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22 'Priceless' jewels snatched from German state museum



24 Iranians rally against 'rioting'; 143 killed in protests: Amnesty



28 Nadal inspires Spain to sixth Davis Cup triumph



Erdogan in Qatar calls for 'swift' end to Gulf crisis

Gulf Cup kicks off today • Kuwait, Qatar to join naval coalition • Doha to raise gas output



DOHA: Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani welcomes Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the Qatari capital yesterday. — AFP

DOHA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday said he hoped a dispute between a Saudi-led bloc and Qatar would "swiftly" come to an end amid emerging signs of a possible breakthrough in the Gulf crisis. However, he ruled out the closure of a Turkish military camp in Qatar, part of the Riyadh-led bloc's string of conditions to end the isolation of Doha.

"My wish is that the Gulf crisis will be swiftly resolved," Erdogan said at the Turkish military base, where around 5,000 troops are stationed. "Those who tell us to close down this base have yet to grasp the fact that Turkey was Qatar's friend in difficult times," Erdogan said. "Throughout our history, we have never let our friends face threats and danger alone, that we cannot do," he added.

Erdogan arrived yesterday in Doha on his first official trip to an Arab country since Ankara's forces intervened in northeast Syria last month against Kurdish fighters. During the visit, Ankara and Doha signed a number of economic and trade accords and agreed on

enhanced cooperation in projects linked to the 2022 World Cup which Qatar will host. Ankara and Doha have grown closer since Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut ties with their former Gulf ally more than two years ago.

Erdogan's visit comes at a critical time amid signs of a possible breakthrough in the crisis between Qatar and its neighbors - in what could be pushing Ankara to further bolster its political and economic relations with Doha. A decision of football teams from the Saudi-led bloc to play at a tournament in Qatar was seen to bear messages of a rapprochement. The Saudi and UAE squads arrived yesterday to compete in the Arabian Gulf tournament in Doha from Nov 26, despite their nations' two-year boycott of Qatar. Bahrain also said it would take part.

The bitter rift between Qatar and the Saudi-led bloc came over accusations that Qatar supports extremist groups and wants closer links with Iran, the archrival of regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia. Erdogan's visit to

Qatar was the third trip since the Saudi-led blockade began in June 2017, which led to rising Turkish influence in Doha. Erdogan attended the fifth meeting of the Qatar-Turkey Higher Strategic Committee at the invitation of Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Qatar News Agency reported.

The burgeoning relationship saw Turkey's military presence in Qatar increase and Doha pledge economic support to Ankara during last year's currency crisis. Doha declared its support for Ankara after it launched an offensive on Oct 9 against a Syrian Kurdish militia, but Arab countries including Saudi Arabia and Egypt have condemned Turkey's "aggression".

Andreas Krieg, a professor at King's College London, said the Qataris were put in a "tough situation" when Turkey launched its operation against Syrian Kurdish forces, considered by Ankara to be "terrorists". "They acknowledged Turkey's right to defend itself while disagreeing about the means and ways used by Ankara in pursuit of this objective," he told AFP.

Continued on Page 24

LVMH puts ring on Tiffany in \$16.2bn union

PARIS: Luxury behemoth LVMH said yesterday that it had clinched a deal to buy the storied US jewellers Tiffany in a \$16.2 billion deal, making the French firm a power player in fine gems just as demand is soaring worldwide. The deal comes after LVMH, already the top luxury firm overall, spent more than a month wooing Tiffany, one of the world's most famous jewelry houses, known for its wedding rings and diamonds. "It is an emblematic brand, an American icon that will become a little bit French," LVMH's chief executive Bernard Arnault told AFP. "It has lots of potential and an incredible history."

Continued on Page 24

First public EV charging station opens

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE) launched the first public charging station for electronic vehicles at its headquarters in Bneid Al-Gar yesterday. The station is located in the parking lot of the society and will operate 24/7 free of charge. It can charge up to two vehicles at a time. During the launch ceremony yesterday, an electronic vehicle demonstrated the charging process.

Dr Bader Al-Twayel, Head of the Sustainable Energy Committee at KSE,

said this is the first of its kind (public charging) station for electronic vehicles in Kuwait. "We hope that soon, more stations will be available in Kuwait. This station is available for the public free of charge," he told Kuwait Times.

Twayel is not sure about the exact number of electronic vehicles in Kuwait presently. "Currently, two automakers are selling electronic vehicles - Chevrolet and BMW, in addition to other brands that don't have an agent in Kuwait. I don't know how many people in Kuwait own electronic vehicles, but I know the number is increasing," he said.

"As soon as the car plugs into the station, it will start receiving power. It takes electricity from the society. Globally, there are five kinds of chargers - home charger, which is slow and takes half a day to charge; public charger like this

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: Dr Bader Al-Twayel, Head of the Sustainable Energy Committee at the Kuwait Society of Engineers, demonstrates the first public charging station for electronic vehicles at the KSE headquarters in Bneid Al-Gar yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Indian doctors remove giant 7 kg kidney from man



NEW DELHI: This handout photograph taken on Oct 29, 2019 and released yesterday shows medics holding a diseased kidney after a surgery at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. — AFP

NEW DELHI: Indian surgeons have cut a kidney weighing the same as a bowling ball out of a man with a life-threatening genetic condition, a surgeon said yesterday. The 7.4 kilogram kidney is one of the biggest ever removed in an operation. "It was a huge lump that was occupying half of his abdomen. We knew it was a big kidney but never thought it would be this heavy," said Sachin Kathuria, a member of the surgical team, told AFP.

The 56-year-old patient, suffering from autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease, underwent the two-hour operation at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi last month. A normal kidney weighs about 120 to 150 gm and is 12 cm long. Kathuria said the kidney cut out from the man was nearly 45 cm long.

Continued on Page 24

Scores of sheep feared dead in Romania capsizes

BUCHAREST: Thousands of sheep were feared dead yesterday a day after a vessel overturned off the Romanian coast, leading to renewed calls for a ban on the controversial sea transport of livestock. The Queen Hind, bound for Saudi Arabia with 14,600 sheep aboard, capsized on Sunday shortly after leaving Midia port on the Black Sea in eastern Romania - no explanation has been given. The crew of 20 Syrians and one Lebanese were rescued along with 32 sheep. The rescued sheep have been

taken to a special shelter in Midia.

No one has been able to board the vessel to check its hold but photos and video footage distributed by rights group Animals International showed dead sheep in the ship and dozens floating in the sea nearby. Rescuers were trying to tow the Palau-flagged vessel back to the dock, less than a kilometer away, battling stormy weather and rough seas.

Ana-Maria Stoica of the local rescue services told AFP workers were trying to remove the cargo refloat the ship. She said once this was done, rescuers would be able to take out the remaining sheep. "We hope that some of them are still alive," she added. Mihaita Gheba, chief of the local veterinary authority, said the dead sheep would be burned while surviving ones would be returned to the breeder.

Continued on Page 24



CONSTANTA, Romania: This handout photo shows a capsized livestock transport vessel in the Midia Black Sea harbor on Sunday. — AFP

Protesters defiant after Hezlb attack

BEIRUT: Security forces cleared road blocks across Lebanon yesterday, facing off against protesters who took to the streets despite being attacked overnight by supporters of the main Shiite groups Hezbollah and Amal. Demonstrators demanding a complete government overhaul have stayed mobilized since protests began on Oct 17, but a bitterly divided political class has yet to find a way out of the crisis. Frustrated by the stalemate, protesters had called for road blocks and a general strike yesterday,

but an attack by supporters of allied parties Hezbollah and Amal on Sunday night weakened the turnout.

Political parties "are trying to instill fear in us as a people, so we don't progress and stay at home," said Dany Ayyash, 21, who was blocking a key road in Beirut's Hamra district. "This is what happened today. There was supposed to be a general strike and yet the people are still at home sleeping." At around midnight on Sunday, backers of Hezbollah and Amal attacked demonstrators at a flyover near the capital's main protest camp. Brandishing party flags, they hurled stones at peaceful demonstrators and taunted them with insults as riot police deployed to contain the violence.

The attackers also ravaged a nearby encampment, tearing down tents and

Continued on Page 24



TRIPOLI: Lebanese anti-government protesters burn tyres to block the road leading to the southern entrance of this northern port city yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Amir receives credentials of new Cambodia, Kenya, Algeria ambassadors

Sheikh Sabah patronizes Informatics Award tomorrow



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the new Ambassador of Cambodia to Kuwait. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the new Ambassador of Kenya to Kuwait.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday the credentials of the newly-appointed ambassadors of Cambodia, Kenya and Algeria to Kuwait. Senior Amiri Diwan and Kuwaiti government officials attended the ceremonies. In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah offered in a cable yesterday his deepest condolences to the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo Felix Tshisekedi on the plane crash incident which occurred in his country, leading to several casualties. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent condolence cables to Congo's National Assembly Speaker Isidore Mvouba and the Senate President Pierre Ngol.

Separately, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to patronize at Bayan

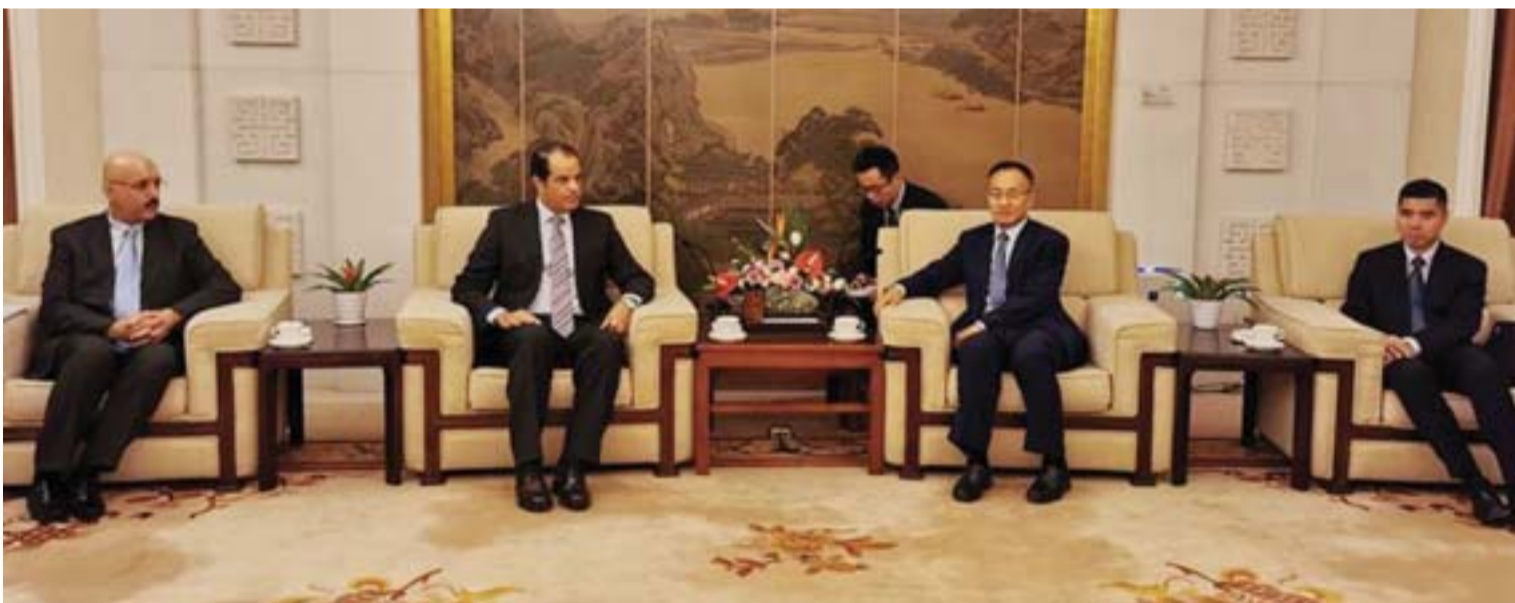
Palace tomorrow the 19th edition of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award. In a press statement, Chairperson of the Award's Board of Trustees Sheikhha Aida Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah said that the sponsorship of His Highness the Amir: Leader of the Humanitarian Action, for this annual ceremony is a "motivation" for achieving objectives of the Award.

The Award has taken a prominent place in the history of information and communication technology by keeping up with all creations of the human mind in this field and stimulating creativity and innovation, as well as encourage technical projects that serve and promote communities, she explained. The Award launched in 2000 and carried with it the skills of this century and looks forward to take technology and technical knowledge as a way to serve humanity, Sheikhha Aida continued saying. During the ceremony, the 'medal of informatics' in its 13th version will be presented to Dr Belgacem Haba, in addition of honoring 10 winners of the prize from seven Arab countries. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the new Ambassador of Algeria to Kuwait.

Kuwait, China hold 1st round of political consultations



BEIJING: (From left) Kuwait's Ambassador to China Sameeh Hayat, Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ali Al-Saeed, Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong and Head of the West Asian and North African Affairs Department at the Chinese Foreign Ministry Wang Di. — KUNA photos

BEIJING: The first round of political consultations kicked off yesterday between a delegation from the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, headed by Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ali Al-Saeed with the Chinese government, said Kuwait's Ambassador to China Sameeh Hayat. In a statement to the press, Ambassador Hayat pointed out that these consultations come within the framework of the implementation of agreements

on bilateral cooperation between the two foreign ministries, especially the ones inked during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China in July of last year. The Kuwaiti delegation held consultations with Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong and Head of the West Asian and North African Affairs Department at the Foreign Ministry Wang Di, he added.

Meanwhile, Saeed pointed out that there are great efforts by the foreign ministries in both countries to discuss all aspects of cooperation, expressing aspiration to hold another round of discussions in Kuwait next year to follow up and put signed agreements into effect, as well as see the results in a realistic and concrete manner. He stressed keenness of the Kuwaiti and Chinese sides to implement these agreements, as "we are currently

reaping the results of some agreements that have been signed previously." He affirmed the invitation of His Highness the Amir to Chinese President Xi Jinping to visit Kuwait.

In the meantime, Chen said that consultations were "fruitful" as it culminated in the visit of His Highness the Amir to China in July 2018. In addition, Di expressed his country's aspiration to strengthen strategic and developmental relations with Kuwait to

achieve common goals. He pointed to the importance of the northern economic zone (Silk City and the Kuwaiti Islands) project as one of Kuwait's major future developmental endeavors. His Highness the Amir and Chinese President Xi witnessed in July last year seven joint agreements, including a MoU on establishing a mechanism for cooperation between the respective governments. — KUNA



Political consultations between Kuwait and China in progress.



KUWAIT: Light showers hit Kuwait yesterday as the Kuwaiti Meteorological Department had predicted 'occasional thunderstorms along with sporadic rains,' coupled with wind speed over 50 km/h and possible foggy weather. The Meteorological Department, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate and other bodies had called on the public to 'remain vigilant' during this period of unpredictable weather. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh and KUNA

Local

Delay in forming new Cabinet could postpone parliament sessions

‘Candidates reject portfolios in a Cabinet that will last less than a year’

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Consultations currently being held by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to form his first Cabinet have come across some obstacles when some nominees declined, which makes it hard to announce the new Cabinet formation this month, informed sources said, noting that this will cause parliamentary sessions to be deferred till the end of next month.

The sources added that the parliament had been preparing to hold a session on Tuesday, December 2, but the delay in forming the Cabinet means delaying that session probably till Dec 24. “There is already a constitutional controversy concerning holding a parliamentary session attended by a caretaker government,” the sources underlined.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

most probably be appointed finance minister.

Likely candidates

Further, the sources said Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's initial consultations have so far settled on appointing Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali as foreign minister, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf as defense minister and Sheikh Tamer Al-Ali as interior minister. “However, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf has turned down the offer and preferred to remain in his current position as deputy chief of joint staffs; thus, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali will likely be appointed defense minister and the current Assistant Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad is the most likely candidate to be appointed foreign minister,” the sources said, noting that nothing is so far final concerning other portfolios because many of the nominees rejected portfolios in a Cabinet that will only last less than a year.

The sources added that Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled invited several lawmakers to join his technocrat Cabinet but all rejected the proposal except MP Rakan Al-Nisf, who demanded to know the final formation before he gives his final word. In addition, the sources explained that in case of further apologies from nominees, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled might retain some of the current ministers such as Awqaf Minister Fahd Al-Shulah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, who will

Issues delayed

In the meantime, well-informed parliamentary sources said the issues the parliament had promised to place on its agenda such as Kuwait's demography, taxing expat remittances, increasing the number of citizens in the private sector and setting quotas per community in Kuwait are no longer relevant after the government's resignation. The sources added that the above-mentioned issues need decisive decisions after relevant ministers conduct full studies. “The Cabinet

resignation means that new ministers will take over, and as usual, start their studies from square one before they respond to parliamentary committees' inquiries,” the sources stressed, adding that the current parliament is expected to meet by mid-December when ministers will hopefully be sworn in.

Citizenship forgery

In other news, the criminal court yesterday sentenced three Saudis to 10 years with labor for forging Kuwaiti citizenships. The sentence also ordered their dismissal, mandating them to return the salaries they had unlawfully received and fined them twice as much. Separately, the court of appeals yesterday upheld the first instance verdict of sentencing a blogger to four years in prison with labor for violating the electronic crimes law by using several fake accounts on social media to commit violations including blasphemy.



Resignation delays key issues



CAIRO: Arab Foreign Ministers attend an urgent session called to discuss a recent US decision effectively backing Israel's building of settlements in the occupied West Bank. — KUNA

Kuwait takes ‘second look’ at complexities of Mideast conflict

CAIRO: Kuwait yesterday said it was imperative to reassess plans and strategies to deal with the Middle East conflict amid the ‘pursuit of justice’ and efforts to achieve intended goals. The remarks by Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah came amid an urgent session involving Arab foreign ministers, called to discuss a recent US decision effectively backing Israel's building of settlements in the occupied West Bank. “We have said time and time again that we fully support the Palestinian cause and remain committed to make sure

the aspirations of the Palestinian people come to fruition,” he said during the talks. He emphasized that the meeting comes at a “highly critical juncture,” where the international community seems to have overlooked a matter that remains on “top of our priority list,” Jarallah said, in reference to the Middle East conflict. The Kuwaiti official went on to deplore a wave of Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, saying there has yet to be an “earnest and tangible” effort to bring peace to the Middle East. On US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's announcement that

Washington is abandoning its decades-old position that the settlements are “inconsistent with international law,” he said it was an attempt to legalize these settler homes. Jarallah applauded the international community for voicing its disapproval of the US decision, emphasizing the need to respect and abide by international laws and conventions. He called for “concerted action” as part of efforts to put in place a roadmap for peace, ultimately bringing an end to the misery of the Palestinian people and peace to the region. —KUNA



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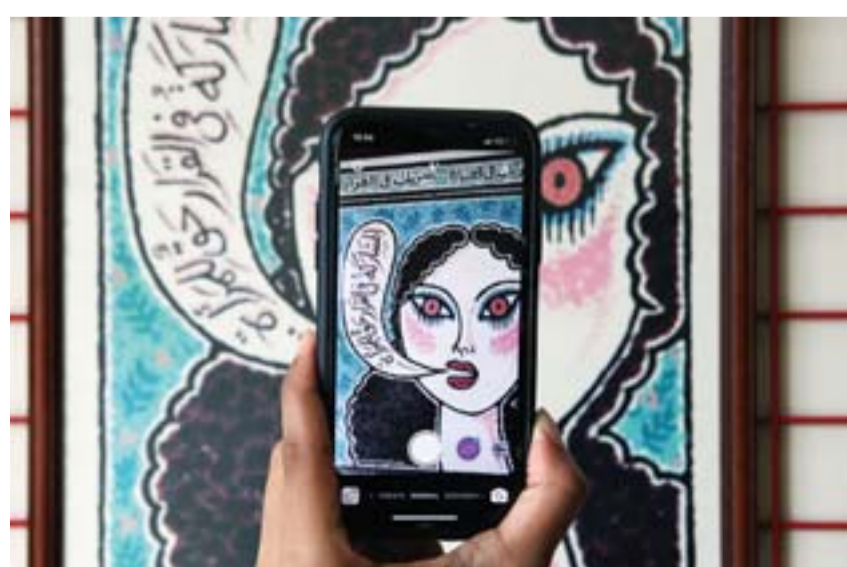
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KUWAIT: A woman snaps a picture of a painting with a text that reads ‘partner in life, partner in decision-making,’ displayed at the Women's Cultural and Social Society in Khaldiya yesterday on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A thunderstorm over Kuwait City. — Photo by Mohammad Subhi (KUNA)

Former Italian PM talks challenges facing EU at Kuwait University college

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KUWAIT: Climate change, technology and the dynamics of US-Chinese relations will be among the serious upcoming challenges for the members of the European Union (EU), said Former Italian Prime Minister Dr Enrico Letta. This came during a seminar with the title of 'Future of The European Union between President Trump and China' held in Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute and organized by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) yesterday. During the seminar, the former Prime Minister shed light on different challenges that face the EU such as climate change, technology, security, trade, migration, Brexit and the relationship between the US and China. He also stressed how important the new US 2020 election will be, noting that it will be very decisive and how it might affect the relationship between the EU and the US. "Brexit will be another complicated issue for the EU," Letta said, adding that it might affect various fields such as trade, education and technology. French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy and several Kuwaiti diplomats and academics attended the seminar. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Former Italian Prime Minister Dr Enrico Letta (left) speaks during the seminar. — KUNA photos



A general view of the audience.

NBK sponsors student activities at KU college

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) renewed its sponsorship of the student activities and events at Kuwait University, College of Business Administration, in line with the bank's commitment to the educational as well as the academic development in Kuwait. Under the one-year sponsorship, NBK will provide the students with the full support to develop their skills and capabilities in the business sector.

"The sponsorship marks NBK's commitment to enhancing cooperation with the educational entities, supporting youth and investing in community development," stated Mohammed Al-Othman, General Manager of Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait.

The event is an integral part of NBK's CSR initiatives aimed at making the optimum use of the potential capa-



bilities of the youth to ensure community development and sustainability. NBK continuously strives to fully develop the education segment and empower the promising young candidates by organizing youth-centered training and development programs, and providing the full support of the student activities to enrich the educational experience. Additionally, these initiatives underline NBK's profound strategy aimed at investing in the human resources, in line with its social responsibility framework and further echo its primary role in the community service for decades.

Local

Kuwait looking for con artist wanted for KD 140,000 thefts

Bus driver injured in Fourth Ring Road crash



Firemen are seen at a location where hazardous material were spilled from a truck in Ahmadi.



KUWAIT: Firefighters rescue a driver who became trapped in a wrecked bus on Fourth Ring Road.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: According to media reports based on information from security sources, Kuwait is working hard to repatriate a Kuwaiti former forensics employee, described as one of the most dangerous forgers and swindlers, who reportedly fled the country after committing her crimes. The sources, according to Al-Qabas daily, said the suspect stole 15 civil IDs of her friends, then used them to cheat notary public officers at the justice ministry to get 82 debt acknowledgements in the names of her victims. She stole a total of KD 140,000 in cash and kind.

The suspect also obtained valuable items after forging documents in the names of some of her relatives and friends, and signed in their names to get money. The sources said some Kuwaiti victims found themselves in huge debts after being contacted by companies asking them to pay. One is thousands of dinars in debt,

although she did not commit any crime. The sources said the suspect, besides being an employee at the forensics department, is also a make-up artist and was able to change her features with certain materials to look like the civil ID holders.

Hazardous material

Ahmadi and hazardous material fire stations dealt with hazardous material that spilled from a truck in Ahmadi. The material is considered caustic and affects the body and pulmonary system when handled. The material was removed and no injuries were reported.

Officer attacks comrade

The interior ministry's relations and security information department said while a traffic officer was organizing traffic flow on the Mangaf-Sabahiya roundabout because of a traffic accident, a motorist tried to ignore instructions, but

the officer told him to wait. The man did not like this and dragged the officer, causing him bruises and other injuries. The driver was arrested, and he turned out to be an interior ministry officer. He was sent to concerned authorities for further action.

Bus driver injured

A bus hit a lamppost on Fourth Ring Road, trapping the Asian driver inside. Hawally fire station men freed him and handed him to paramedics.

No shooting

The interior ministry categorically denied claims on social media that a shooting took place under a bridge. The statement said what took place were reckless acts by a group of motorists under the bridge, who had manipulated their exhaust systems to make shooting sounds, as confirmed by traffic patrols.

8,380 cubic meters of waste removed

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality has distributed 254 new garbage containers since the beginning of a media campaign titled "Keep it Clean", said cleaning manager Melfi Al-Hawaly, noting that cleaning tops his team's priorities. Hawaly added that 8,380 cubic meters of waste has been removed from the governorate's various

areas.

In other news, a number of Municipal Council members who had withdrawn from an earlier session to express their dissatisfaction with forming a special committee to do the work of another panel already convened, strongly condemned considering them as absent without due cause. This came during the Municipal Council's weekly session held yesterday.

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Shiite detentions
 in Malaysia fuelling
 fears of crackdown

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Singapore invokes 'fake news' law for the first time



CALIFORNIA: In this file photo, Navy Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher walks into military court in San Diego, California. The chief of the US Navy Sunday criticized Donald Trump after being sacked in a dispute over an elite SEAL commando whose demotion for misconduct was reversed by the president. —AFP

President Trump fires US navy chief

Dispute over an elite SEAL commando

WASHINGTON: The chief of the US Navy on Sunday criticized Donald Trump after being sacked in a dispute over an elite SEAL commando whose demotion for misconduct was reversed by the president. Richard Spencer was ousted as Navy Secretary, a civilian position, in a case that has fueled reports that the US military leadership has been angered by Trump's interference in discipline cases. "I no longer share the same understanding with the Commander in Chief who appointed me, in regards to the key principles of good order and discipline," Spencer said in a stinging letter published by US media.

"I hereby acknowledge my termination as United States Secretary of the Navy." The dispute centers on the fate of Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher who was accused of war crimes in a high-profile case but was found guilty of a lesser offense. On November 15, Trump - the commander-in-chief of the US military -

reversed the demotion handed down to Gallagher. Trump tweeted on Sunday that Gallagher had been "treated very badly" by the navy, and that Spencer had been asked to resign over the issue and over his alleged failure to address budget overruns.

The president said Gallagher would not be expelled from the elite SEAL (Sea, Air, and Land) force. "Eddie will retire peacefully with all of the honors that he has earned," Trump tweeted. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he had asked for Spencer's resignation "after losing trust and confidence in him regarding his lack of candor over conversations with the White House," the Department of Defense said in a statement. Esper said he was "deeply troubled by this conduct."

Trump undercuts military?

