches.

"We know there is still a bit of work to do but I can't

fault the players in this campaign, they've been ruthless. We're more settled with the group now," said England manager Gareth Southgate. The Czech Republic are also through, but lost 1-0 in Bulgaria on Sunday. —AFP

Lack of Champions League begins to hit Man Utd finances

LONDON: Manchester United's failure to qualify for the Champions League is beginning to erode the club's finances, but increased commercial income helped the English giants post revenues of £135.4 million (\$174 million) for the first quarter of the 2019-2020 season yesterday.

That represents a £400,000 increase on the same

England impress but Southgate knows finals a different game

LONDON: The numbers behind England's successful Euro 2020 qualification highlight just how emphatically Gareth Southgate's side have secured their place in next year's finals. Seven wins from eight games, 37 goals scored at a remarkable average of 4.6 per game, six conceded leaving a goal difference of 31 — qualification has never been in doubt.

But as Southgate himself acknowledged, the group was far from testing and it would be unwise to read too much into the thrashings that his team has handed out to modest opposition.

With the expanded size of tournaments making qualification much easier, the process for the traditional power-houses in the game is now as much about developing a squad and a style of play, than it is about simply picking up the necessary points.

Southgate is perfectly at ease with that process — his strengths so far have been in squad development, bringing in young players and building a tight team ethos. But now he faces something new — genuine expectation of success from the public and media for a tournament which while played in 12 nations, will effectively be a home competition for England.

UEFA president says, Platini could perform 'any role' after return

TIRANA: UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin on Sunday made light of his predecessor Michel Platini's return to football next week, saying the Frenchman could take any role except that of a player. Four years after Platini's ban from all football-related activities for financial wrongdoing, the former UEFA boss is free to work in the sport again today.

Ceferin was asked about Platini at Tirana Sunday where he was watching France play Albania in their Euro 2020 qualifier. "Michel Platini's ban is over. So he can be part in any role in football except as a football player. I think he is a bit old," Ceferin said of the 64-year-old.

Platini is on record this week as tantalisingly saying there would be no rush as elections for top roles at FIFA and UEFA are "some years ahead". Platini told Swiss television channel RTS in September that he "will be back".

The former France captain was banned in 2015 for receiving a two-million Swiss francs (1.8 million euros, \$2 million) payment from ex-FIFA chief Sepp Blatter, who was himself suspended for six years. "I will be back. I don't know where, I don't know how. I can't stay on the suspension, even if it's a suspension made by idiots," Platini said. "I was a victim of a form of a plot, yes, totally, between those at FIFA and those at the Swiss public ministry. There was an agreement between FIFA and them to sack me. I'm not going to say it was a plot by the Swiss state." — AFP

Breakaway Greeks qualify for Rugby League WCup

ATHENS: Greece made sporting history at the weekend by qualifying for the Rugby League World Cup for the first time despite being banned from playing on home soil. The Greeks made a bad start to the final European play-offs for the 2021 tournament when they lost to Scotland in London at the start of November. But they bounced back in style, thrashing Serbia 82-6 in Belgrade on Saturday to join the likes of Australia, New Zealand and hosts England at the sport's biggest competition.

Greek federation president George Stilianos told AFP he took "great pride" in what Greece had achieved. "It is an important step for rugby league in Greece," he said. The achievement has been all the greater because the federation is not even recognised by the Greek authorities and is not allowed to play on home soil. Officially, rugby league comes under the ambit of the federation of modern pentathlon but a split led to a rival Greek Rugby League Association (GRLA) being set up in 2016. It has since been recognised by the European Rugby League Federation, allowing it to contest interna-

spending on players such as Harry Maguire, Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Daniel James in the summer transfer market. "The significant investments that we have made in recent years in areas such as transfers, recruitment infrastructure, analytics and our academy are already beginning to bear fruit," said United's executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward.

