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Deputy FM: Kuwait guarantees rights of expatriate workers

Assembly panel debates law on domestic violence

Iraqi police fire on protesters



BAGHDAD: Protesters gather next to a burning building amidst clashes with Iraqi riot police during a demonstration against state corruption and poor services yesterday. — AFP

BAGHDAD: One person was killed and more than 200 others were wounded yesterday, Iraq's health ministry said, in a mass protest in Baghdad that security forces dispersed with a volley of gunfire and tear gas. More than 1,000 protesters had descended on the capital in the first major demonstration since Iraq's fragile government took office nearly a year ago. Among those wounded, 160 were civilians and another 40 were security forces, the health ministry said. According to medical and police sources, most of them needed treatment for tear gas inhalation and some were injured by rubber bullets. With Iraqi flags

draped over their shoulders or wrapped around their foreheads, the demonstrators had gathered in the iconic Tahrir Square, with a wide range of grievances but apparently without a unified leadership. "Those thieves robbed us!" they cried out in condemnation of the political class in Iraq, considered the 12th most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International. Others were on the streets to protest at the lack of public services, including rampant power cuts, water shortages and unemployment, particularly among youth.

Continued on Page 24

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said yesterday that Kuwait pays a great attention to guaranteeing the rights of expatriate workers in the country and providing suitable conditions for them. Jarallah told reporters that expat workers play an important role in the national economy and different forms of development.

He said Kuwait has laws and legislation and a vast legacy in dealing with expatriate labor, adding that Kuwait is always ready to modify those laws with the aim to provide more justice to expat workers and preserve their rights. Kuwait is home to some 3.3 million expatriates, including some 700,000 domestic helpers, against only 1.4 million Kuwaiti citizens. There have been parliamentary calls to sharply reduce the number of foreigners in the country and to impose wide-ranging charges and taxes on them, including a tax on their remittances to their home countries.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly's committee for family and women affairs yesterday debated a draft law to combat domestic violence against all sections of the society, especially women. Head of the panel MP Safa Al-Hashem, the only female member in the 50-seat Assembly, said the discussion focused on resolving overlapping between different ministries and government agencies in dealing with domestic violence.

She said the panel members are inclined to give all



Khaled Al-Jarallah

powers in dealing with victims of domestic violence to the higher council for the family, which includes a fund to spend on the victims. Hashem added that under existing legislation, victims of domestic violence come under the ministries of interior, social affairs and justice, in addition to other departments.

Rapporteur of the panel MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said the draft law was the combination of several proposals and aims at protecting all sections of the society from domestic violence and providing the necessary shelters. Dallal said the bill will be ready before the start of the new Assembly term on Oct 29.

450 Bangladeshis murdered in South Africa in 4 years

DHAKA: More than 400 Bangladeshis have been murdered in South Africa over the past four years because of business and personal disputes within the community, government officials said yesterday. A wave of deadly attacks on foreign workers in South

Africa in recent weeks has cast a spotlight on the country's record. The Bangladesh embassy in Pretoria said none of the South Asian country's nationals were involved in that violence.

Instead, the Bangladesh ambassador revealed most of the deaths were over business and money disputes, extra-marital affairs, and other personal arguments. The embassy said the bodies of 88 Bangladeshi migrants had already been repatriated this year, and 452 since Jan 2015. "Approximately 95 percent of those who died here were murdered, mostly shot dead in their shops," an embassy official said.

Continued on Page 24

Human emissions '100-times greater' than volcanoes

PARIS: Human activity churns out up to 100 times more planet-warming carbon each year as all the volcanoes on Earth, says a decade-long study released yesterday. The Deep Carbon Observatory (DCO), a 500-strong international team of scientists, released a series of papers outlining how carbon is stored, emitted and reabsorbed by natural and manmade processes. They found that manmade carbon dioxide emissions drastically outstrip the contribution of volcanoes - which belch out gas and are often fingered as a major climate change contributor - to current warming rates.

The findings, published in the journal Elements, showed just two-tenths of 1 percent of Earth's total carbon - around 43,500 gigatonnes - is above the surface in oceans, the land, and in our atmosphere. The rest - a staggering 1.85 billion gigatonnes - is stored in our planet's crust, mantle and core, providing scientists with clues as to how Earth formed billions of years ago. One gigatonne is equivalent to around 3 million Boeing 747s.

By measuring the prominence of certain carbon isotopes in rock samples around the world, the DCO were able to create a timeline stretching back 500 million years to map how carbon moved between land, sea and air. They found that in general the planet self-regulated atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, a key greenhouse gas, over geological timeframes of hundreds of thousands of years. The exceptions to this came in the form of "catastrophic disturbances" to Earth's carbon cycle, such as immense volcanic eruptions or the meteor strike that killed



KOKOPO, Papua New Guinea: This handout picture taken yesterday shows an ash cloud erupting from Mount Ulawun volcano, forcing the evacuation of recently returned residents. — AFP

off the dinosaurs.

"In the past we see that these big carbon inputs to the atmosphere cause warming, cause huge changes in both the composition of the ocean and the availability of oxygen," said Marie Edmonds, Professor of Volcanology and Petrology and Ron Oxburgh Fellow in Earth Sciences at Queens' College, Cambridge. The team estimated that the Chicxulub impact 66 million years ago, which killed off three-quarters of all life on Earth, released between 425 and 1,400 gigatonnes of CO2.

Manmade emissions in 2018 alone topped 37 gigatonnes. "The amount of CO2 pumped into the atmosphere by anthropogenic (manmade) activity in the last 10-12 years (is equivalent) to the catastrophic change during

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Local

Deputy Amir receives Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad after return from Paris

UN chief congratulates Kuwait's Amir on speedy recovery



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait's Ambassador to China Samih Hayat.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif palace yesterday His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Sheikh Nasser had recently attended in Paris the funeral of former French President Jacques Chirac.

In the meantime, Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met yesterday with Kuwait's Ambassador to

China Samih Hayat. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged friendly talks and discussed important issues and significant subjects, defense ministry said in a press statement. Sheikh Nasser praised the role played by the Kuwaiti embassy in China in backing and boosting the two countries' relationship.

In other news, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah on his speedy recovery. In the cable, Guterres said: "I am sending you my very best wishes for your speedy recovery, as well as my sincere wish for your good health and well-being. "You remain a distinguished statesman who has devoted tireless efforts to building strong ties with the United Nations, as well as to restoring and maintaining regional stability," he added. "I look forward to continuing close cooperation with you in advancing our shared goal of

peace and security in the region and beyond. Please accept, Your Highness, the assurances of my highest consideration. With my best wishes and deep respect and admiration."

Separately, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the demise of Sheikh Suhail

bin Mubarak Al Ketbi. In the cable, His Highness the Amir extended his sincere condolences to Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed, praying to Allah Almighty to bless the soul of Sheikh Suhail with mercy in Paradise and bring solace to his family. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent two similar cables of condolences to Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed on the same incident. — KUNA

Parliament Speaker receives municipal council chief, members



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with the President of the Municipal Council Osama Al-Otaibi and a number of members from his council. — KUNA

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received yesterday the President of the Municipal Council Osama Al-Otaibi and a number of members from his council. The meeting was also attended by MPs, senior officials from the council, and Municipal Council Secretary General Bader Al-Rifaie and National

Assembly Secretary General Allam Al-Kandari. After the meeting, Otaibi emphasized the keenness of the Municipal Council to cooperate with all the state's bodies and institutions, especially the legislative one, as the council operates upon the regulations issued out of it. Otaibi endorsed the positive interaction from the Parliament's Speaker

towards the twining initiative between General Secretariat of the Municipal Council and the General Secretariat of the National Assembly. Both sides are working to benefit from exchanged expertise between both institutions, appreciating the fruitful cooperation with Ghanem and Kandari on that matter. — KUNA



WFP Director-General for GCC office Abdul-Majeed Yahya (center)

Kuwait historic partner with WFP: UN officials

KUWAIT: Kuwait is a historic partner with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), UN officials said on Monday, praising Kuwait's key humanitarian role. The two officials said that the Kuwaiti role is great and well-known, stressing the keenness of the program to strengthen its partnership with Kuwait and push it to higher levels. WFP Director-General for GCC office Abdul-Majeed Yahya, said that Kuwait had signed a \$24 million program last week to finance WFP activities in Yemen. In 2018, Kuwait contributed \$50 million, not including Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) contributions, to WFP humanitarian action in Mozambique and Bangladesh, Yahya added. He pointed out that he had met with Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, who praised the program and its important role, especially in conflict areas. Meanwhile, the Regional Director of WFP for East and Central Africa, Erika Joergensen said that



Regional Director of WFP for East and Central Africa Erika Joergensen

Kuwait has a big role in the region, noting that there is an agreement between Kuwait and the program to help those in need. Joergensen praised the influential role of humanitarian contributions and the efforts of the KRCS at all international levels, especially in Africa, noting that this role is appreciated at all levels. — KUNA



MUSCAT: A group photo on the sidelines of the meeting of the GCC Social Security Committee. — KUNA

GCC meeting mulls unified insurance protection

MUSCAT: A meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Social Security committee in Muscat yesterday discussed the latest developments on implementing a unified insurance protection system to be extend to GCC citizens, a Kuwaiti official revealed. General Director of Kuwait's Social Security services

Mesha Al-Othman said on the sidelines of the 18th committee meeting that discussions also focused on the committee's plan for social security's mechanisms and its authentication along with an accountant's team to link them in the GCC association. The meeting also included making the decision to

begin the working mechanisms' role by paying of their membership fees. Othman also revealed statistical reports on GCC workers, which showed that there are 37,640 GCC citizens registered as expatriate workers in other GCC states, including 19,025 actual employees. — KUNA

Kuwait to have commercial mission in Baghdad: Minister

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan announced that Kuwait would have a commercial mission in Baghdad to boost trade exchange with its Arab neighbor. In a speech at the conclusion of the first meeting of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi Joint Ministerial Committee on Monday, Roudhan, also Minister of State for Services, expressed satisfaction with the progress of relations between the two countries. The minister hailed the outcome of the meeting which demonstrated the two countries' keenness to enhance cooperation and coordination in all fields. Since February, the two countries' officials held over four meetings

and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a historic visit to Baghdad to further strengthen ties, he said.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Al-Ani said that the ministerial meeting also mullied opening a new Safwan border crossing, adding that the Kuwaiti side will establish the crossing point. The meeting also tackled trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, he said. The Iraqi minister stressed that the success achieved during the meeting requires perseverance to implement what has been agreed upon to achieve the aspiration of the two peoples. — KUNA

Local

Kuwaiti FM receives credentials of new Honduran, Sri Lankan, Georgian ambassadors

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled receives outgoing US envoy



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new Ambassador of Honduras to Kuwait Luis Alutso. — KUNA photos



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Kuwait Othman Lebi Mohammad Johar.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new Ambassador of Georgia to Kuwait Constantine Giganti.

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday credentials of the newly appointed ambassadors of Honduras Luis Alutso, Sri Lanka Othman Lebi Mohammad Johar and Georgia Constantine Giganti. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled wished the new diplomats best of luck and success in carrying out their duties in Kuwait, as well as further progress and prosperity for the relationship between Kuwait and their respective countries. The receptions were attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Affairs Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, Acting Assistant

Foreign Minister for the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani, and other senior foreign ministry officials.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received the outgoing US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled hailed the efforts of Silverman to boost the Kuwait-US ties on all levels, while he worked in the country. The meeting was attended by Acting Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani and a number of officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. —KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman.

Kuwait welcomes agreement on Syrian constitutional committee

NEW YORK: Kuwait welcomed the UN Secretary-General's announcement of the agreement between the Syrian government and Syrian Negotiations Body on a Constitutional Committee, which will begin its work on October 30, 2019 in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations. This came in a speech delivered Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi at the Security Council meeting on Syria.



Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi

Otaibi hailed the Astana guarantors' efforts, "which contributed to this pivotal stage in the Syrian political process," he said. He also praised the tireless efforts of UN envoy to Syria Geir Pedersen to reach such an agreement, calling upon all parties to work with the Special Envoy in furtherance of his mandate at this critical time. He expressed hope that the October meeting will be the first step towards meeting the aspirations of Syria's people. Emphasizing the need to respect Syria's territorial integrity, Otaibi said the process must be accompanied by confidence-building measures, with tangible progress on such issues as detainees.

Turning to the situation in Idlib, the Kuwaiti diplomat expressed concern that massive displacement and related developments there might overshadow political progress. He went on to underline

that there can be no lasting peace without justice for perpetrators of the crimes committed, expressing support for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism. He reiterated that there could be no sustainable and comprehensive peace in Syria without achieving justice, ensuring impunity and holding perpetrators accountable for crimes committed during the Syrian crisis since 2011, affirming his support for the work of the neutral and independent international mechanism. He stressed that the solution to this conflict will come only through a political settlement in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which includes several stages like writing a constitution and holding free and transparent polls under the auspices of the UN. — KUNA

UNHCR thanks Kuwait for contribution to IDPs in Yemen

GENEVA: Kuwait's "generous" \$12 million contribution to finance programs of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will be allocated to the internally-displaced persons in Yemen, the Commissioner's Office Chief of Staff Salvatore Lombardo said yesterday. Those programs will focus on providing shelter and care for Yemenis, as well as refugees pouring into it from Somalia and the Horn of Africa, Lombardo said after meeting Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN and international organizations Ambassador

Jamal Al-Ghunaim. All the programs are in cooperation with other UN-affiliated bodies such as UNICEF, WFP and WHO, he pointed out. Meanwhile, Ambassador Ghunaim said that the relationship between the State of Kuwait and the UNHCR is indeed "deep-seated and historic." He said the meeting also touched upon other aspects of cooperation, mainly in Syria, Libya and aiding the Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh ahead of the anticipated visit to Kuwait by UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi early next year. —KUNA



GENEVA: UNHCR Commissioner's Office Chief of Staff Salvatore Lombardo meets with Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN and international organizations Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim. — KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City's high-rise buildings seen from inside of the viewing sphere of Kuwait Towers. — Photo by Samar Al-Afghani (KUNA)

Zain main sponsor of LEGO Shows, Mideast largest LEGO spectacle

Company keen on developing children's creative skills

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its main sponsorship of LEGO Shows, the largest LEGO spectacle in the Middle East. The family-oriented educational event, which comes to Kuwait for the very first time, will be held at the Kuwait International Fair in Mishref (Hall 4A) during 15 - 19 October.

During the press conference, Zain expressed its keenness on supporting such innovative initiatives as part of its strategy towards encouraging education and creativity. The company is keen on contributing to the development and enrichment of various creative skills within young age groups, especially children. Zain is particularly keen on supporting entities that offer the proper educational environment for the next generations as per the highest international standards.

LEGO Shows hosts 24 unique entertainment zones that feature cartoon characters and themes from the world's biggest entertainment brands. Children and their families can together enjoy many educational and entertainment activities that center around building LEGO blocks, including LEGO pools, robotics, and more. All the activities were designed to offer a rich educational experience for children to develop their creative and cognitive skills in an innovative and fun manner. The event will also feature a huge Zain Mosaïque artwork sized 8x4m and composed of 400 LEGO bricks, which children and their families can build together. In addition, a 'Zain 5G Rocket' model, built entirely of LEGO bricks, will be featured at the event.

By supporting this unique event, Zain seeks to offer the best educational environment for children in Kuwait to nurture their talents, enrich their skills, and promote innovation and creativity within them from an early age. Zain believes in the important role education plays in building



Held on
Oct 15 - 19

the future. The company's efforts in this regard includes Zain's annual plays, which deliver positive messages to children in a captivating theatrical fashion.

Zain further reaffirms its commitment to supporting any entity that offers the proper educational environment for the next generation as per the highest international standards. The company will spare no efforts in offering its support to such initiatives and programs that serve the community and contribute to the further progress of the country.



From the press conference.

Kuwait Heart Foundation concludes 'successful' campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Heart Foundation celebrated World Heart Day from Thursday, September 26th until Sunday, September 29th, at the Avenues Mall - Phase One. This year's campaign 'Be a Heart Hero' highlighted the importance of women's heart health and the importance of regular checkups. Kuwait Heart Foundation members and Sabah Al-Ahmad Cardiac Center's doctors were present

during the three-day campaign, as they offered constructive instructions to visitors with regards to how to lead a healthy lifestyle and avoid cardiovascular disease. The outreach activities that were included in the campaign received an unprecedented turnout of visitors. The activities included blood pressure tests, body mass index (BMI), and fun sports activities for visitors.

In this regard, Talal Al-Bahar, the President of Kuwait Heart Foundation, stated: "We are honored to provide such a qualitative awareness campaign, to combat outbreaks among the community. Witnessing the engagement of people with the campaign is very encouraging and promising. Overcoming any disease always requires awareness and knowledge, and that is what we are emphasizing through

our media campaign, that women's strength internally and externally are equally important, and that can be achieved through regular checkups to maintain a healthy strong heart." Kuwait Heart Foundation also expressed its gratitude to the doctors from Sabah Al-Ahmad Cardiac Center who contributed in spreading awareness, in addition to Mabane Company for generously hosting the event.



KUWAIT: Talal Al-Bahar, President of Kuwait Heart Foundation (center) surrounded by KHF and SACC's team.



A picture from the 'Be a Heart Hero' campaign.

Local

Kuwait yet to announce position on maritime coalition: Deputy FM

Kuwait to discuss with Cyprus process to return nationals: Jarallah

KUWAIT: Kuwait will officially announce its position over joining an international coalition to protect maritime navigation in the Arab Gulf region once it finished examining details of such coalition, a senior diplomat said yesterday. Kuwait has not announced its official position whether to join the proposed coalition or not "but practical practices show that Kuwait is not far from this coalition," Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said. He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a seminar about elderly care. Jarallah said Kuwait has taken part in meetings in Manama, Bahrain, and Tampa, Florida, regarding the coalition. He underlined that Kuwait would continue to participate in any coalition-related meetings.

Meanwhile, Jarallah said that Kuwait's Foreign Ministry will summon the Cypriot Ambassador to Kuwait to discuss the process of returning Kuwaiti nationals stranded in Cyprus since August, a senior Kuwaiti diplomat said yesterday. He added that the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Cyprus have begun the same procedures with the Cypriot authorities to hasten the

return of the detainees. The Cypriot authorities detained the Kuwaitis on August 10th because of a brawl between them and another group of European nationals. Jarallah affirmed that the ministry have been working on the case and to ensure the fair trial of the Kuwaitis. He also stressed that the Ministry will not allow the trial to be postponed until next February.

In the meantime, Jarallah underlined Kuwait's keenness in human rights due to the adherence to Kuwaiti constitution that gave humans a primary attention and care. In his statement during the opening of 'Kuwait's efforts in relieving the elderly' seminar, Jarallah said that Kuwait's keenness comes from its belief in those rights and its effect on the individual and society. Jarallah pointed out the importance of shedding the light on the big contributions of Kuwait in supporting the elderly through the various governmental bodies in spreading the awareness on the problems that faces the elderly. He also noted that this seminar coincides with the "International Day for Older Persons," in light of the difficulties and challenges the



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah speaks during a seminar about elderly care in Kuwait yesterday. — KUNA

world is witnessing. The deputy foreign minister stressed the importance of this seminar in highlighting national efforts in spreading the awareness on human rights. Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development

Khaled Mahdi said in similar remarks that showcasing Kuwait's efforts in humanitarian various activities triggers parts of its development plans. The efforts Kuwait make in the field of human rights gives it a unique international place, not only

because of its development in infrastructure but in its connection with human development and capital focusing on certain aspects such as active governmental administration, diverse economy, advanced infrastructure and health care. —KUNA

KFSD inspects industrial Shuwaikh



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's (KFSD) Capital prevention



department, in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority, carried out an inspection in industrial Shuwaikh that included several garages, stores and shops,

resulting in issuing several citations against some of them for obstructing movement in corridors and emergency exits due to improper storage.

News in brief

Expat teachers denied allowance

KUWAIT: The education ministry is not honoring the right of expat teachers working in Sabah Al-Ahmad to receive remote area allowance, while payments are made to Kuwaitis and Gulf nationals. This has frustrated them, especially since they were promised many times to be paid. Expat teachers in Sabah Al-Ahmad plan to submit a joint complaint to the education ministry undersecretary to appeal the non-payment of dues, although the decision was issued last year. — Al-Qabas

Abuse of housing law

KUWAIT: A senior official at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare said some Kuwaitis have abused the law and got married only on paper to get housing, adding they will face severe repercussions. Acting deputy general manager for supervision and information technology Ibrahim Al-Nashi said there is continued supervision and legal action has been taken towards several housing applications that were discovered through electronic links with state departments. He said the authority took measures to stop rent allowance payments to housing applicants who were given three options (apartment, house or land) and did not accept any of them. Nashi said the current fiscal year 2019/2020 will see 10,520 units distributed - 10,000 in South Sabah Al-Ahmad and 520 in Jaber Al-Ahmad. He said the authority did not give a date to hand over land to citizens in Mutlaa as this will be done in stages. — Al-Qabas

Educational satellite eyed

KUWAIT: Kuwait University Rector Dr Hussein Al-Ansari said the university is working on building and launching an educational satellite by the physics department of the College of Science. Ansari said the UAE space agency is considered a "house" of experience, and there will be close cooperation between them. "We will attempt to benefit from their experience in the field of scientific research and space science applications," he said, adding "we are working on having a satellite at the start of next year through the physics department." — Al-Qabas

Motorist killed in King Fahd Road accident

KUWAIT: An Indian man was killed when his vehicle flipped over on King Fahd Road. Police and paramedics rushed to the area and found the man had succumbed to his injuries. The body was examined by forensics, then turned over to the coroner.

Theft in Rawda

A company's legal representative told police construction material was stolen from a building under construction in Rawda. Detectives took over the case and are investigating.

Celebratory gunfire

Weapons detectives arrested a Kuwaiti and a Gulf national for firing their weapons during a wedding ceremony in

Jahra. An interior ministry statement said that following the appearance of a video clip showing two men firing their weapons in public, detectives were asked to identify and arrest them. Both confessed and led police to the weapons used (two AK-47s, three pistols and a large quantity of ammunition). The suspects were sent to concerned authorities.

Students' fight

A secondary school student was taken to hospital following an injury he received to the head during a fight. Police received calls about a major fight in a Jahra school, so police responded and broke up the fight. Several of those involved were arrested.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Kuwait flag carrier to launch direct flights to Paris next month

PARIS: Kuwait's national carrier will begin flying directly to Paris as soon as next month, the airline said yesterday. The announcement was made by Kuwait Airways' chief marketing officer Munawar Al-Munawar during an international tourism expo in the French capital, where representatives of the world's most renowned airlines have assembled. "Our participation in an event of such magnitude is part of our efforts to promote the services we offer our passengers," he said, pointing out he was glad that Kuwait Airways is on par with top airlines from around the world. Kuwait Airways' presence in this event is a testament to its prominence on the global aviation stage, according to Anwar Sheikh, an official at the company's Paris-based office. The airline's ever-expanding fleet of aircrafts has helped create a more diverse and comprehensive itinerary, he added, saying French nationals are among the company's most loyal clientele. Kuwait Airways' participation in this expo will help give Kuwait much needed



PARIS: Kuwait Airways, pavilion at the exhibition. —KUNA

global exposure, said the Gulf state's ambassador to Paris Sami Al-Sulaiman. The feedback Kuwait Airways has gotten from its French customers has been nothing short of complimentary, the diplomat emphasized. — KUNA

MP inquires about non-Kuwaitization of Sabah Hospital staff

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Khalil Abul yesterday filed a parliamentary inquiry to the health minister concerning not Kuwaitizing the internal diseases department's medical staff at Sabah Hospital. Abul inquired about the total number of non-Kuwaiti doctors at the department who had exceeded the legal retirement age compared to Kuwaitis, their degrees, specializations and years of experience, how many times the contracts of each had been renewed, the reasons of renewal and why they had not been replaced by Kuwaitis so far. Abul also inquired about the reasons for reappointing the current head of department

in this position despite the presence of Kuwaiti doctors in the same department.

In other news, the Public Authority for Roads and Transport (PART) announced 70 percent of the Wafra highway project has been completed and that another 16-km-long road segment between Sabah Al-Ahmad City and Mina Abdullah will open in December. PART added that the KD 84.6 million project will serve residents of Um Al-Haiman, Sabah Al-Ahmad, South Sabah Al-Ahmad, Wafra residential and agricultural districts and Mina Abdullah. In addition, PART explained that the new road will be 41 kms long including seven intersections, nine flyovers and rain drainage systems.



KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad met leaders of the directorate and department directors to discuss work procedures and make sure they are on schedule as planned. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

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Dr. Yu Hui, Patron, World Congress of Poets and President, World Academy of Arts and Culture, Dr. Maurice Young, President, World Congress of Poets, Prof. Ernesto Kahhan, 1st Vice President, World Academy of Arts and Culture, Dr. Maria Eugenia Sobranis, General Secretary, World Academy of Arts and Culture, and Prof. Achyuta Samanta, President, 3rd WCP, Founder, KIIT & KISS and Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) will grace the Sessions on all days.