The US Navy had launched a discipline procedure which could have strip

Gallagher and three other members of his unit of their prestigious "Trident pins" - effectively booting them from the SEAL force. But Trump's interventions appeared to cut short that process. The president this month also dismissed a second degree murder conviction against Army First Lieutenant Clint Lorance, who was six years into a 19-year term for ordering soldiers in 2012 to fire on three unarmed Afghan men on a motorcycle, two of whom died.

And he granted clemency to West Point graduate Matt Golsteyn, an ex-member of the elite US Army Green Berets, charged with premeditated murder in the shooting death of an alleged Taliban bomb-maker in 2010. Gallagher, a Navy SEAL commando, was accused in the stabbing to death of a wounded Islamic State prisoner in Iraq in 2017, attempted murder of other civilians and obstruction of justice. In July, he was acquitted of charges related to those

accusations but was convicted of posing with the slain fighter's body in a group picture with other SEALs. As a result, he was demoted one rank, from chief petty officer to petty officer first class. Speaking to Fox News on Sunday, Gallagher accused the navy of acting in retaliation after he lodged a complaint.

"They could have taken my Trident (pin) at any time they wanted," he said. "Now they're trying to take it after the president restored my rank." Gallagher's case has been strongly championed by Fox News and Trump's conservative base. But it has also drawn criticism that the president was undermining military judicial process. In his letter to Trump on Sunday, Spencer said that he could not "in good conscience obey an order that I believe violates the sacred oath I took... to support and defend the Constitution." He added that maintaining good order and discipline in the navy's ranks was a "deadly seriously business." —AFP

Lebanese businessman to donate Hitler hat to Israeli foundation

GENEVA: A Lebanese businessman will donate Adolf Hitler's top hat and other objects linked to the Nazi leader to an Israeli foundation in order to keep the items out of the hands of neo-fascists. Abdallah Chatila, who has made a fortune from diamonds and real estate in Geneva, told the *Matin Dimanche* weekly that he had "wished to buy these objects so that they could not be used for the purpose of neo-Nazi propaganda." "My stance is totally apolitical and neutral," he added.

The collapsible top hat believed to have belonged to Nazi leader Adolph Hitler sold for 50,000 euros (\$55,300) at a controversial Munich-based auction on Wednesday. Chatila scooped up as many other Hitler-related articles as he could at the auction and has donated them to the Keren Hayesod association, an Israeli fundraising group.

The head of the European Jewish Association, rabbi Menachem Margolin, said he was "bowled over" by the gestures from the businessman. "In a cynical world, a real act of kindness, of generosity and solidarity," he said in a statement Sunday. Margolin added that Chatila had accepted an invitation to join a visit by 100 European parliamentarians to the site of the World War II Auschwitz death camp in January to receive an award.

Nazis' crimes 'trivialized'

Wednesday's auction in Munich was organized by Hermann Historica, which has picked up business in Nazi memorabilia that the main houses have largely avoided. Other items that went under the hammer on Wednesday included a silver-plated copy of Hitler's anti-Semitic political manifesto *Mein Kampf* that once belonged to senior Nazi Hermann Goering. It was sold for 130,000 euros.

Ahead of the auction, Rabbi Margolin recalled that "it is Germany that leads Europe in the sheer volume of reported anti-Semitic incidents", urging the German authorities to compel auction houses to divulge the names of those buying such articles and put them on a watch list. "The Nazis' crimes are being trivialized here," the German government's anti-Semitism commissioner Felix Klein told the *Funk* newspaper group following the auction.

Many of the items belonging to top Nazi leaders were seized by US soldiers in the final days of World War II. "Far-right and anti-Semitic populism is advancing throughout Europe and the world," Margolin told the weekly paper. Born in Beirut in 1974 into a family of Christian jewelers, Chatila is among Switzerland's 300 richest people. He suggested that the items of Nazi memorabilia "should be burned", while "historians think they should be kept as part of the collective memory". —AFP

Rainstorms hit northern Italy, southern France

VENICE: Torrential rains across northern Italy and southern France killed three people at the weekend, sweeping away part of a motorway viaduct in northern Italy and causing fresh flooding in Venice yesterday. The rains, which left at least three people dead and two missing across the two countries, were the latest in a two-week wave of extreme weather in the region.

Part of a viaduct serving Italy's A6 motorway near Savona in the northern region of Liguria running between Turin and France was washed away by what appeared to be a mudslide, leaving a 30-metre (100-foot) gap in the road. The emergency services did not immediately find any victims at the site, but sniffer dogs and helicopters were checking the area. Pictures of the damage revived memories of the 2018 collapse of the Morandi bridge at Genoa, only 50 kilometers away, which claimed 43 lives.

In the Piedmont region, a 52-year-old woman who was missing after her car was swept away when a river burst its banks was found dead Sunday. Local media reported that two other people in the car had managed to escape in time. The worst hit region in Italy was Alessandria, south of Turin, where 200 people were evacuated and 600 left stranded. One woman was reported

missing, Italian media said. Another 500 people were evacuated further north in the Aosta Valley, where roads were closed because of the risk of avalanches.

Venice under water again

On the east coast, Venice was again hit by the floods that have paralysed the city in recent days, though the levels were well off the historic peak reached on November 12. The floodwaters in St Mark's Square in the city centre were at knee-height, and were beginning to recede by the afternoon.

Venice's mayor has said the damage of the flooding earlier in the month could amount to one million euros, blaming the near-record water level rise on climate change. The recent flooding of the city, a UNESCO World Heritage site, damaged dozens of churches. The latest floods came as environmental activists staged a demonstration protesting the city's inadequate flood protection program and calling for a ban on the massive cruise ships that visit the Renaissance city. Ecologists argue that the development of the large industrial port of Marghera, opposite Venice, was also taking a cost.

Two dead in France

In France, two people died and at least one was missing as high floodwaters swamped cars and turned roads into rivers. One body was found in the village of Le Muy, just north of France's Mediterranean coast, local officials in the southern Var region said. It was found near where a rescue dinghy carrying three members of the fire brigade and three civilians had capsized on Saturday, with one of the civilians subsequently reported missing. The second body,



VENICE: People walk on a footbridge across the flooded Riva degli Schiavoni waterfront in Venice. —AFP

of a man in his 50s, was found in the village of Cabasse in a car, the local authorities said, without giving further details.

Another man, in his 70s, was still missing in the village of Saint-Antonin-du-Var after going out during the night amid heavy rain. The southeastern regions of Alpes-Maritimes and Var have since Friday been hit by torrential rainstorms that also caused huge waves in seaside areas. A woman aged 39 was badly injured on Saturday and hospitalised after being swept away by a wave, the fire service said. The town of Roquebrune-sur-Argens in the Var region was particularly badly affect-

ed and only accessible by boat or helicopter, the local authorities said.

Some 4,500 households have been left without electricity throughout the two regions. The senior official for the Var region, Jean-Luc Videlaïne said that the rains had been of "historic" intensity, adding that the damage would be "considerable". Although water levels were now going down, he added that the situation was "far from returning to normal". In some areas of the Var region, the equivalent of two or three months of rain fell in just 24 or 48 hours. —AFP

International

French and Sahel soldiers step up campaign against jihadists

Mali-Burkina Faso lawless border a haven for ruthless militants

ON THE MALI-BURKINA BORDER: It was the heart of the forest and there, in a marsh, lay a carpet of water lilies, their delicacy unveiled in the dawn light. But the beauty belied the danger - the Tofa Gala forest, on Mali's lawless border with Burkina Faso, was a haven for ruthless jihadists. Guns in hand, French troops advanced on one side of the marsh, and their counterparts from Burkina Faso on the other.

Their goal: Assert control over an area where no troops had set foot for over a year. Named Bourgo IV, the mission was the first official joint ground operation between the French army and the so-called G5 Sahel force, which pools troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. In an exercise earlier this month, some 1,400 soldiers, 600 of them French, were deployed in the volatile region. For jihadists, "it's an ideal area to hide and handle logistics," said Thibault Lemerle, a French colonel.

Thousands of civilians and soldiers have died in violence across the Sahel which began when armed Islamists revolted in northern Mali in 2012. The conflict has since swept into the centre of Mali and spilled into neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger, inflaming ethnic tensions along the way. Many thousands have fled their homes. Belonging to a mosaic of groups from Al-Qaeda to Islamic State and Ansarul Islam, the jihadists have exploited ethnic divisions and a feeling of abandonment to enmesh themselves in local communities. France has some 4,500 troops in the region and the G5 Sahel force has a projected total of 5,000 - a goal clouded by chronic funding, training and equipment problems. They play a game of cat and mouse in this vast territory with a highly mobile enemy, able to vanish into the desert.

'An impossible war'

"They are here but hidden, we search for them but can't find them," said a non-commissioned officer, assault rifle in hand. "This is an impossible war." A detonation occurred - a warning shot from one of the Burkinabe soldiers as a local passed by. The troops walked on. They discovered two abandoned motorbikes suspected of belonging to jihadists and impounded them.

They marched for hours and find nothing. "It's like looking for a needle in a haystack, he could be here, he could already be gone. Shooting can start without warning," said a lieutenant who gave his name as Julien. The soldiers marched on. Ahead, six huts stood in the blazing sun and women and children clustered beneath an acacia tree. There were no men in sight. The French troops searched the huts in silence. One cut open a mattress while another shakes mats. "We're looking for means of communication and components used to make IEDs," said Pierrick, the

head of the search party, referring to roadside bombs. The troops found a few phones and set off on their two-hour hike to get back to their vehicles. "We can't search like that, cutting up mattresses, see how those people were looking at us," one private from the search party said later, going over the events of the day. "But it's the only way," another private said. "Imagine if a phone were hidden in the mattress".

Cat and mouse

A French officer explained the rationale behind the search missions. In areas under jihadist influence, he said, "everyone can be a potential enemy". Caught between a rock and a hard place, locals pay a tough price. Malian and Burkinabe forces have several times been accused of alleged human rights abuses. French forces are told to uphold strict rules of engagement. The French army says there are mechanisms in place during joint operations to prevent incidents.

But a French official, who declined to be named, said that their partners do not always respect the rules. The French and Sahel armies also differ widely in terms of equipment, which has its upsides and downsides. One French officer said that French troops trundle slowly in armored vehicles but the Sahel troops zip around on motorbikes. A Burkinabe officer said the French security measures and loud convoys offer the jihadists time to escape. "It's normal that the French never find anything when they arrive," he said. "With our motorbikes, we're more mobile." But African troops are also far more exposed. Only days earlier, two Burkinabe soldiers riding a motorbike were killed by a roadside bomb. In total some 170 Sahel soldiers have been killed since September in presumed jihadist attacks, including about 40 Malian soldiers who died in a single ambush in November. One French soldier, by comparison, has died. Despite years of training by French forces, the Sahel armies struggle with many problems. Captain Wendimanegde Kabore, a Burkinabe unit commander, told AFP that securing food and water was especially difficult. On many evenings, Burkinabe troops go to their French counterparts for a ration pack.

The arduous march is lightened at times. French intelligence intercepted a message from one of the heads of Ansarul Islam just a few kilometers from the Bourgo operation's positions. The army sent out 80 French soldiers in a bid to capture him, supported by drones and a Mirage 2000 warplane. And towards the end of the same day, forces also caught wind of local informants who tip off the jihadists about army troops. An armored convoy took off in a cloud of dust, arriving at the village. Three men fled and threw objects into the undergrowth. — AFP



SOUM, Burkina Faso: Soldiers of the French army search three people suspected to be affiliated to jihadist groups during the Bourgo IV operation in northern Burkina Faso on Nov 9, 2019. — AFP

Airstrikes kill 8 rebels, sparking new battles

HODEIDAH: Saudi-led coalition airstrikes killed eight Yemeni Houthi rebels near the port of Hodeidah yesterday, triggering fierce battles around the flashpoint city, local officials said. The new escalation threatens a fragile truce in the Red Sea city that was reached after United Nations-brokered peace talks in Sweden late last year. Several more rebels were wounded in yesterday raids that targeted military positions of the Iran-backed Houthis north of Hodeidah, two local officials said. Clashes erupted several hours later between Yemeni government forces and the Houthis in Hodeidah's eastern and southern outskirts.

An AFP correspondent reported the use of heavy artillery and a resident south of Hodeidah also told AFP by phone that "we have been hearing artillery shelling since the early hours of Monday". The Saudis intervened in Yemen in 2015 at the head of a military coalition

against the Houthi rebels, who had seized control of the capital Sanaa. Since then, tens of thousands have died in the conflict, most of them civilians, and millions more have been driven to the brink of famine, according to humanitarian organizations.

The renewed fighting in Hodeidah marked the first battles there since the warring sides established joint observation posts in late October as part of de-escalation moves in the city. Before the UN-brokered peace talks in December last year, there had been heavy fighting for the port, which is vital for aid and food imports. Government loyalists backed by the Saudi-led military coalition had launched an offensive to retake Hodeidah from the rebels in June 2018. In May 2019, the UN announced that the rebels had withdrawn from Hodeidah and two other nearby ports, the first step on the ground since the truce deal. The new clashes come after the UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said on Friday that air strikes had sharply declined in number over the past two weeks, pointing to the possibility of a general ceasefire in the war-torn nation. — AFP

Showdown looms over Syria chemical weapons probe

THE HAGUE: Russia and the West are braced for a fresh showdown at the world's chemical weapons watchdog this week over a new team that will name culprits for attacks in Syria for the first time. The investigators' first report identifying perpetrators is expected early next year, and tensions are already rising at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Moscow is threatening to block next year's budget for the OPCW at the annual meeting in The Hague if it includes funding for the new team, which could effectively shut down the watchdog. But the United States, Britain, France and other allies believe they have enough support for it to pass with a large majority. Despite fierce objections from Syria and its allies, OPCW member states agreed in 2018 to give the organization new powers to pin blame on culprits for the use of toxic arms.

Previously the watchdog—which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 and has eliminated 97 percent of the world's chemical weapons—only had a mandate to say whether or not an attack had occurred. "Everyone is waiting for the IIT (Investigation and Identification Team) results," a senior diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity. Russia, Iran and China led efforts to block the budget last year but it passed by a majority of 99-27. Western diplomats hope to improve on that figure this year to show international support for the OPCW. A vote is expected on Wednesday.

Muddy the waters

Moscow has consistently raised doubts over chemical attacks in Syria or insisted they were staged, and has recently highlighted a leaked report raising questions about a deadly chlorine attack in the Syrian town of Douma in April 2018. Western diplomats however say the Russians and Syrians are trying to muddy the waters about alleged attacks by President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Tensions have also been high since four Russian spies were expelled from the Netherlands in 2018 for allegedly trying to hack into the OPCW's computers. The eagerly-awaited first reports by the new investigations team are expected in the next few months, OPCW chief Fernando



KANSAFRAH, Syria: An aerial view shows damage caused by air strikes by pro-regime forces in this town in the south of Idlib province yesterday. — AFP

Arias said recently. Diplomats say they expect it to be released in February or March.

Syria agreed to hand over its chemical arsenal in 2013, narrowly avoiding US and French air strikes in retaliation for a suspected sarin attack that killed 1,400 people in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta. Russia and the West may however reach agreement on the thorny issue of whether to extend the list of banned chemical weapons to include new "novichoks"—the nerve agent used in the 2018 Salisbury attacks.

London blamed Moscow for the poisoning of former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, and said novichok, a military-grade poison developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, was used. The United States, the Netherlands and Canada have called for the addition of two novichoks, but Moscow wants to add similar chemicals that it says Western nations were experimenting with. Diplomats said a compromise now appeared to be on the cards. — AFP

Beni region since a military offensive against the ADF began at the start of November. A protester died in police firing on Saturday. Two policemen were killed the same day by angry demonstrators, the UN Okapi radio said.

The ADF began as an Islamist rebellion hostile to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. They fell back into eastern DRC in 1995 and have recruited people of different nationalities, but appear to have halted raids inside Uganda. MONUSCO on Saturday said the Congolese army had launched the offensive unilaterally. "MONUSCO cannot engage in operations in a war zone without being asked and without strict coordination with the national army," it said in a tweet.

Uncoordinated action could lead to casualties from friendly fire, it added. Beni, in addition to being in the front line of militia violence, is also the epicenter of an Ebola epidemic that has killed around 2,200 people since August 2018. On Friday, the World Health Organization (WHO) said fighting in the region meant an opportunity to end the outbreak could be lost. Also in eastern DR Congo, at least 29 people were killed on Sunday when a small plane crashed after takeoff, smashing into a densely-populated area of the city of Goma. — AFP

Angry residents burn town hall in DR Congo after deadly attack

BENI: Angry residents set fire to the town hall in DR Congo's volatile city of Beni yesterday after eight people were killed in a suspected attack by a notorious militia. Army spokesman Colonel Mak Hazukai confirmed the latest casualties in the city, near the Ugandan border, telling AFP that "the enemy entered the Boikene quarter and killed eight civilians." Incensed locals then partly burnt the town hall and then moved towards the camp of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) on the outskirts of Beni, an AFP reporter saw.

There have been a string of rallies against local forces and UN peacekeepers in Beni, accused of failing to stop attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militia. Nearly 70 civilians have been massacred in the

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International

Blair: Britain a dangerous mess; both parties peddling fantasies

UK still faces risk of no-deal Brexit

News in brief

Submarine full of cocaine

MADRID: Police in Spain have seized a submarine loaded with cocaine off the coast of the northwestern region of Galicia which arrived from South America, officials said yesterday. Two people were arrested as part of the operation Sunday in the seaside town of Cangas near the border with Portugal, a police spokesman said. The submarine was "likely" transporting "several tons (of cocaine) but this is just an estimate", a source close to the investigation said. Spanish media said the submarine was carrying over three tons of cocaine from Colombia. The submarine, about 20 meters long, came from South America, another source close to the investigation said without specifying which country the vessel departed from. "It is not the first time but we don't see this every day" in Europe, the source added. —AFP

Boy killed by ice sculpture

LUXEMBOURG: A two-year-old boy was killed by a falling ice sculpture as families enjoyed holiday shopping at Luxembourg city's Christmas market. "The child was severely injured and died in the ambulance," police said, after Sunday night's accident. An investigation has been opened, and on Monday the city-capital of the independent Grand Duchy—said all street markets would be closed for the day. "The sculpture couldn't have just fallen by itself," protested French sculptor Samuel Girault, who has been questioned by Luxembourg police. Girault told AFP he had 19 years experience in carving ice and the base of the fallen work weighed two tons. The accident happened just meters from the ice rink at the capital city's annual Christmas fair which opened on Thursday. —AFP

Arab Israeli jailed for murder

JERUSALEM: An Arab Israeli has been sentenced to life in prison for the "nationalistically motivated" murder of an Israeli settler in the occupied West Bank last year, a court said. In its Sunday ruling, the Lod district court in central Israel said Abed Hakim Assi, born in 1998, fatally stabbed Itamar Ben Gal, 29, near the settlement of Ariel on February 5, 2018, after identifying the rabbi and father of four as Jewish. Assi, whose mother is an Arab Israeli and father a Palestinian from the West Bank, "had decided to commit an act of nationalistically motivated terror" following an argument with soldiers at the Ariel checkpoint the previous day, the sentencing said. A video of the incident showed Ben Gal, of the Har Bracha settlement, waiting for a bus while wearing a Jewish skull cap. —AFP

Interpol hunts femicide suspects

LYON: Global police cooperation organization Interpol yesterday launched an international appeal to find eight men suspected of murdering or committing violence against women. Interpol said in the appeal, which coincided with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, that it was calling for the public's help in finding the suspects. It said the appeal is a "stark reminder of how women and girls universally experience violence and abuse across the world." In 2017, some 87,000 women and girls were murdered worldwide, according to a 2018 report from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Of the eight, six are wanted for murder, one for grievous bodily injury resulting in death and one for sexual violence. Two of the men are wanted by Russia and the others by Denmark, Norway, Ukraine, Brazil, Cyprus and the United States. —AFP

Ginsburg released from hospital

NEW YORK: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the US Supreme Court's eldest justice and de facto leader of its liberal wing, has been released from hospital after being admitted last week with a possible infection. The 86-year-old has had a series of health scares this year, sparking speculation she may retire—a move that would allow conservative US President Donald Trump to nominate a replacement. Ginsburg is "home and doing well", US media reported the court as saying Sunday. She was hospitalized on Friday with fever and chills, according to a court spokesperson. A feminist icon, Ginsburg is one of four liberals on the nine-justice court and has given no sign she is thinking of stepping down. In August Ginsburg completed a three-week course of outpatient radiation therapy in New York for a localized malignant tumor on her pancreas. —AFP

Israel to expel HRW director

JERUSALEM: Israel was set to expel the country director of Human Rights Watch yesterday after a lengthy court battle over claims he supports a boycott of the Jewish state. US citizen Omar Shakir, the New York-based rights group's director for Israel and the Palestinian territories, denies the claims and accuses the Israeli government of seeking to suppress dissent. Shakir's deportation, expected in the afternoon, would be the first from inside the country under Israel's controversial 2017 law allowing the expulsion of foreigners who support a boycott, according to authorities. The European Union, United Nations and others have criticized the looming expulsion, with the UN warning of a "shrinking space for human rights defenders to operate" in Israel and the Palestinian territories. But the United States, Israel's closest ally, declined to do so, saying Sunday only that it supported freedom of expression.

LONDON: Former prime minister Tony Blair said yesterday that Britain was in a dangerous mess and that neither his own Labor Party nor Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives deserved to win a Dec 12 election. Britain is holding an election three years ahead of schedule because parliament was deadlocked over Brexit, unable to agree on how or even whether to leave the European Union.

"We're a mess," Blair said at a Reuters Newsmaker event. "The buoyancy of the world economy has kept us going up to now, but should that falter, we will be in deep trouble." Blair, Labor prime minister from 1997 to 2007, said both major parties were peddling fantasies, adding that if the opinion polls were accurate, Johnson's party looked likely to win a majority. Blair, the only Labor leader to win three elections, said his party was now controlled by its "Marxist-Leninist wing" and that its leader Jeremy Corbyn was promising a revolution.

"The problem with revolutions is never how they begin but how they end," said Blair. "The problem with revolutions is that they always end badly." "The truth is: the public aren't convinced either main party deserves to win this election outright." The Dec 12 vote presents a stark choice between a socialist-run state under Labor, which is offering a second referendum on leaving the EU, and the free-market Conservatives, who want to "get Brexit done" by the end of January.

Risk of no-deal Brexit

Blair, an opponent of Brexit, argued for a second referendum on the decision to leave, saying it would need to be followed by another general election. Johnson has pledged to take Britain out of the EU by Jan. 31 if he wins a parliamentary majority and then to negotiate a comprehensive deal with the bloc covering trade and future relations during a transition period due to end next December. Blair cast doubt on that timetable and said there was still a risk that Britain could exit the EU

On Trump impeachment, divisions between urban and rural Democrats

IOWA: First-term US congresswoman Cynthia Axne, back home in her rural Iowa district for the Thanksgiving break, faced a room full of farmers on Saturday who made clear their opposition to the impeachment investigation of Republican President Donald Trump. Axne, 54, avoided any mention of impeachment until one of her constituents, a Democrat who voted for her, said he views the investigation as a waste of time and money: "Let's not vote for impeachment. Let's get stuff done. I'm sick of it!", he bellowed. Others nodded in agreement.

Meanwhile, 1,000 miles away in the old industrial town of Wharton, New Jersey, freshman US congressman Tom Malinowski was treated like a rock star when he told a crowd of about 150 he believed the evidence to impeach Trump was overwhelming. With each mention of impeachment and denunciation of Trump, Malinowski was greeted with loud applause from voters packed into a tiny library basement, where the room hummed with talk of ousting the president.

These two freshman lawmakers flipped districts from Republican control in the 2018 midterm congressional elections, two of the 41 net gains that helped Democrats regain control of the House of Representatives for the first time since 2011. Yet on impeachment, as they face close fights for their seats again next November, their approach is starkly different. Axne avoids any mention of it; Malinowski leans into the topic.

Polls show public sentiment about impeachment breaking along partisan lines, but the reaction of Democratic voters in these two swing districts suggests there is also a rural and suburban divide on the issue among Democrats. "I don't talk about impeachment," Axne, who defeated Republican David Young in 2016 by just two points, said in an interview. "These are hard

Doctors fear Assange 'could die' in UK jail

LONDON: More than 60 doctors wrote an open letter published yesterday saying they feared Julian Assange's health was so bad that the WikiLeaks founder could die inside a top-security British jail. The 48-year-old Australian is still fighting a US bid to extradite him from Britain on charges filed under the Espionage Act that could see him given a sentence of up to 175 years in a US prison.

In the letter to Home Secretary Priti Patel, Britain's interior minister, the doctors call for Assange to be moved from Belmarsh prison in southeast London to a university teaching hospital. They based their assessment on "harrowing eyewitness accounts" of his October 21 court appearance in London and a November 1 report by Nils Melzer, the United Nations special rapporteur on torture.

The independent UN rights expert said Assange's "continued exposure to arbitrariness and abuse

may soon end up costing his life". Assange used WikiLeaks to publish classified military and diplomatic files in 2010 about US bombing campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq that proved highly embarrassing to the US government. "We write this open letter, as medical doctors, to express our serious concerns about the physical and mental health of Julian Assange," the doctors said in their 16-page open letter.

'Medical situation...urgent'

They said they had "concerns about Mr Assange's fitness" to go through the full extradition hearing, which is set for February. "Mr Assange requires urgent expert medical assessment of both his physical and psychological state of health," the wrote. "Any medical treatment indicated should be administered in a properly equipped and expertly staffed university teaching hospital (tertiary care).

"Were such urgent assessment and treatment not to take place, we have real concerns, on the evidence currently available, that Mr Assange could die in prison. The medical situation is thereby urgent. There is no time to lose." The doctors are from the United States, Australia, Britain, Sweden, Italy, Germany, Sri Lanka, Poland. At his first appearance in public for six months, in a court



LLANELLEDD: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson (left) meets members of the public while visiting the Welsh County Show during an election campaign event in Llanellwedd in north Wales yesterday. —AFP

in a year's time without having struck a deal with its biggest trading partner.

"No-deal Brexit is not off the table," Blair said. "This negotiation (on the future relationship) has no chance of being concluded in that transition period." Blair said he did not know whether Labor, which has tacked

working, salt of the earth people who just want to make a living and provide for their families. They're tired of what they consider the bureaucracy and the politics of Washington and that's true to what Iowans are. Impeachment is not a priority in their lives."

Axne supports the impeachment inquiry, and says if there is proof Trump abused his office and harmed America's national security in his dealings with Ukraine, she will vote to impeach him - even it means losing her seat. She agreed she could face voter backlash. "My job is to work for the people here in this district and do a good job for them. But my job also is to protect this country. If we find out that the president has put us in harm's way, then I have absolutely no problem losing a seat over that."