"Our ultimate goal is to win trophies by playing exciting football with a team that fuses graduates from our academy with world-class acquisitions." United have won five of their last six games in all competitions, but are in serious danger of missing out on the Champions League again next season.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men are seventh in the Premier League, nine points adrift of the top four after 12 games. — AFP



Gareth Southgate

Southgate acknowledged that much remains unknown about his team, such as how will they cope when put under intense pressure by opponents in a game with everything on the line. "What we don't know, because we haven't had those tests more recently against the top eight or 10, is exactly how we're going to cope in those moments," Southgate said. "To win the European Championship is, at the moment, no easier than the World Cup. The final four (at the 2018 World Cup) were all European, and you've got to add Spain, Germany, Portugal and all the others into that, so it's a really high-level tournament." — Reuters

tional matches. The new national team, though, formed outside the auspices of the modern pentathlon federation is not allowed to play in Greece — for the play-off match against Scotland, London was "home" for the Greeks. "We hope that our qualification for the World Cup will help to change things," says Stilianos.

Largely, the players are Australian or English with Greek origins, who have travelled thousands of miles and spent thousands of dollars in chasing the World Cup dream. Just three home-grown players took the field for Greece in Belgrade.

The GRLA championship within Greece consists of seven teams but matches are considered illegal and are played under the constant threat of fines.

In spring 2018, a tournament in Athens was broken up by the police. Matches are often played after midnight to avoid interference. "There have often been times when we felt like giving up because we felt like we were banging our heads against a brick wall," coach Steve Georgallis told nrl.com.

"But we stuck solid and the domestic players played games in the middle of the night to make sure the competition kept going. "Hopefully us qualifying for the World Cup helps the domestic teams gain that recognition that we are the Greek Rugby League."

Billy Magoulias, who plays for Cronulla in Sydney, is the only member of the current side with high-level experience in Australia's National Rugby League.

He follows in a rich tradition of Greek diaspora players which includes legendary former Kangaroos captain George Peponis. — AFP

Croatia cap resurgence with Euro 2020 spot

ZAGREB: World Cup runners-up Croatia rounded off a rebuilding mission by booking their place at Euro 2020 with a 3-1 win over Slovakia but they are unlikely to sneak under the radar again at next year's finals.

Croatia secured top spot in Group E, a section also including Hungary, Wales and Azerbaijan, with five wins and two draws from their eight qualifiers. Coach Zlatko Dalic, who masterminded the run to last year's World Cup final, has gradually reconstructed a squad that lost Mario Mandzukic, Danijel Subasic and Vedran Corluka to retirement in the wake of the 4-2 loss to France in Russia.

The "Vatreni" — Croatian for "Fiery Ones" — needed only a point in Rijeka on Saturday to ensure a spot at the 24-team event, which kicks off in Rome on June 12. After a shocking start for home fans when Robert Bozenik scored in the 32nd minute, Croatia's qualification was never in doubt once Nikola Vlasic drilled home the leveller in the second half.

Bruno Petkovic headed the hosts in front and Ivan Perisic sealed the three points with a thumping finish with 16 minutes left. "I'm relieved ... proud and happy," Dalic said after the match. "These boys deserved the European Championship. This is the crowning moment for all that we have done in this year and a half since the World Cup."

But the path through qualifying, preceded by a poor showing in the Nations League, where Croatia finished last in their group behind Spain and England, was far from plain sailing.

Thumped 6-0 by Spain in their first competitive outing since the World Cup, Dalic spoke of the need for "fresh blood" to rejuvenate his side. Incorporating the likes of Petkovic, Josip Brekalo and Vlasic, Croatia began their qualifying bid with a difficult 2-1 victory against Azerbaijan at home in March.

They slumped to a defeat by the same scoreline away to Hungary days later, but victory over Wales in June and a 4-0 win away to Slovakia rebuilt fragile confidence. A disappointing 1-1 draw in Azerbaijan was a setback but Croatia recovered to dismiss Hungary 3-0, before a point in Cardiff left them on the brink of qualification.

For the former Yugoslav republic, independent since 1991, it is the sixth time it will play at the European Championship. "We are getting young players who today played like veterans. Vlasic and (Dino) Peric played superbly," Dalic said Saturday.

Croatian papers Sunday echoed his view, praising the squad and Dalic who became just the second coach to take the country to two successive major tournaments.

The legendary Miroslav Ciro Blazevic was the first, leading Croatia to the Euro '96 quarter-finals and a third-place finish at the 1998 World Cup in France.

The nation of 4.2 million people reached the World Cup final last year for the first time, inspired by captain Luka Modric, but eventually fell to a heavily fancied France.