<p>October 2, Venue - KISS: Compassion Poetry Guests: Shri Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism & Odia Language, Literature & Culture, Govt. of Odisha, and Shri Akhilesh Mishra, Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations.</p>	<p>Shri S. K. Rout, Hon'ble MLA, Bhubaneswar North, and Shri Shyam Jaisi, National Vice President, Bharatiya Janata Party</p>
<p>October 3, Venue - Konark Sun Temple: Tourism Poetry Guests: Shri R. Balakrishnan, Chief Advisor, Chief Minister's Office, Odisha</p>	<p>Speaker: Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Prabhu Gaur Gopal Das, Life Coach, Monk, Spiritual & Motivational Speaker, and Dr. Dilip Nask, Professor, English & Foreign Language University, Hyderabad</p>
<p>October 3, Venue - KIIT: Wisdom Poetry Guests: Smt. Aparajita Sarangi, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (L.S.)</p>	<p>October 4, Venue - Konark Sun Temple: Spiritual Poetry Guests: Shri H. N. Dikshit, Hon'ble</p>
<p>October 5, Venue - Puri Sea Beach: Spiritual Poetry Guests: Shri H. N. Dikshit, Hon'ble</p>	<p>October 6, Venue - KIIT: Reflection Poetry</p>

Poetry Reading Parallel Sessions - English, Chinese, Spanish, Hindi & Odia

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India | Watch live on KalingaTV on October 2, 3 & 6, 2019



Giuliani subpoenaed for documents; Trump attacks US Democrats

Outcry as Pakistan appoints new envoy to UN



LESBOS ISLAND: A migrant sleeps outside at the Moria camp on the island of Lesbos following a fire at the refugee camp which houses some 13,000 people. — AFP

Migrants protest conditions on Greek isle

‘Moria is hell, a jungle, a cemetery’

MORIA: Around a thousand migrants staged a fresh protest yesterday in Europe’s largest migrant camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, two days after a deadly fire at the vastly overcrowded facility. A procession made up mainly of women and children, with some elderly people, left Moria camp walking towards the port of Mytilene, with demonstrators shouting slogans.

But police road-block stopped them half-way to Mytilene. The protesters carried placards in English reading “Moria is hell” and “Freedom”, and carried a stretcher covered by a shroud probably to represent the woman killed in Sunday’s fire at the camp. The fire, which sparked riots the same evening, injured another 17 people, who are being treated in hospital.

“Moria is like a jungle, a cemetery,” said one protester, Fazel Ahmad, from Afghanistan. “I thought I was coming to a country that respects human rights, but what is happening in Moria has nothing to do with human rights,” he said. The region’s chief of police Eleftherios Douroudous tried to calm the angry crowd. “You will be moved to other camps with better conditions in a month,” he told them. “Unaccompanied minors will also be moved to suitable conditions within in October. I understand the difficulties,” he added, appealing to them to be patient.

‘De facto detention camps’

At the same time, a delegation from Oxfam France was visiting a makeshift camp that has sprung up outside Moria, where tents and improvised shelters have spilled over into the olive groves. “It’s worse than I imagined,” Cecile Dufлот, the head of Oxfam France, told AFP as she waited to enter the camp. “We are in Greece, a European Union country. More than 40 percent of those living here are children. We need to ensure that the situation changes.”

People needed to wake up to the burden that Greece and its islands were carrying, she said, adding: “We cannot be satisfied with what are de facto detention camps.” Moria was designed for 3,000 people but currently houses 13,000 after a surge of arrivals in recent weeks from Turkey. Greece announced on Monday it wanted to send back 10,000 migrants to Turkey by the end of 2020 after an emergency cabinet meeting following the fire at the camp. These returns are provided for in a 2016 agreement between Turkey and the European Union.

The conservative government of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has already announced more naval patrols in the Aegean, closed centers for migrants refused asylum, and plans to overhaul the asylum system. Greece hosts some 70,000 mostly Syrian



ATTICA: A woman holds a baby as refugees and migrants take part in a demonstration against their living conditions at the Moria camp on the island of Lesbos yesterday. — AFP

refugees and migrants who have fled since 2015, crossing over from neighboring Turkey. There are more than 26,000 people in the five migrant camps scattered

across the Aegean islands, which have a capacity to welcome only 6,300 or so, according to the latest government figures.— Agencies

In US capital, teen honors victims of gun violence

WASHINGTON: The row of trendy restaurants surrounding an office of the Shakespeare Theater Company in Washington reflects the refined tastes of a gentrifying capital. But down an alley, a mural depicts a very different drama playing out almost daily elsewhere in the same city. There on the wall are the faces of five African-American teens shot dead, including Lauryn Renford’s boyfriend, 16-year-old Zaire Kelly. Renford, 17, was the driving force behind the mural, a recently inaugurated memorial to the slain youths. “I think there’s something very special about these five on the wall,” says Renford, who sees their stories as representing other victims too.

In a country where mass shootings dominate the headlines, the mural is a reminder of more common, everyday gun crime, the victims often African-Americans, their deaths too frequently overlooked except by grieving friends and family. Kelly was attacked in an apparent robbery attempt on his way home from studies. Jamahri Sydnor,

17, was shot while driving, the victim of an “unintended killing” according to DC Witness, a website that tracks Washington homicide cases.

Steve Slaughter, 14, and Taiyana Thompson, 16, are also pictured along with Paris Brown, 19. All were killed in 2017 and 2018. Brown and Kelly, as well as Renford, were students at Thurgood Marshall Academy in Ward 8, one of two districts east of the Anacostia River where poverty is disproportionately clustered. “I realized that families and even just general residents of DC should have a place to grieve the people that we’ve lost and always honor their legacies, and work to preserve those that are left,” Renford says.

Dozens of evenly-spaced red roses symbolize others lost to gun violence but whose youthful faces aren’t pictured on the wall. That could include Maurice Scott, 15, shot dead in May, or Steffen Braithwaite, 16, gunned down the day before AFP interviewed Renford. They are among at least 131 homicide victims this year in the city of about 700,000 residents, up from 118 at the same time last year. Nearby Baltimore, with a slightly smaller population, has recorded around 255 homicides in 2019.

‘I hear gunshots’

In contrast, 64 people have been gunned down nationwide since January in mass shootings where four or more people were killed, according to a Washington Post database. Most of Washington’s gun crime

occurs in Ward 8 and adjacent Ward 7, police data show, but the mural is in a more peaceful neighborhood.

There, it helps broaden awareness among better-off residents who “don’t necessarily know much about the violence” elsewhere in the city, says Renford, a first-year undergraduate hoping to study public health. Karen Lee, a Thurgood Marshall teacher who guided Renford in creating the mural, says she is “really proud” of her. “People are having to deal every day with violence, with shootings,” says Lee, who is white and lives in the academy’s neighborhood. “I hear gunshots and I wonder if I’m going to wake up in the morning and find out that I’ve lost another student.”

In a Washington with more and more condominiums and sleek restaurants, but a declining African-American population, Renford says making the city safer should be a task for everyone and not just a “black and brown conversation.” She joined two other Thurgood Marshall students to found an activist group, Pathways 2 Power, because they want “a seat at the decision-making table” on issues surrounding gun violence.

Poverty, inequity

The group helped her raise the roughly \$12,000 needed for the mural painted by local artist Martin Swift on donated wall space. Renford sees many roots for the violence, including poverty, gentrification, localized “beefs,” and “not valuing the lives of people around you... not even your own



WASHINGTON: Lauryn Renford, 17, looks at a mural by Martin Swift depicting teenage gun violence victims including Zaire Kelly (2nd left). Renford’s boyfriend who was shot dead in 2017, in Washington DC. — AFP

life.” Lee highlights the need to address the inequities between Washington’s wealthier neighborhoods and those where people struggle.

Armed police officers wait at the front steps of Thurgood Marshall while students in tan pants and burgundy shirts file into Martin Luther King Junior Avenue Southeast, where cars pass playing rap music. Across the street is Bethlehem

Baptist Church, the “Black Workers and Wellness Center,” and a parking lot advertising the “Stop the Violence Jam” and other music shows. Back in the alley, two elderly white women accompany a white man walking unsteadily with a cane. In front of the mural, one of the women stops and seems to call to the others. All of them look Paris, Jamahri, Steve, Taiyana and Zaire are looking back. — Agencies

International

Turkish threat looms as Syria 'safe zone' deadline expires

Ankara impatient in Syria, but wary of angering Washington

ISTANBUL: Turkey's deadline to jointly establish a "safe zone" with the United States in northern Syria by the end of September has passed, leaving the threat of unilateral military intervention by Ankara hanging over the region. President Tayyip Erdogan told the United Nations last week he wanted to set up the zone along 480 km of border and reaching 30 km inside Syria.

Under the Turkish plan, up to 2 million Syrian refugees would be settled in the safe zone, with international support. If implemented, the project could halve the number of Syrian refugees sheltering in Turkey from Syria's eight-year conflict, and drive the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia - which Ankara says is a terrorist group threatening its security - from the border.

Expanding Turkey's military presence in Syria would also boost its weight among powers such as the United States, Russia and Iran which all seek to shape Syria's political future, reflecting a mantra of Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu that Ankara should be "strong both at the table and in the field". But Turkey's new emphasis on the refugee transfer, which would move large numbers of Sunni Arab Syrians into a traditionally Kurdish heartland, could face resistance from allies opposed to changing the region's demographic balance.

The United States agreed to the safe zone as a way to protect its Kurdish allies in Syria and address Turkish concerns about the border, after President Donald Trump announced plans last year to abruptly withdraw 2,000 US special forces troops that helped Kurdish

fighters battle Islamic State. But the US troops have yet to leave and Washington and Ankara have so far failed to agree on details. Turkey has accused the United States of dragging its feet and warned that it would take matters into its own hands.

Diplomats, analysts and Turkey's main opposition CHP party say Erdogan would be unwilling to anger the United States with a full-scale military incursion when Ankara's relations with Washington are already under strain. However Turkey has already launched two military incursions into northern Syria in the last three years and has stationed troops into the rebel-held Idlib region. It says preparations for another operation are complete.

Turkey wants to settle refugees in proposed zone



The National Security Council, which includes Turkey's political and military leadership, said late on Monday that Turkey would strengthen efforts to set up the zone so that Syrian refugees could return as soon as possible. Erdogan has also warned the European Union that Turkey, which has received billions of euros in return for chocking off the flow of Syrian migrants into Europe in 2016, could "open the gates" once again if it does not get more funding.

Ahead of his trip to the UN General Assembly, Erdogan said he would discuss his plans with Trump and EU leaders, but he returned last week apparently empty-handed. "Turkey is not a country that can be stalled," he said on the plane home. Cavusoglu echoed his message: "If we cannot find a way with the United States, we will clear out the terrorist organization (ourselves)," he said, referring to the YPG.



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan delivers a speech during the opening of the third legislative session of the Turkish parliament's 27th term yesterday at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. — AFP

US warning

US and Turkish troops have so far carried out half a dozen joint air missions over northeast Syria and two land patrols. The NATO allies disagree over the depth of the zone and who should control it, while the United States avoids even referring to a "safe zone", talking instead of a "security mechanism". The United States has warned Turkey that unilateral action would not serve any country's security. "The last thing Turkey would like is an unintended clash with the US troops on the ground," said Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, of the German Marshall Fund in Ankara. Instead, he said Turkey could adopt a "gradu-

ated strategy" and continue negotiating with Washington while making incursions in areas where there are no US troops and few YPG forces.

Even so, Ankara would be wary of the political consequences in Washington, where Trump's public support for Erdogan is set against demands in Congress for sanctions on Ankara over its purchase in July of Russian S-400 missile defense systems. Cavusoglu said Ankara would move in stages - from joint patrols to "going inside and clearing out the terrorists", then establishing facilities for its forces inside Syria followed by "the humanitarian aspect and return of refugees". — Reuters

Lebanon backs key importers amid fears of dollar shortage

BEIRUT: Lebanon's central bank is to facilitate access to dollars for importers of petroleum products, wheat and medicine, state media said yesterday, following fears of a dollar shortage and possible currency devaluation. Local media said last week banks and money exchange shops were rationing dollar sales in the country, where Lebanese pounds and US dollars are used interchangeably in everyday transactions. Petrol station owners threatened to strike over a lack of dollars at a fixed exchange rate to pay for imports, while flour producers complained they had to resort to much higher rates from money changers.

The central bank on Monday adopted the measure to allow certain importers to obtain dollars at the bank rate to pay for key imports. "Banks that issue letters of credit for the importation of petroleum products (petrol, fuel oil and gas), wheat and medicine will be able to ask the Banque du Liban to ensure the value of such credits in US dollars," read the decision published by the National News Agency.

The mechanism requires that a "special account" be opened at the central bank, and at least 15 percent of the value of the credit be deposited in it in US dollars, as well as the full value in Lebanese pounds, it said. The



BEIRUT: A teller counts US dollars at a currency exchange company in the Lebanese capital Beirut yesterday. — AFP

central bank will take 0.5 percent from each transaction. Lebanon has had a fixed exchange rate of around 1,500 Lebanese pounds to the dollar in place since 1997. Central bank governor Riad Salameh last week denied that the country was facing a currency reserve crisis, but it has become very difficult to withdraw dollars from ATMs in Beirut.

Lebanese economist Jad Chaaban said the central bank measure was a welcome short-term solution to allow key products into the country. "It's a good measure to contain the crisis on importing these commodities and to keep the prices in check," said the associate professor at the American University of Beirut. And it will "ease pressure on the non-

bank exchange rate", he said. But he also called for the broader easing of capital controls keeping dollars in the banks, and "fundamental economic reforms" including to reduce dependency on imports.

Economic growth in Lebanon has plummeted in the wake of repeated political deadlocks in recent years, compounded by eight years of war in neighboring Syria. Lebanon's public debt stands at around \$86 billion - more than 150 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) - according to the finance ministry. Eighty percent of that debt is owed to Lebanon's central bank and local banks. In July, parliament passed an austerity budget as part of conditions to unlock \$11 billion in aid pledged at a conference in Paris last year. — AFP

Rough seas, restless nights; tracking Grace 1 supertanker

MADRID: Video journalist Marco Trujillo sat on his hotel balcony, eyes fixed on the silhouette of a supertanker in the Strait of Gibraltar, watching for the splash of an anchor chain or the smallest sign of movement. A month earlier British commandos had seized the Grace 1 there over suspicions it was breaking EU sanctions by taking Iranian oil to Syria - placing the vessel at the centre of a growing confrontation between Tehran and the West. After weeks of diplomacy and international legal wrangling, the Gibraltar authorities had just decided to lift the seizure order.

Now the world was watching to see when the ship would leave, where it would go and, ultimately, who would buy its crude. Trujillo was determined not to miss the moment it set sail. During the days, he and photographer Jon Nazca hired a fishing boat to get a closer look on the choppy waters - at one point witnessing the moment when it briefly raised the Iranian flag. During the nights, he slept fitfully, fearing he would wake up to find the ship gone. "I admit that you become a bit crazy. It transforms into an obsession," he said.

When it came to it, he was there watching



BANDAR ABBAS: Photo shows the British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero as it leaves Bandar Abbas port in southern Iran. — AFP

as the vessel, now renamed "Adrian Darya 1", edged across his camera's viewfinder and out to sea just after 1 am on Aug 19, four days after the detention was lifted. "It was a relief and joyful feeling after so many days hypnotized by the ship," he said. Then the real hunt began. Reporters in Reuters bureaus from Athens to Istanbul and London to Singapore watched the satellite feeds offered by Refinitiv - a data and analytics company in which Thomson Reuters has a minority stake - following tankers across the world.

Erratic course

They tracked an erratic course towards Greece, then Turkey, then Cyprus, then Turkey, then Lebanon and on. "In the space

of 10 days, it punched in three different destinations, u-turning several times as it traversed the Mediterranean with a cargo of crude nobody officially wanted," said Greece and Cyprus bureau chief Michele Kambas.

The feeds could only supply so much information. The Turkey office sent cameraman Bulent Usta to the coast to scan the horizon. Correspondents phoned their sources to check each purported destination and cut through the rumors and fake sightings spreading on social media. "It became clear that ports in Syria and many other Mediterranean options were not big enough to accommodate a supertanker carrying 2 million barrels of oil," said senior shipping correspondent Jonathan Saul. — Reuters

Jordan's striking teachers reject government call

AMMAN: Tens of thousands of Jordanian teachers yesterday defied a government call to end their four-week nationwide strike over pay, in a deepening crisis that threatens to further strain the heavily indebted country's state finances. The powerful Jordanian Teachers' Syndicate on Saturday rejected as "bread crumbs" modest pay increases offered by Prime Minister Omar Al-Razzaz in a bid to end the strike, which is already the longest by state employees in decades. The strike comes as Jordan struggles to implement tough IMF-backed fiscal reforms.

Only a quarter of Jordan's 4,000 public schools opened yesterday and a fraction of its 1.5 million or so students turned up for lessons, in what economists said was a blow to the Razzaz government, which came to power in 2018 after street protests over IMF-backed austerity measures. Scuffles broke out in several schools between parents and striking teachers, according to two wit-

nesses, and state media reported that many teachers had prevented pupils from entering classrooms, asking them instead to go home. Many parents are not sending their children to school out of solidarity with the striking teachers.

The teachers' union, which has 100,000 members, is demanding a 50% pay hike. Razzaz says pay increases that took effect this month averaging \$35 per month were the most Jordan could afford. His government has said teachers could lose their jobs over what it describes as an illegal action. The teachers, whose average salary is around 450 dinars (\$630) per month, say they have fallen behind others in a bloated public sector plagued by corruption and mismanagement.

Salaries eat up much of the \$13 billion state budget in a country which has one of the world's highest levels of government spending relative to the size of its economy. The government fears that new pay demands by other public sector employees, including doctors, and pension increases for retired soldiers would wreck efforts to restore fiscal prudence as a basis for a sustained economic recovery. The fiscal plan agreed with the International Monetary Fund aims to cut Jordan's public debt of \$40 billion, equivalent to 95 percent of GDP. — Reuters

Morocco journalist gets 1-year jail for 'illegal abortion'

RABAT: Moroccan journalist Hajar Raissouni was sentenced in a Rabat court Monday to one year in jail for an "illegal abortion" and sexual relations outside marriage, provoking a storm of protest from rights groups. In a case that has sparked widespread debate on personal and media freedoms in Morocco, her gynaecologist, who spoke up in her defence, was given two years and her Sudanese fiancé one year in prison.

"This trial had no foundation - the accusations were baseless," said Abdelmoula El Maroufi, a defence lawyer for Raissouni, after the verdict. A journalist for Akhbar Al-Yaoum - an Arabic-language newspaper which has a history of run-ins with the authorities - she was sentenced under Article 490 of the legal code of the Muslim kingdom. That article punishes sexual relations out of wedlock, while the law also forbids all abortions unless the mother's life is in danger.

An anaesthetist was handed a one-year suspended sentence and a medical assistant eight months, also suspended. Meriem Moulay Rachid, lawyer for the convicted gynaecologist, said: "The judicial system has had its word, (but) we will appeal." Relatives of Raissouni also told AFP that they would appeal. Raissouni was arrested on August 31 as she left a clinic in Rabat. In court, she denied having had an abortion, saying she had been

treated for internal bleeding - testimony backed up by her gynaecologist.

The journalist denounced the affair as a "political trial", saying she had been questioned by police about her family and her own writing. She appeared calm on arrival at the courtroom, wearing a black veil covering her head, and waved to her relatives before taking her place in the dock.

'Devastating blow'

Rights groups were quick to condemn the verdicts. Amnesty International described them as a "devastating blow for women's rights in Morocco". Instead of "publicly slandering Hajar Raissouni... and convicting her on unjust charges, Morocco's authorities should revoke her conviction and order her immediate and unconditional release" and all others convicted in the case, said Heba Morayef, Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa director.

Ahmed Benchems, the regional director for Human Rights Watch, described the sentencing of Raissouni and her fiancé as a "black day for freedom in Morocco". The verdicts were "a blatant injustice, a flagrant violation of human rights, and a frontal attack on individual freedoms," he wrote on Twitter.

A Moroccan historian present in court likewise hit out at the entire premise of the case. "It is a case of political repression, repression of independent opinion and vengeance (against) the family", said Maati Monjib. Raissouni had said she was quizzed by authorities about an uncle who is an outspoken Islamist newspaper columnist. Ibtissam Lachgar, co-founder of the Alternative Movement for Individual Freedom - a feminist organization - argued that the case was "political" in its motivation. — AFP

International

On anniversary of banned referendum, Catalan separatists keep up their fight

Tensions run high between Madrid, separatists

BARCELONA: Separatist leaders in Catalonia yesterday pledged to keep up their struggle for independence on the second anniversary of an ill-fated independence referendum, prompting Spain's acting prime minister to warn them "not to play with fire". The banned referendum and the short-lived declaration of independence that followed plunged Spain into its biggest political crisis in decades. Madrid responded by imposing direct rule on the region for months, sidelining regional authorities.

"The road towards the Catalan republic is inevitable," Pere Aragonès, Catalonia's deputy head of government, said in a ceremony in Barcelona. "We want to build it peacefully and for everybody." Yellow balloons marked voting stations used in the referendum, held on Oct 1, 2017 despite being deemed illegal by Madrid. "Let's finish what we started," read one attached note.

In Girona, about 150 pro-independence protesters marched in streets, some hurling eggs at police and toppling garbage bins. State news agency Efe said the central government had sent extra riot police to Catalonia amid fears in Madrid of a repeat of last year, when protesters blocked highways and train tracks and about 180,000 people marched in Barcelona. The separatist movement's momentum has seemingly slowed in recent months as it finds itself divided over whether to take a hard line that could lead to another banned independence referendum, or more dialogue with Madrid.

But tensions have flared in recent days ahead of the verdict, expected in the next two weeks, of 12 separatist leaders on trial for their role in the 2017 independence bid. Spain's high court last week also jailed seven Catalan separatists with possessing explosives, with prosecutors saying they were planning violent action around the time of the verdict. The regional parliament responded to the

arrests by adopting a resolution backing civil disobedience. Acting prime minister Pedro Sanchez said yesterday Madrid was ready to again apply direct rule in Catalonia if the regional government broke any laws. He pointed to the refusal of separatist leaders to condemn the seven activists arrested last week. The leaders said Madrid was trying to paint separatists as a violent movement, a label they reject. "We urge the Catalan independence movement not to play with fire, not to make the worst possible mistake, which is to look the other way if there are signs of violence, as we have unfortunately seen in recent weeks," Sanchez said in an interview with broadcaster Cadena Ser.

Worried about coming days

Laura Borrás, lawmaker for secessionist Junts per Catalunya, said in comments to Reuters that it was the Spanish government who had "set fire to Catalan society" with its actions. The separatist movement has so far been peaceful but the seven activists arrested last week were to be linked to the grassroots CDR, one of the organizers of the Girona protest. "We were born to defend a referendum. We grew to defend a republic. We will be who will make the enemy tremble. And we will win. Have no doubts," the CDRs said on Twitter.

Mass protests were scheduled to take place in Barcelona and elsewhere later on. Opposition politicians voiced concerns about the potential impact. "I'm very worried about the coming days," Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo of the conservative People's Party told radio station Onda Cero. An annual pro-independence rally in Barcelona gathered fewer people than usual last month, with organizers citing divisions among separatist parties and the lack of a clear plan for independence as the reason. — Reuters



BRUSSELS: Former Catalan premier Carles Puigdemont (2nd left) takes part in protest called '#DoNotStealOurVotes' two years after the Catalan referendum yesterday near the European Parliament in Brussels. — AFP

News in brief

France's Sarkozy to stand trial

PARIS: Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy lost a final court appeal yesterday against an order that he stand trial on charges of illegal financing for his 2012 election campaign. Sarkozy, who already faces a separate trial for corruption involving a judge, is accused of spending nearly double the legal limit of 22.5 million euros (\$24.5 million) on his failed re-election bid. France's highest criminal appeal court rejected his attempt to avoid facing the charges, paving the way for a trial date to be set after multiple challenges by Sarkozy's legal team. Prosecutors claim the 64-year-old Sarkozy, who has spent the past few years fighting a barrage of corruption and campaign financing charges, spent nearly 43 million euros on his quest for a second term. In the end, he was beaten by the Socialist Party's Francois Hollande. Investigators claim that Sarkozy's campaign used fake invoices to get around the campaign spending limits. — AFP

11 Afghan policemen killed

BALKH: At least 11 policemen were killed and over a dozen more taken prisoner yesterday when Taliban fighters stormed their headquarters in northern Afghanistan, officials said. A column of more than 400 Taliban fighters on motorbikes attacked Shortepa district police headquarters in Balkh province in the early hours, triggering a lengthy gunfight, provincial spokesman Munir Farhad said. "Eleven policemen were killed in the attack. The Taliban also suffered heavy losses," he said. Karim Khan, the Shortepa district chief, confirmed the toll and said the Taliban had captured 13 policemen and set their headquarters ablaze before leaving the area. The Taliban claimed responsibility, saying their fighters had overrun the district. In a later statement, Balkh police said security forces had regained control of the district. — AFP

Iran sentences 'spy' to death

DUBAI: Iranian courts have sentenced one person to death for spying for the CIA and jailed two others for 10 years for the same crime, as well as imprisoning a fourth person for 10 years for spying for Britain, the judiciary said yesterday. The verdicts come amid spiraling tensions between Tehran and the United States since President Donald Trump last year withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with major powers and reimposed sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy in order to force Tehran to renegotiate the pact. It was not immediately clear if any of the cases were linked to Iran's announcement in July that it captured 17 spies working for the CIA. "One person has been sentenced to death for spying for America's intelligence service ... but the ruling has been appealed," judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili was quoted as saying by the judiciary's news website Mizan. — Reuters

5 anti-jihadist fighters killed

KANO: Jihadists killed five members of a civilian militia during an attack on a town in conflict-hit northeast Nigeria over the weekend, security sources said yesterday. Fighters aligned to the Islamic State group on Sunday launched an assault on Gubio in eight pickup trucks fitted with machine guns, sparking an hour-long firefight. "Five of our comrades were killed in the attack," anti-jihadist militia leader Babakura Kolo said. Militia leaders and a military officer dismissed a claim from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group that it had killed and wounded 18 soldiers in the weekend attack. More than 100 vigilantes and local hunters from the region had been sent to the town in recent days to protect it against incursions from ISWAP. The redeployment came amid a new strategy by the military that has seen soldiers pulled back into "super camps" in a move critics say leaves towns more vulnerable to attack. — AFP

Giuliani subpoenaed for documents; Trump attacks US Democrats

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump attacked the Democratic lawmaker spearheading the impeachment inquiry on Monday as congressional committees subpoenaed his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, for documents related to his dealings with Ukraine. As Trump lashed out at Democratic congressman Adam Schiff, suggesting he should be arrested for "treason," Australia confirmed that the president asked for help with an inquiry into special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

Trump also attacked the whistleblower whose complaint about his phone call with the leader of Ukraine led to the opening of the impeachment probe in the Democratic-led House of Representatives. "We are trying to find out about a whistleblower, when you have a whistleblower that reports things that were incorrect," the president told reporters. The whistleblower, reportedly a CIA officer, raised concerns about the July phone call during which Trump asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate Trump's potential 2020 White House opponent Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, who served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company.