To loud applause in his New Jersey district, about 50 miles west of New York, Malinowski said: "The president is free to pursue a foreign policy that he believes is in the national interest, but he is not free to pursue a foreign policy that only serves his political interest," Malinowski, 53, a Polish-born former employee of the State Department, was the first New Jersey House member to call for Trump's impeachment.

He asked the crowd to put up their hands if they were watching the hearings and nearly all of the some 150 people in attendance put their arms in the air. Five days of public hearings in the Democratic-led impeachment inquiry concluded on Thursday. The probe is looking into Trump's pressure campaign to get Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden, a leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination to challenge Trump in 2020, and his son Hunter, who had served on the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma.

The probe is also examining whether Trump abused his power by temporarily withholding \$391 million in security aid to Ukraine, approved by Congress to fight Russia-backed separatists, to pressure Kiev into conducting the investigation. Asked how he was going to vote on impeachment, Malinowski said he had not made a final decision, but added: "I think you can tell from my presentation that I believe the evidence against the pres-

ident is quite strong."

He had plenty of company at the town hall. Frank Harder, a 71-year retired purchasing agent and registered Democrat, has supported impeaching Trump for months. "I think the man is a traitor," said Harder, who has been a registered Democrat since returning from a tour in Vietnam in 1971. "I think he's Putin's little puppet," he said, referring to Trump's efforts to build a closer relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin. A handful of Republican lawmakers in moderate districts will be greeted on the Thanksgiving break by mobile billboards urging them to support impeachment.



NEW YORK: In this file photo, US Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump speaks to former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg during a memorial service at the National 9/11 Memorial in New York. —AFP

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The ads were purchased by the Need to Impeach and MoveOn.org, two left-leaning groups that have been seeking new ways to apply pressure on Republicans and Democrats who have been reluctant to support impeachment. The ads will target Republican US representatives like Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania and Elise Stefanik of New York. In addition to the mobile billboards, MoveOn launched an ad campaign targeting Stefanik in her home district. —Reuters

Singapore invokes 'fake news' law for the first time

SINGAPORE: Singapore political figure Brad Bowyer yesterday corrected a Facebook post questioning the independence of state investment firms following a government request, in the first use of the country's new "fake news" law. Bowyer used "false and misleading" statements alleging the government influenced decisions made by state investors Temasek Holdings and GIC, according to a statement on the official government fact-checking website. Bowyer said he had placed a correction notice with a link to the government statement above his Facebook post following a request to do so under the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA).

"I have no problem in following that request as I feel it is fair to have both points of view and clarifications and corrections of fact when necessary," Bowyer said in a statement on Facebook. "In general, I caution all those who comment on our domestic politics and social issues to do so with due care and attention especially if you speak from any place of influence." Bowyer, a naturalized Singaporean born in Britain, has been a member of the ruling party and opposition parties but has never stood for elected office.

A spokesman for the newly-created POFMA office said the correction requested by the minister for finance was the first case under the new law, which came into effect in October. Rights groups have raised concerns the fake news law will be used to stifle free speech and chill dissent in the city state, where the ruling party has comfortably won every election since independence in 1965. Singapore says it is particularly vulnerable to fake news because of its position as a global financial hub, its mixed ethnic and religious population and widespread internet access. —Reuters



Julian Assange

hearing last month, Assange seemed frail. He also appeared confused whenever he was asked to talk at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London.

He seemed to have difficulties recalling his birth date, and at the end of the hearing told District Judge Vanessa Baraitser that he had not understood what had happened in court. He also complained about the conditions in which he was being kept in Belmarsh. It was his first public appearance since being dramatically dragged from Ecuador's embassy in April. Swedish prosecutors said last Tuesday they had dropped their investigation into a 2010 rape allegation, even though they found the plaintiff's claim "credible". —AFP

International

Shiite detentions in Malaysia fuelling fears of crackdown

Dozens of Shiites have been rounded up recently

KUALA LUMPUR: Syed Mohamad was celebrating a key date in the Muslim Shiite calendar in secret when officials burst in and detained him, one of several raids in Malaysia that have set the long-persecuted community on edge. Dozens of Shiites have been rounded up recently in the Sunni Muslim-majority country, including several foreigners, fuelling fears that religious authorities are stepping up a crackdown on adherents of the minority sect. Around the world, Shiite Muslims - who are far outnumbered by Sunnis, and follow some different doctrines and rituals - say they face discrimination from authorities and others who accuse them of being deviants.

About 60 percent of Malaysia's 32 million people are Muslim and the country is also home to substantial minorities of Hindus and Christians, and the different communities have largely co-existed harmoniously. Critics however say that a traditionally moderate brand of Islam is being eroded as vocal conservatives gain ground, and the small Shiite community - whose teachings have been banned in Malaysia for over two decades - complain of ever greater pressure. In September religious enforcement officers and police raided a series of clandestine gatherings by Shiites commemorating Ashura, which marks the seventh-century killing of Prophet Mohammed's grandson. As Syed prayed with a small group in a rented premise in southern Johor state, a 20-strong raiding party scaled a fence and burst in. "It sparked fear among the worshippers, the women and children began crying," he told AFP. "There were four men with face masks... One of them had a gun and they accused me of not cooperating and threatened to assault me."

'Climate of fear'

Syed was handcuffed and held overnight, along with seven other worshippers including a Singaporean and a Yemeni, and he now fears being charged in an Islamic court. He could face up to three years in jail and a fine under Islamic law for practising the Shiite form of Islam. Malaysia operates a dual-track legal system, with Islamic

courts handling some religious and family matters for Muslim citizens. In another raid near Kuala Lumpur, community leader Kamil Zuhairi Abdul Aziz and 21 other Shiites were rounded up at the centre he runs while prayer books and speakers were seized.

Such raids, which have been happening on and off since 2010, have "created a climate of fear among the Shiite community", the 53-year-old told AFP. And a private gathering of some 60 Pakistani Shiites was disrupted when religious enforcement officers burst in, although none were arrested. No-one detained in the recent raids was held for long and none have so far been charged in court - but they worry the tactics are aimed at making them too frightened to worship. Shiites say they have faced frequent persecution in Malaysia since a top Islamic body issued a fatwa against them in 1996, and religious authorities regularly denounce them as "deviant". There is no official estimate for the numbers of Shiites in the country, with many too frightened to identify themselves, but observers believe there are between 100,000 and 500,000. There had been a lull in substantial raids for some time until this year however, with some attributing the spike to tensions between Shiites and Sunnis in the Middle East, which can spill over to other Muslim countries.

Activist abducted

As well as raids, there have been more sinister episodes. In 2016 Shiite activist Amri Che Mat was abducted, with witnesses claiming he was snatched after his vehicle was boxed in by other cars. An inquiry last year by Malaysia's official human rights body concluded he was taken by police.

The risks have not deterred many Shiites from continuing to worship. At a recent meeting in a small hall, Kamil recited the Koran to a group of some 75 men, women and children. Shiites "will not be cowed" by the uptick in raids on their gatherings, he said. "We will be patient in overcoming these abuses and continue our duties," he added. Rights groups say that attempts to stop Shiites worship-



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Shiite Muslims watch sermons in Kuala Lumpur. Around the world, Shiite Muslims - who are far outnumbered by Sunnis, and differ in areas including doctrine and ritual - say they face discrimination from authorities and others who accuse them of being deviants. — AFP

ping are against guarantees of freedom of religion in Malaysia's constitution, but religious authorities insist members of the sect are a bad influence.

"We do not want any misunderstanding among Muslims in Malaysia or for fights to break out (between Sunnis and Shiites)," said Mohamad Zawawi Ahmad Mughni, a member of the official Islamic religious council in Selangor state, next to Kuala Lumpur. "Shiite activ-

ities cause discomfort among Sunnis in Malaysia," Mohamad Faizal Musa, a Malaysia-based associate with Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and an expert on the minority, predicted the country's Shiites and Sunnis would not be able to overcome their differences any time soon. "I doubt that can be done with the amount of vilification and harassment (against the Shiites)," he said. — AFP

Facial recognition at Indian cafe chain sparks calls for data protection law

BANGKOK: The use of facial recognition technology at a popular Indian cafe chain that triggered a backlash among customers, led to calls from human rights advocates yesterday for the government to speed up the introduction of laws to protect privacy. Customers at Chaayos took to social media during the last week to complain about the camera technology they said captured images of them without their consent, with no information on what the data would be used for, and no option to opt out.

While the technology is marketed as a convenience, the lack of legislative safeguards to protect against the misuse of data can lead to "breaches of privacy, misidentification and even profiling of individuals", said Joanne D' Cunha, associate counsel at Internet Freedom Foundation, a digital rights group. "Until India introduces a comprehensive data protection law that provides such guarantees, there needs to be a moratorium on any technology that would infringe upon an individual's right to privacy and other rights that stem from it," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from New Delhi.

A statement from Chaayos said the technology was being tested in select cafes and was aimed at reducing purchase times for customers. The data was encrypted, would not be shared, and customers could choose to opt out, it added. "We are extremely conscious about our customers' data security and privacy and are committed to protecting it," the statement said. A Personal Data Protection Bill is scheduled to be introduced by lawmakers in the current parliamentary session to Dec 13. The draft of the bill proposed strict conditions for requiring and storing personal data, and hefty penalties for misuse of such data. But digital rights activists had criticized a recent consultation on the bill they said was "secret and selective". The ministry for information technology did not respond to a request for comment. — Reuters

Detective flees Sri Lanka after 'death threats'

COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan detective investigating high-profile cases has fled the country after receiving death threats soon after the change of government, police and media reports said yesterday. Inspector Nishantha Silva has sought asylum in Switzerland, according to media reports. He left the island on Sunday without informing his Criminal Investigations Department superiors, a police statement said.

"There are various allegations that this officer had been biased during his investigations in the past four and a half years," the police statement said without giving details. The Daily Mirror newspaper said Silva left after receiving death threats after Gotabaya Rajapaksa won a presidential election on November 16. His investigations included high-profile killings and corruption involving administration members under former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, brother of the new president, who ruled for a decade until 2015.

Mahinda Rajapaksa has returned to power as prime minister after leading his younger brother's successful election campaign. Police said there was no pending disciplinary action against Silva, but an inquiry will be initiated to find out how he left the country without permission. Silva was removed from his CID post last year after Mahinda Rajapaksa briefly served as prime minister. But he was restored after that administration collapsed. Among the cases he was investigating was the 2009 assassination of editor Lasantha Wickrematunge by an alleged hit squad. — AFP

A friendly hand: Pope urges more help for Fukushima victims

TOKYO: Pope Francis yesterday urged renewed help for victims of Japan's 2011 earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima disaster, warning "nobody can start over alone" as he noted "concern" over nuclear power. On the penultimate day of his Japan trip, the pontiff heard the stories of those who survived the so-called "triple disaster" - a 9.1-magnitude earthquake that triggered a devastating tsunami and sent a nuclear plant into meltdown.

In an emotional meeting, he embraced 17-year-old Matsuki Kamoshita, who spoke powerfully of his experience as an evacuee, saying he was so badly bullied he "wanted to die." The 82-year-old Argentine paid tribute to those who rushed to help following the disaster, but warned that more was needed. "No one 'rebuilds' by himself or herself; nobody can start over alone. We have to find a friendly and fraternal hand, capable of helping to raise not just a city, but also our horizon and our hope."

Some 18,500 were killed or are missing after the disaster. The waves swept away homes and farms, and engulfed the cooling systems at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, triggering the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl. Nearly half a million people fled their homes in the first days after the quake and even today, roughly 50,000 remain in temporary housing. Survivors shared painful memories of the disaster, with Toshiko Kato recalling finding her home had been swept away by the waves. "I remember that when I stood in the rubble where my home had been, I was thankful for being given life, for being alive and for just being able to appreciate it," she told the pope.



TOKYO: Pope Francis waves upon his arrival for a holy mass at the Tokyo Dome stadium in Tokyo yesterday. Pope Francis yesterday called for renewed efforts to help victims of Japan's 2011 'triple disaster' of earthquake, tsunami and the Fukushima meltdown, noting 'concern' in the country over the continued use of nuclear power. — AFP

'Concern' on nuclear power

The head of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics stopped short of intervening in the debate over nuclear power in Japan, but said there were "important decisions" to be made about future energy sources. "In turn, this involves, as my brother bishops in Japan have emphasized, concern about the continuing use of nuclear power; for this reason, they have called for the abolition of nuclear power plants," he said.

After the meeting, Kamoshita told reporters he had

been "deeply touched" to discover the pope remembered meeting him at the Vatican earlier this year. Francis later met with youth at a Tokyo cathedral, where he repeated a warning he sounded on the first leg of his Asia tour in Thailand on the pitfalls of technology. He called on young people to reach out to others and not isolate themselves.

"We have invented all sorts of gadgets but we still can't take selfies of the soul," he said, during a relaxed visit that saw him don a colorful traditional Japanese shirt over his white papal robes and give a thumbs-up. In the afternoon, tens of thousands of the faithful and the curious flocked to a mass at the Tokyo Dome, waving Japanese and Vatican flags as the pope entered in an open-top vehicle. He waved to the diverse crowd of Japanese and foreign attendees, smiling broadly and kissing the heads of children held up to him as he passed.

"When he appeared, tears almost came out of my eyes. I was very moved by seeing him. It was very emotional," 17-year-old high-school student Hinako Ibuki said. In his address, Francis drove home his call for people to connect with one another, highlighting the plight of the "many people who are socially isolated" in Japan. The message may be particularly pertinent in Japan, notorious for its long working hours. The government is already encouraging employers to give workers more freedom to pursue family lives, hoping to boost the country's dwindling birth rate.

The pope began his trip in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, where he called the use of nuclear weapons a "crime", against the backdrop of two cities synonymous with the atomic bomb's destruction. Later yesterday, he told Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that "every means necessary of dissuasion" must be used to ensure such destruction "will never take place again in human history." Abe replied he had a "steadfast belief" in a nuclear-free world and vowed to be "utterly tireless" in efforts to bring it about. The final day of his visit on Tuesday includes meetings with young students at Sophia University, before he concludes his Asian tour. — AFP

A warm welcome to our new doctors to Hadi Family

<p>Dr. Patrick Ehimen Egbase, FRCOG (UK) Consultant Obstetrics & Gynecology, Head of Reproductive Medicine, Infertility & IVF</p> <p>Is specialized in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) / Intrauterine Insemination • Induction for all ovarian failure and Polycystic disease • Pre-implantation Genetic Testing for embryos • Freezing for embryos / testicular biopsy / freezing sperm • Assisted hatching and day five embryo transfer • Treatment of Recurrent abortion • Laparoscopic hysterectomy • Vaginal hysterectomy • Endometrial resection • Laparoscopic myomectomy 	<p>Dr. Mona Al Sharhan Specialist Obstetrics & Gynecology, Infertility and IVF</p> <p>Is specialized in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ovulation Induction / Intra Insemination (IUI) • In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) • Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI) • Pre-Implantation Genetic Testing (PGT)
<p>Dr. Akeel Hadi Moosa Consultant Clinical Haematologist MBCHB, PHD FRCPath (Haematology)</p> <p>Is specialized in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anaemia-Acquired / hereditary e.g. sickle cell Anaemia • Bleeding / Clotting disorders • Lymphoproliferative disorders e.g. Lymphoma/Leukemia • Bone marrow disorders • Immune disorders 	<p>Dr. Joseph Tharakan Consultant Internal Medicine Fellow of the Royal College of physician (UK) (FRCP)</p> <p>Is specialized in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnosis and treatment General Internal medicine cases • Diagnosis and treatment of Gastroenterology cases

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Business

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2019

12 US meat producers want a slice of the vegan market**13** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait net profit hits KD 15.4 million**14** National Bank of Kuwait looks to diversification, Al Fulajj says

German oil firm strikes black gold

Berlin battles to reach climate neutrality by 2050



RIEDSTADT: An aerial picture shows a view of the oil well of Rhein Petroleum in Riedstadt, south of Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. — AFP

RIEDSTADT: Outside the small town of Riedstadt, near Frankfurt, a bright green derrick pumping oil from deep underground marks a rare rural German site where that is still a profitable business. As Berlin battles to reach climate neutrality by 2050, minnow Rhein Petroleum sees a niche for its unusually pure crude during the transition phase, although its output is dwarfed by the more than two million barrels a day still consumed by Europe's top economy.

Manager Carsten Reinhold holds up a flask of the lukewarm, dark liquid the pumps have been heaving up from 1,500 meters (5,000 feet) below ground since last year. Low in sulphur, such "light and sweet" crude oil resembles the so-called Brent reserves found in the North Sea. "It would be a shame to burn it all up" to fuel road traffic, Reinhold says, as this type of oil is especially suited to manufactur-

ing industries, feeding into chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles and even blades for wind turbines. A tanker truck passes by twice a week on average to siphon 33,000 liters from the site's metal storage tanks, some of it from the firm's other drilling site in Bavaria. It brings the oil to a refinery 80 kilometers away.

'Like an ultrasound'

Rhein Petroleum was founded in 2007 by former Shell executives, and is today controlled by Netherlands-based Tulip Oil. Where most German oil is pumped in the country's north, especially out to sea, the company has bet on inland fields to the south. The last well in the previous wave of extraction in western Hesse state closed in 1994, as oil prices below \$20 per barrel and expensive techniques throttled profitability. But with prices now above \$60 - having previously peaked above

\$100 - margins look more promising.

Meanwhile, the oil company says the prospecting technology available for identifying hydrocarbon reserves deep below the earth has improved massively. "Just like an ultrasound scan of a pregnant woman," the latest technologies can create a 3D visualisation of the world beneath our feet, Reinhold explains. Meanwhile drilling itself has become cheaper, as a single well can allow prospectors to explore a radius several hundred metres across, rather than having to drill again if they don't hit the right spot. And where once wells were staffed around the clock, these days the high-tech facilities - built by Munich-based Siemens - can be controlled remotely with a smartphone app. Even environmentalist activists are not a problem, as they are presently focused on Germany's massive open-cast brown coal mines. Rhein

Petroleum says it is in contact with ecological movements, who approve of the company's policy not to use the controversial hydraulic fracking technology that has powered the shale gas and oil boom.

Vital raw material

Heidelberg-based Rhein Petroleum's success is an outlier amid a German oil sector in a long-term decline however. From a peak of around eight million tons per year in the late 1960s, crude output fell to just over two million tons by 2018. That was enough to cover around two percent of the requirements of Europe's largest economy, still heavily industrialized.

"It's important that we don't give up oil extraction altogether, it helps reduce our dependence on imports, even if only a little," says Ralf Schairer, who heads the Miro

refinery. Energy expert Claudia Kemfert at economic think-tank DIW disagreed, saying oil extraction in Germany "belongs to the past," as "the energy transition and climate protection (measures) will marginalize hydrocarbons".

Even now, she pointed out, major German carmakers like Volkswagen are making big bets on electric vehicles, while industries are looking for materials not based on oil. But chemical behemoth BASF, while itself exploring such technologies, believes "natural gas and oil derivatives will remain an important raw material for the chemical industry over the medium term." Rhein Petroleum judges there is money to be made in the transition period, with its sights set on recently-discovered oil reserves in neighboring Baden-Wuerttemberg state. Exploration is set to start late next year.—AFP

'Unfit' Uber stripped of its London license after safety failures

LONDON: Uber was stripped of its London operating license yesterday for the second time in just over two years after the city's regulator said a "pattern of failures" on safety and security meant the taxi app was not fit and proper. A change to Uber's systems allowed unauthorized drivers to upload their photos to other driver accounts, meaning they could pick up passengers as if they were the booked driver, which happened in at least 14,000 trips, Transport for London (TfL) said.

The Silicon Valley-based company, which has faced pushback from authorities and existing operators in several countries, has 21 days to appeal and can continue to take rides during the process, which is likely to include court action and could drag on for months. "TfL has identified a pattern of failures by the company including several breaches that placed passengers and their safety at risk," the regulator said yesterday, the day the firm's licence expires. "Despite addressing some of these issues, TfL does not have confidence that similar issues will not reoccur in the future, which has led it to conclude that the company is not fit and proper at this time."

Uber, which has roughly 45,000 drivers in London, did not offer an immediate comment. Uber and TfL have been engaged in a long-running battle since TfL rejected a renewal request in 2017, citing shortcomings in the firm's approach to reporting



LONDON: A woman poses while holding a smartphone showing the App for ride-sharing cab service Uber in London. — AFP

serious criminal offences and driver background checks. A judge in 2018 then granted Uber a probationary 15-month licence, after the company made several changes to its business model.

In September, TfL gave Uber just a two-month extension, far short of the maximum possible five years, and imposed further conditions covering ride-sharing, appropriate insurance and driver document checks. Ahead of the latest decision, Uber said it would introduce measures such as a discrimination button enabling drivers and riders to report abuse, enhanced safety training for drivers and a direct connection to the emergency services. — Reuters

'A sly thief': Rising heat steals jobs and lives in east India

BHUBANESWAR: "This extreme heat we now see is no less than a sly thief," said Murali Sahoo, a building painter in eastern India, as he washed his buckets and brushes at the end of another sweltering work day. A decade ago, a week's work painting could bring in 6,000 rupees (\$84), the 43-year-old said. But over the last five years, increasingly blistering summer temperatures in his home state of Odisha mean working all day is no longer possible, even if he starts at 7 am to get a jump on the heat.

"Today my weekly earnings have fallen to just 2,500 rupees (\$35), a measly 350 rupees (\$5) a day. How can a family survive on this?" asked Sahoo, the father of two boys. As climate change brings ever-more-wilting heat in some of the world's already hot spots, the future for outdoor workers like Sahoo may be bleak, scientists say. If greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow at current rates, by 2100 Odisha will get as many as 48 extremely hot days every year, up from only 1.5 such days in 2010, warned the Climate Impact Lab (CIL), a nonprofit consortium of scientists, in a report released this month. The study's researchers classified a day as extremely hot if the outside temperature reaches above 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit).

The report, on heat deaths in India, was conducted in collaboration with the Tata Centre for Development at the University of Chicago and examined the human and economic costs of climate change and weather shocks in India. "Weather and climate shape India's economy and society," said Amir Jina, an environmental economist at the University of Chicago's Harris School

of Public Policy and one of the authors of the study. "Temperature and precipitation affect diverse outcomes such as human health, labor productivity, agricultural yields, crime, and conflict," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation via email.

The study projected that average summer temperatures in Odisha will go from about 29 degrees Celsius (84 degrees Fahrenheit) in 2010 to over 32 degrees Celsius (89 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2100. That would give Odisha the biggest jump in extremely hot days of all of India's 29 states. The national average increase will be from 24 degrees Celsius to about 28 degrees, researchers said.

Meteorologists point to the state's location, its geographical features - such as its 480-km-long (290-mile-long) coastline - and the rise of concrete buildings and asphalt roads in its towns as reasons it can become particularly hot and humid. As temperatures soar, the study said, Odisha's economy will suffer as people find it increasingly difficult to work. No one has yet calculated what rising heat might do to the state's productivity, Jina said. The Climate Impact Lab plans to provide those projections in a later study.

But a report released by the United Nations' International Labor Organization (ILO) in July predicted that, by 2030, India as a whole could lose nearly 6% of working hours to heat stress. That would be the equivalent of 34 million full-time jobs, the ILO said. Extreme heat also can be deadly, health experts warn. Ambarish Dutta, an Odisha expert at the Indian Institute of Public Health in the state's capital Bhubaneswar, said in Odisha the "killing effect" kicks in when the ambient temperature reaches over 36.5 degrees Celsius (98 degrees Fahrenheit).

In the decade up to 2017, a total of 630 people died as a result of heat waves in Odisha, a state where nearly three-quarters of the working population is in the informal labor sector, most of them working outdoors, according to government data. But by the end of the century, the heat-related death toll could reach as high as 42,000 per year in Odisha, the CIL study predicted. — Reuters

Business

Euro zone's bond yields boosted slightly by fresh US-China hopes

Trade optimism lifts world shares

LONDON: Euro-zone bond yields rose slightly in early London trading yesterday, as positive trade war developments trumped last week's weak euro zone data.

The German benchmark 10-year bond yield was up two basis points, recovering from its biggest intraday fall of the week last Friday.

German Ifo Business Climate Index data for November is due at 0900 GMT. Reuters polling suggests a slight improvement is expected.

Trade optimism

Meanwhile, world shares staged a cautious rally yesterday as investors held out for some progress in US-China trade talks.

the back of strong US economic data. The MSCI All-Country World Index, which tracks shares across 47 countries, was up 0.2%.

Britain's FTSE100 index was up 0.7%, Germany's DAX rose 0.5%, and France's CAC40 index was up 0.6%.

China said on Sunday it would seek to improve protections for intellectual property rights, including raising the upper limits for compensation for rights infringements.

Earlier in Asia, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan bounced 0.7%, after losing 0.4% last week.

The comments add to worries that a Chinese crackdown on anti-government protests in Hong Kong could further complicate the talks.



AMRITSAR: A laborer cuts steel bars for a building construction at a roadside in Amritsar yesterday. — AFP

'Least dirty'

In currency markets, the dollar dipped after its rally on Friday when US manufacturing surveys beat forecasts, just as European Union numbers disappointed.

sector is now spreading to the larger services sector, a worrying sign for the global economy.

European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde on Friday called on euro zone governments to strengthen domestic demand.

US meat producers want a slice of the vegan market

NEW YORK: The growing craze for vegetarian versions of juicy burgers and sausages has created such a buzz that even traditional meat producers are trying to get in on the action.

And competitors Hormel Foods, Perdue Farms and Smithfield have unveiled similar initiatives to take a slice out of this new market.

"Our food culture is changing at a rapid pace," said Bryan Kreske, brand manager at Hormel Foods. There is an "increasing curiosity and motivation to try great-tasting, alternative protein sources like plant-based proteins while decreasing their consumption of animal-based protein."

But unlike the upstart alternative meat companies, which cite the carbon footprint of raising cows and other livestock, traditional players have a harder time using environmental or animal rights arguments to promote their products.



NEW YORK: Plant based meat products are seen in a shelf of a supermarket in New York City. — AFP

plants and vegetables into their diet and less about reducing meat consumption," said Eric Christianson, marketing manager at Perdue.

Best known for its chicken, Perdue in September released their "Chicken Plus" products, which include kid-friendly nuggets, made of a mix of chicken, chickpeas and cauliflower - which they say is perfect for parents trying to get their kids to eat vegetables.