"In a bit more than a year Croatia formed an excellent 'make up' and that is why we are looking forward to the European tournament," the Sportske Novosti daily commented Sunday. "Croatia will not be a 'dark horse' in summer 2020 but will be rather attacking from the front rows, which is both an advantage and a burden." — AFP

25 Verstappen wins crazy race as both Ferraris crash out



26 Paine hits out at Stokes for 'cheap shot' at Warner



27 Ronaldo scores 99th Portugal goal as holders seal Euro 2020 spot



Kings snap Celtics' 10-game streak

Redick helps Pelicans hold off Warriors



SACRAMENTO: Richaun Holmes #22 of the Sacramento Kings shoots the ball against the Boston Celtics at Golden 1 Center in Sacramento, California. — AFP

SACRAMENTO: Richaun Holmes hit a pair of go-ahead free throws with 13.3 seconds left as the Sacramento Kings ended the Boston Celtics' 10-game winning streak with a 100-99 victory Sunday afternoon. Buddy Hield led all scorers with 35 points and hit seven 3-pointers, as the Kings won for the fifth time in seven games. Nemanja Bjelica (12 points, 14 rebounds) and Bogdan Bogdanovic (12 points, 10 assists) each had double-doubles. Jaylen Brown led six Celtics in double figures with 18 points, and Daniel Theis had 10 rebounds to go with his 14 points. Boston lost for the first time since its season opener Oct 23. The game featured 24 lead changes and nine ties. After Marcus Smart was assessed a loose ball foul on a scrum under the net that withstood a coach's challenge, Holmes put Sacramento up for good with his two makes.

PELICANS 108, WARRIORS 100

JJ Redick scored 26 points, and Jrue Holiday added 22 as host New Orleans handed Golden state its seventh straight loss. Rookie Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 19, Nicolo Melli had 16, rookie Jaxson Hayes had 10 points and 10 rebounds and E'Twaun Moore added 10 points as the Pelicans prevailed in a meeting of two young teams with the worst records in the Western Conference. New Orleans entered the game with three wins, and Golden State had two, one of

which was a 134-123 triumph in New Orleans on Oct. 28. Rookie Eric Paschall scored 30, rookie Ky Bowman had 19, Glenn Robinson III had 14, and Marquese Chriss 10 to lead the Warriors.

NUGGETS 131, GRIZZLIES 114

Jamal Murray contributed a dunk and two assists to a 15-0, second-quarter flurry that erased a deficit and propelled Denver to a romp at Memphis. Murray finished with 39 points and eight assists for the Nuggets, who won for the sixth time in their last seven games. Jaren Jackson Jr. paced Memphis with 22 points. Paul Millsap and Will Barton capped the 15-0 burst with hoops that made it 53-40 with 4:34 remaining in the half. Denver extended its lead to as many as 25 in the second period and never allowed the Grizzlies closer than 17 in the second half.

LAKERS 122, HAWKS 101

LeBron James scored 33 points and Kyle Kuzma added 17 as host Los Angeles jumped out to a 25-point lead in the first quarter and finished off an easy victory over Atlanta to improve to an NBA-best 11-2. Rajon Rondo scored 15 points and Anthony Davis added 14 as the Lakers earned their fourth consecutive victory and their 11th in their last 12 games since a season-opening loss to the Clippers. Trae Young scored 31 points and Cam Reddish added 13 as the Hawks lost their third

consecutive game and fell for the sixth time in their last seven contests. Atlanta was blown out in Los Angeles for the second consecutive night after losing by 49 to the Clippers on Saturday.

76ERS 114, CAVALIERS 95

Tobias Harris scored 27 points on 12-of-14 shooting. Joel Embiid added 14 points and Philadelphia led for all but a few minutes in a win at Cleveland. James Ennis III contributed 14 points and Furkan Korkmaz had 13 for the Sixers, who snapped a two-game losing streak overall and a five-game road skid. Al Horford had 11 points, and Ben Simmons had 10 points and 11 assists. Collin Sexton led the Cavs with 17 points, while Jordan Clarkson added 15. Tristan Thompson and Kevin Love

had 12 points each for the Cavaliers, who have dropped three in a row.