Giuliani was at the center of the effort to get Ukraine to conduct a probe of the Bidens, who have not been officially accused of any wrongdoing. Schiff, chairman of the Intelligence Committee, and the chairmen of two other Democratic-led House committees issued a subpoena to Giuliani asking him to turn over Ukraine-related documents by October 15. "The committees are investigating the extent to which President Trump jeopardized national

Jail them! Brexit divisions rise on fringes of meet

MANCHESTER: Shouts of "jail them!" rang out at the UK Conservative party conference, as talk turned to the lawmakers who voted against Prime Minister Boris Johnson's strategy on Brexit. Leading eurosceptic Steve Baker said his former colleagues "acted against the national interest", sparking calls for criminal action from the crowd—although he urged restraint. The flash of hostility in an otherwise largely upbeat and disciplined annual conference in Manchester, northwest England, reveals how deep tensions are running in the governing party.

Johnson last month expelled 21 MPs for voting with opposition parties to stop him possibly leaving the European Union without a divorce deal on October 31. Few of the rebels are at this week's party meeting, where ministers fill the main stage and the airways with promises to "Get Brexit done", and moderates are consigned to the fringes. Former finance minister Philip Hammond said he was staying away as he no longer recognized a party of "ideological puritanism that brooks no dissent and is more and more strident in its tone."

'Party of Trump'

But in a small, packed meeting room away from the main venue Monday, three expelled former ministers defended their stance to a largely supportive crowd. They repeated their warnings that leaving the EU, Britain's closest trading partner, at the end of this month without agreeing divorce terms first would be a disaster. They say they are not trying to block Brexit but argue that as Conservatives, the party should be more cautious. Former justice minister David Gauke said the Tories had become a "more confrontational, much more aggressive party". "We are no longer the party of (wartime leader Winston) Churchill, we are more the party of (US President Donald) Trump," he said. His comments sparked shouts of "no!" and "rubbish" from the audience, but there was also prolonged applause.

Foul traitor

Gauke appeared alongside former attorney general



In this file photo, US President Donald Trump (left), Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly (2nd left), Reed Cordish, Director of Government Initiatives, and others listen while former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani (right) speaks during a meeting on cyber security in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. — AFP

security by pressing Ukraine to interfere with our 2020 election," the chairmen said in a letter to Giuliani.

"Our inquiry includes an investigation of credible allegations that you acted as an agent of the President in a scheme to advance his personal political interests by abusing the power of the Office of the President," they said. Trump said on Monday that the call with Zelensky — which a senior State Department official confirmed was listened to by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo — was "perfect" and the whistleblower "reported a totally different statement." In fact, the rough transcript of the call released by the White House matched the whistleblower's account. Trump criticized Schiff for his depiction of the call during a con-

gressional hearing last week. Schiff opened the hearing with a parody imitation of Trump speaking like a mob boss to pressure Zelensky to investigate the Bidens. "It bore NO relationship to what I said on the call," Trump tweeted of Schiff's remarks. "Arrest for Treason?"

Trump also raised eyebrows by retweeting comments made by a Baptist pastor, Robert Jeffress, to Fox News warning of the dangers of "civil war" if the president was impeached. "If the Democrats are successful in removing the President from office (which they will never be), it will cause a Civil War like fracture in this Nation from which our Country will never heal," Trump paraphrased Jeffress as saying. An Australian government spokesman meanwhile confirmed that Trump asked Prime Minister Scott Morrison to help US Attorney General Bill Barr gather information for a probe into the Mueller inquiry.

Australia "has always been ready to assist and cooperate with efforts that help shed further light on the matters under investigation," the spokesman said in a statement. "The PM confirmed this readiness once again in conversation with the President." The Times said the White House restricted access to the transcript of the Trump-Morrison call in a manner similar to what was done with Trump's call with Zelensky. The original FBI probe into Russian election meddling — which was taken over by Mueller — was launched after the bureau received a tip from Australian officials. One new poll out Monday suggested that Americans were split down the middle over whether they support impeachment of the 73-year-old real estate tycoon. If Trump were impeached by a simple majority vote in the 435-member House, he would face a trial in the Republican-led Senate, where a two-thirds majority would be needed to convict and remove him from office.

Few Republican lawmakers have criticized Trump since the Ukraine scandal emerged, but former Republican senator Jeff Flake urged them on Monday to speak up. "Trust me when I say that you can go elsewhere for a job," Flake said. "But you cannot go elsewhere for a soul." — AFP



In this file photo, US President Donald Trump (left), Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly (2nd left), Reed Cordish, Director of Government Initiatives, and others listen while former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani (right) speaks during a meeting on cyber security in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. — AFP

Dominic Grieve, who has led parliament's battles with the government since the 2016 referendum. Grieve wants a fresh poll on Brexit, saying people are now more informed about the complexities—and particularly the dangers of "no deal". "In my mind being a party loyalist always means putting country before party when that is necessary," he said. "And we are at the moment 30 days away from a possibly catastrophic event in our country's peacetime modern history." Grieve has been subjected to abuse, and read out a new message on his phone to the meeting, which accused him of being a "foul traitor". "This sort of atmosphere... is being currently, I'm sorry to say bluntly, encouraged by the leader of the Conservative party," he said, referring to Johnson.

'Like it or get off'

The law the rebels helped pass demands that Johnson seek to delay Brexit if he cannot agree a divorce deal by a

Brussels summit later this month. The prime minister has called it a "surrender act", saying it would allow the EU to decide Britain's fate—and undermine the chances of getting a deal. Former junior foreign minister Alistair Burt, who originally opposed Brexit, said he wanted a divorce agreement but said his party had become obsessed. "I've lost the argument—the party has decided it wants to leave the EU," he said. "But I've seen that process become an obsession to the point of irrationality, that really, really worries me."

Johnson has yet to show he can get a deal to allow Brexit on October 31, or how he can get around the law requiring him to delay if he fails. But opinion polls indicate his tough talk is winning over pro-Brexit voters. Linda Topping, 63, a local party chairwoman from Watford, north of London, said Conservatives should accept they must adapt with the times. "We are supposed to be representing the voters and the voters are changing," she said. "If you don't like it, get off." — AFP

International

Outcry as Pakistan appoints new ambassador to United Nations

9-year-old among 144 minors detained in Indian Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: A decision by Pakistan to appoint a former diplomat as its ambassador to the United Nations has sparked criticism over his alleged involvement in a domestic violence dispute in 2002. Munir Akram "has been appointed as Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York, in place of Dr Maleeha Lodhi," the country's ministry of foreign affairs said in a statement late Monday.

Akram served a previous stint in the post from 2002 to 2008. But in January 2003 the United States asked Pakistan to waive Akram's diplomatic immunity so that he could be prosecuted on assault charges. According to press reports, New York police were called to Akram's home on December 10, 2002 by a woman who alleged the envoy had beaten her. The woman told police dispatchers that the envoy had smashed her head into a wall, that her arm hurt and that he had hit her before, according to the newspaper accounts.

The case could have had potentially embarrassing diplomatic ramifications. At the time, Pakistan was a key US ally in the war on terror, and had just taken up a seat on the UN Security Council, which was then considering whether to authorize military action against Iraq. Akram, who enjoys full diplomatic immunity, was never charged. Even so his return to the post ignited a swift backlash yesterday, many from women angered over the decision.

"In the age of #MeToo, the appointment... sends absolutely the wrong message to Pakistani men AND women: being a domestic violence perpetrator will earn you not just protection from the government but also not harm your career," wrote feminist author Bina Shah in a statement posted on Twitter. Others decried Akram's age in his 70s-and his hawkishness over Pakistan's archival India, with Pakistani media suggesting that his appointment hints at a new, more aggressive policy by

Islamabad over the disputed region of Kashmir. Tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals are high after New Delhi in August moved to strip the portion of Kashmir which it runs of its autonomy. However many also praised him as a seasoned diplomat who would take up the role just as Pakistan is trying to rally the international community to challenge India over Kashmir. The widely-respected Lodhi, who had served in the post for four years, said on Twitter that she had planned to move on after last week's UN General Assembly, and wished Akram luck in the role.

144 minors detained

Meanwhile, a police list seen by AFP showed yesterday that Indian authorities in Kashmir have detained 144 minors, including a nine-year-old, since the government removed the region's special status in August. Sixty of the minors are under 15, according to the document submitted to a committee appointed by India's Supreme Court to look into allegations of illegal detentions. Reasons given by the police for detaining the minors include stone pelting, rioting and causing damage to public and private property, the committee said in its report. Most have since been released. The police however denied that any child was taken into "illegal detention" and said that the juveniles are "dealt strictly (with) as per the prescribed law". "It happens often that when minors/juveniles indulge in stone pelting, that they are momentarily held up on the spot and sent home.

Some of these incidents are exaggerated beyond proportion," the report quoted the police as saying. New Delhi stripped Indian-administered Kashmir of its autonomy on August 5, sending in tens of thousands of extra troops, cutting telecommunications and detaining thousands of people. Almost two months on, many of the region's top politicians remain in custody and mobile



KASHMIR: A security officer stands guard to block a road near closed shops while strict restrictions are imposed during a lockdown in Srinagar. — AFP

phones and the internet remain largely snapped in the Kashmir Valley, the main trouble hotspot.

UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said last month she was "deeply concerned about the impact of recent actions by the government of India on the human

rights of Kashmiris". Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since 1947 and has been the spark of two wars. Last week Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan told the UN General Assembly that India could unleash a "bloodbath" in the Muslim-majority territory. — Agencies

India's monsoon leaves more than 1,600 dead

NEW DELHI: The heaviest monsoon rains to lash India in 25 years have killed more than 1,600 people since June, government data showed yesterday, as authorities battled floods in two northern states and muddy waters swirled inside a major city. The monsoon, which typically lasts between June and September, has already delivered 10% more rain than a 50-year average, and is expected to withdraw only after early October, more than a month later than usual.

The extended rains have wreaked havoc, with northern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states the worst hit in the latest spell of intense downpours, killing 144 people since last Friday, two officials said. In Patna, Bihar's riverside capital city that is home to around two million people, residents said they were wading through waist-deep water to buy essential items like food and milk. Ranjeev Kumar, 65, a resident of Patna's Ashiyana neighborhood, told Reuters by telephone that the entire area was stranded by the water. "The government is not doing any rescue and the situation is very serious here," he said.

On Monday, relief workers rescued Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi from his home in Patna. Video footage showed him dressed in shorts and a t-shirt as he was brought out on a raft along with his family members. Saket Kumar Singh, who lives in the city's Boring Road area, said he was stranded for four days, with about two feet of water inside his house. "There was no electricity, and despite having money I was helpless," Singh, 45, said.

In neighboring Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, heavy rains have brought down more than 800 homes and swathes of farmland are submerged. Data released by the federal home ministry shows that 1,673 people have died because of floods and heavy rains this year, as of Sept. 29. Officials said that many of these fatalities



PATNA, India: A view of a waterlogged ward of the Nalanda Medical College and Hospital is seen following heavy rains in the Indian state of Bihar on Monday. — AFP

were caused due to wall and building collapses, including in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, the western state that has seen 371 flood-related deaths in 2019, the highest in the country. "The danger of old or weak structures collapsing increases during the heavy rainfall, like what happened this time," Chandrakant Sharma, a flood

expert with Uttar Pradesh's disaster relief department said. India's flood prevention and forecasting systems are lacking, other experts say, even as the total flood prone area in the country has increased in recent decades because of deforestation, degradation of water bodies, and climate change. — Reuters



MUMBAI: City civil authority workers pick up plastic waste and trash during a clean-up drive on Versova beach in Mumbai. — AFP

India shelves plan on nationwide ban on single-use of plastics

NEW DELHI: India has held off imposing a blanket ban on single-use plastics to combat pollution, officials said yesterday, a measure seen as too disruptive for industry at a time when it is coping with an economic slowdown and job losses. The plan was for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to outlaw six items on Wednesday, the 150th anniversary of the birth of independence leader Mahatma Gandhi, as part of a broader campaign to rid India of single-use plastics by 2022.

But two officials said there would be no immediate move to ban plastic bags, cups, plates, small bottles, straws and certain types of sachets and instead the government would try to curb their use. For now, government will ask states to enforce existing rules against storing, manufacturing and using some single-use plastic products such as polythene bags and styrofoam, Chandra Kishore Mishra, the top bureaucrat at the ministry of environment, told Reuters.

"There is no new ban order being issued," Mishra said. "Now, it's a question of telling people about the ill-effects of plastic, of collecting and sending for recycling so people don't litter." The government's proposed nationwide ban

had dismayed consumer firms, which use plastic in packaging for everything from sodas and biscuits to ketchup and shampoo.

The Confederation of Indian Industry, a lobby group, said the move had become an existential issue for several economic sectors because alternatives were not immediately available. It said small-sized plastic bottles used for pharmaceutical or health products should be exempted as there is no alternate available. Sachets made from so-called multi-layered packaging should also not be banned, as that could disrupt supplies of products like biscuits, salt and milk, the confederation said.

"There was a conscious decision within the government not to hit businesses hard for now and discourage use of plastic only on a voluntary basis," said an official working on policy. He declined to be identified in line with government rules. Plastic waste is at epidemic proportions in the world's oceans with an estimated 100 million tons dumped there to date, according to the United Nations. Scientists have found large amounts of micro plastic in the intestines of deep-dwelling ocean mammals like whales.

India, which uses about 14 million tons of plastic annually, lacks an organized system for management of plastic waste, leading to widespread littering. "The toxins, poisons and persistent pollutants present in some of these plastic products leach and enter human bodies where they cause several diseases, including cancer," said Chitra Mukherjee, head of advocacy and policy at Delhi-based Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group. — Reuters

Disputed isles at centre of dispute between Japan and South Korea

TOKYO: A South Korean fighter jet conducted a patrol flight over islands at the centre of a territorial dispute with Japan, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said yesterday, the latest escalation of a bitter feud over history, trade and territory. Below are key facts about the disputed islands, known as Dokdo in Korea and Takeshima in Japan. The islands row has heated up amid a fierce dispute over compensation for Koreans forced to work in Japanese firms' mines and factories during World War Two.

What and where

There are two main volcanic islands and numerous smaller islets about equidistant from Japan and South Korea in the Sea of Japan and have a total land area of just under 0.20 square kilometers. The cluster lies in fertile fishing grounds and may sit above enormous deposits of natural gas hydrate that could be worth billions of dollars, Seoul has said. The place is controlled by South Korea, with 25 guards and three lighthouse keepers currently stationed there.

Competing claims

The dispute is deeply emotional for Koreans, who say the islands have been recorded as being part of Korean territory since the year 512 and were the first pieces of their territory seized by Japan when it started its 1910-1945 colonial reign over the peninsula. South Korea has built lodgings, lighthouses and a monitoring facility on the islands despite repeated protests by Japan.

Japan insists the islands were never a part of Korea to begin with, so they were not returned when Tokyo relinquished its claims to the peninsula after its defeat in World War Two. Japan says it had established sovereignty over the islands by the mid-17th century when they were a stop-over point for its fishermen, and were incorporated into Shimane Prefecture in 1905, when South Korea became a Japanese protectorate. Tokyo says the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty confirmed Japanese sovereignty after World War Two. North Korea also claims sovereignty over the islands. — Reuters

Citing 'unhealthy air', Vietnam tells people to limit outdoor activities

HANOI: Vietnam warned its people yesterday to limit outdoor activities because the air quality in the Southeast Asian country has persistently been at "unhealthy" levels for days. The levels of hazardous small particles known as PM2.5 in the air at the country's two largest cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, have been rising persistently since early last month, exceeding "Vietnamese standards", the government said in a statement.

The government blamed the pollution on low rain and farmers burning rice crop remnants after the harvest to prepare for new plantings. Coal is also widely used for power generation in the country. Air Visual - an independent online air quality index monitor - says Hanoi's reading of PM2.5 has exceeded 300 micrograms per cubic meter at times, the worst in the world. Yesterday, it showed PM2.5 levels at 180 in Hanoi and 86 in Ho Chi Minh.

The World Health Organization recommends an air quality standard for PM2.5 of no more than 10 micrograms per cubic meter. Such pollution could become a political issue in Vietnam, where protests have been held in the past against the degradation of the environment. Communist-ruled Vietnam tolerates little dissent and protesters and activists are often prevented from gathering or charged with "causing public disorder". — Reuters

Russians drinking less, living longer, WHO says

MOSCOW: Russia remains a nation of heavy drinkers, but alcohol consumption has fallen 43 percent from 2003 to 2016, a key factor in the country's rapid rise in life expectancy, the World Health Organization said yesterday. Russians consume the equivalent of 11-12 liters worth of pure ethanol a year, among the world's highest consumption levels, but the reduction since 2003 has substantially reduced mortality, the WHO said in a report. Male life expectancy sank to a low of 57 years in the 1990s, but began to climb significantly in 2003 as drinking levels peaked, the report said.

It now stands at almost 68 years for men and 78 years for women. Mortality resulting from all causes dropped by 39 percent from 2003 to 2018 in men and by 36 percent for women, according to the study, which looked at trends over almost 30 years. The study said there was a clear correlation between national alcohol consumption and mortality rates and life expectancy, and that the reduction in drinking resulted from government policies adopted from 2000. "...our publication provides a clear causal link between the implementation of effective alcohol policies and a reversal of mortality trends," the study wrote.

President Vladimir Putin who has been in power since the turn of the century is battling a demographic slump. Last year the population contracted by 86,000 people, the first annual contraction recorded in a decade, the state statistics service said. Putin has long cultivated an image of sobriety in contrast to his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, whom many Russians associate with drunken and embarrassing gaffes. The study pointed to alcohol policy reforms aimed at reducing the share of smuggled or home-made alcohol on the market, increasing alcohol excise taxes and raising the minimum price for vodka and other spirits. — Reuters

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian GulfTHE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
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COMMERCIAL : 24835618P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netFirms in Cuba
run afoul of US
banking squeeze

The bank used by a Swiss NGO operating in Cuba has refused to handle any more transfers to Havana over fears of US sanctions, a concern replicated across the international financial system when dealing with the communist-run island. "We don't know what to do," said Luisa Sanchez, coordinator of MediCuba, an NGO operating in Cuba since 1992 providing HIV, cancer and pediatric assistance. "On August 27, our bank called our accountant to inform him that from September 1, there would be no more transfers to Cuba," Sanchez told AFP in Havana.

The bank, PostFinance, was one of the last Swiss banks to accept such transactions. Contacted by AFP, the Swiss Post subsidiary confirmed it was cutting banking links to Cuba "due to the United States sanctions". "PostFinance isn't subject to US law, but it participates in global payment transactions and therefore depends on a network of correspondent banks and access to dollar operations," it said.

MediCuba is not alone. Some companies left to find other means of paying employees and rent say they are looking urgently for another bank - often private institutions that charge high commissions. Some are using Western Union money transfers while the more desperate have taken to asking travelers to bring cash into the country for them.

Excessive caution

"The banks are going into a phase of overcompliance and this affects everyone," claimed a European tourism entrepreneur, who said his bank gave him a 60-day notice to close his account. The businessman said any transfer from a foreign client, which includes the word "Cuba" in the title, is enough to set off alarm bells at international banks.

For Cuba, which depends on foreign investment to boost growth, the banking crunch is bad news. The government estimates that restrictions it faced with 140 banks during the past year has cost the country nearly three quarters of a billion dollars. Nervousness on the banks' part is nothing new in Havana. The United States has been enforcing a trade embargo on Cuba since 1962 that prohibits the communist-run island from making dollar transactions.

The US has long set a precedent of aggressively going after banks that seek to defy sanctions. Italy's UniCredit paid a \$1.3 billion fine in April for moving millions of dollars through the US banking system on behalf of Cuba, Iran and Libya. In 2014, French bank BNP Paribas agreed to pay a record \$8.9 billion penalty for conspiring to violate sanctions that prohibit transactions with Sudan and other countries.

Since the arrival of Donald Trump in the White House, Washington has toughened sanctions against Cuba, accusing it of aiding and abetting President Nicolas Maduro's government in Venezuela. French bank Societe Generale is facing a suit in Miami under the recently revived Helms Burton law for profiting from property seized by Havana in the wake of the 1959 revolution. The plaintiffs are the heirs to a Cuban bank that is now part of the National Bank of Cuba, with which the French bank conducted business.

Essential dollar

"Ninety-nine percent of banks have American interests," said Dominique Hector, a French lawyer who advises foreign companies in Cuba and Panama. Companies are vulnerable even if they don't officially have a presence on the island, she says. "In the banking system, there is always a step controlled by the United States," through the use of the dollar, the currency of reference. "I have several clients whose accounts have been closed," while others "could never receive their payments because their French bank refused to process them," said Hector.

Panama's Multibank also shut down numerous foreign accounts related to Cuba this year. At the UN General Assembly last week, Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez slammed the US over increased hostility against Havana, particularly for imposing additional obstacles to foreign trade and banking and financial restrictions. But there seems little that Cuba or the banks can do to counter the problem. — AFP

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A military cadet watches rifles at the opening of the exhibition entitled "Kalashnikov, a soldier, a designer, a legend" dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mikhail Kalashnikov, the Russian inventor of the AK-47 assault rifle, at the Victory Museum in Moscow on Sept 24, 2019. — AFP

Russians mark 100th birthday of Kalashnikov

Dozens of cadets and youngsters from Russia's Youth Army have been getting up close and personal with perhaps the world's most iconic firearm as their country prepares to mark the centenary of the birth of Mikhail Kalashnikov, maker of the legendary rifle. At Victory Museum in western Moscow, visitors including the young cadets are invited to assemble Kalashnikovs and pose for selfies at the exhibition dedicated to the famous automatic weapon.

Russia will next month celebrate the life of Kalashnikov, designer of the AK-47, with a number of events, including the museum display and a biopic. Kalashnikov, who died in 2013 at the age of 94, is seen in Russia as a national hero and symbol of the country's proud military past. His AK-47 has become a weapon of choice for both guerrillas and governments the world over. It is also a staple of early military education in Russia.

Maxim, a young cadet, said he learned to put together and take apart an AK rifle at school. "At first your fingers hurt, but then it's quite easy," he told AFP. The exhibition was put together by the Kalashnikov museum in Izhevsk, an industrial town in the Ural mountains, where the inventor worked at the Izhmash weapons factory until his retirement. Alexander Yermakov, the museum's deputy director, said he hoped the inventor's story would inspire "the next generation of Kalashnikovs".

Kalashnikov was showered with every possible major prize in the Soviet Union, and the Kremlin in 2009 gave him the highest honor - Hero of Russia. In 2017, authorities

unveiled a monument to Kalashnikov holding his weapon in central Moscow. Born in a Siberian village on November 10, 1919, Kalashnikov had a tragic childhood during which his father was deported as a "kulak" (prosperous peasant) in 1930. Wounded during a bloody battle with Nazi forces in 1941, Kalashnikov was given a leave during which he thought up the first versions of the rifle. In 1945, a prototype was entered into a competition and the design was eventually recommended for use in the Soviet army. It quickly became prized for its simplicity, cheapness and sturdy reliability.

'Deep torment'

AK-47's name stands for "Kalashnikov's Automatic" and the year its final version was designed, 1947. More than 100 million Kalashnikovs have been sold worldwide and about 50 armies use the AK-47 including those in Iraq and Somalia. Although Kalashnikov said he created the rifle to "defend the fatherland's borders," Moscow first used the gun internationally to put down riots in East Berlin in 1953 and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, journalist C J Chivers wrote in his book "The Gun".

Chivers challenged the official narrative according to which a lone maverick inventor came up with a genius design. "The weapon was designed collectively, the culmination of work by many people over many years," Chivers wrote. The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened the floodgates for weapons trafficking, and the AK turned into the preferred weapon for guerrillas, dictators, and even

school shooters in the United States. The "kalash", as the firearm is called in Russian and French, has been used in attacks in Paris, to settle scores among gangs and poach for wildlife in Africa. In his twilight years Kalashnikov said he was tormented by the thought that his invention had caused so many deaths. In a letter to the Russian Patriarch, he asked if "because my rifle deprived people of life, then can it be that I... was to blame for their deaths?" He said that he experienced "deep emotional torment" knowing that Kalashnikovs ended up in children's hands in conflict zones.