'Plant curious' consumer

Soy burgers have been around for decades. But Beyond Meat and Impossible Burger have been working for the last 10 years to create products that are closer to the taste, texture and flavor of real meat, thanks to ingredients such as

beets. These products jumped into the headlines this year with their introduction in fast food chains, such as Burger King's Impossible Burger, and with Beyond Meat's spectacular Wall Street debut.

Nigeria's SecureID taps into the move from cash to plastic

LAGOS: Sub-Saharan Africa lags other regions such as Asia in moving away from cash to plastic money. One Nigerian company is aiming to close that gap by tapping into a growing appetite for smartcards across the continent.

That figure has grown from 34% since 2014, highlighting the potential for growth. Nigeria's central bank has implemented policies aimed at encouraging a move away from cash, as have Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda.

"That is what I think the entire continent should focus on," she said, noting the continent is effectively a technology consumer, rather than producer.

cial capital Lagos. She, however, would not be drawn into giving an estimate of the potential size of Africa's smartcard market.

SecureID started by importing bank cards before certification from Visa, Mastercard and Verve to make cards around two years after the company was set up.

But manufacturing accounts for just under 8% of Nigeria's GDP, according to the World Bank, dwarfed by services at 52% and agriculture at 21%.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Table listing exchange rates for US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, Canadian dollar, Turkish Lira, Swiss Franc, and US Dollar Buying.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Table listing exchange rates for Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Sri Lankan Rupees, Nepali Rupees, Singapore Dollar, Hongkong Dollar, Bangladesh Taka, Philippine Peso, Thai Baht, and Malaysian Ringgit.

GCC COUNTRIES

Table listing exchange rates for Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, and UAE Dirham.

ARAB COUNTRIES

Table listing exchange rates for Egyptian Pound - Cash and Egyptian Pound - Transfer.

Table listing exchange rates for Yemen Riyal, Tunisian Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Lebanese Lira, and Syrian Lira.

Table listing exchange rates for Morocco Dirham and other currencies.

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr

Table listing selling rates for various currencies including US Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Sterling Pound, Euro, Swiss Frank, Bahraini Dinar, UAE Dirhams, Qatari Riyals, Saudi Riyals, Jordanian Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Sri Lankan Rupees, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Bangladesh Taka, Philippines Pessao, Cyprus pound, Japanese Yen, Syrian Pound, Nepalese Rupees, Malaysian Ringgit, Chinese Yuan Renminbi, and Thai Bhat.

Table listing exchange rates for Turkish Lira and Singapore dollars.

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

Table listing buy and sell rates for various currencies including British Pound, Czech Korune, Danish Krone, Euro, Georgian Lari, Hungarian, Norwegian Krone, Romanian Leu, Russian ruble, Slovakia, Swedish Krona, Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, New Zealand Dollar, Canadian Dollar, US Dollars, US Dollars Mint, and Bangladesh Taka.

Table listing exchange rates for Chinese Yuan, Hong Kong Dollar, Indian Rupee, Indonesian Rupiah, Japanese Yen, Korean Won, Malaysian Ringgit, Nepalese Rupee, Pakistan Rupee, Philippine Peso, Singapore Dollar, Sri Lankan Rupee, Taiwan, Thai Baht, Vietnamese Dong, and Arab currencies.

Business

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait net profit hits KD 15.4 million

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues to post solid top line results. However, the Bank's Net Profit for the 9-month period ended September 30, 2019, fell to KD 15.4 million, down 43% from KD 27.1 million in 2018. Earnings per Share also fell accordingly, from 17 Fils to 5 Fils. On the other hand, Operating Profit increased from KD 78.7 million to KD 79.2 million.

The capital adequacy ratio stood at 18.3%, which comfortably exceeds the regulatory ratio, while shareholders' equity was flat at KD 583 million. The reduction in Net Profit is the result of a very conservative provisioning and write-off policy, which was applied on fully secured but non-performing legacy credits. The asset quality remains very robust, with an NPL ratio at 2.1% and an NPL provision coverage of 285%.

Commenting on the results, Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani, Chairman of ABK, said: "We are working with diligence to ensure a steady growth trajectory of our top line across all our business sectors in the regions we are operating in. We continue to make significant progress in ABK-Egypt, where we have witnessed a solid performance during the first nine months of 2019, expanded our footprint and delivered on our strategic goals. We have also seen steady growth in our UAE branches."

Michel Accad, Group Chief Executive Officer at ABK stated, "The progress we have made during the first nine months of 2019 is a testament to the commitment of our team to deliver operational excellence and a uniquely great customer experience. We will continue to invest in technology under our digital transfor-

mation strategy, as we firmly believe that our focus on pioneering technology solutions will have a positive impact on our customers experience, and will drive our operations forward into 2020 and beyond."

Under its 'Simpler Banking' strategy, ABK continues to deliver innovative services that enrich the customer's experience, and the Bank is investing in robotic process automation initiatives to support its digital transformation. ABK was ranked in the 'Top Ten Safest Banks in the Middle East' by Global Finance and The Banker ranked ABK number 2 in the Middle East 'Movers' list and no 1 in Capital Adequacy Ratio in Kuwait. Forbes ME ranked ABK in the top 50 banks in the Middle East. For more information about ABK please visit ahli.com or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.



Michel Accad



Talal Behbehani

TSI Seats enters BFE catalogue of Airbus

KUWAIT: Founded by the joint initiatives of Turkish Airlines, Turkish Technic and Assan Hanil (a joint-venture between Kibar Holding, and HanilSeoyon E-Hwa, a South Korean global auto parts supplier) as the first and only aircraft seat manufacturer of Turkey, TSI Aviation Seats entered the catalogue showing aircraft seat options to the airlines that are customers of Airbus. With the agreement signed between TSI Seats and Airbus following the successful cooperation between two companies since 2015, TSI Seats gained the right to appear in the BFE (Buyer Furnished Equipment) catalogue of Airbus.

According to the BFE Catalogue Agreement, economy class seat models Skysofa and Epianka of the TSI Seats will appear in the catalogue for the A350 XWB, A330 and A320 plane models of the Airbus. Elesa S model will be placed in the future products section of the catalogue. As for the Royalux, the first Business Class product of the TSI Seats, it will be in the catalogue after its certification process is complete.

Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, Mr. Ilker Ayçi said: "In order to provide logistic support for the sector, we adopted a more active role with our partner firm Assan Hanil and broke a new ground in the history of Turkish Civil Aviation in 2011 with a great initiative. Founded to



design, manufacture, modify and merchandise aviation seats and spare parts, TSI Aviation Seats entered the BFE Catalogue of Airbus today.

We are happy to see the fruits of this beautiful cooperation. As the first and only aircraft seat manufacturer of Turkey, TSI's goal is to become one of the top five aviation seat brands in the global market by 2023. Success is an important cornerstone on the way to our goal. I also believe that this agreement with Airbus will be the herald of new agreements in the civil aviation sector. The success of a national and local company is a proud occasion. I hope that our cooperation will strengthen as it grows. I extend my thanks to all of our personnel and partners who had a part in this success for their contributions."

During the signing ceremony, Kibar Holding CEO Haluk Kayabasi stated: "Today an agreement for BFE Catalogue is signed between Airbus, and TSI Seats, the



joint venture of Turkish Airlines, Turkish Technic and Kibar Holding. According to the agreement, TSI Seats will be the first company in its scale that enters the BFE catalogue. It is expected that the catalogue will increase familiarity and accessibility of TSI in the sector. Catalogue not only provides an opportunity to be visible for the suppliers but also brings the prestige of being approved by Airbus. Considering the Airbus catalogue project's share in the total aircraft orders, expected increase in the retrofit projects along with the other projects of TSI Seats, we aim to reach over \$100 million exports in 2023."

Manufactured for the wide body aircrafts, Skysofa economy class seats were first delivered to Airbus back in September 2015. Last year, Epianka began to fly after gaining the certificates for Airbus A321neo and Boeing B737 MAX narrow body aircrafts and they were used in Boeing B787 Dreamliner aircrafts in July

this year. With the third quarter of 2019, the deliveries start for the A350 wide body aircrafts.

As the joint venture of Turkish Airlines, Turkish Technic and Assan Hanil, TSI Seats cuts down on the external dependence with its support for the local suppliers. TSI Seats maintains its design, engineering, manufacturing and R&D activities in Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport and state of Utah with their team comprised of nearly 150 personnel.

TSI Aviation Seats manufactures high quality, light, innovative and competitively priced products with a focus on the weight issue as it directly effects the fuel consumption of the aircraft. National supplier plans to gain a sizeable portion of the civil aviation market and become one of the top five airplane seat manufacturers of the global market by 2023. Entering the BFE Catalogue of Airbus with this vision, the company continues its investments and growth as a brand.

VIVA launches the new corporate values: Drive, devotion and dynamism

KUWAIT: VIVA, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and a subsidiary of STC Group, has launched its new corporate values 'Drive, Devotion and Dynamism', through a series of activities held at VIVA Headquarter building, in the form of messages, team-building workshops and interactive events led by both the Human Resources and Public Relations teams.

The activities featured awareness sessions that brought the employees from different departments together, and underlined the significance of implementing these values within the organization as they are main contributors to the vision and culture of the company. VIVA is keen on focusing not just on technical competencies but on those that lie underneath as core values which in turn impact work culture and corporate performance.

On this occasion, Ahmad Hamad Al-Hammad, VIVA CHRO stated: "It is important to note that VIVA corpo-

rate strategy revolves around investing in our employees and enriching our customers' experience. How we define corporate values today identifies our best practices and reflects on our business performance internally amongst our employees and externally on our customers and investors. Living our values and encouraging everyone in the company to do so has turned into a key performance objective driving us to achieve our corporate goals.

Moreover, we ensured that everyone understands the new set of values that were selected and implemented in order to be able to relate to them and link them to their daily corporate operations and functions." VIVA continues to reinforce its stance as a digital leader in the telecommunications arena with topnotch and innovative products, services and solutions that cater to our customers' needs and demands, in line with the technological evolution taking place across the nation and the region."



Ahmad Al-Hammad



Struggling state-owned South Africa companies

JOHANNESBURG: Heavily-indebted South African public companies are draining government coffers to stay afloat owing to years of bad management and corruption during the terms of former president Jacob Zuma. Cyril Ramaphosa, who has been president for almost two years, promised to clean up the companies but has in fact made little headway.

"State-owned entities require urgent attention," Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu said in a report this week. He added that the financial situation of state-owned enterprises in general "remained under significant pressure." Makwetu voiced "significant doubt about whether some of the SOEs can continue with their operations in future without financial assistance." Following are major problem cases, and one relatively positive one.

Eskom provides around 95 percent of the electricity used in South Africa, mostly with coal-powered generating plants. They are old and poorly maintained however, and result in regular power shortages that hamper activity in Africa's biggest economy. Eskom employs 46,000 people and has amassed 450 billion rand (\$30 billion) in debt, even though the state has injected 128 billion rand into the company over a three-year period. Ramaphosa plans to split the group up into three separate units, production, transportation and distribution.

Interim chief executive Zuks Ramasia acknowledged recently that the airline's accounts have been in the red for years, despite cash injections by the state. SAA last reported a profit in 2011, and has 9.2 billion rand in debt. In November, the carrier unveiled a restructuring plan that could eliminate almost 1,000 positions among its overall staff of nearly 5,200 people. Former head Dudu Myeni, who was close to Zuma, has been accused of "illegal practices" and company mismanagement by a commission probing corruption under the former president. —AFP



Business

Specter of funding crunch looms over runs at China's small banks

Funding squeezed by government de-leveraging, bailout

YINGKOU: Bundles of yuan notes were stacked high behind the counters of branches of Yingkou Coastal Bank earlier this month, as the northeast China lender fought off a run on deposits while onsite government officials battled rumors of a funding crunch. Yingkou was the latest small bank to have its deposit-reliant funding base undermined by depositors, spooked by the funding crunch that led to the shock state-led rescue of tiny regional lender Baoshang Bank. To help repair the damage, Yingkou hiked its already high deposit interest rates.

The run came just as smaller lenders' reliance on deposits for funding shot up this year after Baoshang's rescue sent interbank interest rates spiking, raising borrowing costs. Funding was already under pressure from government efforts since 2016 to de-leverage the financial system. Since August, government-mandated cuts in lending rates to shore up a slowing economy have only exacerbated the pressure.

With less income from lending and without the full suite of funding options available to much larger peers, the interest rates that China's legion of small banks may have to offer to attract deposits could further undermine their stability, analysts said. Dai Zhifeng, a banking analyst with Zhongtai Securities, said the funding difficulties risked distorting small banks' behavior. "Lacking core competitiveness, some of them have turned to high-risk, short-sighted operations," he said, adding that a liquidity

crunch was possible at some institutions.

At Yingkou, "untruthful rumors about the bank's deep financial crisis spread online", the city police said, triggering a run on deposits on Nov. 6 when a Reuters witness saw piles of cash behind counters at six city-centre branches. The local government stepped in to allay concerns, placing officials at Yingkou's biggest branch to help calm depositors, and hanging notices saying the bank had sufficient assets and that its operations and management were in good standing.

Deposits made up 58% of Yingkou's funding as of June-end. In the wake of the run, it raised its rate for one-year time deposits to 4.4% from 4.2% and kept the rate on its flagship three-month wealth management product above 5%, showed marketing materials seen by Reuters. By comparison, the popular money market fund Yu'eobao backed by e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd offers a 2% annualized rate, while China's benchmark rate for a one-year time deposit is 1.75%.

"I thought about the risks of smaller lenders, but an

interest rate of 4%-plus on deposits was too attractive for me," said Sun Wensheng, a futures trader who deposited 420,000 yuan (\$59,772.86) with Yingkou just before the bank run. The China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission (CBIRC) did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the risk to small lenders from higher deposit rates. Yingkou did not respond to a request for comment.

Localized rescue

Though small, problems at China's more than 4,500 local banks matter because of their close ties to larger lenders and huge base of mom-and-pop savers. Yingkou was the second bank run in less than two weeks, following a panic at Yichuan Rural Commercial Bank in central Henan province amid a corruption investigation into a former boss. But in contrast to the May rescue of Inner Mongolia lender Baoshang Bank, when a takeover by the central government sent inter-bank lending rates sharply higher, local governments took the lead in managing both of the latest scares.

The change in approach was deliberate and is now

based on the specific situation of the bank in question, said an official at the Shanghai branch of the CBIRC. In both runs, funding from other local banks was swiftly brought in to allay liquidity fears under instruction from the authorities. "The current smaller banking industry is fragile due to (its) high leverage and poor liquidity management," said another regional CBIRC official who oversees local rural banks.

"Smaller banks need to be treated carefully and problems rectified as they emerge, such as corporate governance, to avoid contagion risks." For fear of squeezing a funding lifeline, regulators have refrained from cracking down on the high-return time deposits offered by small banks. Local intervention should help contain problems and cut the cost of any rescue, said Rory Green, an economist covering China at independent investment research firm TS Lombard.

"That is long-term positive for China, but will create a lot of risks when local authorities don't have enough capital and don't act quickly enough to stabilize the situation," he said. Regulators are also looking at recapitalization, mergers and other forms of support. On Nov 18, Harbin Bank Co Ltd - a midsize lender with links to Baoshang stakeholder Tomorrow Holdings - saw its shares jump 9% after two local state-controlled groups became its key shareholders, paying an above-market price to do so. —Reuters



Bank runs hit 2 small banks in past month

Gulf Bank announces Al Danah winners

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 24th November 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 17 - 21 November 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week. The winners this week are: (1) Tajeiah Ali Hussain Alawwad (2) Saad Faleh Shebib Al Sahly (3) Mohammad Shafi Yusuf Kaji (4) Yoland Mekal Dergham (5) Ayah Adel Abdalfatah Samarah.

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.

Oil traders bet on economic upswing in 2020: Kemp

LONDON: Crude oil traders are betting the market will tighten significantly next year, even as the major statistical agencies predict production will outstrip consumption and oil inventories will rise. Most of the divergence can be explained by differing assumptions about global growth in 2020.

The International Energy Agency (IEA), the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries are all projecting that the oil market will be in surplus in 2020. Each of the three agencies is forecasting that non-OPEC oil supplies will increase around 1 million barrels per day (bpd) faster than global oil consumption next year. The three agencies are also forecasting non-OPEC production growth of 2.2-2.4 million bpd while consumption increases by only 1.1-1.4 million bpd.

If these forecasts are correct, the result will be a significant rise in stocks of crude and refined products, unless OPEC members and their allies reduce their own output even further. But the shape of the crude futures curve suggests traders and hedge funds are instead anticipating a drawdown in stockpiles next year. Brent's six-month calendar spread has tightened to a backwardation of around \$3.50 per barrel, up from less than \$1.90 at the same a month ago and a contango of \$1.10 this time last year.

Backwardation (where spot prices trade above futures prices) is normally associated with low/falling inventories, while contango (spot prices trading below futures) is typically associated with high/rising stockpiles. —Reuters

National Bank of Kuwait looks to diversification

KUWAIT: While the resignation of Kuwait's government on 14 November was unexpected, it was hardly surprising. Friction between Kuwait's appointed cabinet and its elected parliament has led to the resignation of several governments in recent years, as well as multiple cabinet reshuffles and the dissolution of parliament.

The frequent fallout between the government and parliament reflect the robust nature of Kuwait's parliamentary democracy. But from a business and investment point of view, it is deeply frustrating. As a sovereign entity, Kuwait has successfully insulated itself against the recent geopolitical headwinds in the region as well as the volatility in the oil markets.

The country's GDP growth remains solid, albeit dampened by lower oil prices, and its sovereign credit rating remains top tier. But the slow pace of economic reforms aimed at stimulating private sector investment allied with lower-than expected levels of public sector spending has disappointed the business community. "Business in Kuwait is a mixed bag," says Salah Al-Fulaj, NBK Chief Executive Officer-Kuwait. "The underlying fundamentals are strong, but there are structural challenges."

Business landscape

Few people are better placed to assess Kuwait's business landscape than Al-Fulaj. He is responsible for the domestic operations of Kuwait's biggest and oldest bank. And in a career with the bank spanning more than 34 years, Al-Fulaj has been deeply involved in most areas of business and finance in Kuwait.

"The economy is undiversified," he says. "So that increases the impact of the global slowdown. And there are some domestic challenges. For example, the slowdown in project awards. I do not see a reason it has been slow." With about \$166bn-worth of projects in planning, Kuwait has a strong pipeline of future projects. And the country's lenders, led by NBK, are sitting on abundant liquidity and strong capital positions, and are keen to provide facilities to the local market.

But the country's political disagreements have led to delays on some of Kuwait's most ambitious projects, the latest being the cancellation in October of the advisory services contract for the Al-Zour North 2 and 3 and Al-Khiran independent water and power projects (IWPPs). "It is disappointing," says Al-Fulaj. "There is a lot of dependence on capital expenditure and the trickle down to small and medium-sized enterprises."

"We have to look at the glass being half full," he says. "Kuwait is in an excellent position to grow. It has a low break-even oil price and income is high. The price of oil is stable and we have a young, entrepreneurial population." Established in 1952, NBK is Kuwait's biggest bank, with NBK Group reporting more than \$95bn in assets and \$51.9bn in deposits at the end of September 2019. It was the first national bank established in the Arabian Gulf and today is the fifth-biggest bank in the GCC by value of assets.

"There is an abundance of liquidity," notes Al-Fulaj. "We are flush with Kuwaiti dinar." Al-Fulaj says that one of the principle reasons that Kuwait's banks are in such a healthy fiscal position is because the Central Bank of Kuwait was quick to implement regulatory changes to protect bank liquidity following the 2008 global international financial crisis. "The Central bank of Kuwait (CBK) was proactive in securing solid capital and high provisions in Kuwait's banking system," he says. "It led the wagon, not jumped on it like many international banking regulators, when it came to risk management."

As a result, he says, all of Kuwait's banks maintain higher levels of capital provisions than what is required by the international regulators through the recently introduced Basel III and IFRS9 regulations. Concern about the outlook for global growth has suppressed bullishness about the outlook for oil prices, leading to



Salah Al-Fulaj



lower-than-expected spending by the government so far in this fiscal year, which has triggered a slump in the value of major project contract awards in 2019.

And even before the latest government resignation, the outlook for project spending looked likely to be disrupted by parliamentary elections scheduled for 2020. "Capital spending is an important factor," says Al-Fulaj. "The government budgeted a 17 per cent increase in spending year-on-year. But the current level is only 4 per cent up. We hope that between now and April, there will be an increase in capital expenditure. We need infrastructure."

Diversification

Headquartered in Kuwait, and with close to 3,000 employees, NBK offers a range of corporate, Islamic, retail and investment banking solutions to individual, corporate and institutional clients across the Middle East and North Africa, and around the world. In 2018, NBK Group reported net income of \$1.229bn was up 15.4 per cent on the previous year. And despite challenging macroeconomic conditions in 2019 that have seen slower demand for credit in Kuwait, the bank increased its loan book in the first nine months of 2019. In October, NBK Group reported a net income of \$993m for the first three quarters of 2019, up 10.9 per cent on the same period in 2018, with assets increasing 6.6 per cent. A key factor in the bank's success is its strategy to diversify and digitize its operations. "NBK has a competitive advantage," notes Al-Fulaj. "It is uniquely placed to be able to provide Islamic or conventional services because of its subsidiary Boubyan Bank and NBK, a major conventional bank. Boubyan represented 16.8 per cent of operating income in the first three quarters of the year."

NBK International Banking Group delivered more than 24 per cent of operating income. This is the uniqueness of NBK. If the local market shrinks, we have the international and we have an Islamic subsidiary. We always diversify." In 2017, the government launched Kuwait Vision 2035, setting out a program of economic and fiscal reforms aimed at boosting growth through private sector investment and diversifying the economy. Vision 2035 seeks to deliver about \$100bn of investment in Kuwait between 2017 and 2021, with about one third of the investment coming from the private sector. "Vision 2035 keeps us optimistic, despite some of the setbacks," says Al-Fulaj. "The banks have a major development role and are key partners in Vision 2035. But they need government support in facilitation and execution." Al-Fulaj would like to see the government putting greater effort into delivering the Vision 2035 objectives.

"There are three areas of change that we would like to see," he says. "The first is to increase the contribution of the private sector. We need to improve privatization. We want to see the government accelerate the privatization program through things such as the initial public offering of IWPPs." "The second change we would like is in the execution of projects," he says. "We need to execute as soon as possible."

The Jaber Al-Ahmed cultural centre is beautiful, but it was developed by the Amiri Diwan. We need all parts of government to come up with projects and execute." A key element of the investment program is the use of public-private partnership (PPP) schemes to deliver key projects, including the Al-Khiran IWPP and the Kabd



municipal solid waste treatment project. Kuwait has struggled to deliver its PPP plans. "The third change we need is to activate the PPP projects," he says. "These have been [delayed] for years."

Energy opportunity

Al-Fulaj says that growing project activity in the oil and gas sector is an area of increased opportunity for companies in Kuwait, and particularly for Kuwait's banks. "The main area of spending is energy," he says. "Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC) will play a key." Earlier this year, NBK and Kuwait Finance House co-arranged a five year syndicated revolving loan and Murabaha facility at KD350m (\$1.2bn) to be used for general corporate purposes.

"The oil sector is moving ahead and we think it will be bigger in 2020," says Al-Fulaj. Downstream plans may also need to solicit local lenders' support. Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company is understood to be seeking lending facilities for a planned petrochemicals project near the Al-Zour refinery in the south of the country, estimated to cost KD3bn. "That is positive for us because NBK is the main financier for the energy sector," he says. "We are forecasting bigger borrowing requirements from the energy sector."

Digital transformation

It is not only the corporate sector that is evolving. The changing behavior of NBK's retail banking customers means that the bank is having to transform at a rapid pace. "About 60 per cent of the population is under 30," says Al-Fulaj. "What is attractive to them? A few years ago, it was mobile first. Now it is mobile only. In the first three quarters of 2019, mobile transactions increased by 70 per cent year-on-year while online transactions fell by 30 per cent." "We have got to be agile," says Al-Fulaj. "Banking is now all about being faster and more convenient. We have to know what our clients want. We have to learn through research."

What's On



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Palestinian Cultural Heritage Expo kicks off at Kuwait Women's Association

By Ben Garcia

The four-day Palestinian Cultural Heritage Expo kicked off yesterday at Kuwait Women's Association in Khaldiya. The expo which displays cultural heritage and products is one way of its relentless effort to preserve their cultural identity in the face of daily threats. Rami Tahboub inaugurated the event along with the head of and members of diplomatic corps. Speaking with the Kuwait Times after touring the expo venue, Tahboub said he is

happy to inaugurate the Palestinian Cultural Heritage Expo as they celebrate the silver jubilee this year.

"Today we are celebrating the silver jubilee of Palestinian Cultural Heritage Expo in Kuwait. The expo has symbolic touches of Palestinian heritage and it reflects the Palestinians and Kuwaiti relations which supported the exhibition for many years," he said. The expo will last until Thursday and it's open to public from morning till evening. They can purchase art products, books, embroideries and food. A cultural show is

also set to close the event scheduled on Thursday at 6 pm.

With regards to their bilateral relations, Tahboub described it as being outstanding. "Our relation with Kuwait is really outstanding on all levels particularly in all the areas of cooperation. I particularly laud Kuwait for their great attitude towards the Palestinian people, for being supportive and appreciative in all our causes," he said. "Our relations have taken shape significantly for the better day after day; just recently Kuwait appointed a non-resident ambassador to Palestine and

it sends us a very good signal from Kuwait that we are still their high priority."

In fact, they indicated to hire more Palestinian teachers to work in government schools in the coming years. Right now we have more than 500 Palestinian teachers. Historically our hardworking and trustworthy teachers have been here since 1936 when teachers were hired to establish its school system. We are honored to have this as our invaluable contribution to Kuwait and its people," he added.

Jordan based Palestinian Cultural Center

Head Siham Abu Ghazalih said their expo is not merely to sell and get more support for the Palestinian causes but they focus on preserving the cultural heritage of Palestine in the face of incessant threats. "This exhibition aims at preserving the identity of Palestinian people and our culture, so that our future generations will get an opportunity to witness it by themselves. We are touring the world to showcase our heritage, buying our products is the way it will be preserved and treasured for generations to come in this world," she said.



India's most beautiful stepwells

Every great civilization has contributed something special to the pantheon of world architecture. Egypt gave the world pyramids, Greece provided Corinthian columns, and India provided the stepwell, elevating the humble act of collecting water into an extravagant piece of public theatre.

Known variously as baoris, baolis and vav, stepwells were designed to fill and empty with the changing seasons, allowing access to the water via a series of cascading terraces, no matter how high or low the water level. Reflecting the importance of water in monsoon-dependent India, most stepwells were lavishly ornamented and decked out with niches and pavilions where people could swim, bathe, perform religious rituals, and enjoy the natural cooling effect of a stored body of water.