MAGIC 125, WIZARDS 121

Nikola Vucevic collected 30 points and 17 rebounds to record his 10th double-double of the season as host Orlando posted a victory over Washington. Vucevic shot 11 of 14, and Evan Fournier highlighted his 25-point performance with five 3-pointers for the Magic, who have won three in a row. Markelle Fultz made all six of his shots in the first half and finished with a season-high 19 points. Bradley Beal followed up consecutive 44-point performances by scoring 34, and C.J. Miles added 21 for the Wizards, who lost for just the fifth time in their last 25 meetings with Orlando. — Reuters

Murray will do 'great job' at Davis Cup, says British captain

MADRID: Andy Murray will do a "great job" when he continues his comeback from injury at next week's inaugural Davis Cup Finals in Madrid, British captain Leon Smith said on Sunday. The former world number one claimed his first ATP title since 2017 last month in Antwerp to raise hopes that he could return to the top of the game despite needing career-saving hip surgery earlier this year.

Murray, who inspired Britain to the 2015 Davis Cup title, will line up alongside his older brother Jamie, Dan Evans, Kyle Edmund and Neal Skupski at the Caja Magica. "Andy feels great," said Smith. "He's obviously extremely happy to be back in tennis."

"He's training unbelievably hard to get back to his best position, with great focus. "If he's picked to play, then I know he will do a great job on the court. That's not ego, that's confidence of course. "He's still a very good tennis player, he's pushing (the other) guys ahead. And at the same time, you realise what he's gone through."

Britain, who were handed a wildcard for the first tournament since the old World Group was scrapped, will be favourites to progress from a Group E which also features Kazakhstan and the Netherlands. The teams will face off in two best-of-three-set singles matches in each tie, with one doubles rubber.

"We are very lucky to have three very good singles players and really good doubles options," added Smith,

who is expected to choose either British number one Evans or Edmund to partner Murray, now ranked 125th. "So I've got a few things to ponder in the next couple of days, but it's a good situation to be in. "It wasn't that long ago that it wasn't like this and the guys all stepped up even though they were ranked 270, 300, 400... Beating guys 30th, 60th in the world. "That's why you have to respect any opposition." Russia get the finals, revamped by Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique's Kosmos company, underway on Monday against reigning champions Croatia. But the Russians have been weakened by the withdrawal of world number four Daniil Medvedev, who has been struggling with exhaustion after a gruelling season that saw him reach six consecutive finals.

Croatia are missing the injured Marin Cilic, while the tournament will have to launch its new format without Roger Federer, who decided not to play. Novak Djokovic and home favourite Rafael Nadal have committed themselves to the event, although the Spaniard has been struggling with an abdominal injury in recent weeks.

But his captain Sergi Bruguera insisted the 19-time Grand Slam champion wants to take part. "The truth is that he's in a great moment," said Bruguera. "He is doing well and is eager to compete." The other ties see Belgium take on Colombia, who never played in the World Group, while Italy face Canada. — AFP

NBA results/standings

LA Lakers 122, Atlanta 101; Orlando 125, Washington 121; New Orleans 108, Golden State 100; Memphis 114, Denver 131; Cleveland 95, Philadelphia 114; Sacramento 100, Boston 99.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	10	2	0.833	—	LA Lakers	11	2	0.846	—
Miami	9	3	0.750	1	Houston	10	3	0.769	1
Milwaukee	9	3	0.750	1	Denver	9	3	0.750	1.5
Toronto	8	4	0.667	2	Utah	8	4	0.667	2.5
Philadelphia	8	5	0.615	2.5	Phoenix	7	4	0.636	3
Indiana	7	6	0.538	3.5	LA Clippers	8	5	0.615	3
Orlando	6	7	0.462	4.5	Dallas	7	5	0.583	3.5
Charlotte	6	7	0.462	4.5	Minnesota	7	6	0.538	4
Brooklyn	5	7	0.417	5	Oklahoma City	5	7	0.417	5.5
Cleveland	4	8	0.333	6	Sacramento	5	7	0.417	5.5
Chicago	4	9	0.308	6.5	Memphis	5	8	0.385	6
Atlanta	4	9	0.308	6.5	Portland	5	8	0.385	6
Detroit	4	9	0.308	6.5	San Antonio	5	8	0.385	6
Washington	3	8	0.273	6.5	New Orleans	4	9	0.308	7
New York	3	10	0.231	7.5	Golden State	2	12	0.143	9.5