'Everything kept secret'

During the Soviet era, Kalashnikov's work was shrouded in secrecy. The inventor once said that a US weapons historian managed to contact him by post in the 1970s asking for his biography, but the KGB forbade any contact. "From my first step along the path of a designer, I was hidden and classified," he wrote in one of his books. Nelli Kalashnikova, the inventor's daughter, grew up knowing nothing about her father's work.

Before the 1990s, "our family was kept secret, the kids were kept secret, and everything was kept secret," she told AFP. She described her father as a quiet, modest man of tremendous self-restraint. Kalashnikov became a living legend after the veil of secrecy was lifted but he barely profited financially from his inventions and lived modestly in Izhevsk. Today, Russia manufactures fifth-generation Kalashnikov rifles - AK-12 and AK-15. — AFP

Ocean plastic
waste probably
comes from ships

Most of the plastic bottles washing up on the rocky shores of Inaccessible Island, aptly named for its sheer cliffs rising from the middle of the South Atlantic, probably come from Chinese merchant ships, a study published Monday said. The study offers fresh evidence that the vast garbage patches floating in the middle of oceans, which have sparked much consumer hand-wringing in recent years, are less the product of people dumping single-use plastics in waterways or on land, than they are the result of merchant marine vessels tossing their waste overboard by the ton.

The authors of the study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, or PNAS, collected thousands of pieces of waste during visits to the tiny island in 1984, 2009 and again in 2018. The island is located roughly midway between Argentina and South Africa in the South Atlantic gyre, a vast whirlpool of currents that has

created what has come to be known as an oceanic garbage patch. While initial inspections of the trash washing up on the island showed labels indicating it had come from South America, some 3,000 km to the west, by 2018 three-quarters of the garbage appeared to originate from Asia, mostly China. Many of the plastic bottles had been crushed with their tops screwed on tight, as is customary on board ships to save space, said report author Peter Ryan, director of the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

Around 90 percent of the bottles found had been produced in the previous two years, ruling out the possibility that they had been carried by ocean currents over the vast distance from Asia, which would normally take three to five years. Since the number of Asian fishing vessels has remained stable since the 1990s, while the number of Asian - and in particular, Chinese - cargo vessels has vastly increased in the Atlantic, the researchers concluded that the bottles must come from merchant vessels, which toss them overboard rather than dumping them as trash at ports. "It's inescapable that it's from ships, and it's not coming from land," Ryan told AFP. "A certain sector of the merchant fleet seems to be doing that, and it seems to be largely an Asian one," he said.

Fishing nets

There are two distinct types of marine pollution. On

the one hand, there are the beaches around urban centers: the plastics that are found there come from coastal areas, and include bottles, bags and packaging. But these things sink easily and are less likely to be carried far by currents. Farther out in the oceans, the garbage patches contain fragments of objects of unclear origin, as well as items used by cargo ships and fishing fleets: Not just the bottles emptied by the ships' crews, but also nets, ropes, buoys, crates, barrels and floats. "It's an underappreciated cause of pollution," said Ryan.

Half of the great Pacific garbage patch is made up of fishing nets, by weight, according to a report published last year in Scientific Reports. Oceanographer Laurent Lebreton, one of the authors of the latter report, said that the oft-quoted figure of 80 percent of plastic pollution coming from the land does not apply to the high seas. He recalled having found huge clusters of nets created by fishing vessels in the North Pacific, known as "fish aggregating devices" to attract fish.

"Often they don't retrieve them and they are lost. We have found several tons of them," said Lebreton, of the organization The Ocean Cleanup. "Everyone talks about saving the oceans by stopping using plastic bags, straws and single use packaging. That's important, but when we head out on the ocean, that's not necessarily what we find," he said. — AFP

Forsaken in terror
war, Kenyan islands
await doctors by boat

Laden with medicines, the speedboat sets off before dawn, its path lit only by the full moon as it cuts between miles of thick mangroves towards Kenya's border with Somalia, where few dare to go. Two hours later at sunrise, the boat arrives at Kiangwe village, one of several remote coastal communities whose only healthcare comes from these monthly visits by the Safari Doctors mobile medical team. Volunteer doctors and nurses roll up their trousers and heave containers full of medical supplies onto their shoulders before wading ashore and hiking up a hill to a building that will serve as their clinic for a few hours.

Kiangwe and surrounding villages have been hard-hit by the Kenyan government's war with Somali extremist group Al-Shabaab, whose militants operate from within the nearby Boni Forest which straddles the border. In the distance, between stick-and-mud houses topped with palm fronds, stands a shuttered clinic that was built but never occupied. "We have several buildings lying dormant because we have personnel (professional nurses and doctors) that don't want to get posted" to the region, said Umr Omar, the 36-year-old who founded Safari Doctors four years ago. So, every month, over a few days, her voluntary team made up of both Kenyan and foreign medics

visits up to 12 villages, some of which require a last-minute phone call to check on security. However four other villages in the region are considered no-go zones and have no healthcare access at all, said Omar. Thanks to donations and fundraising, the Safari Doctors mobile medical team treats up to 800 patients a month.

Few options in emergencies

Inside the makeshift clinic, the team sets up a triage area where patients are weighed and have their blood pressure taken, before being directed to one of several desks manned by medical personnel. At one desk, a group of nurses crowd around a woman with a hard lump in her neck, believed to be a bullet lodged there from an Al-Shabaab ambush on a car she was travelling in several years ago. "I was the only one left... others had died on the spot," Bilal Abdi said of the attack, which also left her with bullet wounds in her foot.

The nurses advise her to go to Lamu to get the bullet removed. Asked how she will do so, she just shakes her head. Rufia Alio, 55, sliced his finger open while farming over a week before the mobile clinic visited, and is finally getting it bandaged up. "There are no hospitals here which is a problem. We have pregnant women here, we have the aged ones who are suffering, there are others who suffer from fever... and thus when Safari Doctors come they help by giving us medicine and injections," he said.

However once the Safari Doctors move on, there are few options. Omar tells of a young man from Kiangwe who carried a sick villager with appendicitis on a 24-hour journey by motorbike in order to get him to a hospital. That journey costs about \$30, but the road is dangerous and



Children wait on the beach for the arrival of a mobile clinic run by Safari Doctors at Kiangwe in Lamu on June 17, 2019. — AFP

prone to Al-Shabaab attacks, while communities on islands have no access to a road. Hiring a speedboat to Lamu town can cost up to \$200 - a fortune for members of this community who mostly live off the land. Omar said that for a woman in emergency labor, the bumpy speedboat ride is "something else", while some have even given birth in the middle of the ocean. In a bid to plug the gap, Safari Doctors has trained traditional birth attendants and given youth in the communities basic first aid training. Lamu County has long been one of the poorest, most underdeveloped, and marginalized areas in Kenya. Locals say their plight has only grown worse since the army in 2015 sent troops into the area to flush Al-Shabaab militants out of the forest, in what was meant to be a three-month operation, but has yet to come to an end. — AFP

Business

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FLINT, Michigan: In this file photo taken on June 12, 2019, line workers assemble the chassis of full-size General Motors pickup trucks at the Flint assembly plant. US manufacturing activity tumbled to a more than 10-year low in September as lingering trade tensions weighed on exports, according to an industry survey released yesterday. — AFP

US factory activity sinks to 10-year low

Lingering trade tensions weigh on exports

WASHINGTON: US manufacturing activity tumbled to a more than 10-year low in September as lingering trade tensions weighed on exports, further heightening financial market concerns of a sharp slowdown in economic growth in the third quarter.

The survey from the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) yesterday came on the heels of data last week showing a moderation in consumer spending in August. The economy's fading fortunes have been blamed on the White House's 15-month trade war with China, which has sapped business confidence and undermined manufacturing. "This is serious," said Torsten Slok, chief economist at Deutsche Bank Securities in New York. "There is no end in sight to this slowdown, the recession risk is real."

The Federal Reserve cut interest rates again last month after lowering borrowing costs in July for the first time since 2008 to keep the longest economic expansion in history on track.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said trade policy tensions, which "have waxed and waned, and elevated uncertainty is weighing on US investment and exports." Powell said US central bank contacts had told policymakers that trade policy uncertainty "has discouraged them

from investing in their businesses."

The ISM said its index of national factory activity dropped 1.3 points to a reading of 47.8 last month, the lowest level since June 2009, when the recession was ending. A reading below 50 indicates contraction in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for about 11 percent of the US economy. September's reading marked the second straight month that the index broke below the 50 threshold.

The index has now declined for a sixth consecutive month and is in stark contrast with a rebound in the so-called hard data like industrial production, which showed output at factories rising in August. Still, the ISM index needs to drop below the 42.9 level to signal a recession in the broader economy.

The US-China trade war also coincides with a fading boost from last year's \$1.5 trillion tax cut package. The ISM said comments from manufacturers "reflect a continuing decrease in business confidence," and also noted that "global trade remains the most significant issue." Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the ISM index rising to 50.1 in September.

The ISM's forward-looking new orders sub-index edged up to a reading of 47.3 last month from 47.2,

which was the lowest level since June 2012. A measure of export orders plunged 2.3 points to a reading of 41.0 in September. The survey's factory employment index dropped to 46.3 last month from 47.4 in August. The dollar fell against a basket of currencies after the data. US Treasury prices rose. US stocks were trading lower.

Construction spending tepid

Slowing economic growth was also underscored by a separate report from the Commerce Department showing construction spending edged up 0.1 percent in August. Data for July was revised down to show construction outlays unchanged instead of nudging up 0.1 percent as previously reported.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast construction spending increasing 0.4 percent in August. Construction spending fell 1.9 percent on a year-on-year basis in August. Spending on private residential projects jumped 0.9 percent, the biggest gain since November 2018, after rising 0.6 percent in July. Housing starts and building permits surged to a more than 12-year high in August, government data showed last month, lifted by declining mortgage rates.

The 30-year fixed mortgage rate has dropped about

130 basis points from last year's highs to an average of 3.64 percent, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac. Spending on private nonresidential structures, which includes manufacturing and power plants, dropped 1.0 percent in August to the lowest level since January 2018. Investment in private nonresidential structures decreased 1.6 percent in July.

Outlays on private nonresidential structures have been weighed down by a manufacturing downturn due to trade tensions and cheaper energy products. Investment in nonresidential construction fell at its steepest pace in more than three years in the second quarter. That contributed to business investment declining for the first time in more than three years. Spending on private construction projects was unchanged in August after declining for four straight months.

Investment in public construction projects rose 0.4 percent after increasing 1.4 percent in July. Spending on state and local government construction projects gained 0.6 percent. That followed a 1.7 percent surge in July. Outlays on federal government construction projects dropped 2.2 percent in August after falling 2.5 percent in the prior month. — Reuters

Iranian home buyers dodge sanctions, make Turkey their plan B

ISTANBUL: Iranians in Turkey are finding ways to sidestep laws in their home country to buy properties and get Turkish passports, hoping to protect their savings even as the United States ramps up sanctions on Iran. As they find ways around Iran's money-transfer restrictions, the spike in home-buying has propelled Iranians to become Turkey's second-largest foreign property buyers, behind only Iraqis.

Hundreds of professional Iranians have been forced to make "dodgy money transfers" simply to get by, said one former electrician shop owner who now helps his countrymen buy homes in Istanbul.

Interviewed in a housing complex of towers and shops where Farsi was heard as much

as Turkish, he said he is not proud of his work which involves helping Iranians transfer money out of their country for which he receives a commission. Some of the transactions he makes for his fellow countrymen are illegal and he knows that if he returned home he would be arrested for money laundering.

"There is no way to do it legally, so we help them transfer the money," he said under condition of anonymity. "Who am I to be doing this? A bank should actually be doing this job."

Washington's policy of "maximum pressure" sanctions meant to cripple Iran's economy and force concessions over its nuclear program have prompted Tehran to limit the foreign currency citizens can hold outside banks. But that and other measures meant to support the Iranian rial have been widely disobeyed, analysts say, prompting the government to resort to bartering to keep the economy afloat.

According to five Iranians who spoke to Reuters about property-buying in neighboring Turkey, they are attracted because of the similar Muslim-majority culture and the ease of registering businesses as foreigners in a country that does not recognize US sanc-

tions on Iran. After last year's currency crisis tipped Turkey's economy into recession, the Turkish government made it easier for foreign nationals to gain citizenship, slashing the property investment threshold to \$250,000 from \$1 million. The lifetime passport offer, for foreigners who commit not to sell for at least three years, is meant to keep money flowing into an economy that was driven for years by a foreign-funded construction boom.

But for middle-class Iranians, property ownership presented an escape from difficulties back home and a safe haven from US sanctions, which Washington increased again two weeks ago by targeting Iran's central bank. "I have a lot of friends and acquaintances who have bought houses in Istanbul and Izmir. People are thinking about buying houses as a plan B," said Ali Asgarzade, an Iranian lawyer who plans to move his family from Tabriz to Istanbul due to economic conditions. Asgarzade said he found the price of baby formula in Iran baffling because it tripled in a matter of months after the reimposition of sanctions. He then decided Turkey was the right choice for his family. — Reuters

Ford, Mahindra agree on \$275m deal for India, emerging markets

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI: Ford Motor Co and Mahindra & Mahindra will form a joint venture in India valued at \$275 million to produce and sell vehicles in the country and export to emerging markets, the two companies said yesterday.

The two companies have for months been negotiating the deal which will see Ford take a 49% stake in the new entity and end most of its independent local operations in the country, Reuters reported in April. Under the terms of the deal, which is likely to be finalized by mid-2020, Ford will transfer its local automotive assets, including both its car manufacturing plants in the country,

and employees to the new entity, the companies said in a statement.

Under pressure from shareholders to make profits, Ford has been globally restructuring its businesses with an aim to save \$11 billion over the next few years. By shifting to a joint venture, Ford is changing its India strategy where it has long run an independent operation in a market dominated by Asian car makers like Suzuki Motor Corp and Hyundai Motor Co and where several others have struggled to make money.

"Strong alliances like this play a crucial role in assuring we continue to achieve our vision while at the same time staying competitive and delivering value to our global stakeholders," Jim Hackett, Ford president and CEO said in the statement. Ford's two car manufacturing plants - one in Chennai in southern India and the other in Sanand in western India which was inaugurated in 2015 - will be moved to the new joint venture, the companies said. Ford will retain its engine plant at Sanand and its global business center in Chennai. — Reuters



Conquering every terrain: New Nissan Patrol makes global debut in Mideast

Nissan SUV flagship delivers even higher levels of comfort, safety and connectivity

ABU DHABI: Nissan unveiled the new 2020 Nissan Patrol with enhancements that offer customers even higher levels of sophistication, comfort, safety and connectivity.

The new Patrol features striking new design, enhanced luxury features and the latest advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility technologies. At the same time, the new Nissan Patrol retains its exceptional on- and off-road "Go Anywhere" capabilities and class-leading power.

The Nissan Patrol is the icon of Nissan's SUV heritage, loved by generations of loyal customers who have purchased about 1.9 million since it debuted in 1951. Known for its durability, reliability, premium design, safety, comfort features and unmatched all-terrain performance, the Patrol remains the flagship of Nissan's extensive 4x4 lineup. The car holds a special place in the hearts and minds of Middle Eastern customers who value performance even in the toughest of conditions, a key attribute of the Patrol. "Patrol is one of our longest-standing and most cherished models with a long and proud heritage," said Joni Paiva, regional vice-president, AMI region. "The new Nissan Patrol represents the peak of luxury and ultimate capability and will continue to provide authentic experiences to its loyal customers in the Middle East and around the world."

Engineered from the wheels up to tackle the most demanding driving conditions on the planet, over the years the Nissan Patrol has more than earned its reputation. Patrol



Thierry Sabbagh, Managing Director, Nissan Middle East



Richard Miller Global Program Director, Full-Size Trucks and SUV - Nissan Motor Co



Joni Paiva Regional Vice President, Marketing and Sales for Africa, Middle East and India, Nissan Motor Co. Ltd.

can provide the same outstanding level of comfort cruising on the highway in Dubai or negotiating rocky mountain terrain.

The Patrol has established itself as one of the most capable vehicles around, with outstanding driving performance, best-in-class engines and advanced Hydraulic Body Motion Control. With that as a starting point for the new 2020 Patrol, Nissan took all of the aspects of a vehicle that already provided owners with top level comfort, safety and confidence behind the wheel - and made it ever better.

Thierry Sabbagh, Managing Director, Nissan Middle East said, "The story of Nissan Patrol in the Gulf dates to the very first iteration of this legendary four-wheel drive when it first appeared in Kuwait. It was the start of a love affair between the desert people of the Arabian Peninsula and the Patrol that exists, to this day. In a region steeped in tradition, yet steered by the future, it was only fitting to host the

global launch of the new Patrol in the Middle East."

The Patrol's ruggedly stylish appearance and all-conquering performance has led the model to become an inseparable part of the social and cultural fabric of the Middle East. The iconic SUV's popularity is ever-growing in the UAE. It continued segment domination with a 45.2 per cent market share in FY18 (GCC market share is 27 percent; GLF market share excluding KSA is 33 percent) and retains its position as a majority contributor to Nissan Patrol's global sales.

"Today, we can proudly say that the 2020 Nissan Patrol is built to reflect the aspirations of our Middle Eastern customers. We are delighted to introduce a powerful and elegant vehicle that is capable of exploring the world around you and with you, whilst still retaining a sense of safety, comfort and sophistication", he added.

Signature design changes for the new Patrol include Nissan's V-motion grille, interpreted in a new way for SUVs. Along with the new boomerang-shaped LED headlights, the redesigned grille highlights the Patrol's strong, angular front.

At the rear, the Patrol's new taillights also sport the boomerang shape. They are seamlessly integrated along with a large chrome nameplate and sequential rear turn indicators, which have been added for the first time on a Nissan vehicle. Inside, a new center console incorporates dual displays featuring Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. This ensures customers are always connected and can make the most of their

smartphones. New diamond-stitch quilted leather seats with added padding provide a luxurious feel, as does the new hand-stitched steering wheel. Climate control and powered lumbar support are optionally available for the front seats. Significant reductions in noise and vibration result in a quieter, more pleasant cabin. Improved cooling and air flow distribution systems lead to quicker cooling, ideal in hot climates.

The new Nissan Patrol also stands out for its extensive suite of advanced safety and security technologies. In addition to the Nissan Intelligent Mobility technologies already available, the new Patrol comes with Intelligent Emergency Braking with pedestrian detection and the Intelligent Forward Collision Warning system.

All-terrain Patrol power is provided by the strongest V6 and V8 engines in the segment. The base 4.0-liter V6 produces 275 horsepower and 394 Nm of torque. The 5.6-liter V8 produces 400 horsepower and 560 Nm of torque. An All-Mode 4x4 system lets the driver switch modes to handle different on- and off-road conditions. Hydraulic Body Motion Control, available on V8 models, ensures a more comfortable ride thanks to improved suspension and vibration reduction. The new Nissan Patrol will be available at Nissan dealers across the Middle East from September 25, 2019 at a starting price of AED 199,900 (inclusive of 5 percent VAT). Prices per market will be revealed at their respective launches and will vary from market to market.



Business

Huawei founder: AI will change how international community develops

Zhengfei hosts Kaplan, Cochrane OBE and Wenlin in an open dialogue on innovation, rules and trust

KUWAIT: Ren Zhengfei, CEO and founder of Huawei, hosted an open discussion alongside other prominent guests examining the role of innovation and trust in the future of the information, communication and technology (ICT) sector. He stated that technology will continue evolving in an unpredictable manner and emphasized that there was no need to feel uneasy about this. "We should embrace this new era with great courage," said Zhengfei.

Zhengfei was joined in the discussion by computer scientist, futurist, and serial entrepreneur Jerry Kaplan; Professor Peter Cochrane OBE, innovator, academic, and consultant, and Zhang Wenlin, President of Corporate Strategy Department, Huawei. When asked how he saw the future, Zhengfei commented: "I believe that society is on the eve of another explosion of new theories and technologies. Technology will continue evolving in a manner that we cannot predict yet. We can't tell what the trends of the future will be."

Artificial intelligence, however, will have a large role to play. "AI will certainly start being applied on a large scale," said Zhengfei. "It will just create greater wealth and generate higher efficiency for society as a whole. AI will be the core variable that will influence and shape a country's future capabilities and bring disruptive changes to that country. This means AI will fundamentally change how the international community develops. With support from infrastructure that includes super-computers, super-large storage systems, and ultra-high-speed connectivity, humanity will welcome a new level of prosperity."

Speaking on AI's impact on society, Kaplan said: "AI is not magic. It's not really about intelligence at all. It's simply a new wave of automation. To understand what's going to happen with AI, you simply have to look at previous waves of automation. While automation disrupts labor markets, it doesn't cause the jobs to disappear.



Ren Zhengfei

New jobs will be created. As we become wealthier, demand will be created. We get a new middle class and new demands for goods and services. And in fact, automation will change the nature of labor, not put people out of work."

Cochrane discussed the purpose of AI and the ICT sector. "What are we trying to do? First of all, we have to try and create sustainable societies. To do that, we have to get away from the idea that we can polish and improve what we've got. It won't work. Transformation demands biotech, nano tech, AI and robotics, and the Internet of Things. Because anything we create for the future has to be recycled, repurposed, reused, and the only way we can orchestrate this is with the IoT. We have to stop producing more and more for the few, and we have to start providing sufficient for the many. If we do not, we will never see a stable planet where people are living equitable lives. There is sufficient on this planet to support every human, but with the technology we have right now, we stand to destroy our ecosystem. So, we have to



Coffee with Ren Zhengfei, founder and CEO of Huawei

change the way we live and the way we do things."

Within the past year, levels of trust in technology, particularly AI and 5G, have been challenged. On this point, Zhengfei referred to how, then the first train was introduced to China, people thought that they were powered by ghosts and couldn't figure out how they ran - but that now no-one complains about them at all. "Now people are very concerned about AI," he said. "They are worried that AI will cause unemployment, disrupt social structures, and distort our ethics. They worry too much. Advancements in technology have helped us create more wealth. 5G itself is a tool, just like the ballast beds that train tracks are laid on. That's all it is about. People should have more trust and tolerance towards new things. The most prominent feature of innovation is that it gives everyone academic freedom, allowing peo-

ple to explore."

"People have concerns, fears, and high expectations for technology," said Wenlin. "I think the best way forward is to have an open discussion about the nature and stages of technology with people like sociologists, scientists, regulators, and tech companies. With more dialogue among industry players, I think we will work out a trustworthy management framework based on a more reasonable and clear understanding of technology. Then we will help more people understand technology and see it in a rational way. As tech companies, we should do everything in our power to take on complexity ourselves, enable our users to understand the key nature of technology and the rights they have, and give them more choices. This way, we will gradually earn users' trust and continue building trust from society as a whole."

Al Mulla Automobiles welcomes customers to new Mercedes-Benz service center in Ahmadi



Management and staff

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles, the sole authorized distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, welcomes its customers to its Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned showroom and service center in Ahmadi, where it offers customers a range of certified pre-owned vehicles and a wide selection of maintenance and repair services in its service center.

This facility is part of Al Mulla Automobiles dedication to being closer to its customers across Kuwait and providing them with the best services, while maintaining its promise to offering them the best experience at all of its facilities and showrooms.

The Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned showroom conforms to the Mercedes-Benz future retail concept MAR2020, which can be easily felt in the overall look and design of the showroom, vehicle presentation, sales process, and customer consultation.

The new facility extends over an area of 2,500 m² divided into 1,200 m² for CPO showroom operation, 1,300 m² for after sales and parts operations. The showroom has the capacity to display 15 Certified Pre-Owned cars and features private and semi-private customer consultation areas, in addition to two vehicle delivery areas where customers can receive their cars.

Pre-owned Mercedes-Benz cars under this label fulfill stringent criteria and undergo thorough checks by the qualified Mercedes-Benz technicians to ensure that customers who drive Mercedes-Benz Certified cars have confidence in the valuable services that this program delivers, including a warranty that



The new service center in Ahmadi

meets the highest standards.

When customers choose a pre-owned Mercedes-Benz under this program, they get the same attention and care as expected when buying a new car. Every pre-owned Mercedes-Benz car has passed rigorous safety, mechanical, and electrical checks. The signed multi-point checklist ensures that the vehicle has undergone thorough testing.

The new service center in Ahmadi offers a variety of options that suit the needs of different customers and aims to achieve their full satisfaction. The Ahmadi service center provides services such as General Repair, Express Service, Quick Lube and a Spare Parts.

Whether the customer brings the vehicle in or requests it to be picked up, the vehicle is inspected through the complementary Active Reception service to make sure that required

jobs are properly handled.

The new facility also offers the Mercedes-Benz ExpressService, which provides the highest quality, precise and efficient service in the shortest period of time. The ExpressService includes all annual services such as the Maintenance Repair Service A and Service B, oil change, AC system service, tire change, and brake service. On the other hand, the Quick Lube offers customers a fast engine oil and filter oil change within 30 minutes only.