Today, stepwells - whether abandoned or in use - can be found scattered across India, with the highest concentration in the north of the country, often far from the mainstream tourist trail. Here's our pick of seven of the most spectacular, with details on how to visit them yourself.



1. Chand Baori, Abhaneri, Rajasthan

Perhaps the most striking of all India's stepwells, Chand Baori has featured as the setting for a string of Bollywood song and dance numbers. Some 3500 steps topple down the sides of the enormous central tank,

arranged in an intricate criss-cross pattern that recalls the facets of a cut diamond - albeit one that's 13-stories deep and 35m across from side to side.

There's a hint of M C Escher about the latticework of interlinked stairways, giving the baori a sense of impossible geometry. The lower tiers were constructed by the Hindu king Raja Chanda in the 9th century, but the Mughals embellished the upper levels with pavilions and arcades in the 18th century, making the monument look more Islamic than Hindu. If it looks a little familiar, the stepwell had a cameo in the 2012 Batman flick 'The Dark Knight Rises'.



2. Rani-ki-Vav, Patan, Gujarat

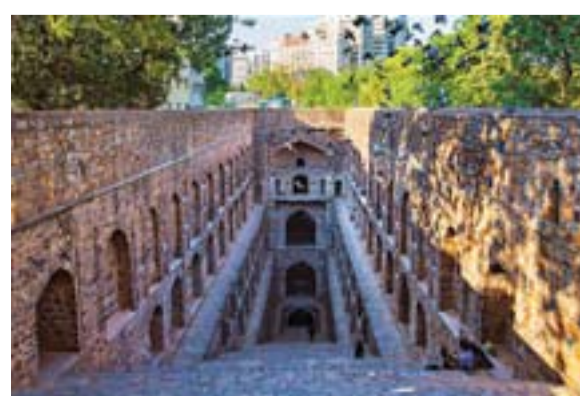
The grand-daddy of Indian stepwells, Rani-ki-Vav is one of the few surviving relics from the once-powerful Chaulukya kingdom, which ruled large areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan in the 11th century. Dropping vertiginously into the ground in a series of carving-covered tiers, this monumental stepwell was constructed on the orders of Udayamati, wife of the Chaulukya king Bhimdev I.

The remarkable state of preservation of Rani-ki-Vav is actually the result of a natural disaster - the monument was filled with silt in the 13th century and only re-exposed in the 1940s. Today, the stepwell is Unesco-listed, both for its super-sized superstructure, and for the intricacy and elegance of the carvings of Vishnu and other deities that cover every spare inch of exposed stone.



3. Agrasen Ki Baoli, Delhi

This oft-missed Delhi landmark opens up unexpectedly in the middle of a New Delhi street, just minutes from the mercantile chaos of Connaught Place. The stepwell cuts a 60m-long slice through the earth below the Indian capital, faced with niches set under Islamic arches, accessed via a single sweeping stairway. The structure seen today was most likely constructed during the Tughlaq period in the 14th century, when Delhi was ruled by a dynasty of Turkic sultans. It's said to be haunted - usually by the same people who warn of jinns (Islamic spirits) stalking the ruins of Tughlaqabad and Feroz Shah Kotla. Today, the baoli is a favoured selfie spot thanks to a starring role in the 2015 Aamir Khan blockbuster PK.



4. Adalaj Vav, Adalaj, Gujarat

While it can't compete with the scale of Rani-ki-Vav, the 15th-century stepwell at Adalaj in central Gujarat is a masterpiece of the stonemason's art - a jewel-box of column-propped arcades surrounding a central, octagonal well shaft, covered in a filigree tracery of carved flowers, elephants, deities and ornamental motifs. Although the carvings swim with Hindu symbolism, the well was actually constructed by a Gujarati sultan, Mahmud Begada, over foundations excavated by a vanquished Hindu rival, reputedly to court the attentions of the defeated king's widow. According to legend, the sultan was so pleased with the stepwell that he put the masons who built it to death to stop them duplicating their masterpiece.



5. The Pushkarinis of Hampi, Karnataka

Stepwells are primarily a north Indian tradition, but the Vijayanagar ruins at Hampi are dotted with ceremonial tanks, or pushkarinis, that are built in the stepwell style. Within the royal enclosure, the so-called Stepped Tank is a classic Indian stepwell, long since stripped of its upper pavilions, but with its eye-catching cascade of pyramid-shaped stairways still intact. Along with nearby ruins such as the Elephant Stables and Queen's Bath, it gives a powerful sense of the ceremony-filled lifestyles of Hampi's ancient rulers. — www.lonelyplanet.com

Health & Science

Deadly measles epidemic leaves 25 dead in Samoa

WELLINGTON: A measles epidemic in Samoa has now claimed 25 lives, with children bearing the brunt of the deadly outbreak, official data in the Pacific island nation showed yesterday. The government said they had registered 2,194 cases of the disease - in a population of about 200,000 - with more than half those affected aged under four years old. All of the recorded deaths, barring a 37-year-old man, have been toddlers in the same age group. Officials have declared a state of emergency and said a compulsory immunization program was making progress, with more than 17,000 people vaccinated in the past five days.

The UN children's agency UNICEF has sent more than 110,000 doses of measles vaccine and medical teams from Australia and New Zealand are helping administer them to the population of about 200,000. Tonga and Fiji have also experienced outbreaks but Samoa has been hit hardest due to low vaccination rates estimated at 28-40 percent. The country's immunization program was briefly suspended last year when two babies died shortly after being given the measles vaccine.

Investigations revealed that hampered nurses had accidentally given the infants the wrong medication but the deaths left a legacy of distrust that hampered immunization efforts. The government this month made vaccination mandatory, with children and non-pregnant women the priority groups. Schools and kindergartens have been closed and children banned from public gatherings such as church services in a bid to contain the outbreak.

More than half affected aged under four



Aside from the devastating human cost of the epidemic, the Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) expressed concern it could hurt the country's economy by discouraging visitors. STA chief

Faamatuainu Lenata'i stressed that the popular tropical destination remained open for business for travelers who had received vaccinations. "Tourism is the mainstay of our economy with so many families depending on this industry for their livelihoods, and leading up to the holiday season, we continue to advise everyone to simply take heed of the preventative health measures that are now in place," he said. — AFP

Slowing down to see Switzerland's melting glaciers

GENEVA: Reuters photographer Denis Balibouse spent years shooting fast-moving subjects in fast-breaking events - the winning goal in a Europa League soccer clash, the confrontation in an Extinction Rebellion street protest. Then he found himself facing a different kind of challenge - how to capture a much slower story, the century-long retreat of Switzerland's glaciers in the face of global warming.

"Everybody talks about the melting of the glaciers. But visually how could we show that?" said the father-of-two who works out of Reuters' Geneva bureau. "You can go to a glacier one day and maybe come back a few years later ... but there is little in the landscape that tells you: 'Oh the ice was there in '83 or 2005.'" The solution came to him as he leafed through a book of black-and-white 19th century photographs of Switzerland's Alpine heights and rivers of ice.

He decided to pick a selection of old vistas from online public libraries, then head out and take a photograph from the same spots, from the same perspectives. He would juxtapose old and new and show what had changed. The challenge was to find those locations. He spent hours in the office looking at online maps, wandering around in virtual reality, lining

up peaks with ridges and other landmarks. Then he went out with his camera and tripod. Some of the glaciers were well-known, a short walk from the road. Others could only be reached by cable car and hours of hiking.

"The Aletsch glacier is 20km long. In two days and a bit of walking I got four different pictures ... The rocks haven't moved, but the vegetation has changed quite a bit." At the Trient glacier, a forest had grown up where the original picture was taken. He tried to match lighting conditions to get as close a match as possible. "Most of the old pictures were taken in afternoon, or later afternoon. In the 19th century they needed a lot more time to climb. They carried their equipment on horses or donkeys."

He took to the skies in a light aircraft to capture the Zanfleon glacier. There was no comparative shot from the 1800s, but it was the best way to see the vast plane of polished flat rock left bare by the shrinking ice. More than three years since he started his research, Balibouse's efforts produced 12 clear shots - some of them composites of old and new pictures, some of them showing him holding up an old photograph in front of the modern day landscape. He also shot video, with images morphing from past to present.

All of his work brought the same unavoidable fact into focus. Vast walls of ice had diminished or disappeared. The glaciers had retreated, leaving the landscape scarred with precarious hills of loose stone and scree. "One glacier had dropped about 200 meters in depth and more than 3km in length in 150 years. You can really see it," said Balibouse. "It's mindblowing the amount of ice that has gone." — Reuters

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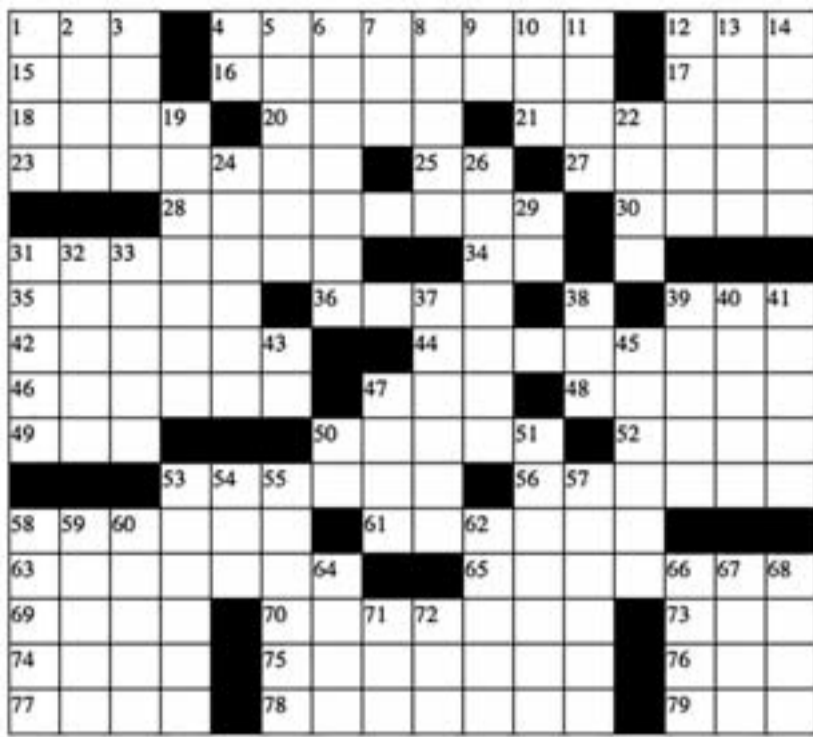
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2369



ACROSS

- 1. Wild and domestic cattle.
4. An acid formed as an intermediate product of the metabolism of tyrosine and phenylalanine.
12. Explosive consisting of a yellow crystalline compound that is a flammable toxic derivative of toluene.
15. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
16. A landlocked socialist republic in central Asia.
17. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
18. A signal transmitted along a narrow path.
20. French physicist noted for research on magnetism (born in 1904).
21. Chinese tree cultivated especially in Philippines and India for its edible fruit.
23. An area of ground used for some particular purpose (such as building or farming).
25. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
27. A sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue separating or binding together muscles and organs etc.
28. A sweet syrupy trihydroxy alcohol obtained by saponification of fats and oils.
30. With no effort to conceal.
31. A republic in the western Balkans in south-central Europe in the eastern Adriatic coastal area.
34. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
35. Small genus of South American trees yielding latex.
36. An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.
42. Fungus used in the preparation of punk for fuses.
44. A tricyclic antidepressant (trade names Imavate and Tofranil) used to treat clinical depression.
46. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
48. Erect leafless flower stalk growing directly from the ground as in a tulip.
49. One of the strands twisted together to make yarn or rope or thread.
52. (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great distance.
56. Hidden and difficult to see.
58. A plaster now made mostly from Portland cement and sand and lime.
61. A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
63. Usually paved outdoor area adjoining a residence.
65. With laces not tied.
69. 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.
70. Being or passing over or across the sea.
73. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
74. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
75. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
76. Take something away by force or without the consent of the owner.
77. A notable achievement.

DOWN

- 1. A small cake leavened with yeast.
2. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
3. A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.
4. Before noon.
5. A long piece of brightly colored cloth (cotton or silk) used as clothing (a skirt or loincloth or sash etc.) in India and Pakistan and Burma.
6. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
7. How long something has existed.
8. Having a pair of equal and opposite charges.
9. A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
10. A slippery or viscous liquid or liquefiable substance not miscible with water.
11. Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
12. Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
14. The cardinal number that is the sum of one and one and one.
19. One of the three Furies.
22. Forbidden to profane use especially in South Pacific islands.
24. Of or pertaining to or written in Altaic.
26. The basic unit of money in Nicaragua.
29. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
32. Belonging to or befitting a supreme ruler.
33. The organ that bears the oviducts of a flower.
37. (electronics) Designating sound transmission from two sources through two channels.
38. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
39. Snarled or stalled in complete confusion.
40. Fig tree of India noted for great size and longevity.
41. Very attentive or observant.
43. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
45. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
47. Temporary living quarters.
50. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
51. Of or related to the cornea.
53. A long monotonous harangue.
54. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
55. A member of a North American Indian people living around the mouth of the Colorado river.
57. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
59. The third canonical hour.
60. Liquid excretory product.
62. A small constellation in the polar region of the southern hemisphere near the Southern Cross and Chamaeleon.
64. Divisible by two.
66. One of a set of small pieces of stiff paper marked in various ways and used for playing games or for telling fortunes.
67. Very dark black.
68. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
71. The capital and largest city of Japan.
72. The shape of a raised edge of a more or less circular object.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may still be out of step concerning your ideas. Go ahead and work on your ideas apart from work and then make your presentation. Be ready to change or adapt but know that rewards are in the making and the last-minute revealing of your idea to co-workers is the witness to your hard work. There is a new phase now that pushes you in the social and political world. This is a special status and has a way of seeming necessary. It starts out small but can become quite ambitious and full of community responsibilities. Your energies may be focused on personal achievements and the love of animals as well.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A few things come to your attention this morning but one of the most important things to catch your eye is a way for you to express your talents in helping people. Problem solving, conflict resolution and all sorts of opportunities to help heal a nation are yours for the asking. A little more education or credentials will be of no matter as you excel in your efforts to help a group, help a country, city or people to come back from difficult times. Surviving abilities and knowledge into the ways of communication will move you to the front of the pack that seeks to make a difference. Politics or teaching will be your new calling.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Someone could challenge you or say something that does not seem quite right—a very sensitive issue. This may touch you in some emotional ways. Perhaps this is a young person that is difficult to understand. Whether this is your co-worker friend or a customer, a friendly attitude may be all that is needed. Acceptance and reassurance may be the key to a better understanding. Your taste in art and appreciation in general are heightened later today. Perhaps this is a good time to set up a time to visit a museum or perhaps a model home. You can recognize a good investment: whether it is a painting or the type of floor you may want to put in. You are wise to keep away from speculation and money risks just now. Your sense of value is to the fore.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Be careful of procrastination today. True procrastination is not the result of simple laziness—it is trying to delay what will really become the end result or outcome. Perhaps there is a challenge that is teasing you and you are not sure how you want to proceed. This may not be the clearest of times. There is the danger of foggy thinking and of your being misled or getting too carried away with some plan or idea. You may want to break that routine and try something new or different today. You will discover new ideas that will be of great value later. You are coming into a creative and competitive phase, one in which you want to be admired and appreciated.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Decisive action is the main order of business now: how you respond to change and maintain your independence is a major focus. There is no time to coast. You look for new and innovative ways to handle your job. During your lunch break you work in some research time and find that there is more than one way to handle the requests that are upon you in the work place now. You are enthusiastic with your new information. Your concentration may be focused on your parents this afternoon. The opinion and methods of yesterday versus today may be the topic of conversation. Understanding comes from working through and accepting some of the disappointments you may have experienced from the past.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A hot discussion may take place today but you enjoy the debate. Through your ability to listen and to solve problems, you teach others. There is a vast amount of intelligent energy available to you. If you remember your priorities, a midweek crisis can be averted and changed into a very productive day. You may have a clear understanding of your position in the world these days. Communal activities that take place this afternoon and evening should be both well-attended and successful. Relationships are intensified and this tends to make you love everybody. Self-confidence is good, not pompous-congratulations! There is a fabulous romantic trend coming up and it begins this evening. If you have a mate, a deepening of relationship can be enjoyed.



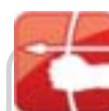
Libra (September 23-October 22)

A new forum could be a turning point in a meeting this morning. A group meeting on the sales floor is exciting as well as frustrating. Give this time to unwind—there is more to discover. Obtaining and exchanging information takes on more emotional significance for you now. Being more involved with co-workers and reports from other business bring about an interesting satisfaction. Communicating feelings becomes important. Another meeting is planned for tomorrow... Be ready with questions. The time is ripe for sudden and unexpected change in the family or personal routine. This certainly does not have to mean negative. Some of the greatest experiences come with the little surprises that happen from time to time in our life.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are supportive of a loved one's ideas this morning and may find yourself in deep conversation. You do not forget your various responsibilities however, and may find yourself working a little late this afternoon to make sure you have completed all the necessary work on your agenda. You may be planning a garage sale for this weekend and tonight you and a mate or friend will be marking prices and cleaning the clothes. In your quest for independence this week, do not go too far—friends will be including you in some fun activity that you will not want to miss for this weekend.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Do not worry too much about what others think about your work or abilities. You will be able to achieve quite a lot today. An emphasis on business is positive and you will find the day moving along rather quickly. The intellectual and communicative talents of those close to you take on greater importance; any shortcomings of this kind stick out like a sore thumb. There is a great deal of communication with media friends regarding education or the lack of education in your community. There could be some great suggestions as you gather with your friends to create a few inspirations.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

In a business meeting today you should not become preoccupied with one idea and accept it as gospel. Consider all sides of an issue. This could be your most beneficial move now, yet it may be hard to hold yourself back in order to hear all the sides. Be cautious in your expenditures this afternoon; most any enterprise would increase your debts. You are intuitive, considerate and imaginative and will include your loved ones in some problem-solving ideas before making a final decision today. While visiting parents or grandparents this afternoon, you experience a feeling of pride and accomplishment as you show off a new talent.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

There is an emphasis on close relationships, and a preoccupation with ideas of fairness and harmony is part and parcel of the cycle you have begun. You want what you want and many of your friends are not surprised to see results that are just the way you visualize them. Your friends commend you on your ability to create end results to your plans so quickly. Today may be the day you take a day off from your work to sign papers on a house or attend a birth or any number of other life-changing things. Yes, you are conscientious about your work but you have written instructions for the underling that will be stepping in to help.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You can bring an attitude of common sense, positive energy and warmth to a frustrated person today, enabling the creation of more positive thinking. You have a calm way about you and you take the time to listen. You may visit a bookstore later today and gather some books that will be helpful for this person. Be careful that you do not go on a spending spree this afternoon, for you may appreciate the beauty and value of everything you encounter today. You are most successful in constructing a project and may enjoy making changes to your home. Water flowing in or near your home can aid in everyone's ability to relax and have creative, intuitive thoughts. A waterfall can be designed in an entrance hall or outside birdbath area—perhaps a fish pond.

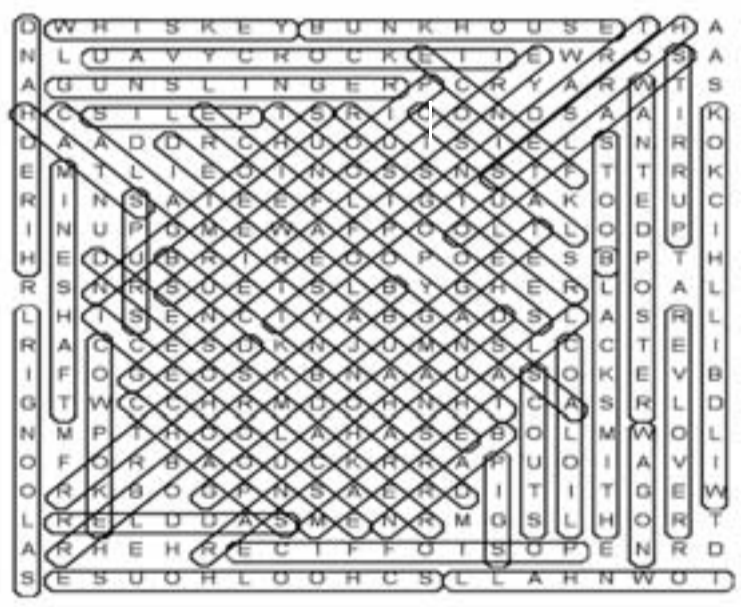
Wordsearch Puzzle

Old West 3

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 46 letters spell a John Wayne quotation.



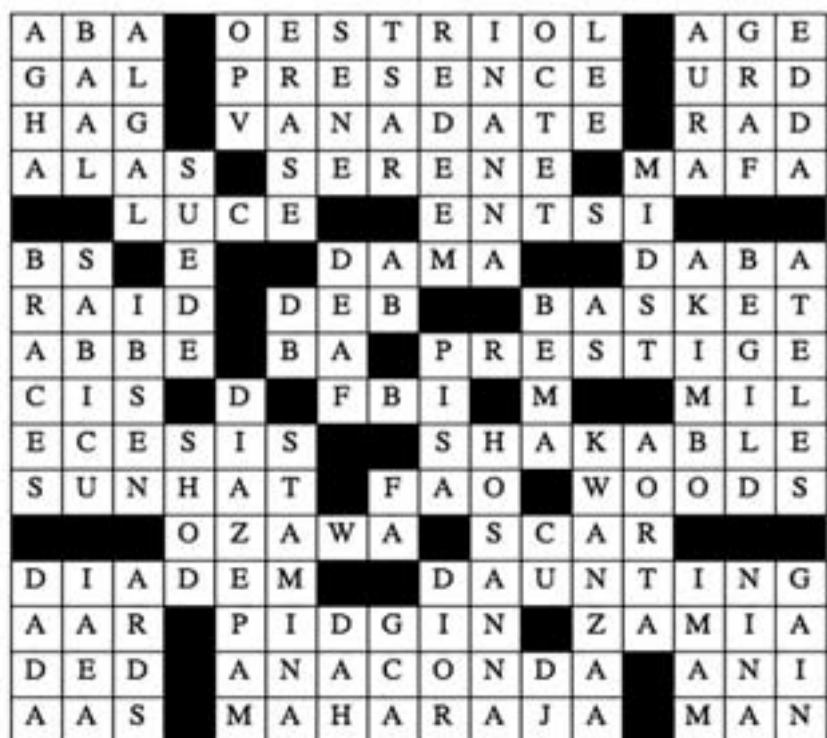
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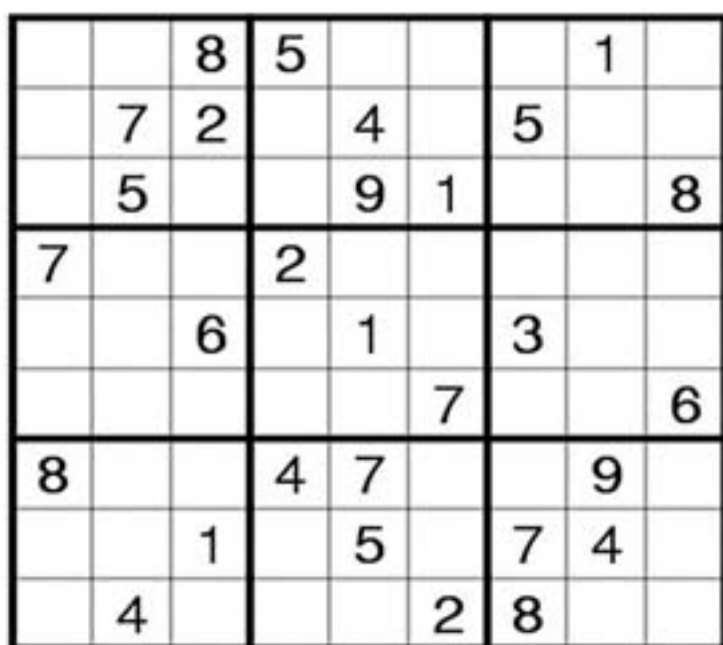
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The hidden message is: ALWAYS DRINK UPSTREAM FROM THE HERD

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2019



Taylor Swift performs onstage during the 2019 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Bullying debate after death of K-pop star **Goo Hara**

Fans mourned and questions were asked Monday after K-pop star and revenge porn victim Goo Hara was found dead in a possible suicide, which would make her the second female singer in a month to take her own life in the high-pressure industry. The body of Goo, a member of former girl group Kara, was discovered Sunday evening at her home in Cheongdam, one of Seoul's wealthiest neighborhoods. Police were still investigating her cause of death and Yonhap news agency reported they were "keeping the possibility of suicide in consideration".

In May, the 28-year-old star apologized to her fans after being hospitalized following a suspected suicide attempt, saying she had been "in agony over a number of issues". Goo was abused by an ex-boyfriend last year after their sex videos. The ex, hairdresser Choi Jong-bum, threatened "to end her entertainment career" by leaking the footage, and a CCTV clip of the couple showed the singer kneeling before him apparently begging him not to.

In the conservative South, women who appear in such videos often feel shame—despite being the victims—and face ostracism and social isolation if the images become public. The man was convicted of multiple crimes including

blackmail in August and was given a suspended jail term, but the star had been targeted by abusive online comments since the incident. Before her body was discovered on Sunday her Instagram account was flooded with hate comments about her appearance and her history with her ex.

Goo made her debut in 2008 with Kara for several years one of the two biggest K-pop girl groups—and pursued a solo career after the group broke up, completing a tour of Japan last week. Her death sparked an online petition on the website of the South's presidential office calling for stronger punishments for cybercrimes and abusive online comments, which garnered more than 20,000 signatures in less than a day.

"It was not long ago that we lost someone through hate comments and this cannot happen again," the petition said. "Please protect the people from hate comments and criticisms that are spreading like a virus." Goo's last Instagram post on Saturday evening showed her in bed with the caption, "Good night".

Shining presence

South Korea has one of the world's highest rates of suicide which, according to recent government figures, is among the top causes of death for those under 40. Taboos about mental illness also



This picture shows K-pop star Goo Hara arriving at Incheon International Airport, west of Seoul.

dissuade many South Koreans from seeking help. Goo's death comes a month after Sulli—a fellow K-pop star and her close friend—took her own life in October after a long struggle with online bullying.

Beneath the glitz and glamour, the K-pop industry is known for its cut-throat competitiveness, lack of privacy, online bullying, and relentless public pressure to maintain a wholesome image at all times and at any cost. K-pop stars like Goo

and Sulli are picked up by agencies at a young age—usually in their early- or mid-teens—and live under tight control, with their days taken over by grueling singing and dancing training.

Earlier this year Goo had spoken out about abusive comments, depression, and her difficult life as a celebrity. "We have to be careful about every move we make in our lives and are suffering from a pain that we can't share even with our friends and family," said Goo, adding that anyone can struggle with depression. "You all have freedom of expression, but can you please look back on yourself before posting a hate comment?" she said.

Fans mourned the star's death and lamented that she was unable to hear the voices of support. "The stars appear to have a shining presence but they live with a pain that no one will understand," a fan wrote on Goo's Instagram account. "How many more victims after Sulli and Goo will there have to be to understand that hate comments hurt others?" the writer added. Another fan wrote: "Maybe you couldn't hear the voices of love and support because the voices of hate were too loud. My heart aches." — AFP

'Good pope v bad pope?' Hopkins and Pryce star in Vatican drama



In this file photo Welsh actors Anthony Hopkins, right, and Jonathan Pryce, left, attend the AFI FEST gala screening of 'The Two Popes' at TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. Every story needs its hero and its villain.

Every story needs its hero and its villain. So when Fernando Meirelles decided to make a film about Pope Francis and Pope Benedict coming face-to-face, the director knew which pontiff he would side with. For the first time in seven centuries the Catholic church has two living popes, and "The Two Popes" imagines a series of spirited debates between the strict, conservative Benedict and his charismatic successor.

"At the start of the film for me Benedict was the 'bad pope' and Francis was the 'good Pope,'" said Oscar-nominated Meirelles ("City of God.") But as the movie progressed, and the Brazilian director learnt more about both men, something started to change. "I read some of his writings. And I watched some of his sermons. And he's interesting," the director told AFP at the film's recent premiere. "I think the press created this image of a Nazi, which is not really ... he's not very different from Pope Francis actually."

The two men on screen bridge their differences, bonding over Benedict's piano-playing and Francis' beloved football team in conversations at the Pope's summer residence, and in the Sistine Chapel. The Netflix film, starring Welsh screen legends Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce as Benedict and Francis respectively, has quietly emerged as an Oscar contender. It was written by New Zealander Anthony McCarten, whose last three films—"The Theory of Everything," "Darkest Hour" and "Bohemian Rhapsody"—have all won the best actor Oscar for their leading men.

McCarten told AFP that "career-best performances by both men" in his latest film were undoubtedly worthy of Academy recognition. There are "no more fitting recipients than either of them," he said at the American Film Institute's AFI Fest. Hopkins said the glowing response to the film had been a "big surprise," expressing hope that it could teach the world something about tolerance. "Let's talk, sit down,

stop being so grim about everything," said the "Silence of the Lambs" Oscar-winner.

Church scandals

Pope Benedict's shock 2013 resignation came against a backdrop of child sex abuse scandals and financial corruption. These events are touched upon in the film, but only fleetingly. At one point, Francis hears Benedict's confession—including his knowledge of historic sex abuse allegations against Mexican priest Marcial Maciel. But the audio quickly fades to silence, leaving the audience to fill in the gaps.

"I had to be very careful not to go (too) far," said Meirelles. "We had more lines on child abuse (in the script) but if I had two extra paragraphs on that it would become a film on child abuse." He knew that a specific Mexican cardinal had issues with kids, and he didn't do anything, to avoid a big scandal. "Nonetheless, Benedict emerges as a surprisingly likeable figure—something Meirelles attributes to Hopkins' considerable charm.

"As a dramatist, I had to love both characters equally," added writer McCarten. "I had to start to learn and see the world through his eyes. Benedict 'stands for tradition, orthodoxy, for something dependable, for a moral compass. Which is timeless, an eternal truth. And there's a strength in that.' The film also covers, in flashbacks, a dark period in Francis' past.

As head of Argentina's Jesuits, he was accused of cozying up to the country's brutal military dictatorship in the 1970s. "Francis was and still is known as a divisive person in Argentina. It's talked about in the film, it's not shied away from," Pryce told AFP. The "Game of Thrones" star said he studied Francis' "flaws and weaknesses"—as well as his more admirable traits, like tackling inequality and climate change—to develop the character.—AFP



The portrait of late K-pop star Goo Hara is seen surrounded by flowers at a memorial altar at a hospital in Seoul. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Awards



Taylor Swift accepts the Artist of the Decade award from Carole King onstage during the 2019 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



US singer Kane Brown



Dan Smyers and Shay Mooney — AFP photos

TAYLOR SWIFT PUTS RANCOR ASIDE, SMASHES ALL-TIME AMERICAN MUSIC AWARD RECORD



Taylor Swift accepts the Artist of the Decade award from Carole King onstage during the 2019 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California.



US singer/songwriter Carrie Underwood

Taylor Swift took the high road as she won six American Music Awards on Sunday to surpass Michael Jackson's all-time record, avoiding any direct mention of a bitter dispute with her old record company. Swift won the top award, artist of the year, and four others. She was also given an honorary artist of the decade award, taking her all-time total to 29 American Music Awards, organizers said. That easily outstripped the 24 awards picked up by Jackson.

"All that matters to me is the memories that I have had with you guys, with you the fans, over the years," Swift, 29, told the audience at the ceremony in Los Angeles after performing a medley of her old hits. Swift had been expected to speak out about a long feud with record industry executive Scooter Braun, who owns the master recordings to her first six albums after Swift signed with a new label in 2018.

Swift accused Braun last week of refusing permission for her to sing songs from her back catalog at the awards show. The public spat culminated last week with Braun saying that his family had received numerous death threats after the pop singer urged her 122 million Instagram fans to let Braun "know how you feel about this."

But on Sunday, the "Fearless" singer made no mention of the dispute, although she opened her performance wearing a white shirt printed with the titles of her old albums. "This year for me has been a lot. It's been a lot of good, it's been a lot of really complicated," she said, without elaborating. She beat Drake, Ariana Grande, Halsey and Post Malone as artist of the year. Newcomer Billie Eilish, 17, took home two statuettes for best new artist and best alternative rock artist after a breakout year that saw her top the US charts with her single "Bad Girl."

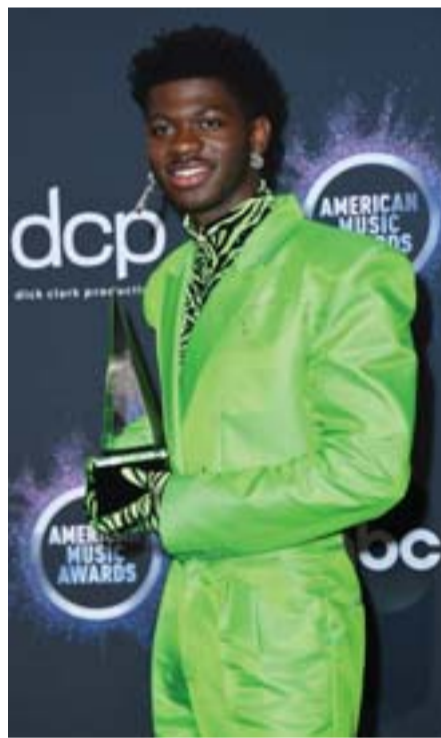
"You made it all happen," said Eilish, thanking her fans. Eilish showed her support for environmental causes by wearing a T-shirt with the slogan "No Music on a Dead Planet" as she gave her first awards show performance with "All the Good Girls Go to Hell." Selena Gomez kicked off the ceremony in her first live TV performance in two years after undergoing a kidney transplant in 2017 and battling anxiety and depression.



US singer Halsey



US singer Lizzo



US singer/songwriter Lil Nas X

Body positive R&B singer Lizzo performed her new single "Jerome," and Cuban-born Camila Cabello and boyfriend Shawn Mendes sang their hit pop single "Senorita," which won the award for collaboration of the year. British rocker Ozzy Osbourne, 70, who has been sidelined by serious health problems for a year, was mostly seated as he took to the stage with rappers Post Malone, Travis Scott and rocker WATT for their single "Take What You Want."

Punk rockers Green Day got the audience to its feet as they marked the 25th anniversary of their 1994 breakout album "Dookie." Other performers included the Jonas Brothers, Kesha, Halsey, Christina Aguilera and Shania Twain. — Reuters



US actress Constance Wu and Hong Kong actor Jimmy O Yang



British singer Dua Lipa



Indonesian singer/songwriter Agnez Mo



Canadian singer/songwriter Shania Twain



US actress Regina King



US actor Billy Porter



US singer
Selena Gomez



British singer/
songwriter Ella Mai



US singer/songwriter Toni Braxton



Canadian actress
Cobie Smulders and
husband Taran Killam



US/Canadian
singer/dancer
Paula Abdul

Winners in key categories

Artist of the year: Taylor Swift
Artist of the decade: Taylor Swift
New artist of the year: Billie Eilish
Collaboration of the year: Shawn Mendes and Camila Cabello 'Senorita'
Tour of the year: BTS
Favorite music video: Taylor Swift 'iYou Need to Calm Down'
Favorite social artist: BTS
Favorite male artist pop/rock: Khalid
Favorite female artist pop/rock: Taylor Swift
Favorite duo or group pop/rock: BTS
Favorite album pop/rock: Taylor Swift 'Lover'
Favorite male artist country: Kane Brown
Favorite female artist country: Carrie Underwood
Favorite duo or group country: Dan + Shay
Favorite artist rap/hip-hop: Cardi B
Favorite male artist soul/R&B: Bruno Mars
Favorite female artist soul/R&B: Beyonce



US rapper Post Malone



Singer Pia Mia



Singer/songwriter
Kesha, right, and
musician Bif Freedia



Australian actress
Katherine Langford



Actress Sofia Carson



US musician Pete Wentz



US actor Chadwick Boseman



(Left to right) Mike Dirnt, Billie Joe Armstrong and Tre Cool from Green Day

Lifestyle | Features



Picture shows the Jewel Room (Juwelenzimmer), one of the rooms in the historic Green Vault (Grünes Goelbe) at the Royal Palace in Dresden, eastern Germany. — AFP photos



Picture shows one of the rooms in the Green Vault (Grünes Goelbe) at the Royal Palace in Dresden, eastern Germany.

Germany's 'treasury chamber' museum in Dresden robbed

A German state museum with one of the biggest collections of baroque treasures in Europe has been robbed, police said Monday, with media estimating losses of up to a billion euros. The Green Vault at Dresden's Royal Palace, which is home to around 4,000 precious objects made of ivory, gold, silver and jewels, was broken into early Monday morning. "This morning there was a break-in at the Green Vault," police in Saxony state confirmed on Twitter, adding that an estimate of the damages was "not yet possible".

Bild newspaper reported meanwhile that "antique jewelry worth around a billion euros

has been stolen" in what it called "probably the biggest art theft since World War Two". One of the oldest museums in Europe, the Green Vault holds treasures including a 63.8-centimetre figure of a Moor studded with emeralds and a 547.71-carat sapphire gifted by Tsar Peter I of Russia.

Bild said the criminals had broken into the well-protected palace by attacking a nearby power distributor and climbing through a window. They then proceeded to target smaller items of jewelry, leaving larger, bulkier items behind, Bild claimed, without citing sources.

'Hard-earned' treasures

Founded by August the Strong, Elector of Saxony in 1723, the Green Vault is one of 12 museums which make up the famous Dresden State Art Collections. Its historic section, which contains around three quarters of the museum's treasures, was the one broken into on Monday. With a strict limit on the amount of daily visitors, entrance to the historic vault can only be reserved in advance.

Exhibits are arranged into nine rooms, including an ivory room, a silver gilt room and the central "Hall of Treasures". One of its most valuable pieces, the green diamond, is cur-

rently on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where it is a headline attraction in the temporary exhibition "Making Marvels: Science and Splendor at the Courts of Europe".

After the Royal Palace suffered severe damage in World War Two, the Green Vault remained closed for decades before it was restored and re-opened in 2006. For Saxony's state premier, the heist went beyond the value of the artifacts stolen. "The treasures that are found in the Green Vault and the Dresden Royal palace were hard-earned by the people of Saxony over many centuries,"

said Michael Kretschmer.

"One cannot understand the history of our country, our state without the Green Vault and Saxony's State Art Collections." In 2010, the museum hosted a meeting between Chancellor Angela Merkel and then President of the United States Barack Obama, on the latter's first state visit to Germany. Monday's theft is the second high-profile heist in Germany in recent years, after a 100kg, 24-carat giant gold coin was stolen from Berlin's Bode Museum in 2017. — AFP

'Frozen 2' ices out competition in N American box office

Disney's new release "Frozen 2" iced out competitors to top North American box offices over the weekend, taking in an estimated \$127 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said Sunday. The film follows the beloved characters from 2013 hit "Frozen," as they travel to an ancient, autumn-bound forest in search of the origin of Queen Elsa's (voiced by Idina Menzel) magical ice powers.

"Frozen 2," which has come out just in time for the winter holidays, set a November record for an animated movie and secured the third-best start for an animated film behind fellow Disney titles "Incredibles 2" (2018) and "Finding Dory" (2016), according to Variety. In second was last week's leader, "Ford v. Ferrari," with an estimated \$16 million. The Fox film is based on the true story of how a team at Ford built a car to challenge Ferrari's longtime dominance of France's classic 24-hour Le Mans race.

New Sony release "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood," a drama about a journalist's relationship with beloved television star Fred Rogers (played by Tom Hanks), debuted in third place with an estimated \$13.5 million. Thriller "21 Bridges" opened at fourth, taking in an estimated \$9.2 million. The new movie from STX Films stars Chadwick Boseman as an NYPD detective who shuts down all 21 of Manhattan's bridges to find two suspected cop killers.

Rounding out the top 10 were: "Midway" (\$4.7 million) "Playing with Fire" (\$4.6 million) "The Good Liar" (\$3.4 million) "Charlie's Angels" (\$3.2 million) "Last Christmas" (\$3.0 million) "Joker" (\$2.8 million). — AFP

Actresses Idina Menzel, left, and Kristen Bell are honored with stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, in Hollywood, California. — AFP



Female comic superhero fights India's sex traffickers

A female superhero will use her powers to fight sex crimes in India and the stigma that trafficking survivors face, in the third installment of a comic series due to be released this week. Priya, a rape survivor-turned superhero who flies around on a tiger, fought her abusers and helped acid attack victims in the last two editions of the "Priya's Shakti" comic.

"Comics are hugely popular with teenagers and young adults ... we wanted to reach teenagers because they are learning about sexuality, gender-roles and sexual violence," said series creator and filmmaker Ram Devineni.

"More importantly, we have given voices and put attention on survivors of gender-based violence," Devineni told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an email. Thousands of people across India - largely poor, rural women and children - are lured to cities each year by traffickers who promise good jobs, but sell them into modern day slavery. India recorded around 3,000 human trafficking cases in 2017, according to recently released crime data, which anti-trafficking campaigners said masked the true scale of the crime.

In the new comic, which can be downloaded for free from Tuesday, Priya rescues sex trafficking victims and challenges the communities that refuse to accept them on their return home. "Priya's Shakti" (Priya's Strength) was the first Indian comic book of its kind when first released in 2014,

using augmented reality to tell the story of a young, rural woman who is gang-raped and then shamed by her family and community. In her latest comic titled "Priya and the Lost Girls", she returns to her village where she finds all the women, including her sister, missing. She then traces them to a brothel owned by a demon who she must fight to rescue the women.

Although set in India, the story has global resonance, the creators said. "People in first world countries think of sex trafficking as a third world problem. What they don't realize is, it happens in their own backyards. It is a global industry making a lot of money," the comic book's writer Dipti Mehta said. The story was based on research the creators conducted of brothels in red-light districts of Kolkata and Mumbai.

"I think as artists and creators it is our social responsibility to raise awareness and give voice to those who need it the most," Mehta said. The "Priya's Shakti" series has been downloaded more than 500,000 times and read by about 26 million people worldwide, Devineni said. Augmented reality is being used as a sex education tool in Myanmar, while Indonesian storytellers are spreading a 'mighty girls' message through a series of illustrated e-books to fight male dominance. — Reuters

Kendall Jenner's family, friends want her to have children

The 24-year-old model spent the weekend hanging out with her nephews, three-year-old Saint and six-month-old Psalm West - her half-sister Kim Kardashian West's boys with husband Kanye West - and joked the tots had made her broody. She shared a number of photos on Instagram and, referencing her friend Fai Khadra, who had taken the pictures, wrote: "Everyone in favor of Fai and i starting a family

say 'T' (sic) Her sister Kylie Jenner - who has 21-month-old daughter Stormi with Travis Scott - quickly wrote: "T", as did her mother Kris Jenner, who added a heart eye emoji. Kim - who also has daughters North, six, and Chicago, 22 months - replied with a series of exclamation marks. Meanwhile, Gigi Hadid also agreed Kendall should start a family, while Hailey Bieber - who is married to Justin Bieber - was very enthusiastic about the possibility. Kendall - who is the only 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' sibling not to be a parent - previously joked about her child-free status. Responding to a family photo featuring her nieces and nephews, she also shared a meme of a woman with a bag over her head and the caption: "Pregnancy is in the air. Me." Last year, the brunette beauty admitted it was "weird" her younger sister Kylie had had children before her. She said: "It's obviously a bit weird that your little sister [Kylie Jenner] is having a baby before you. I didn't expect it to happen like this. But it's beautiful." And while Kendall is open about her desire to have kids one day, she's not rushing into it. She said: "I am ready to wait. I want to have kids, but at, like, 28 or 29."



Kim Kardashian West doesn't think children should wear make-up

The 39-year-old reality TV star - who has kids North, six, Saint, three, Chicago, 22 months, and five-month-old Psalm with Kanye West - has revealed she now agrees with her husband's views on children and make-up, having previously admitted that the issue led to an argument

within their home. Speaking to 'The Sunday Project', Kim shared: "About the make-up thing, I don't think a kid should really be wearing make-up either, you know." The brunette beauty also revealed she's spoken to various friends and family members about the issue. She said: "I think sometimes if you don't understand a rule, it is good to learn and ask your friends. In my case [I asked] my siblings what they would do." And according to Kim, she and Kanye came to an agreement about the make-up issue after she sought advice on the subject. Kim explained: "[We] bounce ideas around and develop a way that we're going to parent and rules that we have. And we always have to stay aligned." Previously, the reality TV star admitted that Kanye's conservative views had created tension at home - especially in relation to their eldest child North and the issue of make-up. She said: "North is trying to get in on the make-up, but she's being blocked heavily because her dad has stopped all make-up for her until she is a teenager. It's a big discussion, a big fight in the household right now but it is what's best. I think as a parent you just learn and figure it out as you go and we realized we didn't really want her to wear make-up at a young age but she sees her mom putting on lipstick and lip gloss." — Bang Showbiz



The 'Modern Family' star has teamed up with No B.S. Skin Care for a new campaign, after deciding she wanted to "take control" of what she puts "in and on her body". She said: "Staying healthy is important to me, and that means taking control of what I put in and on my body. My lifestyle detox started with clean eating, but when I realized how many toxins were hidden in the products I used every day, I knew I had to make a big switch. My fans wanted in on the process, so the pressure was on to find something really good - for me and for them." No B.S. resonated with me because their products are made with good-for-you ingredients that actually improve skin health. My No B.S. regimen has four powerful basics you can use every day to clean up your skincare

game. My hope is that everyone who tries it will feel so good in their skin that they don't mind going makeup-free." Sarah has worked with No B.S. Skin Care to put together a skincare regimen bundle. Diana Briceno, CEO of No B.S. Skin Care, added: "Sarah's story really resonated with our team and our brand because like so many of our customers, she realized that what she ate, drank, and used on her skin could contribute to toxins building up her body. At No B.S., we love sharing stories like Sarah's to bring awareness to the importance of clean beauty ingredients and products. This is exactly why she is the perfect partner to inspire people to take control of their own health, and cut out all of the unnecessary, toxic B.S. they don't need, starting with their skin care."

Iranians rally against 'rioting'; 143 killed in protests: Amnesty

TEHRAN: Supporters of Iran's government poured into central Tehran yesterday for a massive rally to condemn days of "rioting" that the Islamic republic blames on its foreign foes. Waving the Iranian flag and banners that read "Death to America", they descended on Enghelab (Revolution) Square from all directions. In a shock announcement on Nov 15, Iran raised the price of petrol by up to 200 percent, triggering nationwide protests in a country whose economy has been battered by US sanctions.

Officials say the demonstrations turned violent because of the intervention of "thugs" backed by royalists and Iran's arch-enemies - the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia. The square filled up quickly on Monday with young and old, including clerics carrying portraits of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "Countries like America, Israel or Saudi Arabia... don't want to see us make progress, develop and have security," said a housewife at the rally. "We support our leader and, for these reasons, they tried to put a spoke in our wheel," she told AFP.

The rally was addressed by Major General Hossein Salami, head of the elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps which helped to put down the unrest. "This war is over," Salami told the huge crowd that covered the square and spilled into side streets. "You have defeated the power of the arrogance,"

he said, referring to America. "The coup de grace has been delivered."

Meanwhile, Amnesty International yesterday said at least 143 demonstrators were killed across Iran since leaders ordered security forces to stamp out protests that followed fuel price rises on Nov 15. "According to credible reports... those killed include at least 143 people," said the London-based rights group. "The deaths have resulted almost entirely from the use of firearms."

It said one person reportedly died after inhaling tear gas, another after being beaten. Amnesty "believes that the death toll is significantly higher" and was still investigating, it said. Amnesty, which last week gave a death toll of more than 100, called for the international community to condemn the bloodshed. "The international community's cautious and muted response to the unlawful killing of protesters is woefully inadequate," said Philip Luther, Amnesty's research and advocacy head for the Middle East.

"They must condemn these killings in the strongest possible terms and describe these events for what they are - the deadly and wholly unwarranted use of force to crush dissent," Amnesty said. "verified videos show security forces deliberately shooting unarmed protesters from a short distance. In some cases, protesters were shot while they were running away." They also showed secu-

rity forces shooting from rooftops, it said, adding that the crackdown was carried out by police, Revolutionary Guards, and the Basij paramilitary force "and others".

Long-fraught links between Tehran and Washington plunged to a new low in May last year when the US unilaterally withdrew from an international accord that gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear program. In his speech, Salami issued a warning for the United States and its allies Britain, Israel and Saudi Arabia. "You have received a strong slap in the face," Salami told them. "If you cross our red lines, we will destroy you."

Chants of "Death to the USA" and "Death to Israel" rang out as some in the crowd set fire to American flags. On the eve of the rally, an SMS had been sent to citizens urging them to attend the demonstration, amid an ongoing Internet outage imposed during the unrest. The near-total Internet blackout came at the height of the street unrest in a step seen as aimed at curbing the spread of videos of the violence.

Connectivity has returned to much of the country except for its mobile telephone networks, said NetBlocks, a site that monitors internet disruptions. NetBlocks said connectivity on IranCell was running at 100 percent, but two other key mobile service providers - MCI and RightTel - were down at one and 24



TEHRAN: Iranian pro-government demonstrators gather in the capital's central Enghelab Square yesterday to condemn days of "rioting". — AFP

percent respectively. The unrest erupted hours after a midnight announcement that the price of petrol would be immediately raised by 50 percent for the first 60 litres and 200 percent for any extra fuel after that each month.

President Hassan Rouhani said the proceeds would allow his government to pro-

vide welfare payments to the needy. During the violence, dozens of banks, petrol pumps and police stations were torched across Iran. Officials have confirmed five people were killed, but the death toll from clashes with security forces is thought to be much higher. — Agencies

Scores of sheep feared dead in...

Continued from Page 1

Romania joined the EU in 2007 and is the bloc's third-largest sheep breeder and a top exporter, primarily to Middle Eastern markets. Romania's main livestock breeders and exporters' association Acecop has called for an urgent investigation, saying it was "shocked by the disaster". "If we cannot protect livestock during long-distance journeys, we should outright ban them," Acecop president Mary Pana said in a statement late on Sunday.

Acecop has previously called for legal changes that would oblige transporters to improve conditions aboard livestock carriers. Gabriel Paun of Animals International has also called for an inquiry to be held "without delay", alleging that the ship had been overloaded. He added that the Queen Hind already had engine problems last December.

The veterinary authority said in a statement that the vessel had fully complied with EU regulations and that sufficient space, food and water had been provided. Activists have labeled the livestock transport vessels - about 100 of which leave Media every year - "death ships", saying sheep risk being cooked alive on board during the hot summer months. In July, the European commissioner in charge of health and food safety demanded that Bucharest stop the transport of 70,000 sheep to the Gulf, citing animal welfare. — AFP

Indian doctors remove giant 7 kg...

Continued from Page 1

The Guinness Book of Records says the largest kid-

ney removed from a human was 4.25 kg in an operation in Dubai in 2017. Doctors at the New Delhi hospital said however they had found medical accounts of a kidney weighing nine kilos being cut from a patient.

The disease the unnamed man was suffering from causes cysts full of fluids to start growing in kidneys. Doctors called for the operation when they detected internal bleeding and spreading infections. Kathuria said the man was now in good condition and on dialysis awaiting a kidney transplant. — AFP

Erdogan in Qatar calls for 'swift'...

Continued from Page 1

"There has been a lot of rumors about this potential disagreement following Qatar-critical coverage in the Turkish press, but in reality there has been no rift in this relationship between Doha and Ankara."

After the Gulf crisis erupted, Turkey was at the forefront of nations supplying Qatar with food and services, bypassing the blockade imposed by the Saudi-led nations. Qatar last year announced a \$15-billion loan to Turkey's fragile banking sector and also gave a luxury jumbo jet - reportedly worth around \$400 million - as a "gift" to Ankara. The two nations have similar policies over Islamist groups, primarily the Muslim Brotherhood.

Turkey's relations with both Egypt and Saudi Arabia are rocky, and ties between Riyadh and Ankara worsened significantly after Washington Post contributor and regime critic Jamal Khashoggi was murdered in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct 2, 2018. Cinzia Bianco, Gulf Research Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said Erdogan's visit was "key" at this time. "Erdogan is trying to make sure that a rumored Gulf appeasement won't come at the expense of Qatar-Turkey relations," she said.

"Welcome to Qatar," the Qatar Football Association tweeted yesterday along with a heart emoji and a welcome video of the Emirati team arriving in Doha. Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said earlier this month that the boycotting countries' decision to travel to Doha was "a clear indication of the progress towards solving the Gulf crisis". Other steps were being taken "which affirm we are heading in the right direction to reach positive results", he added, without giving details.

An official from the Cairo-based Arab League is to visit Doha for a conference during the tournament, raising hopes for mediation efforts. It is unclear if the boycott countries will ease their rules on citizens travelling to Qatar, which launches its Gulf Cup campaign against Iraq at Doha's Khalifa Stadium at 1630 GMT today. The UAE will face Yemen two hours later, while Qatar will not face any of the nations enforcing the embargo until its group-stage clash with the UAE on Dec 2. The match will be closely watched for the behavior of both the home support as well as any visiting fans.