The Certified Pre-Owned Showroom at Ahmadi is open from 8:30am to 8:30pm Saturday to Thursday, while the Mercedes-Benz Ahmadi Service Center is open to receive customers from 7:00am to 9:00pm (Saturday to Wednesday) and 7:00am to 6:00pm on Thursday. Customers can also pre-book their service appointments by visiting the website.

11% growth of new KFH online users sign up for H1, 2019

KUWAIT: New KFH online users sign up surged by 11 percent for the period January - July in 2019 over the same period last year. In 2018, the total usage of KFH online services reached roughly 90 million. These numbers confirm that KFH is on track and is adapting well to the digital era demands.

Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Waleed Mandani said that these figures reflect the efficiency of KFH online services,

while indicating how KFH effectively utilizes technology to ensure that its business and customer expectations are aligned.

He added that KFH embraced the change in banking and financial services and introduced a wide range of high-end digital services over the past few years.

Mandani explained that KFH had made significant strides with its digital transformation journey, drawing attention to its advanced and innovative financial services and products. This includes KFH Xpress, instant financial transfers service using RippleNet network, Mobile Deposit of Cheques that enables quick deposit of cheques in a fast and efficient way to customers' accounts, the queuing system Skiplino for booking appointments electronically in bank branches, opening several KFH-Go self-banking stations, cash withdrawals via mobile using QR code, Civil ID or mobile number, KFH Pay service for electronic pay-



Waleed Mandani

ments, Robotics Process Automation, Artificial-Intelligence-driven Chatbot, KFH Pass that allows customers to postpone the one of their installment payments online, and many other digital services.

Burgan Bank signs exclusive partnership with Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Co



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced that it has signed an exclusive partnership with Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Company, whereby its customers will be offered many exclusive benefits and discounts.

"We are delighted to be partnering with Al-Yousifi Company, one of the largest and well-known companies in

Kuwait, to offer our clients everything that is extraordinary and different," said Nasser Al Qaisi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Burgan Bank. It is worth mentioning that under this agreement Burgan Bank customers will be able to get discounts up to 50%. This offer will not be seasonal but throughout the year.

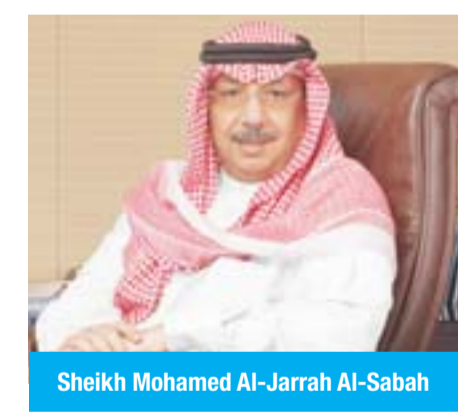
Fitch affirms KIB's long-term IDR at A+ with a stable outlook

KUWAIT: Fitch Ratings London, one of the leading global credit ratings agencies, has reaffirmed Kuwait International Bank's Long-term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'A+' and affirmed viability rating (VR) at 'bb-' with a stable outlook on 30 September 2019. The stable outlook on KIB's Long-term IDR reflects the outlook on the Kuwaiti sovereign rating.

According to Fitch, KIB continues to benefit from a fairly stable operating environment in Kuwait despite the economic impact of low oil prices. The Bank is exposed to slower economic growth, but Fitch believes that the Kuwait government's continuing capital-spending plans will partially offset such pressures. Fitch's expectation of support from the authorities is underpinned by Kuwait's strong ability to provide support to domestic banks, as reflected by the sovereign rating (AA/Stable) and strong willingness to do so irrespective of the banks' size, franchise, funding structure and the level of government ownership. This view is reinforced by the authorities' record of support for the domestic banking system in case of need.

Fitch added that the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) operates a strict regime with hand's on monitoring to ensure the viability of banks, and has acted swiftly in the past to provide support where needed.

In Fitch's view, KIB's Viability Rating (VR) reflects the bank's small, but growing, domestic franchise, concentrated balance sheet, volatile asset quality, variable profitability and high reliance on wholesale funding. Fitch emphasized that the VR factors in the bank's adequate capitalization and well-managed liquidity, as well as



Sheikh Mohamed Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

a fairly stable operating environment in Kuwait. In Fitch's view KIB liquidity risk remained contained.

Fitch also added that the issuance of \$300 million additional tier 1 capital notes in 2Q19 restored the bank's tier 1 ratio and CAR to 19.5 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively.

Fitch also emphasized that the reserve coverage of impaired financing continues to be high by international standards due to the prudent actions of CBK requiring the build-up of precautionary reserves. Fitch believes this is necessary to mitigate the bank's significant concentration.

Sheikh Mohamed Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of KIB said: "This latest rating action is reflective of KIB's impressive standing, and it serves to highlight the Bank's strong financial core as well as its growth strategy. This strategy which is currently underway strive to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers, by adopting latest technology and digital solutions that are accessible at any time and any place to truly satisfy our customers."

Al-Jarrah further added: "The global banking industry must evolve in a way that is compatible for the future and in this effort, KIB made major investments in upgrading IT infrastructure, streamlining systems and processes to provide customers with an enhanced digital experience."

What's On



The Osaka Japanese Restaurant opens in the heart of Kuwait City



Left Tony, the Executive Manager of Osaka Restaurants & Food Supply Co announced on September the 18th during an inauguration ceremony the official Opening of the new Osaka Restaurant, one of the renowned Japanese restaurants in town. Osaka's new branch is strategically located in the heart of Kuwait City, in Qibla.

Since the first opening of Osaka Restaurant in Al Shaab Al Bahri in 2010, and then the opening of its second branch in Salmiya near AUK in 2014, the restaurant succeeded in attracting university students and Kuwait youth to explore and enjoy a lavish experience of traditional Japanese Sushi.

Ever since, the Management of Osaka Co. started conducting intensive feasibility studies with a persuasion from its General Manager Mohsen Boshahrito locate Osaka new branch in downtown, Qibla, insisting on Salmiya area, Al Soor Street as it is considered one of the most vital, dynamic and strategic location at the City heart. The study also covered different ways to launch Osaka in an upscaled contemporary modern look that suits its Clientele with its new and wide-ranging menu dishes.

The new Osaka Japanese Restaurant in Qibla hosts an exceptional décor that merges between Japanese Authentic traditions and it contemporary Modern design, providing to its guests an exceptional dining experience, where the menu includes a variety of traditional and delicious dishes from Soups, Salads, Appetizers, Huge selection from the sushi bar, Grill Teppanyaki, yakitori, Japanese noodles and rice, and not to forget Japan's famous raw and fresh dishes from salmon, tuna, yellowtail fish, scallops to oysters.

Osaka Restaurants & Food Supply Co. is also planning to open a new branch in Ahmadi Gov soon to meet most of the Japanese food lover's needs. Besides, Osaka Restaurant in Al Soor Tower offers a Privatized Valet parking Service, a VIP Room for special Event, an amazing outdoor seating area, and not to forget the Home Live sushi stations service.

The Company is so proud to add Osaka -Kuwait City to its unique collection to become the 7th branch such as ZumaQ8, Marina thai & Weekend. The Company is so confident that Osaka will offer to its guests a unique dining experience to enjoy the most scrumptious Japanese cuisine in a pleasant atmosphere.



ABK's 28th group graduates from 'ABK Academy'

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) congratulated 27 students from the 28th batch of intakes, who recently graduated from the 'ABK Academy' after successfully completing a four week intensive program. The training consisted of two main parts. The first was classroom facilitation and the second was 'on the job' training, whereby trainees had the opportunity to be fully engaged in the work environment of various

departments within the Bank and day-to-day operations, giving them a more hands-on experience.

ABK Academy has graduated a total of 627 candidates to date; preparing a substantial number of individuals to take on jobs within the Bank. This type of involvement and contribution is of tremendous value not only to national youth, who gain tremendous insight into banking as a profession, but also to the Bank who

has the chance to train and employ local talent.

The ABK Academy was launched as an educational platform that focuses on training students and individuals seeking a job opportunity in the banking sector. By engaging with these participants, the Bank is able to build on existing potential and talent, and better identify the areas in the bank, in which they could put this positive energy to work.



KFAS, RIBA to hold happiness in the city symposium

In efforts to further explore the emerging issue of how urban design and architecture can foster wellbeing in our cities, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) have collaborated with The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Department for International Trade (DIT UK), Kuwait University College of Architecture and Pace to hold a one-day symposium in Kuwait on the 14th October 2019. Set under the theme "Happiness in the City - Redesigning Urban Living", the symposium will be held at the Regency Hotel, providing a unique platform for cultural, creative and technical minds to explore the concept of redesigning built-environments to better promote happiness and wellbeing.

Split into three work streams (Creative, Cultural, and Technical), the symposium will bring both local and inter-

national high-level speakers - with international and regional experts in fields such as place-making to physical redevelopment, talking in parallel, as a flagship event for the country with up to 250+ attendees.

In a word from KFAS Director-General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, said: "We are so pleased to be working with RIBA, Pace, DIT and Kuwait University to hold this outstanding event next month. Our collaboration comes as part of our initiative to find new innovative solutions to address the challenges facing our country, made possible by developing the capacities of researchers, policy makers and business executives. Based on the findings of this symposium, we aim to study social sustainability of urban environments, and identify the specific ways urban structural characteristics contribute to the behavioral, experiential and well-being outcomes."

RIBA Gulf Chapter Representative for Kuwait, and Director of Architecture at Pace, Ian Purser, stated: "Using the fast-paced redevelopment of Kuwait as a reference, the 'Happiness in the City Symposium' will provide delegates with a platform to debate how architecture and urban design can best support the wellbeing of our cities and the happiness of the people who live and work in

them, as well as visit them. The symposium presents a unique opportunity for the attendees to discuss the relationship that 'shared happiness' has on the social and economic impact of our cities, with input from specialists in the field of architectural education, industry design and engineering, as well as sociology, environmental psychology and behavioral economics".

Commenting further, Pace CEO, Tarek Shuaib, said: "Our partnership with RIBA goes back years, just as well as KFAS, and it pleases us as one of the leading architectural firms in the region with 50 years of excellence to once more be a part of a major architectural event set up by RIBA and taking place in Kuwait. As pioneers in design and urban development, we find it necessary to participate in the discussion on how to give designers, architects and planners a more concrete understanding of wellbeing in order to build a happy environment that is sustainable - with a special focus on re-designing for equity, social inclusion and sociability that can help us all reconnect". The agenda includes a series of round table discussions, workshops, seminars and an exhibition, which will offer opportunities for delegates to collaborate and engage with fellow delegates and wider design community as well.

No more passport extensions for Filipinos

The Philippine Embassy in Kuwait has sent a circular informing all its citizens here that it will no longer extend the validity of the Philippine passport effective immediately. Passport validity extension may be permitted in special cases including death, medical emergency, or urgent work-related travels. The public is advised to apply for passport renewal at the Embassy at least 7 months to 1 year prior to the passport's date of expiry.

Linden University Fair back in Kuwait with top US Universities

In cooperation with the US Embassy in Kuwait and AMIDEAST, the Linden University Fair will take place at the Marina Hotel from 5:00-8:30 pm on Tuesday, October 8, 2019. The fair is free and open to the public. Some of America's top universities as ranked by the US News and World Report, including Duke University (#10) and the University of California, San Diego (#37), will take part in the fair. The US Embassy's Education Adviser will also be present, along with officers from the Embassy's Consular and Foreign Commercial Services sections.

Agenda

5:00 PM to 6:00 PM - Three of the participating U.S. universities will give an information session about their schools and answer questions from students and parents about educational opportunities in the United States. 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Educational fair

Participating universities

Duke University
University of California, San Diego
University of Utah
Iowa State University of Science and Technology
University of Illinois - Chicago
Manhattan College

Is red meat still unhealthy? maybe not, after all, says study

WASHINGTON: Cutting back on red meat is standard medical advice to prevent cancer and heart disease — but a review of dozens of studies has concluded that the potential risk is low and evidence uncertain. In new guidelines published yesterday in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, a panel of researchers from seven countries suggested that “adults continue current unprocessed red meat consumption.”

The advice — which immediately drew a sharp reaction from other experts — added that adults should also “continue current processed meat consumption.” The research, published in the journal edited by the American College of Physicians, analyzed multiple studies that, taken together, showed reducing red meat consumption by three servings per week could lower cancer mortality by seven deaths per 1,000 people.

Researchers said any such decline was modest and that they had found only a “low” degree of certainty about the statistic. They added that the quality of evidence linking processed meat with cardiovascular diseases and diabetes was “very low.” “There are very small risk reductions in cancer, heart disease and diabetes, however the evidence is uncertain,” Bradley Johnston, an epidemiology professor at Canada’s Dalhousie University and director of the NutriRECS group that put together the guidelines, told AFP. “So there may be a reduction — or there may not be. “People need to make their own decisions. We are giving them the best estimate of the truth.”

Steaks, sausages back on menu?

The researchers said they want to change the “old school”

approach of giving general nutritional recommendations, and to bring more focus on evidence of individual benefit. “People should look at this and hopefully make more well-informed personal choices, rather than being told what to do by authoritative organizations,” Johnston said. But eating less red meat and processed meat has been a cornerstone of dietary guidance for decades in many countries and from leading health groups.

The potential risk is low and evidence uncertain

The World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer says that processed meat is carcinogenic, while red meat is “probably carcinogenic.” In response to the latest guidelines, the World Cancer Research Fund said it would not change its advice. “We maintain our confidence in the rigorous research conducted for 30 years,” said its director of research, Giota Mitrou.

Marji McCullough, epidemiologist at the American Cancer Society, said the researchers had taken into account people’s personal values and preferences. “It’s kind of like saying: ‘we know helmets can save lives, but some people still prefer the feeling of the wind in their hair when they ride bikes. And let’s face it, most people won’t crash,’” she said. “But everyone agrees you should wear a helmet.”

Kevin McConway, emeritus professor of applied statistics at Britain’s Open University, said the lack of hard scientific evidence meant there were few clear answers. “Depressingly, all this tends to indicate that after all these years and all these millions of research participants, we still don’t know much,” he said. — AFP

Indonesia scraps plans to close komodo island

JAKARTA: Indonesia has scrapped plans to ban tourists from an island home to komodo dragons and will instead limit visitor numbers and raise entry prices to create a “premium destination”, officials said. A plan announced last year would have seen Komodo national park close from the start of 2020, over concerns that the giant lizard species were suffering from the effects of mass tourism.

But the mooted closure sparked concern in the area’s tourism industry and could have meant relocating a couple thousand island residents. It also did not apply to nearby islands where the giant, slaving carnivores are also found. Indonesian environment minister Siti Nurbaya said Monday that the park would not be closed. “We will just turn it into a world-class holiday destination,” she added in a statement.

Last year, the region’s governor sparked a controversy when he proposed charging

visitors \$500 to see the dragons, about 50 times the current \$10 entrance fee. Maritime minister Luhut Pandjaitan said Monday that a new quota system would be introduced to limit the number of visitors to the island, amid concerns that tourism was putting too much stress on the lizards. There have also been concerns about declining numbers of deer, boars and other natural prey, as well as attempts to smuggle the lizards.

Thousands of tourists annually descend on the cluster of islands in the eastern part of the country — the only place in the world where komodo dragons can be seen in their natural habitat. The islands are home to nearly 2,900 dragons, which can grow to around three meters in length. An adult typically weighs from 70 to 90 kilograms. Tourism ministry spokesman Guntur Sakti said Tuesday that the islands would be turned into a “premium destination”, without elaborating.

“It is important to provide certainty so that the tourism industry is not hampered in its work,” he added. Indonesia has launched a push to replicate Bali’s success across the Southeast Asian archipelago, including trying to draw more visitors to Lake Toba on Sumatra island as well as ancient Buddhist and Hindu temples. — AFP

CLINIC

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Kuwait Times

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- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
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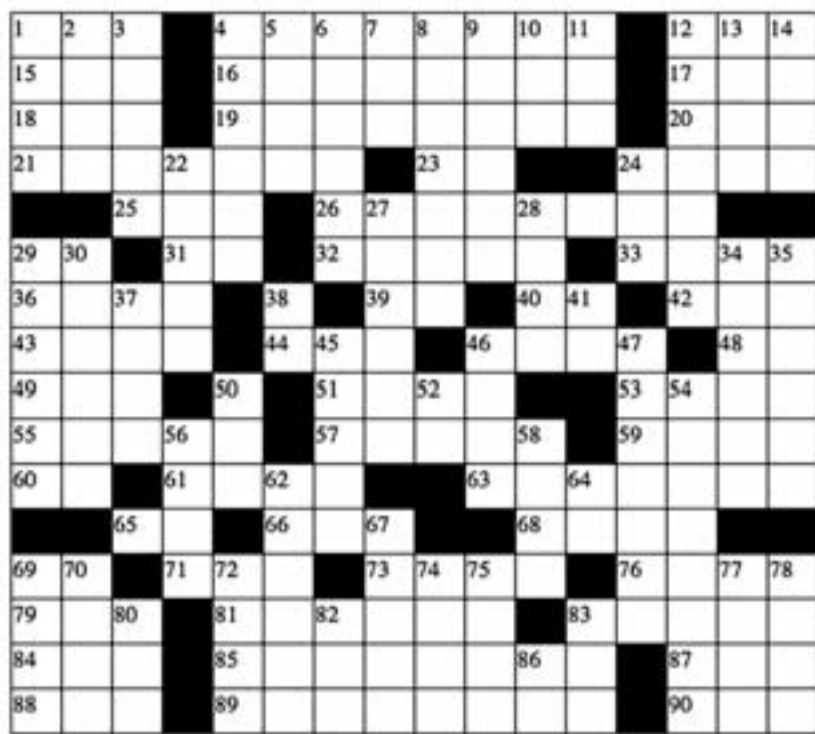
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2322



- ACROSS**
- What you can repeat immediately after perceiving it.
 - The stage of meiosis or mitosis when chromosomes move toward opposite ends of the nuclear spindle.
 - A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
 - The sound made by corvine birds.
 - Foliose lichens chiefly of northern latitudes.
 - An ugly evil-looking old woman.
 - Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
 - One of two or more tenants holding title to the same property.
 - To make a mistake or be incorrect.
 - Italian electrical engineer known as the father of radio (1874-1937).
 - A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
 - A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 - The mints.
 - The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
 - A bachelor's degree in religion.
 - Lower in esteem.
 - A unit of weight used in some Moslem countries near the Mediterranean.
 - Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
 - A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
 - A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali metal group.
 - The sixth day of the week.
 - Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
 - Alternative names for the body of a human being.
 - A radioactive element of the actinide series.
 - A strong solution of sodium or potassium hydroxide.
 - A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
 - A contagious skin infection caused by the itch mite.
 - A resident of Iowa.
 - Squash bugs.
 - Clarified butter used in Indian cookery.
 - An associate degree in nursing.
 - United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
 - Any binary compound formed by the union of hydrogen and other elements.
 - A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
 - An associate degree in applied science.
 - The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
 - A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
 - The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
 - English actor noted for his portrayals of Shakespeare's great tragic characters (1789-1833).
 - 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.
 - A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
 - Of or pertaining to or characteristic of Nepal or its people or language or culture.
 - A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
 - Terrestrial or epiphytic ferns of tropical rain forests.
- DOWN**
- A fraudulent business scheme.
 - The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
 - A Bantu language spoken in southern coastal Tanzania.
 - Harmony of people's opinions or actions or characters.
 - A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
 - King of the Huns.
 - (prefix) Coming before or being preliminary or preparatory.
 - A bag used for carrying money and small personal items or accessories (especially by women).
 - Annual to perennial woody herbs of temperate North America, Europe and Asia.
 - Estrangement from god.
 - Take in solid food.
 - Of or concerning this or that.
 - Earn on some commercial or business transaction.
 - A city in northern India.
 - A telegram sent abroad.
 - The month following February and preceding April.
 - A port city in southwestern Iran.
 - Characterized by lightness and insubstantiality.
 - Any of the elementary particles having a mass equal to or greater than that of a proton and that participate in strong interactions.
 - Derived by copying something else.
 - Chinese tree cultivated especially in Philippines and India for its edible fruit.
 - Again but in a new or different way.
 - A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
 - A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
 - A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
 - Distinctive and stylish elegance.
 - A bachelor's degree in naval science.
 - The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
 - An antineoplastic drug used to treat certain malignancies.
 - A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 - The 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - Pitching dangerously to one side.
 - The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.
 - Sports equipment that is worn on the feet to enable the wearer to glide along on wheels and to be propelled by the alternate actions of the legs.
 - A small cake leavened with yeast.
 - (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
 - A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
 - Channel into a new direction.
 - Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
 - An informal term for a father.
 - The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
 - A proportion multiplied by 100.
 - A branch of the Tai languages.
 - Being nine more than forty.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is not perhaps the best time to make important decisions that affect your living situation or life circumstances. Your thinking process may undergo some transformation or change at this time. There is a natural sense of growth and development. Concentrating and getting down to the important issues is the best path to take right now. There is a community affair this evening that will bring a positive end to a confusing day. You strive to attain ideals of the highest order. You bring imagination to group goals. You dream of what is best for all people. Inspired, you could be quite creative—even inventive. One of your most creative times begins this week.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a significant day you can use to your best advantage. A day that is not too lazy or too stressful, a time for accomplishing tasks or setting things up to work in your favor. Delays and inconveniences may try your patience from time to time; proof your work and confirm appointments. This afternoon, you will find an item that has been lost from a long time ago. Short trips or a planned vacation can be enjoyed soon. Acknowledging a person's dilemma will encourage frankness. This communication could lead to ideas of ways you or this person could earn an income. There are present energies that will work in favor of putting together a few plans for a small business partnership.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

If you need a loan, this is a good day to request one. This is a perfect time to be assertive and move forward in your career. You have all the energy you could want today and it should be easy to channel your energies in the right direction. The path you need to take is open and clear. Communicating and being understood are important to you and this day seems to be a high point for you as you learn new communication techniques and skills. Being clearly understood and respected for your ideas frequently are important issues in your life. Your timing should be perfect and you will remain focused but ever the type of caring person that can be flexible. People love to be around you and the young ones in your family bring much laughter tonight.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This may be a challenging day where you can use your skills and expertise to solve problems and feel successful. Any professional advice you might need is available. You may have to pay close attention to the negative feelings and talk them into a more positive place. Change is important and your adapting to whatever is changing is even more important at this time. Radical and inventive ideas hold the key to realizing your ambitions and advancing your status—a shakeup is in the works. This mood could carry into your living space—careful. Low-profile activities will help you adjust to any large changes just now.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are very much like a genius. Some of the things you think and say are obviously brilliant. You have such an outpouring of insights that having a conversation with you can be a real experience. Your mind works like lightning. Words and thoughts take form, illuminating whatever subject is at hand. You really do have very different ideas and you express yourself in creative ways. There may also be a sustained interest in communication, computers, electronics and all that is electrical. This is a good day to start a diet, or perhaps, a new and positive habit. All the energies are working in your favor for this to be a successful endeavor. One example of favorable outcome is your method of investing—which is working out successfully just now.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your public image has improved and you may find higher-ups are taking another look at your potential. The good life and all that is fine and luxurious are what you value. You could enjoy making your own way and finding solutions to whatever problems you have. Business decisions are straightforward and easy to make. You make your way through ideas, concepts and your ability to communicate and express yourself to others. Everything may be pouring in at once and it's all good news. Your career direction receives encouragement and life's difficult situations seem to flow past you with little frustration. A relationship with a difficult older person may become more positive now. Whistle a happy tune!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This could be a challenging day but it is one that opens up opportunities for improvement and positive changes. You may find that you have to look into unusual places for answers to current projects. Some sort of temporary obstacle may appear. There is an opportunity to pull on some past project and revise, revamp and refresh the old into something new. This is a time to rebuild, improve and refine. New information about a physical complaint or hindrance is exciting and progressive. You want to know more and may be able to attend a lecture by the author or inventor to learn more. This may mean you know someone that can be helped by some forward-moving application. A friend will go with you if you ask. Tonight is a good time to socialize.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Outer circumstances tend to work in your favor this day. You may find that you are more organized than before—able to reach new levels of self-discipline. This is a smooth time during which events seem to arrange themselves favorably. Sympathy and understanding are emotional qualities that take on greater importance. Everything seems to work together to bring out your unique qualities. You may find that someone close to you understands you and is supportive of your eccentricities. You could come up with new solutions or inventions; you certainly have the mind for achievement.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a vital day with much energy and lots of action. You may feel focused and even a bit radiant. You could find yourself in the public eye with people gathered around you to find out the next project or answer to the present quandaries in the workplace. You are successful at getting your instructions over to others. All sorts of financial or business opportunities are opening up to you at this time. It is known that you are an understanding person and you handle difficult matters with compassion and patience. A fascination with some new idea or a person that pushes a new idea makes you want to expand your horizons and study new possibilities.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You could find that you are appreciated for your ability to respond quickly when others need help. You may learn some new techniques that will teach others to help themselves. You will find that your time will not be your own if you agree too quickly each time someone needs your guidance or helping hand. Communications with others are positive and your friends and co-workers find you witty. Others appreciate your independence. This is a very lucky day for making plans or decisions and finding your way through just about any problem you may discover. You feel successful. It can be easy now to separate and get rid of that which does not advance your goals.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Some trigger is ignited that creates in you a tease to purchase items that you think will enhance your life. Material things and the whole concept of value take on more importance today; fortunately you remember that you are saving for something special. When dealing and working with others, you are good at helping others spend money. The higher-ups in your department are happy you enjoy socializing with the patrons. The patrons sense your earnest intent to be helpful. Today is all about helping your customers to be happy. Someone may come up with a contest to see which clerk can sell the most.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You have an uncanny ability to get beyond the status quo, always coming up with new ways of doing things. You can take the most mundane stuff and find a new angle. Unpredictable and spontaneous, you seldom lean on other people's experience, preferring to create as you go. All will agree that you are very original, unconventional and possess deep and accurate insights. Contacts you make this day could make a big difference in your professional future, so get out there and shake hands, looking people in the eye at every opportunity. This fall season may bring a variety of party invitations—networking when appropriate is important. Love and money mix together beautifully this evening.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Gardening

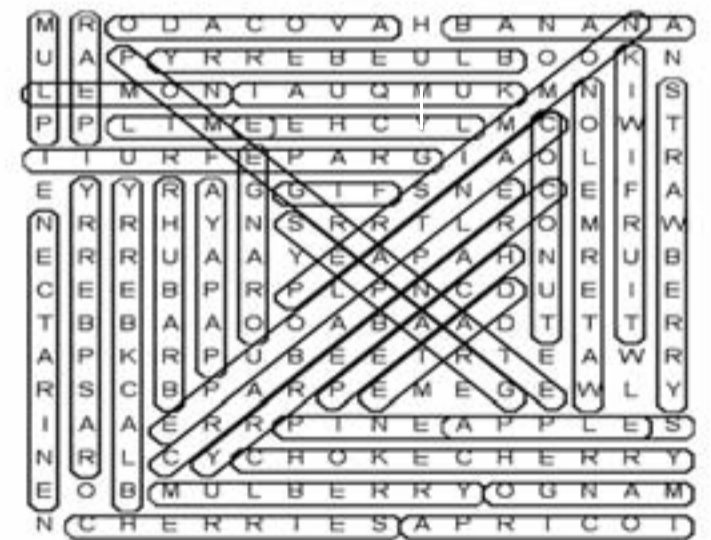
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 27 letters spell a Lady Bird Johnson quote.



- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ANNUALS | GARDEN | ORGANIC | SEEDS |
| BEANS | GERANIUMS | PEAS | SHOVEL |
| BEETS | GLOVES | PERENNIAL | SOIL |
| BIENNIAL | GNOME | PETUNIAS | SPADE |
| BROCCOLI | GREENHOUSE | PINWHEEL | SUNSHINE |
| CARROTS | GROW | PITCH FORK | TOMATOES |
| COMPOST | HOES | PLANTING | TROWEL |
| CULTIVATE | HORTICULTURE | RAIN | TULIPS |
| DAISIES | HOSE | RAKE | VEGETABLES |
| DIGGING | HYDRANGEA | RELAXING | WATER |
| FERTILIZER | LILACS | ROSES | WEEDS |
| FLOWERS | LILIES | ROWS | WHEELBARROW |
| FUCHSIA | MARIGOLDS | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Fruit



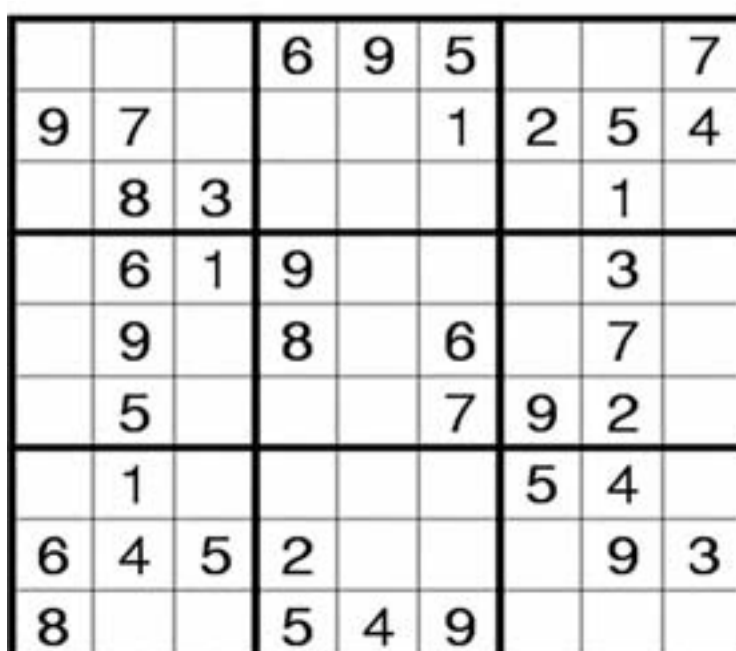
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|--------------|------------|-------------|
| APPLES | DATE | ORANGE |
| APRICOT | FIG | PAPAYA |
| AVOCADO | GRAPEFRUIT | PEACH |
| BANANA | GRAPES | PEAR |
| BLACKBERRY | KIWIFRUIT | PERSIMMON |
| BLUEBERRY | KUMQUAT | PINEAPPLE |
| CANTALOUPE | LEMON | PLUM |
| CHERRIES | LIME | POMEGRANATE |
| CHOCHECHERRY | LYCHEE | RASPBERRY |
| COCONUT | MANGO | RHUBARB |
| CRABAPPLE | MULBERRY | STRAWBERRY |
| CRANBERRY | NECTARINE | WATERMELON |

The hidden message is: HONEYDEW MELON

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku

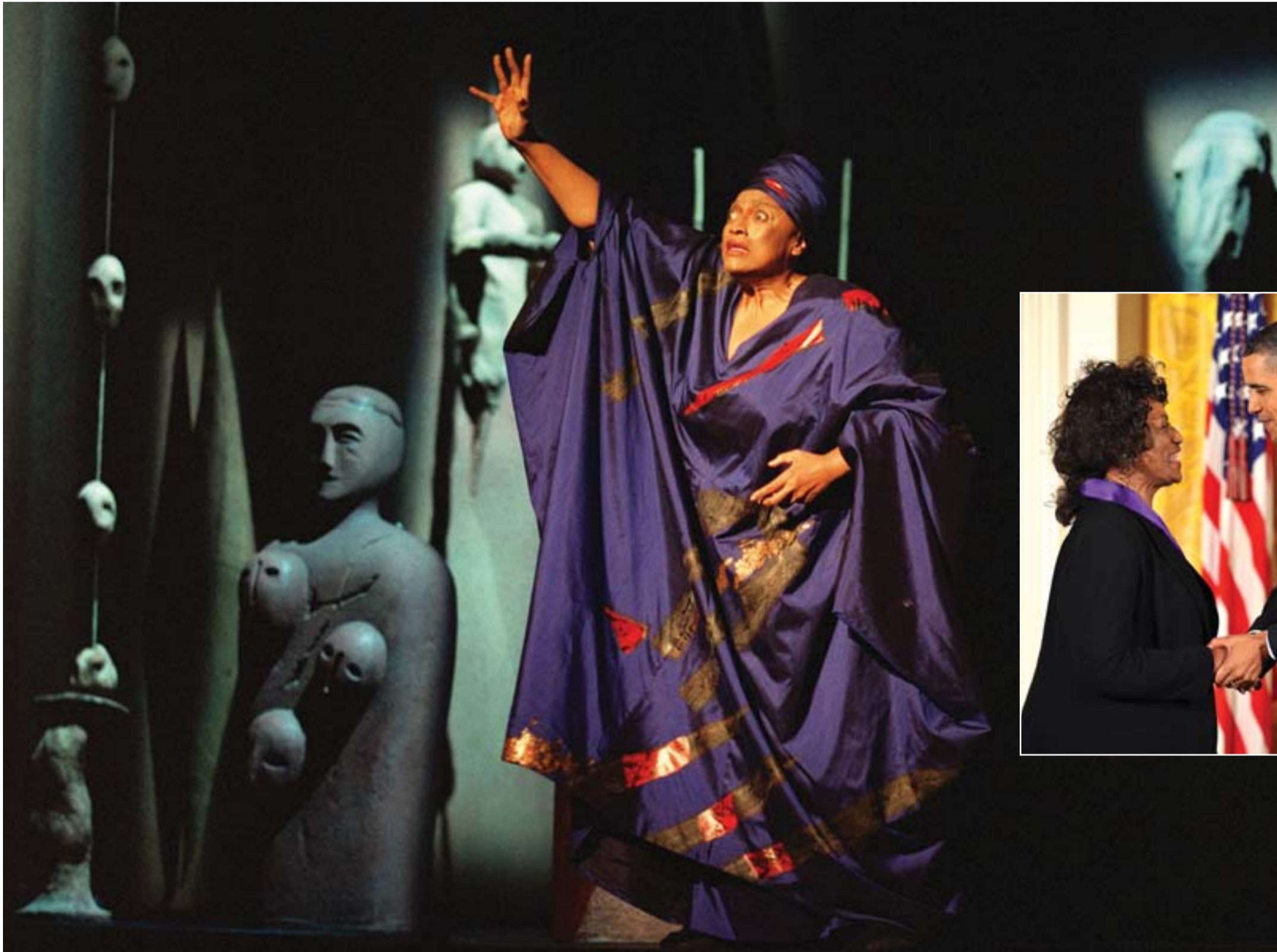


Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2019



In this file photo American soprano Jessye Norman performs at the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris.
— AFP photos

In this file photo US President Barack Obama presents the 2009 National Medal of Arts to opera singer Jessye Norman during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC.

Global opera legend **JESSYE NORMAN** dies at 74

Celebrated opera singer Jessye Norman, an American soprano who showcased her majestic voice in performances around the world, died Monday, her family said. She was 74 years old. The Grammy winner died "surrounded by loved ones" at a New York hospital due to septic shock and multi-organ failure after complications from a 2015 spinal cord injury, a statement said. "We are so proud of Jessye's musical achievements and the inspiration that she provided to audiences around the world that will continue to be a source of joy," said her family.

Praising her "beautiful tone, extraordinary power, and musical sensitivity," New York's Metropolitan Opera—where she sang more than 80 performances—dedicated its Monday show of "Porgy and Bess" to Norman. "Jessye Norman was one of the greatest artists to ever sing on our stage," said general manager Peter Gelb in a statement. "Her legacy shall forever live on." Born September 15, 1945 in Augusta, Georgia, Norman grew up surrounded by music as one of five children in a family of amateur artists.

She made a foray into gospel at age four, and as a young girl began listening to radio broadcasts of perform-

ances at the Metropolitan Opera, where she would eventually become legend. "I don't remember a moment in my life when I wasn't trying to sing," she told NPR in 2014. Growing up in the segregated American South, at five years old she sat in a "whites only" section in a train station, becoming an unknowing young activist. "We come to Earth, I feel, with a completely open heart," she told NPR. "And then we're told that we have to close it off to certain things. And that's a great shame."

A pioneering young black woman in the white world of classical music, Norman quickly became beloved for her seemingly effortless soaring voice and effervescent personality. She studied music on a full-tuition scholarship at the historically black college Howard University in Washington before going on to the Peabody Conservatory and the University of Michigan. She established herself in Europe in the 1970s, making her operatic debut in Berlin in 1969 before dazzling audiences across the continent including Italy. She eventually moved to London and spent years performing recital and solo work.

Perhaps best known for her Wagnerian repertoire, the

regal Norman made her Met debut in 1983 as Cassandra in Hector Berlioz's "Les Troyens" during the house's centennial season. "Her huge voice is a velvet wonder, totally seamless when she so desires," wrote The Washington Post's Octavio Roca in a 1980 review.

Soul-healing voice

News of her death triggered a wave of tributes, including from American-Canadian singer-composer Rufus Wainwright, who said "the world has lost one of the greatest voices that we have ever had and heard." "She poured herself out for us," Wainwright tweeted. "Rest in peace, dearest Jessye Norman." Norman held a slate of honorary doctorates from prestigious schools including Juilliard, Harvard and Yale. She earned a prestigious Kennedy Center Honor at age 52 in 1997, and president Barack Obama bestowed her with a National Medal of Arts.

Her notable performances include two US presidential inaugurations, the 60th birthday celebrations of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, the opening ceremonies of the Atlanta Summer Olympics in 1996, and at the bicentennial of the

French Revolution in Paris in 1989. She was a Commander in France's Order of Arts and Letters, and also had an orchid named after her. She took on much of the cost of opening the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, which provides free after-school arts programming to disadvantaged children in Georgia.

Her personal life remained shrouded in mystery, though her 2014 biography "Stand Up Straight and Sing!" alluded that a French aristocrat once proposed to her. At a 2014 Metropolitan Opera Guild luncheon honoring Norman, the Nobel-prize winning novelist Toni Morrison, who died earlier this year, praised the soprano's voice as a unique wonder. "The beauty and power, the singularity of Jessye Norman's voice. I don't recall anything quite like it," Morrison said. "I have to say that sometimes when I hear your voice, it breaks my heart," she said. "But all of the time, when I hear your voice, it healed my soul."—AFP

Late Mexican superstar's body goes missing

Legendary Mexican singer Jose Jose's legions of fans had not even finished processing the news of his death when a mystery exploded amid the mourning: where is the body of "The Prince of Song"? Jose Romulo Sosa Ortiz, a superstar singer of Latin love songs better known by his stage name, Jose Jose, died Saturday at age 71 outside Miami, according to the Mexican government. Emotional fans were still belting out his classic hits through tears in Claveria, his native Mexico City neighborhood, when the loss took a telenovela-like turn: Jose Jose's two oldest children, Jose Joel and Marysol, accused their younger half-sister and her mother of hiding his body.

When Jose Joel and Marysol, whose mother was the second of Jose Jose's three wives, arrived Sunday at the

funeral home where they thought his wake would be held, they were told their father's body was not there. They said their father's third wife, Sara Salazar, and her daughter Sarita refused to tell them where it is or what the funeral plans are. As comparisons to Elvis Presley began to fly—is he REALLY dead? — Jose Joel and Marysol went to the police station in Cutler Bay, Florida, to file a report on his missing remains.

"If I don't see my dad's body I can't believe anything. Nothing," Marysol told journalists outside the station house. "To be clear: We aren't fighting for his money or his inheritance, we aren't interested in that," said Jose Joel. He called for an autopsy, urged the Mexican government to intervene and suggested that Sarita was acting "as if it were part of a contract" to sell exclusive media rights to their father's funeral.

Telenovela villain

In an exclusive interview with Spanish-language TV network Univision on Sunday, Sarita, 25, made an appeal for family unity and said it was "still very early to decide what will be done" with the remains. She blamed the confusion surrounding her father's body on US regulations on handling remains. "US laws are very strict. Unfortunately, not even his wife has been able to view the body," she wrote in a statement published Monday on the Instagram account of a Univision pro-

gram called "El Gordo y La Flaca."

"People of Mexico: we will bring him to Mexico so you can say goodbye. We promise you will be able to hold a wake for him," she added. Memes comparing Sarita to the most iconic villains of Mexico's melodramatic telenovela soap operas went viral on social networks. In Claveria, the singer's native barrio, fans gathered around a statue of him and chanted: "We want them to give us back Jose Jose!"

"He was a great man, for his voice but above all for his sensitivity... He was a great man of the people," Rogelio Cuevas, an 86-year-old neighbor, told AFP. Mexico City authorities are planning a mass karaoke

tribute to the late crooner Friday outside the Palace of Fine Arts.

Velvety voice

With his velvety voice and songs for jilted lovers, Jose Jose sold more than 120 million albums in a career spanning over five decades. The Latin Recording Academy, which gave him a lifetime achievement award in 2004 and named him its person of the year in 2005, said "his music and voice will forever reign in the history of Ibero-American music." Jose Jose was known for his openness about his personal life, including his romances and struggles with alcoholism.

He quit drinking in 1993, but health issues led him to give up singing in the early 2000s. He married three times and fathered three children. He wed his Cuban third wife, Salazar, in 1995, then moved to Miami with her. He had been hospitalized for pancreatic cancer, though Sarita told Univision he was in remission. Relations had long been strained between her and her half-siblings, who claim she prevented them from seeing their father in later years. Jose Jose had ceded the rights to his songs to Sarita, and Mexican media reported that she also convinced him to sign the rights to his life story over to her.—AFP



Fans pay tribute to the late Mexican singer and actor Jose Jose after knowing of his death, in front of his monument in Mexico City. — AFP



Models present a creation by Stella McCartney during the Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Opera Garnier in Paris. — AFP photos



McCartney's plea for planet after deal with fashion's richest man

British designer Stella McCartney pleaded for fashion to "wake up" and help save the planet Monday after her first Paris show as part of the industry's biggest luxury conglomerate. "The world is crying out for change and it is our responsibility to act now," said the creator, whose label is a pioneer of ethical fashion. "We aren't perfect... and like all businesses, we are part of the problem," McCartney admitted.

Baby", McCartney projected images of coupling pangolins, Artic foxes and other endangered species onto the Belle Epoque ceilings of the Opera Garnier in Paris. Clips of zebras, ostriches and elephants also getting up to some monkey business helped get fashionistas in the mood. The designer-daughter of Beatle Paul McCartney and animal rights activist Linda McCartney-listed her long record of finding environmentally friendly alternative materials in a lengthy press release to go with the show.

Influential critic Godfrey Deeny of the Fashion Network said McCartney had to walk a delicate diplomatic line "because within the LVMH empire are a series of giant brands—from Fendi to Louis Vuitton—who use exotic skins and furs." He said reminding people "that she has always put her money where her mouth is" may have been to counter "any suggestion that she might be selling out".

Lace and classy grace

McCartney insisted her classy spring summer collection was "the most sustainable ever" and included raffia bags made by female artisans in Madagascar, with the material coming from communities fighting deforestation. It also included a luxurious-feeling new fake fur called Koba, made from plant-based plastics and recycled polyester, and shoes with sustainable wooden heels and sneakers made from "second life plastic".

With Kaia Gerber—the daughter of 1990s supermodel Cindy Crawford—wearing one of a series of ingenious flower print dresses, the catwalk was dominated by elegant lace and Mughal crenellation fringed creations. Critics also lapped up her mix of chill English formal wear and sexy streetness, with transparent lace blouses under business jackets and a run of stripey, chevron looks.

The most Parisian of designers, Agnes b, put old maps of the French capital on some of her clothes. But it was the Africans who walk the city's streets that she celebrated in her show, with Malian-born French rapper Oxmo Puccino performing as models walked in a mix of classic French cool casual wear and African wax and "sapeur" dandy-inspired outfits.—AFP



Attack on Greta Thunberg

"But we are pushing the boundaries every day to find solutions that do exist in an industry desperately in need of change." Her comments come days after LVMH's billionaire owner, Bernard Arnault - the second richest man in the world - attacked Greta Thunberg at the launch of his group's environmental drive. He accused the Swedish teenager of "surrendering to total catastrophism" over climate change and depressing young people.

"She doesn't offer anything other than criticism," he told reporters in Paris after the event, where McCartney also spoke. The designer has become Arnault's personal advisor on sustainability since he bought into her brand in July, although she remains the majority shareholder. Arnault's LVMH group, whose huge stable of luxury brands includes Dior, Louis Vuitton and Givenchy, is seen as lagging behind its French rival Kering.

Last week Kering—which owns Gucci, Yves Saint Laurent and Alexander McQueen—said it had gone carbon neutral and would half the greenhouse gas emissions in its supply chain within five years. LVMH refused to join Kering in signing "The Fashion Pact" on the fighting climate change at the G7 summit last month. Kering owned half of McCartney's label until she bought them out last year. McCartney said it was time brands got serious about the climate emergency, saying, "It's time to wake up."

Not just a trend

Sustainability "is the future of fashion, not just a trend", she said. "The younger generation are standing up and telling us that our house is on fire and that we need to respond like we are in a crisis, because in fact it is a crisis," she said. The vegetarian said that she had never used fur, leather, skins, feathers or animal glues since she founded her label in 2001.

To the sound of Donna's Summer's "Love to Love You



British designer Stella McCartney acknowledges the audience after the Stella McCartney Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Opera Garnier in Paris.

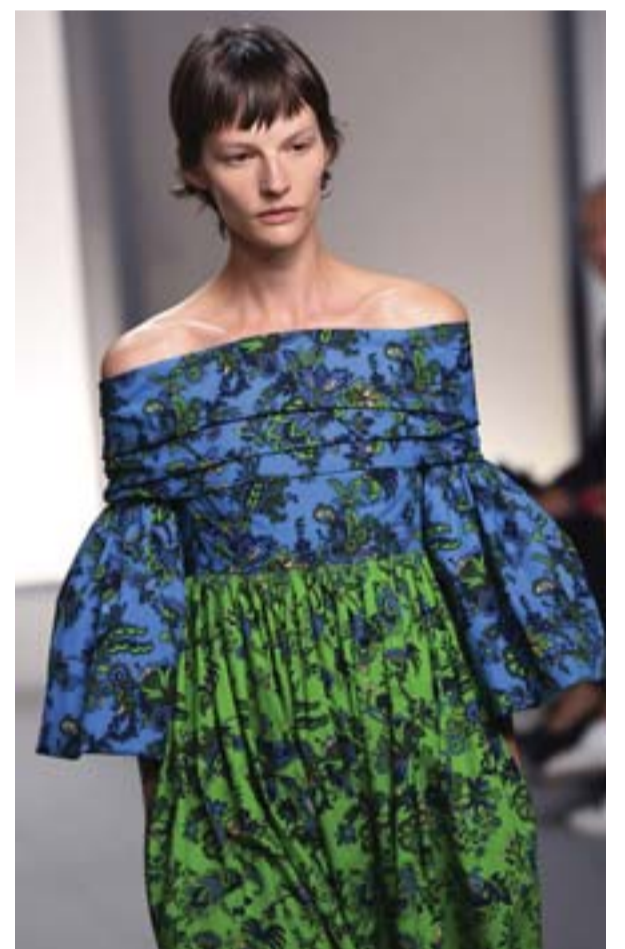


British designer Clare Waight Keller Givency acknowledges the audience after the Givenchy Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Garde Republicaine in Paris.



GIVENCHY REVISITS THE 1990S AT PARIS FASHION WEEK

The Givenchy collection for Spring/Summer 2020, unveiled as part of Paris Fashion Week, channeled the mood of Paris and New York of the 1990s, mixing romantic floral dress and distressed-look denim. Clare Waight Keller, designer at the LVMH-owned French couture house since 2017, unveiled her latest collection entitled "NY PARIS 1993" on Sunday in a minimalist space with a rap music soundtrack. Models strutted down the catwalk in high-waisted leather skirts, bra tops and plunging neckline jackets while others wore faded jeans or flower print dresses. — Reuters



Models present a creation by Givenchy during the Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show at the Garde Republicaine in Paris. — AFP photos



Saint Laurent unveils its latest sheath

It is the ultimate tight-fitting-one hopes-outfit that no man wishing to impress can do without. French fashion house Saint Laurent is now selling luxury gold-wrapped condoms. Having made fashion history with "le smoking" tuxedo and skin-tight dresses, it is moving into sheaths of a latex variety. Its designer Anthony Vaccarello unveiled the latest creation on his Instagram account, with the ripped and heavily tattooed New York artist David Alexander Flinn apparently modeling one. He appears in a daring new advertising campaign for the label called "The Love Affair" standing in the buff in front of Polish model Anja Rubik. She is fully dressed-in Saint Laurent of course-admiring his manhood. The cheeky campaign appears to be an attempt by

Vaccarello to wipe away the lingering memory of his "porno chic" ads for the brand in 2017, which the French regulator and feminists branded as degrading to women. Many of the posters were torn down or had "Sexist" stickers plastered over them.

Rebuff to new puritanism

Saint Laurent was later forced to alter images of painfully thin girls in rollerskates bending over a stool and spreading their legs provocatively. Rather than the "male gaze" of that shoot, this campaign is intended to be seen from the woman's point of view, taking in the full splendor of the naked male. Vaccarello has heavily sexed up the iconic label since he took charge in 2016 with

ever shorter miniskirts and leather hotpants.

But the Belgian admitted that his look, which has upped sales, has not gone down well with everyone. "They keep telling me, 'It's too short, or too transparent,'" he said. "I hate this new puritanism that judges everything," he added on the eve of Paris fashion week, which ends Tuesday. "It has become impossible to have an opinion that goes against" the herd, he said, complaining of a "witch-hunt atmosphere".

The new gold-wrapped condoms, which Vaccarello also credited on Instagram to London-based German photographer Juergen Teller, are selling at Saint Laurent's new flagship boutique in central Paris. No one at the store was able to tell AFP how much the condoms

were or how they were selling. Vaccarello, 37, is far from the first major fashion designer to want to wave their magic wand over condoms. Last year American Alexander Wang did a collaboration with the condom brand Trojan under the hashtag #ProtectYourWang.

And earlier this year the bad boy of Paris fashion, Georgian Demna Gvasalia, sent a black and fuchsia-striped condom to fashion editors as an invitation for what would turn out to be his last show for Vetements, the rebel brand he founded.—AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Asia's top film festival opens in shadow of 'Parasite'

Organizers of Asia's top film festival, which opens in Busan this week, warn that a surge of global interest in the critically acclaimed South Korean movie "Parasite" masks a damaging underinvestment in local independent cinema. Bong Joon-ho's darkly comic tale of class war in the Seoul suburbs won the Palme D'or for best film at Cannes and is firming as an Oscar favorite next year, in what would be the first ever win for a Korean film.

It has been sold to 192 international markets—a record for a local production—and has already grossed just over \$90 million ahead of its highly anticipated October 11 release in the United States. The film is a crowning achievement for veteran director Bong, whose works have been lauded by the likes of Quentin Tarantino and two-time collaborator Tilda Swinton. His work has long been championed by the Busan International Film Festival, a gala event dedicated to both unearthing new independent Asian talent and connecting emerging filmmakers with financiers.