Bahrain's Salwa Eid Nasser was given a warm reception after her 400 m gold triumph at the World Athletics Championships in Doha in October and her country's flag and anthem were both permitted. Qatar's national football team was forced to play without travelling supporters during the Asian Cup in the UAE at

the start of the year, while security tried to ban the display of the Qatari flag. Advertising for the Cup dotted around Doha was quickly updated to include the flags of the three newly added competitors.

The boycotting countries had refused to participate in the previous Gulf Cup two years ago, which was originally scheduled to be held in Qatar just a few months after the crisis erupted. But they took part when the tournament was subsequently moved to Kuwait. Outside of Qatar, there have been glimmers of a possible endgame to the bitter spat which has seen the two sides trade barbs on everything from access to the holy city of Makkah to alleged Twitter hacking.

Leading Emirati politics professor Abdulkhaleq Abdullah, an authority on the UAE's political thinking, tweeted that the end of the boycott could be in sight following the Gulf Cup announcement. Abdullah called the trio's decision "as political as it is sporting". "Football... may open the door for the travel of sports fans to Qatar to support their teams, which means necessarily lifting the travel ban to Qatar and the return of Gulf cohesion," he wrote after the announcement. Iraq, Kuwait, Oman and Yemen will also vie for the cup at the tournament which wraps up on Dec 8.

In a related development, Qatar and Kuwait have told the United States that they will join a US-led naval coalition in the Gulf which was established in response to a series of attacks on oil tankers, a US military official said yesterday. "Qatar and Kuwait have already told us they are going to join, so it is just a matter of time," US Army Colonel John Conklin, chief of staff of the coalition, said. He said they were expected to provide personnel and patrol boats. The coalition, based out of Bahrain, is known as the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC).

Qatar also said yesterday it would sharply boost its liquefied natural gas (LNG) production, already the world's largest, based on a rise in its proven reserves. Minister of State for Energy Affairs and CEO of state-owned Qatar Petroleum Saad Al-Kaabi said Qatar's LNG output of 77 million tons per year would increase to 126 million tons by 2027. Kaabi also announced that proven gas reserves in the North Field, which Qatar shares with Iran, had increased to 50 trillion cu m. Almost all of Qatar's gas reserves are located in the North Field, the world's largest gas field.

In addition, Kaabi said the field contains 70 billion barrels of condensates, or natural gas liquids, and massive quantities of LPG, ethane and helium. "These are very important findings which will have a great positive impact on Qatar's gas industry," Kaabi said in a statement. The new plans will raise Qatar's overall hydrocarbon production to about 6.7 million barrels oil equivalent per day from 4.6 million currently. Gas has helped fuel Qatar's rise to become one of the world's richest countries, transforming the peninsula state and helping it to successfully bid for the 2022 football World Cup finals. — Agencies

First public EV charging...

Continued from Page 1

one, which takes around an hour to charge; fast charger; ultrafast charger; and wireless, which is the

Protesters defiant after...

Continued from Page 1

damaging storefronts in their most serious assault on protesters so far. At least 10 demonstrators were wounded, civil defense said, without specifying the extent of their injuries. UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Jan Kubis, called for restraint. "I urge all Lebanese political forces to control their supporters, to avoid using the national protests for pursuing their political agenda," he said on Twitter.

The state-run National News Agency said authorities have launched an investigation into the incident. Parliament speaker Nabih Berri, who heads the Amal Movement, called on security forces to keep roads open to avoid "civil strife". Yesterday morning, scattered stones, shattered glass and the mangled remains of tents littered the ground in the main Beirut protest camp at Martyrs' Square. Around it car windows had been smashed with rocks.

But the demonstrators said they would not give up. "The attack gave us all - at least the ones here right now - a sense of determination," Ayyash said. Nearby, security forces deployed along the road after shoving aside demonstrators who had been sitting on the ground. Salim Mourad, a 31-year-old protester, showed AFP his torn collar, saying riot police dragged him by his shirt. "We don't want violence," he said.

Security forces also deployed across main arteries in north and east Lebanon yesterday, removing barricades that had been raised by demonstrators. The army said it arrested nine people north of Beirut at dawn after they tried to block roads using burning petrol and shattered

latest," Twayel explained.

"We started with this kind of charger and we hope it will spread in Kuwait in the future. We at the society aim to be leaders in providing modern technology - to be a model for other institutions. Launching this station is an initiative of the society without any support from other institutions. We also have other power projects such as turning five mosques into smart mosques, solar energy projects and many others," conclude Twayel.

glass. It also arrested four other "rioters", releasing three shortly afterwards.

The security forces have come under fresh criticism following Sunday's attack, with protesters accusing them of being lax with Hezbollah and Amal supporters, most of whom were allowed to walk away. "The thugs throw stones and insult security forces but they don't confront them," said Elie, 24, who was among the protesters attacked. "They don't arrest them the way they arrest us." Such criticism prompted Interior Minister Raya Al-Hasan to respond by saying the army and police remain the only "guarantors of the country's stability".

Political leaders have failed to select a new government nearly one month since Prime Minister Saad Hario's cabinet resigned, bowing to popular pressure. President Michel Aoun, whose powers include initiating parliamentary consultations to appoint a new premier, said he was open to a government that would include technocrats and representatives of the popular movement - both key demands of the protesters.

But demonstrators say they reject any government that would also include representatives of established political parties. The United States, France, the World Bank, and credit rating agencies have all urged officials to accelerate cabinet formation, warning of a deteriorating economic and political crisis. In the latest diplomatic push, senior British foreign office official Richard Moore was in Lebanon yesterday.

He would "underline the urgent need to form a government" during meetings with the president, prime minister, foreign minister, the speaker and the army chief, the British embassy said in a statement. "The people of Lebanon have been clear in their demand for improved governance, and they should be heard," Moore, the director general for political affairs, was quoted as saying. — AFP

LVMH puts ring on Tiffany in...

Continued from Page 1

Tiffany, founded in 1837 and headquartered on glamorous Fifth Avenue in New York, has long symbolised tony American sophistication, most memorably in the 1961 film "Breakfast at Tiffany's" starring Audrey Hepburn, based on the Truman Capote novella. The companies said in a statement that LVMH will acquire Tiffany for \$135 a share in cash in a transaction with an equity value of approximately 14.7 billion euros or \$16.2 billion.

The deal adds Tiffany to LVMH's extensive stable of luxury brands that include Louis Vuitton, Dior and Moët & Chandon, and will strengthen its position in the United States. It also lets LVMH tap into a different type of luxury demand, from clients who view their purchase as more of an investment than an impulse buy. "These are clients who, unlike in fashion, are interested in permanence and buy a jewel to keep, but also to pass on," Arnault told AFP. "When you buy a beautiful dress, it's rare that after a few dozen years this dress will still seem contemporary," he said.

Tiffany had been lagging behind its rivals in terms of sales growth in recent years, and is expected to benefit from LVMH's extensive global network and promotional power. "Applying this marketing and communication machinery should go a long way in making Tiffany more relevant in design jewelry and watches," said Luca Solca, an analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein, according to Bloomberg News.

The addition of Tiffany to LVMH's jewelry holdings, which already include Bulgari, Chaumet, Tag Heuer and Hublot, vaults it past Swiss-based Richemont, which holds Cartier among other brands. Richemont led the pack with a 14.8 percent share of the luxury jewelry market in 2017, according to data from Euromonitor International. But with Tiffany at 10.8 percent and LVMH at 7.5 percent, combined they will now lead the segment.

LVMH began its public courting of Tiffany on Oct 15 with an offer of \$120 per share. Last week it raised its bid to around \$130, which convinced Tiffany to open its books to LVMH, which then offered \$135 to clinch the deal. The company said further financial details would be released ahead of a conference call with analysts. Tiffany's shares closed trading on Friday at \$125.51. They were trading around \$90 per share at the beginning of October, before LVMH first began to make overtures to Tiffany's management.

LVMH shares were up 1.1 percent in afternoon trading at €400.75, and have climbed since the group first announced a bid for Tiffany, reaching a record high of €407.85 earlier this month. "Some companies in the retail sector have complained about softer demand, but luxury brands tend to hold up well when economies cool as the mega rich usually fare better in a cooler economic climate," said David Madden at CMC Markets UK.

The boards of directors of both companies have approved the acquisition, with Tiffany's board recommending that shareholders approve the transaction. The deal is expected to close in the middle of 2020 following approval by Tiffany's shareholders and regulators. LVMH is the world's largest luxury group, posting record sales of €46.8 billion in 2018, for a net profit of €7 billion. — AFP

Sports

Wagner runs through tail as NZ thrash England in first Test

Victory was New Zealand's 11th in 104 Tests against England

WELLINGTON: New Zealand wrapped up an impressive innings and 65-run victory over England on the final day of the first Test at Bay Oval yesterday with Neil Wagner completing his eighth five-wicket haul as he ran through the tourists' tail.

The tourists were dismissed for 197 with about 90 minutes of play remaining in the match in Mt. Maunganui after Wagner broke a stubborn 59-run ninth-wicket partnership between Jofra Archer and

Sam Curran. The left-armed had taken three wickets in 17 balls for one run as England collapsed from 132-5 to 138-8 before tea.

He had Archer caught in the deep and then trapped Stuart Broad in front on the next delivery to end England's resistance and finish with figures of 5-44 from 19.2 overs. "It feels great to win a Test match," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said at the post-match presentation. "England are an outstanding side and it took a tremendous amount of hard work to get past their total."

The victory was New Zealand's 11th in 104 Tests against England. It was also their second largest after beating them by an innings and 132 runs in 1984. New Zealand now have three wins in their last four Tests against England, with one draw, and their second in succession by an innings after winning the day-night test in Auckland by an innings and 49 runs in 2018.

Wicketkeeper BJ Watling was named man of the match after his maiden double century of 205 and hefty partnerships with Henry Nicholls, Colin de Grandhomme and Mitchell Santner helped the hosts to a first innings of 615-9 declared. "It felt really good," Watling said. "The key was to get partnerships, and the boys stuck in there at the end."

"We tried to build as much of a lead as possible and hoped the wicket would do funny things on day five." After Santner had taken three quick England wickets late on Sunday, the tourists resumed on 55-3 and faced an uphill battle to bat the entire fifth day to stop New Zealand from taking a 1-0 lead into the second match of the two-Test series on Friday in Hamilton.

And while they showed signs they might be able to see the day out, tentative shot- and poor decision-making led to their downfall.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Captain Joe Root, Joe Denly, Ben Stokes and Ollie Pope were all dismissed playing at balls they did not need to, while Archer fell into a trap set by Wagner. Stokes's dismissal was particularly important with the



MOUNT MAUNGANUI: New Zealand's Neil Wagner (R) celebrates with team mates after bowling England's Jos Buttler during the fifth day of the first cricket test between England and New Zealand at Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui yesterday. —AFP

aggressive all-rounder looking settled before he played on, letting out a loud yell of exasperation after chasing a wide, shortish ball from Tim Southee.

His dismissal at 121-5 sparked a collapse, with Wagner then ripping through the lower order. Archer and Curran kept the hosts at bay for more than an hour either side of tea and were starting to look comfortable before Wagner struck again to wrap up the match.

Root said failing to kick on from a decent platform in the first innings had cost England. "We missed an opportunity if we're brutally honest with ourselves," said Root of England's collapse from 277-4 to 295-8 in their first innings before they were dismissed for 353.

"Could have done with a score over 450, and using that scoreboard pressure as another fielder. "We did a lot of good stuff, we just need to do it for longer." —Reuters

SCOREBOARD

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: Scoreboard on day five of the first Test between New Zealand and England at Mount Maunganui yesterday:

England 1st innings 353 (B. Stokes 91, J. Denly 74, R. Burns 52; Southee 4-88, Wagner 3-90)

New Zealand 1st innings 615-9 dec (B. Watling 205, M. Santner 126, C. de Grandhomme 65, K. Williamson 51; Curran 3-119)

England 2nd innings

R. Burns c de Grandhomme b Santner	31
D. Sibley c Watling b Santner	12
J. Denly c Watling b Wagner	35
J. Leach c Latham b Santner	0
J. Root c Latham b de Grandhomme	11
B. Stokes b Southee	28
O. Pope c Santner b Wagner	6
J. Butler b Wagner	0
S. Curran not out	29
J. Archer c sub (Henry) b Wagner	30
S. Broad lbw Wagner	0
Extras (b12, lb1, w1, nb1)	15
Total (all out, 96.2 overs)	197

Fall of wickets: 1-48 (Sibley), 2-53 (Burns), 3-55 (Leach), 4-69 (Root), 5-121 (Stokes), 6-132 (Denly), 7-133 (Pope), 8-138 (Butler), 9-197 (Archer), 10-197 (Broad)

Bowling: Southee 20-4-60-1, Boult 6-4-6-0, de Grandhomme 10-3-15-1 (1w), Santner 40-19-53-3 (1nb), Wagner 19.2-6-44-5, Williamson 1-0-6-0.

Result: New Zealand won by an innings and 65 runs

India fast bowlers in the pink after debut day-night Test

KOLKATA: India's fast bowlers are enjoying a rare moment in the sun after they combined to dismantle Bangladesh in the maiden day-night Test on Indian soil. Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami took all 19 Bangladesh wickets to fall in Kolkata, a rarity on the sub-continent's pitches where spinners usually rule. It surpassed the record 17 wickets taken by pacemen in a home Test in 2017 against Sri Lanka, also at Kolkata's Eden Gardens. In the first pink-ball Test for both sides, India beat Bangladesh by an innings and 46 runs in just over two days to sweep the two-match series.

"It was always on the cards that India's pacers would call the shots, but Bangladesh have to be disappointed at the lack of application and fight shown by their batsmen," former India batsman VVS Laxman wrote in The Times of India yesterday.

Skipper Virat Kohli has been all praise for his pacemen and said workload management was the key to keeping them in top shape. "They gained more experience, now they're bowling well together," Kohli told reporters after India sealed the one-sided win on Sunday.

"They take ownership of their own preparation, their own fitness and communication is very clear... We want you fresh for Test cricket, don't worry about anything else. "And they feel secure as well that if they don't play, we have back-up bowlers to come and do the job as well. So that bench strength is also helping us a lot."



KOLKATA: (From left) Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami celebrate after dismantling Bangladesh in the maiden day-night Test in Kolkata. —AFP

The three quicks have been on a roll despite the absence of yorker specialist Jasprit Bumrah, who is recovering from a stress fracture of the back. Shami and Yadav took 24 wickets between them in India's 3-0 Test whitewash of South Africa last month.

Spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja bowled a total of just seven overs against

Bangladesh, who fell for 106 and 195. "Doesn't happen often in India when the spinners hardly roll their arm over in the test match," Indian fast bowler Irfan Pathan wrote on Twitter.

However, the real test for the Indian quicks will come in January and February, when India will play two Tests in seamer-friendly New Zealand. —AFP

Archer hit with racial abuse in N Zealand Test

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: New Zealand Cricket bosses said yesterday they will personally apologise to England fast bowler Jofra Archer after he was racially abused during the first Test in Mount Maunganui.

The Barbados-born Archer, considered one of the most promising all-rounders in world cricket, tweeted he was disturbed to hear racial insults "whilst battling to help save my team". The 24-year-old featured in a late show of resistance with Sam Curran in a 59-run stand for the ninth wicket before New Zealand wrapped up the match for an innings and 65 runs victory.

"A bit disturbing hearing racial insults today whilst battling to help save my team, the crowd was been amazing this week except for that one guy," Archer tweeted. New Zealand Cricket's (NZC) public affairs manager Richard Boock said there is "zero tolerance towards abusive or offensive language" at all cricket venues in New Zealand.

NZC "will contact Mr. Archer tomorrow to apologise for the unacceptable experience, and to promise increased vigilance in the matter when the teams next meet in Hamilton", Boock said. He said they will also examine CCTV footage in an attempt to identify the person responsible and will refer any relevant information to the police. The second Test between New Zealand and England starts in Hamilton on Friday. —AFP

Kim Sei-young captures LPGA Tour Championship

NAOLES: South Korea's Kim Sei-young rolled in a long birdie putt at the 72nd hole on Sunday to win the LPGA Tour Championship and claim a record \$1.5 million winner's prize. Kim, leader after each of the first three rounds, struggled to build momentum at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida.

But she came through when it mattered, edging England's Charley Hull by one stroke. She was one-under for the day through 17 and Hull had joined her atop the leaderboard at 17-under par with a bogey-free six-under 66 that included birdies at 16, 17 and 18.

A playoff looked more than possible, but Kim didn't blink, rolling in her fifth birdie of the day at the final hole to seal the win with a two-under par 70 for an 18-under par total of 270. Kim said she had "no idea" that she was putting for the win at 18.

"Last putt I was just trying make two-putt because I didn't see the leaderboard," Kim said. "I just tried to make

the right distance; made it. It's unbelievable," she said. "I was, like, so emotional, almost crying."

Hull, who started the day five off the pace, said she knew after birdies at the second, 12 and 13 that she had a shot at the largest winner's cheque ever in women's golf. "Kind of 15 I looked at the leaderboard and I thought I've got a chance," she said. "I didn't birdie 15, but I birdied 16, 17, 18 — I gave it my best shot."

Kim acknowledged that she was feeling the nerves — even though she was feeling the pressure not from Hull but from playing partner Nelly Korda. "I didn't know Charley finished at 17 (under)," Kim said. "What if I couldn't make it? I could go to a playoff. It's not good for me."

Telling herself it was "no big deal", Kim said she "just tried to play like a practice round". Even more than the prize money, Kim said, she was delighted to achieve her pre-season goal of adding a third title of the year to a resume that now includes 10 victories. "That's the most satisfying," she said. In the end her well-struck putt broke late and dived into the hole.

KO CAPTURES MONEY TITLE

American Danielle Kang delivered a storming seven-under final round, highlighted by an eagle at 17, to share third



NAPLES: Sei Young Kim of South Korea poses with the CME Globe trophy after winning the CME Group Tour Championship at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida. —AFP

place on 272 with Korda, who started the day two back and carded a one-under 71.

World number one Ko Jin-young finished tied for 11th, but still added to her haul of season-ending hardware. The LPGA Player of the Year, whose four titles included two majors, also snagged the money title and the Vare Trophy for the lowest scoring average.

"I am honored to win amazing awards," said Ko, who came into the week nursing an ankle injury. "I tried to do my best today, but putting was not good," she said, admitting it made for mixed feelings as the season ended.

"It's good, but my play was not good. So I will work harder," Ko said, adding it was "not the end" but "the beginning". —AFP

Paine says, Australia can get better after Pakistan romp

BRISBANE: Australia captain Tim Paine says his team have room to improve after crushing Pakistan in their opening Test, hailing the quality of his batsmen and bowlers. The home side comfortably won the first of their two Tests by an innings and five runs inside four days at the Gabba on Sunday, set up by dismissing Pakistan for 240 in the first innings then smacking 580 in reply.

They now head to Adelaide for a day-night Test starting Friday, with Australia having ominously won all five pink-ball matches they have played. Australia's top order struggled during the recent Ashes series, but they clicked in Brisbane, raising hopes a corner has been turned.

David Warner hit 154, opening partner Joe Burns 97 and number three Marnus Labuschagne 185. The only real failure was Steve Smith (four), who was their saviour in England. Asked if Australia had finally found its long-term top three, Paine replied: "The early signs would suggest yes."

"One innings doesn't make a summer but we are really happy with the positive signs that we saw," Labuschagne, in particular, was a revelation, building on promising form during the Ashes to hit his maiden Test century and, according to Paine, "finally arrive on the big stage". —AFP

Sports

Paul Millsap, Nuggets dispatch Suns for fifth straight win

Dinwiddie leads Nets past Knicks for third straight win

DENVER: Paul Millsap scored 23 points and hit all nine of his free throws, Will Barton and Jamal Murray added 22 points each, and the host Denver Nuggets beat the Phoenix Suns 116-104 on Sunday night. Mason Plumlee had 14 points, Monte Morris finished with 10 and Nikola Jokic had eight points and 13 rebounds for the Nuggets, who have won five straight. Cheick Diallo scored a career-high 22 points on 10-of-12 shooting, Dario Saric had 18 points and a career-high 17 rebounds, and Elie Okobo had a season-high 16 points. Phoenix guard Devin Booker was held to a season-low 12 points a night after scoring 35 in a win at Minnesota on Saturday. The Suns played without guard Ricky Rubio (back spasms) and center Aron Baynes (right hip flexor strain) for the third straight game. Rubio has missed four of the last five games, and Baynes has sat for four straight.

MAVERICKS 137, ROCKETS 123

Luka Doncic and Kristaps Porzingis posted double-doubles while Tim Hardaway Jr. provided complementary scoring as Dallas stretched its winning streak to five games with a victory over host Houston. Doncic finished with 41 points and 10 assists, while Porzingis added 23 points and 13 rebounds. Hardaway scored 31 points on 10-of-18 shooting, including 5 of 11 on 3-pointers, to power the Mavericks. The Rockets dropped their third consecutive game following their eight-game winning streak. The Rockets trailed wire-to-wire, never even forging a tie, though they did come close, getting within five late.

NETS 103, KNICKS 101

Spencer Dinwiddie scored a game-high 30 points for visiting Brooklyn, which withstood a furious fourth quarter rally by New York to escape with a victory.

Jarrett Allen finished with 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Taurean Prince added 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Nets, who have won three in a row — all without the injured Kyrie Irving and Caris LeVert — to get back to .500 at 8-8. Joe Harris added 13 points, and Garrett Temple finished with 12 points. Marcus Morris Sr. scored 26 points for the Knicks, who have lost three in a row and four of five to fall into last place in the Eastern Conference at 4-13. Julius Randle scored 15 points, followed by Wayne Ellington (12) and Dennis Smith Jr. (10).

KINGS 113, WIZARDS 106

Bogdan Bogdanovic stalled a Washington rally with a 3-pointer with 1:28 remaining, allowing visiting Sacramento to hang on for the victory. Harrison Barnes led all scorers with 26 points, including two free throws with 1:56 left that set the stage for Bogdanovic's back-breaking hoop. Bogdanovic added three free throws in the final 62 seconds, sending Sacramento to the seventh win in its last 10 games since an 0-5 start. Bradley Beal had 20 points and a game-high eight assists to pace the Wizards.

CLIPPERS 134, PELICANS 109

Montrezl Harrell scored 24 of his 34 points in the second half, and host Los Angeles rolled over New Orleans. Harrell, who also collected 12 rebounds, connected on 13 of 18 shots to tie a career high in scoring. Kawhi Leonard had 26 points, Lou Williams added 19 and Paul George finished with 18 points as the Clippers captured their fifth consecutive win. Brandon Ingram scored 24 points to lead the Pelicans. Jrue Holiday had 18 points, while E'Twaun Moore contributed 17 points. Former Clipper JJ Redick scored 12. —Reuters



DENVER: Devin Booker #1 of the Phoenix Suns handles the ball against the Denver Nuggets at the Pepsi Center in Denver, Colorado. —AFP

Sabres knock off Panthers

FLORIDA: Jack Eichel had a goal and two assists, and Zemus Girgensons scored twice, leading the Buffalo Sabres to a 5-2 win over the Florida Panthers on Sunday in Sunrise, Fla. Eichel is on pace for a career season, leading Buffalo in goals (14), and he is tied for the lead in assists with Rasmus Dahlin, who had his 15th assist Sunday. Jeff Skinner and Victor Olofsson also scored for the Sabres, who halted a three-game losing streak. Linus Ullmark made 43 saves to even his season record at 5-5-1. The Panthers got goals from Brett Connolly and Noel Acciari. Connolly has five goals in his past five games and a team-high 11 for the season.

HURRICANES 2, RED WINGS 0

Sebastian Aho scored midway through the second period, and Teuvo Teravainen added an empty-net goal to give Carolina the win over host Detroit. Both players assisted on the others' goal, and James Reimer had 19 saves for the shutout. It was Carolina's sixth win in its last seven games, as the Hurricanes continued their ascent up the Metropolitan Division standings. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Detroit has lost six games in a row and firmly sits in last place in the Atlantic. Detroit also has the fewest points (17) in the entire NHL. Goalie Jimmy Howard made 34 saves.

OILERS 4, COYOTES 3 (SO)

Connor McDavid scored the lone shootout goal and visiting Edmonton rode a third-period comeback to a shootout win over Arizona to earn a second victory in as many nights. Oilers goaltender Mikko Koskinen made 27 saves through overtime and denied all three players he faced in the shootout. McDavid also collected an assist to increase his point-scoring streak to 11 games, during which he has collected 12 goals and 24 points. Edmonton has won three of four games and holds the top spot in the Pacific Division. —Reuters

Bahrain beat Qatar in Gulf Basketball Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa'

KUWAIT: Bahrain Basketball team beat its Qatari counterpart 69-62 during their match within the 16th Gulf championship being held in Kuwait. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia beat UAE's 81-67. With this win, Bahrain tops the list with 4 points, followed by Saudi Arabia 3 points, Kuwait and UAE with 2 points each and finally Qatar with one point.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's team will play against UAE, while Qatar play with Saudi Arabia.

The tournament follows the league system of one meeting for all teams, then the team that ends in first place will meet the one in fourth, and the second place team will meet the third place team in the semi-final, then the winners will play the final match.

In the first match, Bahrain had a 17-0 run against Qatar through fast breaks and mistakes committed by the Qatari players as the

quarter ended with the score of 22-6 for Bahrain. Qatar closed the gap in the second quarter, then Bahrain returned to its form and ended the third quarter 51-42, and ended the match in the fourth quarter winning 69-62.

The second match between Saudi Arabia and UAE saw the Saudi's beating UAE 81-67, as the first quarter saw UAE going 16-4, but the Saudi coach was able with alternating players ending the first quarter 22-21. Then the Saudi team had control of the match through strong defense and ended the quarter for Saudi Arabia 46-32. The Saudi team continued its control ending the match 81-67.

Head of the Saudi delegation Mustafa Al-Qabaly lauded the performance of his players, as they put the loss in front of Kuwait behind them. He said his team seeks to compete for the title, adding that the teams are close in their levels.

Qatar's head of Basketball Federation Ahmad Al-Muftah lauded the organization, adding that we are happy to be in Kuwait and wish the event all success, as Kuwait returns after years of absence due to the suspension.

He said Qatar lost in front Bahrain due to bad performance in the first quarter, meanwhile the Bahraini team was highly organized. He said "we hope to get over the loss and come back in front of Saudi Arabia to make up for the loss, as we are here to compete for the title.



African players in Europe: Zaha ends 1,245-minute goal drought

PARIS: Sadio Mane and Riyad Mahrez scored in the English Premier League at the weekend, but the most significant goal from an African star was struck by Wilfried Zaha. His goal could not prevent mid-table Crystal Palace losing 2-1 at home to leaders Liverpool, but it ended a morale-sapping 1,245-minute goal drought for the Ivorian winger. Zaha, one of 30 nominees named Sunday for the 2019 African Player of the Year award, wasted a late chance to snatch a second equaliser when he blazed over from close range.

ENGLAND

WILFRIED ZAHA (Crystal Palace)

Ivory Coast international Zaha, 27, scored his first goal of the season for Crystal Palace in their defeat against

leaders Liverpool, ending a period of 1,245 minutes on the pitch without finding the net.

SADIO MANE (Liverpool)

Senegal forward Mane, 27, put Liverpool ahead shortly after half-time at Palace. Mane's shot, which hit both posts before spinning over the line, was his 12th of the season.

RIYAD MAHREZ (Manchester City)

Algerian international Mahrez, 28, turned the game against Chelsea on its head with a jinking run and finish into the far corner, a goal that turned out to be the winner in a 2-1 victory. It was his third Premier League goal of the season in his first league appearance since early October.

SPAIN

YOUSSEF EN-NESYRI (Leganes)

En-Nesyri scored a stunning early goal but it was not enough to prevent Leganes losing at home to Barcelona. The Moroccan forward cut inside from the right and unleashed a shot into the top left-hand corner at Butarque, only for Luis Suarez and Arturo Vidal to give Barca a 2-1 victory. En-Nesyri now has three goals

in as many games for Leganes, who remain rooted to the bottom of La Liga.

ITALY

MUSA BARROW (Atalanta)

Barrow got his first start for Atalanta but missed an early penalty in a 2-1 loss to champions Juventus. The 21-year-old Gambian rattled the crossbar after 17 minutes following a spot-kick awarded for a Sami Khedira handball. Barrow redeemed himself with the cross that allowed Robin Gosens to nod in a goal for the home side before being substituted.

FRANCK KESSIE (AC Milan)

Ivorian international Kessie came on for struggling AC Milan as a second-half substitute in a 1-1 draw against Napoli, having being overlooked by new coach Stefano Pioli for the past two league games. Despite a solid performance, the 22-year-old midfielder came under fire from Milan fans on social media after being photographed sitting in the locker room in the San Siro alongside two teammates before the game looking at their mobile phones.

KALIDOU KOULIBALY (Napoli)

Senegal defender Koulibaly proved sol-

id for Napoli to ensure the southerners left AC Milan with a point. Koulibaly blocked a late goal-bound effort from Polish striker Krzysztof Piatek to keep Napoli seventh, five points off the Champions League places.

GERMANY

ANTHONY UJAH (Union Berlin)

Nigerian Ujah scored his second goal of the season as Union Berlin stunned league leaders Borussia Moenchengladbach with a 2-0 win. Ujah headed home in the 15th minute from a trademark Berlin counter attack and remained a constant threat for the home side before being subbed off to rapturous applause in the 78th minute.

STRELI MAMBA (Paderborn)

Former fifth-division player Mamba continued his blistering recent form, scoring twice for Paderborn as the league's bottom side shocked Borussia Dortmund with a 3-3 draw at Signal Iduna Park. The brace brought Mamba's goal tally to four for the season for the late bloomer, who is eligible to play for both Germany and the Democratic Republic of Congo but has not yet made a decision on his availability.

FRANCE

ISLAM SLIMANI (Monaco)

Slimani was at the centre of the action at both ends as he had a dramatic and ultimately unhappy afternoon as Monaco lost 2-1 at Bordeaux. The Algerian gave his side a 15th minute lead when he ran on to Wissam Ben Yedder's flicked header and smashed a left-foot shot into the net. But the game turned when Slimani, defending in the wall, leapt to block a free kick with his arm raised. The ball struck his elbow and the referee awarded Bordeaux a penalty and sent Slimani off. Coach Leonardo Jardim was unhappy that Slimani argued with the referee. "He scored a goal but honestly I expect more from him, the behaviour is also important and it wasn't a great day for him."

ADAMA TRAORE (Metz)

Malian midfielder Adama 'Noss' Traore saved a precious point for Metz against Reims with his first league goal of the season. The on-loan Monaco player arrived late in the penalty area to pounce on a loose ball and smash a left-foot equaliser just under the bar in the 47th minute. The game ended 1-1 and Metz remain in the bottom three, one point from safety. —AFP

Sports

Tottenham banking on Mourinho recovering golden touch in Europe

Mourinho's deal contains £2 million bonus for making the top four

LONDON: Tottenham turned to Jose Mourinho to try and maintain their status as a Champions League club, but a terrible start to the Premier League season leaves the Portuguese with a mountain to climb either domestically or in Europe. Mourinho's appointment was not a universally popular one with the Spurs' support given his past as a two-time Chelsea manager. He managed to make the right first impression by securing Tottenham's first away win in the Premier League since January with a 3-2 victory at West Ham on Saturday that was far more comprehensive than the scoreline suggested.

A vital three points cut the gap between Mourinho's men and the top four to nine points, but strong starts from Liverpool, Leicester, Manchester City and Chelsea mean one of them will have to falter significantly in the coming months to open the door to Spurs. The fact that Mourinho's deal signed last week reportedly contains a £2 million bonus for making the top four is an illustration of how tough a task it will be.

Could winning the Champions League for the first time in the club's history actually be Spurs' best way to secure the riches and prestige of Europe's premier club competition for a fifth consecutive season?

Under Mauricio Pochettino, who was sacked after five-and-a-half years in charge last week, Tottenham improved each year in Europe and last season fell just one hurdle short after a dramatic run to Champions League final.

Despite their dreadful domestic form and a 7-2 thrashing at home to Bayern Munich last month, Pochettino left with his side well-placed to reach the last 16 once more.

Victory over Olympiakos in Mourinho's home debut on Tuesday will secure their passage into the knockout stages. "I think we can go and win that match at home and qualify in the Champions League," said Mourinho, who has a proud record of always qualifying from the Champions League

group stages in spells as Porto, Chelsea, Inter Milan, Real Madrid and Manchester United. A rejuvenated Spurs could certainly cause problems for some of Europe's more fancied sides come the new year as they showed in shocking City and Ajax on their way to last season's final.

Mourinho labelled himself "humble" on his return to management after 11 months out of the game last week, but was quick to point out in his first media briefing that, unlike Tottenham, he had never lost a Champions League final. He has lifted the trophy twice, with Porto and Inter, but the second of those successes came 10 seasons ago and there are questions over whether he is still the man to deliver Champions League glory.

The 56-year-old has failed to win a single knockout tie in the Champions League over the past five years. The nadir of that run came when the negative approach that has often characterised Mourinho's sides came undone for Manchester United against Sevilla in the last 16 of the 2017/18 season.

That style contrasts sharply with the thrilling comebacks away from home that carried Spurs to the final in June as they scored three times in Manchester and Amsterdam. "Before teams just defended and used the counter-attack, now most of the teams have the courage to play," said City manager Pep Guardiola, after seeing a fearless Chelsea under Frank Lampard go to the Etihad and have secure more possession than the English champions on Saturday. "Young managers, they have nothing to lose, go forward and that's why the football is nice."

Attack has tended to beat defence in the latter stages in recent years with attack-minded Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, Barcelona and Liverpool the only sides to lift the Champions League in the past seven seasons. Spurs could not have chosen a more different approach. Now they have to see if Mourinho is still capable of Champions League miracles. — AFP



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Portuguese head coach Jose Mourinho (2nd R) and Tottenham Hotspur's assistant coach Ricardo Formosinho (R) chat as they take a team training session at Tottenham Hotspur's Enfield Training Centre, in north London yesterday, ahead of their UEFA Champions League Group B football match against Olympiakos. — AFP

No end in sight to Napoli turmoil as Liverpool clash looms

MILAN: Napoli face a key Champions League match away to Liverpool tomorrow and there is no end in sight to the turmoil at the club where the directors still appear to be at loggerheads with coach Carlo Ancelotti and his players.

The Gazzetta dello Sport said on Monday that club president Aurelio De Laurentiis was set to fine his players one quarter of their monthly wages after they

broke off a week-long training retreat this month, described by Italian media as a mutiny.

The newspaper added that midfielder Allan, a lynchpin of the side over the past five seasons, would be fined half his salary while the players were also consulting their lawyers. The problem blew up after Di Laurentiis ordered widely-disliked "ritiro" — a training camp where the squad are confined to a hotel — following a 2-1 loss to AS Roma on Nov. 2.

The players refused to return to the camp following a Champions League match against Salzburg four days later, prompting the club to announce legal action against them. A media silence imposed by the club is now entering its third week and Ancelotti and his players again refused to talk to reporters following their 1-1 Serie A draw at AC Milan on Saturday which extended their winless run to six games in all competitions.

Under UEFA rules, Ancelotti is obliged to give a news conference in Liverpool the day before Wednesday's match but there was no indication on

Monday that the club were prepared to lift the embargo. Napoli's website has given only minimal details on training sessions and ticketing information for supporters but no quotes from the squad, meaning the only news has come from leaks to the media. The muted celebrations which followed Hirving Lozano's goal against Milan on Saturday, added to a generally lacklustre display, suggested that morale is still at a low. Only a couple of players went over to congratulate the Mexican and the rest went straight back to the centre circle.

Former Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri was spotted in the stands at San Siro on Saturday, leading to the inevitable speculation that he is being lined up for the Napoli job should they lose to Liverpool.

Amid the chaos, Napoli, who began the season with the stated aim of ending Juventus' run of eight successive Serie A titles, have now dropped to seventh and, if the slump continues, will finish outside the top five for the first time since 2010. — Reuters

Banega penalty sends Sevilla third in La Liga

MADRID: Ever Banega's first-half penalty proved enough to seal Sevilla a 1-0 win at Real Valladolid on Sunday as Julen Lopetegui's men jumped to third in the Liga table. Sevilla are unbeaten in six league matches since a 4-0 thrashing at Barcelona last month and trail the reigning champions and Real Madrid by only one point, although they have played a game more.

A tight encounter was settled by the only goal in the 13th minute, as Javi Moyano brought down former Manchester City winger Nolito and Argentinian international Banega dispatched the resulting spot-kick.

Lucas Ocampos of Sevilla was sent off late on after receiving a second yellow card for time wasting, but the visitors held on to continue their excellent start to the season under former Spain and Real Madrid coach Lopetegui.

Barcelona lead the table on goal difference ahead of Real Madrid after beating Leganes on Saturday. Earlier on Sunday, substitute Kenan Kodro scored a late winner as Athletic Bilbao claimed a 2-1 victory at Osasuna to move fifth.

The Basque side have taken 10 points from their last four league games and sit only two points behind fourth-placed Atletico Madrid.

Inaki Williams put the visitors ahead in the 21st minute with his third goal of the season, but Argentinian Ezequiel Avila levelled for Osasuna with 14 minutes to play.

Inly three minutes later, Bosnian Kodro sealed all three points for Bilbao on only his second appearance this term. Chinese forward Wu Lei scored his first league goal of the campaign to help Espanyol secure a 1-1 draw against Getafe.

The 28-year-old was prolific in China for Shanghai SIPG, but has struggled since moving to Spain in January. Former Newcastle United striker Joselu scored twice late on as Alaves won 2-0 at Eibar to take his Liga tally to six goals since leaving St James' Park in the close season. Iago Aspas netted a double to help struggling Celta Vigo to a 3-1 victory at Villarreal. — AFP

Salah among 30 nominees for top African award

JOHANNESBURG: Trophy-holder Mohamed Salah is among 30 nominees named Sunday for the 2019 African Player of the Year award. He is one of 10 English Premier League stars to make the list, which includes his Liverpool teammates Sadio Mane and Naby Keita.

There are two each from Arsenal (Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Nicolas Pepe) and Crystal Palace (Jordan Ayew and Wilfried Zaha). Riyad Mahrez (Manchester City), Wilfred Ndidi (Leicester City) and Mahmoud "Trezeguet" Hassan (Aston Villa) complete the contenders from the Premier League.

A further 12 nominees come from other European leagues — France (three), Belgium, Italy, Netherlands (two each) and Germany, Portugal and Spain (one each). Of the other eight contenders for an award introduced in 1970, five play for Asian clubs and three are based in Africa.

Egyptian Salah is seeking a Player of the Year hat-trick, but may be pipped for first place this time by Senegalese Mane, who is having an outstanding season with Liverpool. Mane also helped Senegal reach the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations final, which they lost 1-0 to Algeria in Cairo.

Other former African Player of the Year winners in contention are Mahrez, who captained Algeria to



LONDON: File photo shows Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (C) takes his place on the bench for the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Liverpool at Selhurst Park in south London on November 23, 2019. — AFP

their first Cup of Nations title since 1990, and Aubameyang.

Madagascar, who took African by storm when reaching the Cup of Nations quarter-finals last July, are among five challengers for the national team award. A surprise nominee for Club Player of the Year is winger Meschak Elia from the Democratic

Republic of Congo club Tout Puissant Mazembe.

He recently received a worldwide one-year ban for falsifying his age while seeking a transfer to Swiss club Young Boys. The winners of the various men's and women's awards will be announced at a ceremony in the Egyptian resort of Hurghada on January 7. — AFP

Hoffenheim waste chance to go fourth after Mainz hammering

BERLIN: Hoffenheim missed out on an opportunity to move into the Bundesliga's top four on Sunday, suffering a heavy 5-1 home defeat by a Mainz side playing under newly appointed coach Achim Beierlorzer.

The hosts failed to win for the first time in five games as the visitors moved out of the relegation zone to 13th spot with only their third victory of the campaign. Beierlorzer, who was sacked by struggling Cologne nine days before taking over at the Opel Arena on November 18, started his reign successfully despite Ridle Baku's first-half red card as Cameroon midfielder Pierre Kunde Malong scored twice to open his account for the season. Levin Oeztunalı claimed the first goal of

proceedings on 33 minutes before his midfield partner Baku was dismissed seconds before the break for a studs-up challenge on the home side's Sebastian Rudy.

Mainz continued to attack in the second half, peppering the Hoffenheim box until an own goal from Pavel Kaderabek in the 52nd minute doubled their lead.

Kunde tapped in for his first of the season 10 minutes later before Andrej Kramaric claimed a consolation effort for the home side in the 83rd minute. Jean-Paul Boetius snuffed out any chance of a comeback in the 90th minute, however, scoring on the break to make it 4-1 and Kunde added his second two minutes later to complete the rout.

Mainz coach Beierlorzer praised sacked former boss Sandro Schwarz, dedicating the victory to him. "It was an amazing achievement," Beierlorzer said. "Sandro deserves a very, very large share of it. It's guaranteed that the team fought for him today and brought home the victory."

Earlier on Sunday, goalkeeper Rune Jarstein was sent off as Hertha Berlin continued to stutter, losing 4-0 at Augsburg. Hertha lost a fifth straight game and slid below Augsburg after Philipp Max, Sergio Cordova, Andre Hahn and Florian Niederlechner scored for the hosts. Hertha are just a point above the relegation zone.

Left-back Max opened the scoring for the Bavarians in the 18th minute with a free-kick but the turning point came 10 minutes later. Jarstein earned a red card with a studs-up challenge on Niederlechner. Cordova claimed the home side's second in the process.

Substitute Hahn added a third in the 52nd minute with a superb curling strike from the edge of the box. Niederlechner bagged his side's fourth in the 79th minute. "The disappointment is understandably big, we have to digest that first," said Hertha captain Niklas Stark. "There were so many things we did which you just can't do while playing away in the Bundesliga. "We simply have to do better." Earlier on Sunday, Borussia Dortmund's squad were booed and jeered when they appeared at the side's annual general meeting, with fans screaming "shame on you".

Coach Lucien Favre is under pressure as Dortmund, expected to challenge for the title after an ambitious close-season recruitment drive, languish in sixth after a draw to lowly Paderborn on Friday.

On Saturday, managerless Bayern Munich closed the gap at the top of the table to just a point with a 4-0 romp at Fortuna Duesseldorf as leaders Borussia Muenchengladbach suffered a shock 2-0 loss at Union Berlin. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE			
Lokomotiv Moscow v Bayer 04 Leverkusen	20:55		
beIN Sports			
Galatasaray SK v Club Brugge KV	20:55		
beIN Sports			
Real Madrid CF v Paris Saint-Germain	23:00		
beIN Sports HD 1			
Crvena Zvezda v Bayern Munich	23:00		
beIN Sports			
Juventus FC v Atletico de Madrid	23:00		
beIN Sports HD 3			
Atalanta v GNK Dinamo Zagreb	23:00		
beIN Sports			
Manchester City v Shakhtar Donetsk	23:00		
beIN Sports			
Tottenham Hotspur v Olympiacos CFP	23:00		
beIN Sports			

25 Kim Sei-young captures
LPGA Tour Championship



26 Paul Millsap, Nuggets dispatch
Suns for fifth straight win



27 Tottenham banking on Mourinho
recovering golden touch in Europe



Spain clinch sixth Davis Cup title

Unstoppable Nadal defeat Shapovalov to seal victory over Canada



MADRID: Spain's team members pose with the winner's trophy during the trophy ceremony after winning the Davis Cup Madrid Finals 2019 in Madrid. — AFP

MADRID: Rafael Nadal put the finishing touches to his extraordinary year by clinching a sixth Davis Cup title for Spain on Sunday as he beat Denis Shapovalov in Madrid to seal victory over Canada. Nadal's 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) win over Shapovalov in front of an adoring home crowd at the Caja Magica gave Spain an unassailable 2-0 lead after Roberto Bautista Agut earlier battled past Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6 (7/3), 6-3. "I'm incredibly happy to end the year like this," said Nadal afterwards.

The 33-year-old had been an unstoppable force in Spain's pulsating semi-final against Britain on Saturday and never looked like letting this chance slip, with King Felipe VI and Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos watching on, along with Barcelona defender Gerard Pique.

Pique's marketing company Kosmos have been at the heart of the raft of changes to this 119-year-old competition but Nadal's brilliance has been familiar, even if this will surely go down as one of the finest seasons of the 19-time

Grand Slam champion's sparkling career. He added a fourth Davis Cup final success — three more than Roger Federer — to the ones he claimed in 2004, 2009 and 2011, while capping a remarkable 12 months that has included winning the French and US Opens, and ending the year as world number one.

The Spanish team will also pocket a cheque worth \$2.1 million. Nadal won eight out of eight rubbers played this week and at times on Saturday, as when he stormed to singles and doubles victories against Britain, it was tempting to view Spain's progress as something of a solo effort.

But, unlike Canada, Spain have used all five of their squad, with Bautista Agut, Pablo Carreno Busta and Feliciano Lopez all playing at least one singles match, and Lopez and Marcel Granollers joining forces in the doubles. There has also been the undeniable advantage of the home crowd and although Spain's success has delivered a huge boost to the event in its inaugural year, some will argue it

might have been fairer to find a new venue in 2020, let alone consider keeping it in Madrid until 2021. Hosting and mixed attendances are among several issues for Pique and the International Tennis Federation to solve in the coming months but on the court, some gripping ties have ensured the new Davis Cup has got off to an encouraging start.

Bautista Agut's win over Auger-Aliassime was particularly poignant, given the world number nine was returning after withdrawing from the team on Thursday, following the death of his father Joaquin.

"I could not have played today without all the work of my team-mates this week," said Bautista Agut on court afterwards. "After such a complicated week, I had to get out there and face it. Everything was difficult today but I managed to overcome it and get the first point for Spain."

Shapovalov, meanwhile, had ousted Nadal at the Canada Masters when they first met in 2017 but he was no match here for the veteran's power and sheer force of will. A bliss-

tering forehand on the run set up the decisive break in the first set, which Nadal served out when Shapovalov hit long. The youngster had a break point early in the second but slapped his return into the net and Nadal held on, surviving a nine-minute game when a Shapovalov retrieval plopped out. Shapovalov opted for more variety with a brilliant touch volley and then a deft drop-shot making things increasingly uncomfortable for Nadal, who came under pressure when serving to stay in the set both at 5-4 and 6-5.

In the tie-break, Shapovalov led early but missed a short forehand for 4-2. Instead, Nadal won four of the next five to tee up two points for the title. He looked sure to convert the first, on serve, but Shapovalov ripped a forehand pass. Two big serves saw Shapovalov save the second and then create a set point of his own. But Nadal saved it for 7-7 and a return into the net gave him a third championship point. When a Shapovalov forehand hit the tape, Nadal fell on his back, his arms outstretched. — AFP

49ers rout Packers

SANTA CLARA: The San Francisco 49ers' defense held Aaron Rodgers to just 104 yards passing while sacking him five times en route to a 37-8 rout of the Green Bay Packers on Sunday night in Santa Clara, Calif. The 49ers solidified their spot atop the NFC pecking order with a 10-1 record, while sending the Packers back to Green Bay at 8-3. Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 253 yards and two touchdowns on just 20 attempts, completing 14. His 145.8 passer rating was about double that of his counterpart, Rodgers, who had too little time and too few open receivers. Rodgers finished 20 of 33 with a touchdown, posting the lowest yards-per-attempt (3.15) in any start in his career and his second-lowest yardage total in a start in which he wasn't injured.

PATRIOTS 13, COWBOYS 9

Tom Brady completed 17 of 37 passes for 190 yards and one touchdown, and New England held on to clip visiting Dallas on a cold, wet and windy afternoon in Foxborough, Mass. N'Keal Harry scored the lone touchdown for New England (10-1), which notched double-digit victories for the 17th straight season while beating the current NFC East leader, Julian Edelman led all receivers with eight catches for 93 yards, and Sony Michel led the ground attack with 20 carries for 85 yards. Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott struggled in the inclement weather, completing 19 of 33 passes for 212 yards and an interception.

SAINTS 34, PANTHERS 31

Wil Lutz kicked a 33-yard field goal as time expired to

give host New Orleans the win over struggling Carolina. Drew Brees passed for 311 yards and three touchdowns and drove the Saints (9-2) 65 yards in less than two minutes to set up Lutz's kick. New Orleans took over possession after kicker Joey Slye missed a 28-yard field-goal attempt with 1:56 to play for Carolina (5-6), which has lost four of five. Michael Thomas, the NFL's leading receiver, caught 10 of Brees' passes for 101 yards and a touchdown. He reached 100 pass receptions for the third consecutive season on a first-quarter catch. He later surpassed 1,200 receiving yards for the season, making him the fifth player in NFL history to reach that total and 100 catches in three consecutive seasons.

SEAHAWKS 17, EAGLES 9

Rashaad Penny rushed for a career-high 129 yards and a touchdown as Seattle defeated host Philadelphia on a windy afternoon. Seattle's defense, without All-Pro defensive end Jadeveon Clowney because of a hip injury, forced five turnovers — four by Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz (two interceptions, two fumbles). The Eagles (5-6) had four starters on offense sidelined by injury — running back Jordan Howard (shoulder), wide receivers Alshon Jeffery (ankle) and Nelson Agholor (knee) and All-Pro right tackle Lane Johnson (concussion).

BILLS 20, BRONCOS 3

Josh Allen passed for 185 yards and two touchdowns while adding 56 yards on the ground. Cole Beasley and John Brown had a touchdown catch each, and host Buffalo's defense took care of the rest against Denver. Frank Gore rushed for 65 yards to pass Hall of Fame running back Barry Sanders for third in career rushing yards with 15,289. He came into the game needing 46 yards to surpass Sanders. Devin Singletary added 106 yards on the ground to lead Buffalo.

BROWNS 41, DOLPHINS 24

Baker Mayfield threw a season-high three touchdown passes as host Cleveland scored the first 28 points of the game en route to a blowout over Miami, the Browns' third straight win. Mayfield threw all three of his touchdowns in the first half. He finished 24 of 34 for 327 yards with one interception. Browns wide receiver Jarvis Landry had a monster game for Cleveland, reeling in 10 catches for 148 yards and two touchdowns. The Browns (5-6) worked past a shaky third quarter to put away the Dolphins (2-9) and keep their playoff hopes alive.

STEELERS 16, BENGALS 10

Devlin Hodges replaced Mason Rudolph at quarterback in the second half and rallied Pittsburgh, keeping host Cincinnati winless on the season.

Hodges was 5 of 11 for 118 yards and hit James Washington on a 79-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter with his second throw of the game as the Steelers (6-5) extended their winning streak over the Bengals to 10, including playoffs, going back to 2015. Chris Boswell kicked a 47-yard field goal with 11:59 remaining to break a 10-10 tie and added a 26-yard kick with 3:18 remaining.

TITANS 28, JAGUARS 20

Tennessee exploded for 42 third-quarter points and kept its playoff hopes alive with a runaway victory over Jacksonville in Nashville, Tenn. Derrick Henry rushed for 159 yards and two touchdowns and quarterback Ryan Tannehill accounted for four touchdowns as Tennessee (6-5) moved into a second-place tie with Indianapolis in the AFC South, one game behind division-leading Houston. Jacksonville (4-7) is now firmly entrenched in last place. Tannehill hit Dennis

Kelly for a 1-yard touchdown pass with 13:13 left in the third quarter to give the Titans a 14-3 lead, then Henry scored on 74- and 7-yard touchdown runs just 16 seconds apart to give the Titans a 28-3 lead.

BUCCANEERS 35, FALCONS 22

James Winston shrugged off two first-quarter interceptions to throw for 313 yards and three touchdowns as Tampa Bay dumped host Atlanta. Chris Godwin enjoyed a monster game for Tampa Bay (4-7), catching seven passes for 184 yards and two scores. The Buccaneers' much-maligned defense, last in the league against the pass, applied the clinching blow when Ndamukong Suh recovered a fumble and rumbled 6 yards for a touchdown with 3:06 left in the game.

BEARS 19, GIANTS 14

In a battle of units that have been quite inept in recent weeks, Chicago's offense got rolling in the third quarter as the host Bears handed the Giants their seventh straight loss. It was just the second time this season the Bears managed 300 yards of total offense (335). Wide receiver Allen Robinson II hauled in six receptions for 131 yards and a touchdown. But it was Khalil Mack and a solid defensive effort that gave Chicago (5-6) its second win in the past three games and kept the New York offense stuck in "inept" mode.

REDSKINS 19, LIONS 16

Dustin Hopkins kicked four field goals, including a go-ahead 39-yarder with 16 seconds remaining, and Washington edged visiting Detroit to snap a four-game losing streak. The game-winning kick was set up by a Quinton Dunbar interception in the final minute. Steven Sims returned a kickoff 91 yards for Washington's lone touchdown. — Reuters