But Parasite's breakout success "hides a crisis" in the local film industry at large, said Nam Dong-chul, program director at BIFF. Nam said investors and cinema chains needed to help smaller independent productions find an audience in a market dominated by Hollywood-funded blockbusters. "We have indeed been lazy with building a strong foothold where new talents can blossom," he said. "We can take advantage of opportunity only when independent and art films have a stable market share."

Star-studded program

Bong is not slated to appear at BIFF this year as he tours the world promoting his latest work, but the spotlight will

shine on an impressive collection of acclaimed international award winners. "Call Me By Your Name" star Timothee Chalamet and Indian Oscar winner A.R. Rahman of "Slumdog Millionaire" are expected to either grace the red carpet during the opening gala on Thursday or make an appearance in the days that follow.

"Leaving Las Vegas" director Mike Figgis will head the jury for the festival's main awards, while Japanese auteur Kore-eda Hirokazu will be in town to collect the Asian filmmaker of the year award and to present his latest feature, "The Truth". The Korean star parade will be led by opening night co-host Lee Hanee, fresh from the success of her actioner "Extreme Job", now the second-highest grossing in Korean cinema history. Local films will take pride of place with 20 world premieres in the Korean Cinema Today section alone.

There's a nod to the rising influence of streaming platforms with four Netflix original productions on the program, along with the world premiere of the much-anticipated Malaysia-HBO co-production "The Garden of Evening Mists". Thursday's opening film is acclaimed Kazakh director Yerlan Nurmukhambetov's "The Horse Thieves. Roads of Time", starring 2018 Cannes best actress winner Samal Yesleyamova.

His last appearance at BIFF saw him awarded the prestigious New Currents prize for early career directors with his drama "Walnut Tree" in 2015. BIFF runs from October 3 to 12 and features 303 films from 85 countries.—AFP



In this file photo a woman walks past cinema posters for the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) at the Busan Cinema Center in Busan. — AFP

Netflix announces fourth season of hit show 'Stranger Things'

Netflix announced Monday a fourth season of retro sci-fi show "Stranger Things," the site's most successful original production, as it bids to fend off intense competition from other streaming platforms. The video subscription service added that it had entered into a multi-year deal with the hit series' creators, Matt and Ross Duffer, to work on unspecified film and series projects. "Stranger Things," a nostalgic 1980s drama about a gang of suburban adolescents battling supernatural monsters, became an instant hit for Netflix when it was launched in 2016. The third season smashed the platform's global viewing records in July when 40.7 million accounts viewed it in its first four days of airing. The finale to the third season left the door firmly open for a sequel.

Netflix announced the fourth series by tweeting a video along with the tag line "We're not in Hawkins anymore," a reference to the fictional Indiana town where the story began. The tweet appears to suggest that the monsters in the show now live somewhere else, as hinted at the end of season three. The Duffer brothers were virtually unknown when Netflix commissioned their idea about teenagers confronting supernatural creatures and a parallel universe in a smalltown American. "We can't wait to see what The Duffer Brothers have in store when they step outside the world of The Upside Down," said Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos, referring to the alternative universe in "Stranger Things." He did not give any further details about their future productions in the press release. Netflix is the market leader in global television and film streaming, with over 140 million paying accounts worldwide. It is accelerating its content production as Apple, Disney, WarnerMedia and NBCUniversal launch their own streaming platforms.—AFP

Swiss chocolatier Callebaut all-in on cacao

Swiss chocolatier Barry Callebaut on Friday unveiled a new formulation that packs in the parts of the cacao fruit it used to toss away, taking aim at younger generations. As modern consumers seek whole grains, less sugar, more nutrients and less harm to the environment, one of the world's biggest chocolate makers is playing to the trend with products based on a recipe using 100 percent of the cacao fruit, not just the seeds.



This undated and unlocated handout photo released by Barry Callebaut shows a new type of chocolate made entirely from the fruit of a cocoa tree.—AFP

"Millennials and centennials earnestly want to live a happy, healthy life, in symbiosis with the world around them," the Callebaut group said at an event where attendees sampled items from the new "CacaoFruit Experiences" line. "They want food and drinks that are tasty and nutritious for them and also good for the planet and its people." Products in the line were pitched as rich in nutrients while not wasting any of the cacao used to make chocolate, which was long derived from just the beans.

Typically, 70 percent of cacao fruit is discarded as waste while making chocolate, according to Callebaut. CacaoFruit Experiences products promised to pack in the entire fruit, from beans to peels, pulp and juice. "This results in a range of high-quality ingredients that can be used in applications such as juices, smoothies, frozen desserts, bakery and pastry products, and snacks all the way to chocolate," Callebaut said.

"At the same time, they are good for the planet and its people because the entire cacao fruit is utilized." "WholeFruit chocolate" will come in two types, one consisting of 100 percent cacao and another mixing in milk. Callebaut chief executive Antoine de Saint-Affrique said the company was looking forward to many offerings based on its new recipe.

Mondelez International-backed SnackFutures will be the first to introduce CacaoFruit Experiences in consumer products—in smoothie and jerky products initially debuting in Los Angeles shops, according to Callebaut. WholeFruit chocolate made of 100 percent cacao was slated to hit chef and artisan markets early next year. Chocolate has lost some of its appeal in developed markets, where it faces competition from foods perceived as more healthy. The cost of cacao, meanwhile, has put pressure on profits.

Callebaut last year introduced a new "ruby" chocolate, with its client Nestle launching KitKat bars in Japan and South Korea coated in pink chocolate. The pink color is obtained naturally from ruby cocoa, explained Akiko Hara, a manager for Barry Callebaut in Japan. Meanwhile, Nestle in July announced the creation of a chocolate made entirely from cacao beans and pulp, with no refined sugar added. Callebaut is a supplier of chocolate to Nestle, Hershey, Unilever and Mondelez.—AFP

Tom Cruise meets president in Kiev

Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky welcomed Tom Cruise to Kiev to discuss locations for one of the Hollywood superstar's new film projects, the presidency said yesterday. Zelensky, who was a popular comedian until his shock presidential election win this spring, told the 57-year-old actor about his own experiences in cinema, the press service said. It was not revealed whether the pair discussed the president's current role in a real-life drama: the scandal that has launched impeachment proceedings against US leader Donald Trump.

Photos showed the Ukrainian president beaming as he stood by the casually dressed blockbuster star in an official meeting room on Monday. "During the meeting, Tom Cruise informed Volodymyr Zelensky that he was interested in Ukrainian locations for the shooting of one of his new film projects," the presidency said. Earlier Cruise was spotted on the Soviet-era Kiev subway. Some commentators criticized Zelensky for meeting the actor rather than focusing on his own mission impossible: tackling corruption and ending the war with Russia-backed separatists in the country's east.

Last month, the 41-year-old leader met Hollywood actors Mila Kunis, Ashton Kutcher and Robin Wright at an event in Kiev. Others joked about the real reason for Cruise's visit. "Tom Cruise came here to prepare for the role of Volodymyr Zelensky in a new movie about Trump's impeachment," blogger Petro Terentiev wrote on his Facebook page. Trump is accused of pressuring Zelensky on July 25 to supply dirt on former US vice president Joe Biden, the favorite to represent Democrats against Trump in the 2020 presidential election.—AFP



This handout picture taken and released by the Ukrainian Presidential press-service shows President Volodymyr Zelensky, left, talking with US actor and film producer Tom Cruise, right, during their meeting in Kiev.—AFP

Kilt helped Tintin come out as more PC comic hero

It's the moment experts say that Tintin stopped being quite so racist, and began his long journey towards what we might now call culturally sensitive "wokeness". A key drawing of the crime-fighting cub reporter from his British adventure, "The Black Island", will go under the hammer in Paris next month. Worth an estimated 300,000 euros (\$326,000), the A3-sized ink drawing from 1938 marks a turning point in the development of the comic book boy hero as a more rounded, self-aware individual.

Having engaged in full-blooded Russophobia in "Tintin in the Land of the Soviets", and piled on the racial stereotypes in subsequent scrapes in the Congo, America and the Middle East, Tintinologists say the story marks a "stylistic and ideological change". And they credit Tintin putting on a skirt—or a Scottish kilt, to be more precise—for this radical transformation. Professor Laurence Grove of the University of Glasgow told AFP that in the story Tintin "goes from looking at other cultures from the outside to taking on other cultures."

Civilizing mission

"He's not saying, 'I'm going to tell you what to do,' as he did he in the Congo where he wanted to turn the natives into good little Belgians. "This time Tintin is saying, 'I'm going to be like you and by doing that I'm going to help solve the problem,'" said the specialist, the president of the International Bande Dessinee Society, the French name for comics.

Loosely based on Alfred Hitchcock's classic film, "39 Steps", the story has Tintin and his dog Snowy pursuing a gang of counterfeiters across Britain, ending up in the Scottish Highlands where a "ferocious beast" kills anyone who dares to set foot on its island.—AFP



A man rides a bike during a cycling lesson.



Sami (right, in the yellow shirt), one of the teachers of the Let's Ride project, shows different parts of the bicycle to a group of immigrant people, in Merihaka area in Helsinki, Finland.—AFP photos

Bike riding courses offer Finland's immigrants new freedom

It's a skill you never forget once learnt, as the saying goes: Now immigrants to Finland can receive free cycling lessons to help them better integrate into life in the bike-loving nation. On a sunny September morning a group of around eight students have taken time out from their Finnish lessons to come to an empty car park in Helsinki's Suvilahti district, where they are fitted out with helmets and bikes.

"Many people who come to Finland, mostly women, they don't have this bicycle skill and it's a very important part of Finnish society," says Federico Ferrara of the Finnish Cyclists' Federation, which runs the project. Ferrara insists that learning to ride helps to empower the new arrivals, especially women, many of whom come from North Africa or the Middle East.

"Many of our clients have some kind of taboo with these biking skills, maybe they've fallen down when they were kids and they have this trauma in their head for 20 years, or maybe it's not socially or culturally accepted for them to bike," Ferrara tells AFP. The instructors help some of the students climb onto their bikes, and, as today's group has already had some practice in the saddle, they set off around a course of cones.

Despite some initial wobbles, instructor Sami Viitanen soon decides the group is ready for the next stage, and leads them out for a spin on the roads to get used to riding in traffic. Biking is popular in the Nordic nation, where more than half of people in the capital travel by bike at least once a week, according to authorities. A further 10 percent cycle all year round despite the long,

snowy winters.

But outside the city, learning to ride can be key to living independently. "If they are in a refugee centre, many times they are in the middle of nowhere and the bike can be the only way of commuting," Ferrara says. In the past year-and-a-half, Ferrara and his colleagues have taught 320 beginners to ride. The project is funded by Finland's state lottery and gambling monopoly. Ferrara says that after three hours, 90 percent of clients are able to navigate a car park. "Riding is great, now I can do it," gushes Orhan, who came to Finland from Turkey seven years ago.—AFP

Massive iceberg breaks off Antarctica



ANTARCTICA: This undated handout picture received yesterday shows a "loose tooth" on the Amery Ice Shelf in eastern Antarctica. — AFP

WASHINGTON: A more than 600-square-mile iceberg broke off Antarctica in recent days, but the event is part of a normal cycle and is not related to climate change, scientists say. The iceberg, dubbed D28, broke away from the Amery ice shelf between Sept 24 and 25, according to

observations from European and American satellites. It measures 1,582 sq km, according to the European Copernicus program. It is about 210 m thick and contains 315 billion tonnes of ice, American glaciologist Helen Amanda Fricker said.

The figures are huge, but iceberg produc-

tion is part of the normal cycle of ice shelves, which are an extension of the ice cap, she said. "Ice shelves have to lose mass because they gain mass. They want to stay the same size," said Fricker, a professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California. The gain in mass comes from

snow falling on the continent and glaciers that move slowly toward the shore.

The east of Antarctica - where D28 broke off - is different from the west of the continent and Greenland, which are rapidly warming due to climate change. "It's really important that the public doesn't get con-

fused and think that this is climate change," Fricker said. An iceberg that was three times larger broke off Antarctica two years ago, she said, causing panic at the time. "It's a fine line because we definitely don't want people to think that climate change isn't happening," Fricker added. — AFP

Stolen golden coffin makes return from New York to Cairo

CAIRO: Looted amidst the tumult of Egypt's 2011 revolution, the golden coffin of priest Nefertiti was unveiled yesterday in Cairo after its return from New York. Standing at 1.8 m, the fine gilded sarcophagus has gained notoriety, apart from its historical value, for its role at the centre of an international trafficking ring. Dating back to the Ptolemaic period (1st-2nd century BC), the ornate wooden coffin was designed for Nefertiti, a high priest of the ram-headed god Heryshef.

The shimmering artifact adorned with gesso reliefs had been housed since 2017 in New York's Metropolitan Museum, which purchased it from a Paris art dealer for around \$3.5 million (\$3.8 million). But in February, a Met exhibition which named the high priest had to shut down after being informed the sarcophagus had been plundered by a multinational trafficking ring. It had been smuggled out of Minya in southern Egypt in 2011, the year that long-time autocrat Hosni Mubarak was toppled in a popular revolt. It had then made its way to the United Arab Emirates and Germany before landing up in France.

"I am very happy to have this piece back again in Egypt... We will know all the details about the theft later," Mostafa Waziri, secretary general of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, told reporters at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization unveiling. Egypt has sought to promote its archaeological heritage in a bid to revive its vital tourism sector, which took a battering from political turmoil after the revolution. — AFP



CAIRO: A picture taken yesterday shows the golden coffin of Nefertiti on display at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization following its repatriation from the US. — AFP

Iraqi police fire on protesters...

Continued from Page 1

And some carried portraits of Staff Lieutenant General Abdulwahab Al-Saadi, who was this week removed from his post in Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Service in a shock move.

Riot police cleared the square a first time but the demonstrators regrouped and met a steady volley of live shots from security forces that continued even after the crowds had dispersed into adjacent neighborhoods. Three young men could be seen carrying a wounded demonstrator who was barefoot but wearing a checkered white-and-black scarf to protect him from tear gas fired by riot police, who also deployed water cannons.

Some protesters made their way towards Al-Jumhuriyah Bridge, which leads into the high-security Green Zone where government offices and foreign embassies are present. Police had set up metal barricades and stationed trucks at the mouth of the bridge to prevent protesters from crossing, and a security source inside the zone told AFP that reinforcements had been requested.

The gathering was the biggest demonstration against Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi since he came to power in late Oct 2018, just months after demonstrations that engulfed the southern city of Basra last summer. Despite simmering frustration with the premier over the past year, streets in Baghdad had remained relatively quiet before a confluence of factors apparently reignited public anger this week.

Graduates have slammed the government for failing to hire them in a country where a vast majority of the labor force is employed by a bloated public infrastructure. According to the World Bank, youth unemployment in Iraq is running at around 25 percent, double the national average. Abdel Mahdi has also taken flak over the decommissioning of Saadi, feted as a national hero for recapturing Iraqi territory from the Islamic State group.

Other protests in Nasiriyah and Najaf, south of Baghdad, saw hundreds gather in anger at poor services before also being dispersed by tear gas, AFP correspondents there said. Since 2004, a year after the US-led invasion that ousted dictator Saddam Hussein, almost \$450 billion of public funds has vanished into the pockets of shady politicians and businessmen, according to official figures. — AFP

UPS wins first US approval for 'drone airline'

WASHINGTON: Package delivery giant UPS said yesterday it became the first company to obtain US regulatory approval to operate a "drone airline" and would expand its airborne operations in healthcare and other sectors. UPS said it was the first applicant to win full certification from the Federal Aviation Administration, allowing it to fly an unlimited number of drones with an unlimited number of remote operators. "This is history in the making, and we aren't done yet," said David Abney, UPS chief executive.

"Our technology is opening doors for UPS and solving problems in unique ways for our customers. We will soon announce other steps to build out our infrastructure, expand services for healthcare customers and put drones to new uses in the future." UPS earlier this year partnered with the technology firm Matternet on delivery of medical products and specimens in North Carolina. "UPS is ready to build on this application and expand to a variety of critical-care or lifesaving applications," a company statement said.

Abney said the UPS Flight Forward unit "is building a full-scale drone operation based on the rigorous reli-



MENLO PARK, California: This March 13, 2019 image released by UPS shows a Matternet drone loaded with a UPS sample box. — AFP

ability, safety, and control requirements of the FAA." US Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said, "This is a big step forward in safely integrating unmanned aircraft systems into our airspace, expanding access to healthcare in North Carolina and building on the success of the national (drone pilot program) to maintain American leadership in unmanned aviation." The news comes with a variety of companies ranging from new startups to major tech firms such as Amazon and Uber working on autonomous drone delivery. — AFP

Human emissions '100-times greater'...

Continued from Page 1

these events we've seen in Earth's past," Edmonds told AFP. Celina Suarez, Associate Professor of Geology at the University of Arkansas, said modern manmade emissions were the "same magnitude" as past carbon shocks that precipitated mass extinction. "We are on the same level of carbon catastrophe which is a bit sobering," she told AFP.

By comparison, the CO2 released annually by volcanoes

hovers around 0.3 and 0.4 gigatonnes - roughly 100 times less than manmade emissions. "Climate skeptics really jump on volcanoes as a possible contender for top CO2 emissions but it's simply not the case," said Edmonds. "It's also the timescale." Whereas Earth's atmosphere has frequently contained higher concentrations of CO2 than the present day, outside of catastrophic eruptions it has taken hundreds of thousands of years for such levels to accumulate.

In contrast, manmade carbon emissions have seen CO2 levels rise two thirds in a span of a few centuries. "Climate deniers always say that Earth always rebalances itself," said Suarez. "Well, yes it has. It will rebalance itself, but not on a timescale that is of significance to humans." — AFP

450 Bangladeshis murdered in South...

Continued from Page 1

Ambassador Shabbir Ahmad Chowdhury said the number killed could be far higher, as many families do not report the deaths. "Many are buried here. It is therefore uncertain to tell the exact number of dead," he told AFP. Chowdhury said most Bangladeshis "hire local hitmen" who carry out killings to settle disputes. "Quite a lot of Bangladeshis have been shot dead, but we don't report them, let alone seek justice, because many of us live here illegally," Abdul Awal Tansen, a top Bangladeshi community leader in Johannesburg, told AFP.

Bangladeshis started migrating to South Africa in the

early 2000s and today an estimated 300,000 live there - many illegally - making them one of the largest Bangladeshi diaspora. Bangladesh media has reported how young men pay traffickers up to \$12,000 to get to South Africa. Thousands own grocery shops across the African nation. Scores of Bangladeshi-owned shops were attacked in the recent anti-immigrant violence, community leaders said. "They often see us as their competitors. We are not taking their jobs yet they attack us with guns," one Bangladeshi migrant, Khalil Mia, told AFP.

The high commissioner said the embassy has urged South African authorities to take action against illegal migration and crime. "They should be more strict on these issues," he said. A foreign ministry official in Dhaka said despite the murders, a growing number of young Bangladeshis still try to get to South Africa illegally. "It is hard to stop the surge of fortune seekers," he said on condition of anonymity. — AFP

Sports

'No second chances' as Erasmus names strong Bok team for Italy

'We have to win this to get into the quarter-finals'

SHIZUOKA: South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus warned there were no second chances as he made three changes to the team that lost to New Zealand in their World Cup opener for the "do-or-die" Pool B match against Italy on Friday.

Prop Tendai Mtawarira, hooker Bongsi Mbonambi and lock Lood de Jager all come in for the Springboks' must-win game in Shizuoka.

A second-string Springbok side hammered African neighbours Namibia 57-3 on Saturday, a match for which many of the team that went down 23-13 to the All Blacks were rested.

"This is a do-or-die game for us," Erasmus said. "We have to win this to get into the quarter-finals. The players feel it. I'm sitting here feeling butterflies because we've lost to Italy recently — they will really be up for this."

"Italy will be the really slippery game for us, like Japan was for Ireland," he said, in reference to the World Cup hosts' shock 19-12 victory over the Irish.

Mtawarira, Mbonambi and de Jager replace Steven Kitshoff, Malcolm Marx and Franco Mostert respectively, who are all expected to make an impact after being named on the bench.

Two players drop out from the New Zealand match-day 23 completely with Trevor Nyakane out of the World Cup with a torn calf and Jesse Kriel nursing a hamstring injury.

In a sign of the Boks' approach to the match against Italy, who have beaten Namibia 47-22 and Canada 48-7 in their opening two games, Erasmus named just two

back replacements on the bench.

"Italy have a very good pack and put a lot of effort in their set phases," said Erasmus.

"People may think it is a gamble to have only two back replacements but we want to have plenty of ammunition for what is likely to be a major forward battle. "It's a 23-player game these days and the players who come on will be expected to contribute almost as much in game time as those who start among the front-rows."

"But for this game we are asking the players we have chosen to start to set the tone."

The Springboks have met Italy 14 times before, with South Africa winning 13, although that solitary defeat (in Florence in 2016) was with a team featuring 10 of Friday's Bok selection.

"Italy have had their eyes on this match for a couple of years and will have planned and schemed how to bring us down once again," said Erasmus.

"This is a defining match for them and while we were focusing on the New Zealand game, they will have had their eyes on this one as the key to the quarter-finals for them."

"That means we have to be at our absolute best if we are to beat them — we are at the stage already where there are no second chances. That's a message we have been emphasising to the players this week."

South Africa (15-1)

Willie le Roux; Cheslin Kolbe, Lukhanyo Am, Damian de Allende, Makazole Mapimpi; Handre Pollard, Faf de



SHIZUOKA: Italy's captain Sergio Parisse takes part in a training session at the Kusanagi Sports Complex Ball Game Field in Shizuoka during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup. — AFP

Klerk; Duane Vermeulen, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Siya Kolisi (capt); Lood de Jager, Eben Etzebeth; Frans Malherbe, Bongsi Mbonambi, Tendai Mtawarira

Replacements: Malcolm Marx, Steven Kitshoff, Vincent Koch, RG Snyman, Franco Mostert, Francois Louw, Herschel Jantjies, Francois Steyn. — AF

Sexton shakes off injury for World Cup return against Russia

KOBE: World Player of the Year Jonathan Sexton will captain Ireland for the first time after being recalled for their Rugby World Cup match against Russia tomorrow following a thigh injury.

The 34-year-old fly-half missed Ireland's shock 19-12 defeat by hosts Japan in Shizuoka on Saturday, which threw Pool A wide open, with a knock he suffered in the opening 27-3 win over Scotland.

British and Irish Lions star Sexton was one of 11 personnel changes and two positional switches made by Joe Schmidt following a five-day turnaround, in what is the New Zealander's last tournament before he steps down as Ireland coach.

"It's a massive honour. I spoke to Joe this morning, so I only found out myself over the last few hours," Sexton told reporters after Schmidt announced the team yesterday. "I haven't even had a chance to tell my family or anything, but I'm sure they're going to be very proud as well."

The Leinster playmaker added: "It's something that I've thought about since I was a kid, something I've made a lot of decisions around trying to get there one day. "It has taken a while but it was worth the wait and I'm incredibly proud."

"I want to be captain now of a good performance and a good win in a World Cup game, so that's my main focus. "I have a big responsibility in the team anyway, so nothing has changed," insisted Sexton, who said he was also fit enough to resume his role as Ireland's first-choice goal-kicker.

Schmidt, explaining why he had made so many alterations, said: "There might be 13 changes because we do need to make sure everyone is ready and involved as much as possible, to get everyone up to speed."

"It's pretty tough with a six-day and then a five-day turnaround, there's always going to be a bit of attrition. We're looking to freshen it up and give guys an opportunity."

"It's great, because we've got some guys who would



KOBE: Ireland's players take part in a training session at the Steelers Training Ground in Kobe yesterday, during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup. — AFP

have been very, very keen to be involved who will get an opportunity tomorrow." Schmidt gave Jordi Murphy an immediate start at No 8, with the back-row having only recently arrived in Japan to replace the injured Jack Conan in the 31-man squad.

"He trained unbelievably well today," Schmidt said. "He is straight off the flight, he got in late Sunday. "We are just asking for him to do the best he can for us. The one thing with Jordi is that you seldom get anything other than that. He's a really good performer for us and we'd have a lot of confidence about him being able to slot straight in."

Meanwhile centre Garry Ringrose and flanker Peter O'Mahony will both be starting their third game in 11 days when Ireland face Russia in what are set to be sweltering conditions under the closed roof of the Kobe Misaki Stadium.

Ringrose will partner the returning Bundee Aki in midfield, with Chris Farrell ruled out due to concussion and Robbie Henshaw still to regain full fitness following

hamstring trouble.

Up front, Ireland will field an all-Munster front-five against Russia. They will now look to beat both Russia and Samoa in their two concluding group fixtures and may well need bonus points from both to be certain of gaining one of the two quarter-final spots on offer from a tightly-contested Pool A.

Ireland will have to make history if they are to be crowned world champions for the first time, as every side that has lifted the Webb Ellis Cup has gone through the tournament unbeaten.

Ireland (15-1)

Rob Kearney; Andrew Conway, Garry Ringrose, Bundee Aki, Keith Earls; Jonathan Sexton (capt), Luke McGrath; Jordi Murphy, Peter O'Mahony, Rhys Ruddock; Jean Kleyn, Tadhg Beirne; John Ryan, Niall Scannell, Dave Kilcoyne. Replacements: Sean Cronin, Andrew Porter, Tadhg Furlong, Iain Henderson, CJ Stander, Joey Carbery, Jack Carty, Jordan Larmour. — AFP

'We want to nail this': All Blacks to show no mercy to Canada

OITA: New Zealand playing Canada may be a mismatch, but for All Blacks captain Kieran Read today's clash in Oita is a vital step towards their target of a third consecutive World Cup. When they last met at the 2011 World Cup — since when they were the two-time defending champions are unbeaten at the World Cup — it was a 79-15 rout, and an even higher scoreline is on the cards this time.

Read, who featured in the lop-sided game eight years ago, has shown no mercy towards the rugby lightweights, saying this match is about the All Blacks getting it right. "As a captain, we want to nail this game. You want to stay in as much structure as you can but if opportunities present themselves, hopefully the guys can take them," he said, with wings Rieko Ioane and Jordie Barrett given a chance to prove themselves.

The All Blacks made 11 changes to the side that beat South Africa in the Pool B heavyweight clash a week ago, and when the names coming in include Sonny Bill Williams and Ioane, while Ben Smith can only make the bench, it highlights their depth of talent. "You gain confidence, trust of guys alongside you, it builds your game," Read said, when questioned on what the revamped All Blacks

could get out of playing a team like Canada.

"Certainly we want to go out there make sure that individually we're all in a good state. For us now, it's making sure that we just perform to the best of our ability." Smith's exclusion comes as coach Steve Hansen wants to see more from his twin playmakers Richie Mo'unga and Beauden Barrett who will be paired for only the fifth time.

"They haven't played a lot of Test matches together so they just need a bit more time together. I'm not saying it's not clicking or anything. It's just time," Hansen said.

Ioane, who has touched down a remarkable 23 times in 26 Tests, has been overtaken in the All Blacks pecking order by Sevu Reece but in an ominous warning to Canada, Hansen said he is pushing to get his starting spot back.

"We know that he's also capable of playing wonderful rugby and it's important he plays well... Once he does that, and I'm sure he will, the pressure comes back on the selectors," Hansen said. Jordie Barrett, the youngest of the three brothers who will make history as the first sibling trio to start a World Cup match for New Zealand, is another under instructions to set the game alight.

The 22-year-old utility is seen to have a bright future although his impetuosity has at times let him down. "It's not his confidence that he has to get right, it's his understanding. He wants to do everything at 100 miles an hour," Hansen said. "He's got two brothers that are ahead of him and when you're in a contest with your siblings you're always in a hurry because you want to prove not only to yourself but also your siblings and everybody else that you're better than they are." — AFP

Defence coach warns Scotland against Russia relapse at Rugby WCup

KOBE: Scotland's defence coach has insisted the team cannot afford to let their standards slip against Russia after getting their bid for a Rugby World Cup quarter-final place back on track.

The Scots revived their last-eight hopes with a convincing 34-0 bonus-point win over Samoa in Kobe on Monday after starting the tournament with a miserable 27-3 loss to old rivals Ireland.

They now find themselves in what would appear to be a three-way fight with Ireland and Japan for one of the two places in the knockout phase on offer from a tightly-contested Pool A where Samoa may yet have a say in the issue.

Scotland's concluding group match against Japan, whose shock 19-12 win over Ireland threw the pool wide open, in Yokohama on October 13 could be a make-or-break fixture for both sides. But four days earlier, Scotland face outsiders Russia, against whom they are likely to need another bonus-point success if they are to set up a winner-takes-all clash with tournament hosts Japan.

"The reality of where we are is it is knockout now," Scotland defence coach Matt Taylor told reporters at the team hotel on Tuesday. "Every game now is like a quarter-final."

"We have to turn up and play Russia with the right mindset and do a good professional job. Hopefully if we do that, we set ourselves up for a really good game against Japan." The Australian added: "I will be very disappointed if we don't show the same aggression and mindset because we know if we don't show up, or put in a performance like we need to, we are out. — AFP

Japan win great for Rugby World Cup: Schmidt

KOBE: Joe Schmidt admitted Japan's stunning Rugby World Cup win over Ireland was "fantastic for the tournament" — even though he wishes his side had not been on the receiving end of the 'Shock in Shizuoka'.

Four years on from their 'Miracle of Brighton' victory over South Africa at the 2015 World Cup in England, Japan again upset the formbook with a 19-12 defeat of Ireland in Shizuoka last Saturday.

"If it wasn't us that lost the game, I'd say, 'Wow, that's fantastic for the tournament,'" Ireland coach Schmidt told reporters yesterday.

"Everywhere we've gone, the Japanese people have been incredibly excited about the game. They're delighted with us, obviously, and I think loads of interest has been spiked by that."

Japan's victory appears to have set up a three-way contest with Ireland and Scotland for the two quarter-final places on offer from a tightly-contested Pool A.

"It's great for our pool if you're an independent observer because it's thrown the pool wide open and everyone's chasing Japan in our pool now," said Schmidt.

The Ireland boss has made 11 personnel changes and two positional switches to his side for Thursday's match in Kobe against group minnows Russia, with fit-again fly-half Jonathan Sexton, the reigning World Player of the Year, captaining his country for the first time.

Ireland may require bonus points, achieved by scoring four tries in a match, as well as wins against both Russia and Samoa to be certain of making the last eight. But Schmidt warned against forcing the issue.

"We have to stay around our performance-oriented goals, because for us we can't put anything on the scoreboard without getting the things we need to put in place; that we build the pressure or that we create the opportunities from," the New Zealander said.

"I felt the first 20 minutes last weekend was very good, we got the right field position and turned a few balls over which was frustrating. "But we converted two tries on the back of some really good line breaks and maybe that was to our detriment because we kind of stepped back after that and didn't play with the same front-foot. "You can't afford to do that against a quality opposition."

Schmidt, however, revealed his frustration with French official Jerome Garces, a touch judge on Saturday, who will be the referee for the Ireland-Russia match.

"We were penalised for offside four times and we've now got the feedback that three of those were incorrect calls... It's pretty hard to keep getting off the line and onto the front foot when you are getting those calls."

"Two of them were from an AR (assistant referee) who is going to be refereeing us on Thursday, so we know we're going to have to be on our best behaviour."

Tournament rules state roofs on grounds such as the Kobe Misaki Stadium, the venue for Thursday's match, must remain shut for World Cup fixtures.

Sweltering conditions have made ball-handling difficult, with Scotland's 34-0 win over Samoa at the ground on Monday notable for numerous knock-ons by both sides.

"Yeah we watched the game last night and it looked very sloppy," said Sexton, who missed the Japan defeat with a thigh injury. "It's something we're going to have to be mindful of. — AFP

Sports

Griezmann attempting to find his feet on rocky ground at Barca

Barca looking for lift-off in Champions League after goalless draw against Dortmund

BARCELONA: Antoine Griezmann said he knew it would be tough settling in at Barcelona but it may have proven harder than he thought.

Barca play at home to Inter Milan today looking for lift-off in the Champions League after a goalless draw against Borussia Dortmund made for an underwhelming start to their latest bid for success in Europe.

Griezmann also has something to prove after two steady but unspectacular months, elevated by moments rather than the consistency Ernesto Valverde would have hoped for when the Frenchman's 120-million euro release clause was activated last summer.

"Against Bilbao he was not as involved as we would like," Valverde said at the start of the season. "But it is also up to the team to allow our strikers to participate more." When Griezmann scored twice in the next game, against Real Betis, before tossing glitter above his head at Camp Nou, it felt like he had made his big introduction and not just because of the theatrics.

But five La Liga games have since brought only one more goal and assist while a handful of rather muted displays have left a sense of a player finding his feet, despite excelling in La Liga for the past nine seasons.

After last week's win over Villarreal, Griezmann was asked about his start at Barcelona. "It's different," he said. "It's a different type of football, a different position and I knew it was going to be difficult to adjust."

"But I feel like I'm improving every game and that's it. Three goals, it's not bad right? I can do better but I just arrived. I work for the team and if I can score or assist, even better." Griezmann has reason to defend himself. He joined a team that after five games had posted its lowest points total in 25 years, with last season's collapse against Liverpool still lingering, not least

for Valverde, whose future is never secure.

He also arrived as one of the world's premium strikers but found his new club pursuing Neymar for the duration of the summer, as if the Brazilian might add something he could not. There were relationships to repair too, with Barcelona's fans and players, after Griezmann not only turned them down 12 months before but embarrassed them, by announcing his decision in a documentary.

INCONSISTENCY

"I've spent very little time with him to be honest," Lionel Messi told Diario Sport last month. "Since I returned, I've been injured and training on my own. They went on tour and when they came back we saw each other a little in the dressing room but I've not been there in the training sessions. We'll have the opportunity to share a lot of things."

Once in position, Griezmann has been played in "different positions", three times down the middle as a lone striker and five times on the left of the front three. In his eight games, there have been six different attacking combinations, the revolving pair around him involving all of Luis Suarez, Ousmane Dembele, Rafinha, Carles Perez, Ansu Fati and Messi.

"He is a player who can play in several positions," Valverde said. "We have to see who plays but it's clear the system has to accommodate the players." When he announced he would be leaving Atletico in May, Griezmann said he wanted a fresh challenge and he would have been under no illusions about the inevitable dimming of status alongside the likes of Messi, Suarez and Dembele.

The emergence of the 16-year-old sensation Fati



SANT JOAN DESPI: Barcelona's players attend a training session at the Joan Gamper Sports City training ground in Sant Joan Despi, near Barcelona, yesterday on the eve of the UEFA Champions League Group F football match against Inter Milan. —AFP

and 21-year-old Perez has added two more into an already-crowded attacking roster. But consistency has been hard to come by in a team ridden with

inconsistencies and in that context, Griezmann's start has been encouraging. Against Inter, he will hope for something more. —AFP

Dortmund expect to lose Sancho to premier league club

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund expect to lose England winger Jadon Sancho to a Premier League club with both Manchester United and City reportedly tracking the teenager, director of sport Michael Zorc has admitted.

After turning down a new Manchester City contract to join Dortmund in August 2017, Sancho, still only 19, made his England debut last October on the back of stunning performances for the German club. He has scored 18 goals with 29 assists in 64 games for Dortmund who in the current market can expect around 100 million euros (\$109 million) for Sancho having paid eight million pounds for him after he signed a five-year deal until June 2022.

According to the British media, United and ex-club City are monitoring him. Sancho has made a great start to the season with four goals and six assists in nine games and Dortmund have reportedly doubled his salary to six million euros per year. Many fans, however, do not expect the club to hold onto the fleet-footed winger for much longer and Zorc agrees that "the really top clubs" are "not blind".

"You don't have to be a prophet to say that Jadon will certainly not be playing here for another five years," said the Dortmund boss ahead of Wednesday's Champions League game away to Slavia Prague.

Sancho had yet to turn 18 when he played his first Bundesliga game over 90 minutes in January 2018 — a chance he most likely would not have had so young in England.

"But he knows very well that he took a positive step in his development at Borussia Dortmund," added Zorc.

"I doubt that this would be possible with top English clubs. We trust players from an early age and are not afraid to let them play. He (Sancho) acknowledges that." — AFP



DOHA: Qatar's Mariam Mamdouh Farid competes in the Women's 400m hurdles race heats at the 2019 IAAF Athletics World Championships at the Khalifa International stadium in Doha yesterday. —AFP

Last in heat, Qatari hurdler still breaks down barriers

DOHA: When Qatari hurdler Mariam Mamdouh Farid crossed the finish line more than 15 seconds after the winner in her heat, the sparse crowd at Khalifa International Stadium cheered as if she had put on a podium performance. The 21-year-old finished last in a 400 metres hurdles heat in front of her home crowd with a personal best time of just under one minute 10 seconds, but her race was much more about breaking down barriers than leaping over them.

Competing in a black full-body leotard covering her from head to toe under a national team singlet, Farid is one of two female athletes from Qatar taking part in the

world athletics championships for the first time.

"My goal is inspiring the younger generation, breaking down barriers, making people's perception of how women are in the Middle East," she said. "We are not oppressed. I can still compete with my scarf on. If there is something I want to do, I will do it."

Farid took up athletics as a 15-year-old, having dabbled in a number of sports at her school in Doha. "I used to be the strong girl in school playing football with guys and beating them at the break," she said.

Now on the global stage, Farid, a communications student at the Doha campus of Northwestern University, could not help but be a little starstruck by the hurdlers in other lanes. "I used to see Sydney (McLaughlin) the American champion on Instagram and now she's competing with me," she said. "I felt special."

Making history at the world championships in Doha is not a big enough dream for Farid. She aims to one day win a medal at a major event. "My dreams are very big," she said. "It's not just competing at the world championships but taking medals." — Reuters

Solskjaer demands more clinical Man Utd after Arsenal snatch draw

MACHESTER: Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer jealously lauded the killer touch of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang after the Arsenal striker secured a 1-1 draw for the Gunners at Old Trafford on Monday.

A return of just nine points from their opening seven games is United's worst league start for 30 years and leaves them already 12 points behind leaders Liverpool in 10th. Solskjaer's side have not scored more than one goal since the opening weekend of the season, while Aubameyang took his tally for the season to eight in eight games, seven of which have come in the Premier League.

"It's another game that we are 1-0 up," said Solskjaer. "1-0 at Southampton, 1-0 up at Wolves, we need to learn to win these games. We go 1-0 up and then we don't get the second goal that we want to get. That's the learning now for this time. Be more clinical."

Aubameyang's equaliser just before the hour mark was only awarded after a VAR review with the Gabon international initially wrongly flagged offside. Bukayo Saka pounced on a misplaced pass deep inside the United half and his through ball freed Aubameyang, who was clearly played inside by Harry Maguire.

"Seven now in seven games, so that's clinical," added Solskjaer admiringly of Aubameyang. "VAR is a work in progress, but I'm for right decisions and they definitely deserved their goal today." For many years the clashes between these sides were the Premier League's marquee fixtures. United and Arsenal were the champions of England for nine consecutive seasons between 1996 and 2004. However, the fact they were facing off on a Monday

night because neither are in Champions League action later this week was reflected in a first 45 minutes devoid of inspiration. "I think both Man Utd and us have quality players and we need to improve, to work, to improve physically and tactically to achieve the best performance," said Arsenal boss Unai Emery.

The one moment of quality separated the sides just before the break as Scott McTominay's stunning strike put United in front. Daniel James led a counter-attack from an Arsenal corner and after his cross just evaded Marcus Rashford, the England international cut the ball back to the edge of the box where McTominay smashed into the top corner. That was the first goal United had scored a goal from open play at home in the first-half this season. And they failed to find another goal despite dominating after Arsenal's equaliser.

Paul Pogba fired inches wide from the edge of the area before McTominay somehow didn't score his second of the night with a free header six yards out from a corner. Bernd Leno produced a fine save to turn a piledriver from Maguire over as the world's most expensive defender tried to atone for his earlier error. But the German goalkeeper's best save of the evening came at the death as he flew to his left to turn Rashford's powerful free-kick to safety.

Arsenal remain without a league victory at Old Trafford since 2006, but a point is enough to edge them back into the top four on goal difference. "We wanted to win because we were thinking it was a very good opportunity here to achieve the three points," added Emery. "After 90 minutes I think it was a fair result for both sides." — AFP

Salzburg's youngster Haaland set to shine at Anfield

OSLO: Salzburg's red-hot teenage striker Erling Braut Haaland, will have the chance to measure himself against Liverpool's dazzling collection of attackers today, if he is fit to play.

The Austrian club's sporting director Christoph Freund said on Sunday that the 19-year-old has been ill and may not feature against the European champions at Anfield but there will be many beyond the confines of Merseyside who pray that he is wrong.

After an explosive start to Haaland's Champions League career, fans want to see more of the Norwegian. "He's going to become one of the best strikers in the world," said Salzburg team-mate Maximilian Woeber. "He's just phenomenal."

Haaland set the first round of Champions League games alight when he hit a first-half hat-trick as Salzburg pulverised Genk 6-2 to top Group E ahead of Napoli, who beat Liverpool on the same night.

At 19 years and 58 days, Haaland became the third youngest man to score a hat-trick in the Champions League since its revamp in 1992. Raul was just 18 years and 114 days when he did it in 1995 for Real Madrid against Ferencvaros while Wayne Rooney was 18 years and 340 days when he marked his debut in the competition with a treble for Manchester United against Fenerbahce in September 2004.

Imposing Haaland, who stands 1.94m tall, has been in scintillating form since moving from Molde to Salzburg in January, has scored 17 times in 10 appearances. In May in the under-20 World Cup, he hammered nine goals in one match as Norway humiliated Honduras 12-0.

In spite of his record and his undoubted potential, Haaland is not a regular starter for Salzburg. Five days after his star turn against Genk, he was on the bench at Linz in the Austrian League. He was not even in the squad for the two subsequent wins over Austria Vienna, one in the cup and one in the league.

The young gun is just as confident in his abilities as his teammates are. Asked to name his favourite player by Norwegian TV he answered, with a smile: "I have to say 'it's me'", before adding a slight caveat.

"Zlatan Ibrahimovic is the biggest one. He is Scandinavian, so someone has to take over from him," he said. His profile is inevitably attracting interest from Europe's wealthiest clubs.

"All my life, I have dreamed of playing for one of the best clubs in the world, and I particularly like English football," he said. Yet Haaland has said he is a fan of his father Alf-Inge Haaland's former club Leeds — the city where he was born in July 2000 — and wants to bring glory to a team currently loitering in England's second tier Championship.

"The dream is to win the Premier League with Leeds," he told a Norwegian newspaper in 2017. Juventus and Manchester City have been mentioned as potential suitors but one intriguing link is with Manchester United which has a complex history with the Haaland family. Haaland's dad played for Nottingham Forest, Leeds and then Manchester City, where he was the victim in 2001 of an infamous incident where Manchester United's Roy Keane deliberately stamped on his right knee.

"I really don't like United and I can't stand its players," Alf-Inge has said. Yet Manchester United has a Norwegian manager, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. In the 2017 interview, Erling Braut explained that he had just chosen to join Molde from Bryne, rather than accepting offers from abroad, because he wanted to work with its coach at the time — Solskjaer.

"He had a very big impact on my life," said Haaland said recently of his time at Molde. "He is one of the reasons why I'm here today. He is a good person and a good coach." Solskjaer, who admitted on Monday that he is in the market for strikers, returns the admiration. —AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

SK Slavia Prague v Borussia Dortmund	19:55
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
FC Barcelona v Internazionale Milano	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
RB Leipzig v Olympique Lyonnais	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
LOSC Lille v Chelsea FC	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6	
Valencia C.F. v Ajax Amsterdam	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Zenit St. Petersburg v SL Benfica	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Liverpool v Red Bull Salzburg	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD	

25 'No second chances' as Erasmus names strong Bok team for Italy



26 Murray going 'in right direction' after biggest win since return



27 Last in heat, Qatari hurdler still breaks down barriers



Norway's Warholm seals hurdles double

Russia's Lasitskene clinches superb high jump hat-trick



DOHA: Norway's Karsten Warholm competes in the Men's 400m Hurdles final at the 2019 IAAF Athletics World Championships at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha. —AFP

DOHA: Norway's Karsten Warholm retained his 400m hurdles World Championship crown with a barnstorming victory in Doha Monday as Russia's Mariya Lasitskene completed a superb high jump hat-trick.

After an opening three days of competition marked by swathes of empty seats, Warholm delighted the biggest crowd of the championships so far with a battling victory at the Khalifa Stadium. Warholm took gold in 47.42seconds, with his rival Rai Benjamin of the United States claiming silver in 47.66sec. Qatar's Abderrahman Samba took bronze in 48.03. The 23-year-old Warholm roared, pumped his fist and slapped his chest as he was introduced to the crowd before the start of the race as part of a dazzling light display. That set the tone for a classic hurdles battle, with Warholm timing his move to perfection to take the lead heading into the home straight before holding off Benjamin.

"This was a very tough race," Warholm said. "I actually felt my heart was going to stop. I thought 'I'm going to die but it's going to be worth it.'" Although Monday's crowd

was the largest of the championships so far, most fans had left the arena well before Warholm set off on his lap of honour.

"I'm used to talking to myself so it wasn't a problem," Warholm joked. "It was something else in London (in 2017) when there was 60,000 people there. I've got to be honest about that. But at the same time, with the gold medal, I couldn't care less."

Warholm's win came just moments after high jump Lasitskene won a third consecutive world championship title to set alongside her wins in 2015 and 2017. The 26-year-old, who is one of only 30 Russian athletes allowed to compete in Doha under the authorised neutral athlete banner, took gold ahead of Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh.

Lasitskene claimed the gold after clearing a height of 2.04m to win on countback ahead of Mahuchikh. Vashiti Cunningham of the United States took bronze. The win marked another career milestone for Lasitskene, who has dominated international high-jumping in recent years. "It was like in a fairytale to get a third world title," Lasitskene said. "My whole

country expected me to be on the podium. I had to cope with this pressure." Lasitskene was barred from the 2016 Olympics after Russia was banned from the games over the country's doping scandal.

But she has since been allowed to compete as a neutral athlete, a status handed to athletes who are deemed to be above suspicion by the International Association of Athletics Federations. There was also success for another defending champion in the 5,000m, where Ethiopia's Muktar Edris retained his 2017 crown in a time of 12 minutes 58.85 seconds. His compatriot Selemone Barea, 19, took silver in 12:59.70 and Canada's Mohammed Ahmed the bronze in a time of 13:01.11. Also on the track Monday saw African runners claim victories in the women's 800m and women's 3,000m steeplechase.

Uganda's Halimah Nakaayi took advantage of the absence of defending champion Gaster Semena to win the 800m, conjuring a sprint finish to take gold in 1min 58.04sec, with the fast-finishing Raevyn Rogers of the

United States taking silver in 1:58.18.

American Ajee Wilson had to settle for bronze in 1:58.84. The 800m at this year's championships took place without South Africa's two-time Olympic champion Semena, prevented from competing in Doha after losing her legal battle against regulations which would have forced her to take medication to lower naturally elevated testosterone levels. The 3,000m steeplechase meanwhile saw redemption for Kenya's Beatrice Chepkoech, who won gold two years after a blunder cost her a medal in London.

The 28-year-old world record holder pulled clear from the field early on and led by around 40 metres at the bell before coasting home in 8min 57.84sec. Defending champion Emma Coburn of the United States took silver with a time of 9:02.35 ahead of Germany's Gesa Krause, who claimed bronze in 9:03.30.

Chepkoech had missed out on a medal two years ago when she inadvertently missed a water jump and was forced to backtrack before finishing fourth. — AFP



Mariya Lasitskene

Mo Farah's former coach Salazar hit with four-year doping ban

LOS ANGELES: Long distance running guru Alberto Salazar, the former coach of Britain's four-time Olympic gold medallist Mo Farah, has been slapped with a four-year ban after being found guilty of doping violations.

The decision to ban the 61-year-old from the sport comes after a four-year investigation by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) and a prolonged battle behind closed doors. USADA also said Jeffrey Brown, a Texas endocrinologist who treated many of Salazar's athletes at his Nike-backed Oregon Project, has also been given a four-year suspension.

In announcing the bans, USADA praised the athletes for speaking out. "The athletes in these cases found the courage to speak out and ultimately exposed the truth," said USADA chief executive Travis Tygart.

"While acting in connection with the Nike Oregon Project, Mr Salazar and Dr Brown demonstrated that winning was more important than the health and well-being of the athletes they were sworn to protect."

USADA said in the statement that two, three-member arbitration panels had determined Salazar and Brown should be banned for "orchestrating and facilitating prohibited doping conduct." The Cuban-born Salazar operates the Nike Oregon Project — which four-time Olympic champion Farah belonged to from 2011 until 2017.

Salazar was discovered to have trafficked or attempted to traffic banned substance testosterone, given athletes a substance in excess of its permitted limit and tampered with the doping control process of athletes.

"USADA's investigation yielded a wide range of evidence referenced in the hearing, including eye-witness proof, testimonies, contemporaneous emails, and patient records," USADA said in a news release.

"Between the two cases, USADA relied on more than 2,000 exhibits, which the AAA heard along with the defendants' cases. In all, the proceedings included 30 witnesses and 5,780 pages of transcripts."

In a statement on the Oregon Project's website, Salazar denied ever doping his athletes. "I am shocked by the outcome today," Salazar said. "Throughout this six-year investigation my athletes and I have endured unjust, unethical and highly damaging treatment from USADA."

"I have always ensured the WADA code is strictly followed. The Oregon Project has never and will never permit doping. I will appeal and look forward to this unfair and protracted process reaching the conclusion I know to be true."

Farah left Salazar's camp in 2017 but denied the decision was related to Oregon Project doping accusations. The Somalia-born British star, who won back-to-back Olympic 5,000m and 10,000m titles at the 2012 and 2016 Games, has repeatedly denied any knowledge of Salazar's alleged involvement in doping.

"I am a firm believer in clean sport and I strongly believe that anyone who breaks the rules should be punished," Farah said when announcing his split with



Alberto Salazar

Salazar. "If I had ever had any reason to doubt Alberto, I would not have stood by him all this time," Farah added.

Salazar is believed to be in Doha where several Oregon Project athletes are competing in the IAAF World Championships. One of Salazar's athletes, the Ethiopian-born Dutch runner Sifan Hassan, won the women's 10,000m on Saturday and will go for more gold in either the 5,000m or 1,500m. — AFP