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# Hashem welcomes 100% hike in expatriate maternity charges

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## Kuwait leaps ahead in WEF competitiveness index



By Jamie Etheridge

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait leaped eight spots to rank 46 out of 141 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index, a signal that government efforts to improve Kuwait's investment climate and diversify the oil-based economy are starting to pay dividends. Kuwait earned the label "most improved in the [MENA] region", scoring high in macroeconomic stability, health and financial sector, though it earned lower

marks for institutions, labor markets and innovative capabilities.

Among the Gulf states, UAE ranked highest at 25, Qatar came next at 29 and Saudi Arabia 36. Bahrain at 45 scored just above Kuwait, and Oman completed the GCC states at 53. The annual WEF report examines a variety of factors including macroeconomic stability, labor market, institutions, infrastructure, innovation, business dynamism, health, skills and adoption of ICT. It then ranks the world's economy on a variety of subfactors,

positing that these are the key factors that produce economic growth and stability.

"The Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 (GCI 4.0) provides stakeholders with a detailed map of the factors and attributes that drive productivity, growth and human development," the report notes. The WEF report is utilized by governments and investors as one way to gauge a country's economic potential and especially its attractiveness to foreign investors.

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By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** MP Safa Al-Hashem yesterday welcomed a decision by the health ministry to increase by 100 percent charges expatriate women have to pay at maternity hospitals, saying the new raise will regulate the service. Hashem, who has been pressing the government to increase charges on expatriates, said the decision will greatly benefit operations at maternity hospitals run by the health ministry. She praised the health minister for accepting some of her proposals that call for imposing a raft of charges on expatriates, whom she blames for disruption of main services in the country.

The health ministry announced yesterday that it has decided to increase maternity charges for expatriate women from KD 50 to KD 100 for natural delivery and KD 150 for caesarean delivery (C-section), saying the decision came after a thorough study. The raise is effective immediately. The ministry said that unlike before, expat women will also have to pay for their stay at hospitals, which is KD 10 daily in wards, raising at the same time charges for private rooms at maternity hospitals from KD 50 to KD 100 per day.

The ministry of health has been regularly increasing medical charges at public hospitals, following last year's major

increase in most medical charges. On top of that, expats are required to pay KD 50 annually in health insurance as a prerequisite for a residence permit. Hashem also claimed that expatriate doctors at Farwaniya and Adan hospitals favor expat patients ahead of Kuwaitis and urged the health minister to stop such practices. The lawmaker called on authorities to continue their fight against visa traders and "residency mafias", whom she blamed for distorting the demographic structure in Kuwait, where 3.3 million expats live against 1.4 million native Kuwaitis.

Meanwhile, a proposal recently made by Hashem on violations mandating expats' deportation was referred to relevant parliamentary committees, said parliamentary sources, noting however that the time remaining in the new Assembly term might not be enough to discuss them. The sources added that some of the points mentioned in Hashem's proposal are already being implemented, such as deporting expats with expired residency visas, those working for employers other than their sponsors and those whose jobs in their work permit do not match what they actually do.

Further, the sources said that manpower authority will soon start taking measures leading up to deportation against expat violators, including those

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## News in brief

### Initial nod for KFH AUB takeover

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House has received conditional approval from Kuwait's Central Bank for its proposed acquisition of Bahrain's Ahli United Bank. The deal depends on a number of requirements to ensure adherence to sharia, transparency and protection of free competition, the Central Bank said in a statement. KFH announced its plan to take over the Bahraini lender in January. — Reuters

### Health insurance payment online

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry's PR and security media department announced launching health insurance payment online for all residency affairs departments, adding applicants desiring to renew their residency visas should pay the fees online at [www.moh.gov.kw](http://www.moh.gov.kw) before heading to residency affairs departments or service centers to complete the renewal process. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

### Driver who jumped curb arrested

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry's PR and security media department announced that in response to social media videos showing a public transport bus being driven on the sidewalk, traffic police patrols tracked down the bus driver, arrested him and impounded the bus. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

### Saudi women can join armed forces

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia announced yesterday it will allow women in the ultraconservative kingdom to serve in the armed forces as it embarks on a broad program of economic and social reforms. The move is the latest in a series of measures aimed at increasing the rights of women in the kingdom, even as rights groups accuse Riyadh of cracking down on women activists. — AFP

### German gunman filmed shooting

**BERLIN:** The gunman in yesterday's deadly shooting in the German city of Halle filmed himself during the attack and posted the footage on a video game site, the SITE monitoring group said. In an excerpt of the footage, the suspected perpetrator launches into an anti-Semitic diatribe in English. The suspect is a 27-year-old German, magazines Spiegel and Focus Online reported. — AFP

## Turkey launches Syria push with air, artillery fire

**AKCAKALE, Turkey:** Turkey launched a military operation against Kurdish fighters in northeast Syria yesterday just days after US troops pulled back from the area, with warplanes and artillery striking militia positions in several towns in the border region. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, announcing the start of the action, said the aim was to eliminate what he called a "terror corridor" on Turkey's southern border, but European countries immediately called on Ankara to halt the operation.

Thousands of people fled the Syrian

town of Ras al Ain towards Hasaka province, held by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. The Turkish air strikes had killed two civilians and wounded two others, the SDF said. Turkey had been poised to enter northeast Syria since US troops, who have been fighting with Kurdish-led forces against Islamic State, started to leave in an abrupt policy shift by US President Donald Trump. The withdrawal was criticized in Washington as a betrayal of America's Kurdish allies.

A Turkish security source told Reuters the military offensive, dubbed "Operation Peace Spring", opened with air strikes. Turkish howitzer fire then hit bases and ammunition depots of the Kurdish YPG militia. The artillery strikes, which also targeted YPG gun and sniper positions, were aimed at sites far from

Continued on Page 24

## Trio wins Nobel for developing Li-ion batteries

**STOCKHOLM:** Three researchers won the Nobel Chemistry Prize yesterday for the development of lithium-ion batteries, paving the way for smartphones and a

fossil fuel-free society. John Goodenough of the United States - at 97 the oldest person to be awarded a Nobel prize - Britain's Stanley Whittingham, and Japan's Akira Yoshino will share the nine million Swedish kronor (about \$914,000) prize equally, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

"This lightweight, rechargeable and powerful battery is now used in everything from mobile phones to laptops and electric vehicles... (and) can also store

significant amounts of energy from solar and wind power, making possible a fossil fuel-free society," the jury said. "Lithium batteries have revolutionized our lives since they first entered the market in 1991," and were "of the greatest benefit to humankind".

Over two-thirds of the world's population own a mobile device, nearly all of which are powered by rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, Paul Coxon of the University of Cambridge's Department

of Materials Science and Metallurgy told AFP. Seeking an alternative source of power during the oil crisis of the 1970s, Whittingham discovered a way to harness the potential energy in lithium, a metal so light it floats on water. He constructed a battery partly made of lithium that utilized the element's natural tendency to shed electrons, thereby transferring energy. However the battery was too unstable to be used.

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## 3D printer makes meat in space

**MOSCOW:** The prospect of astronauts tucking into a roast dinner has grown slightly closer after a successful experiment used a 3D printer to create meat on the International Space Station. The bioprinter produced beef, rabbit and fish tissue using magnetic fields in microgravity, a Russian medical technology company involved in the experiment said yesterday. The experiment - an international collaboration involving US, Russian and Israeli companies - was carried out in September by cosmonaut Oleg Skripochka in the sta-

tion's Russian segment using a 3D printer developed in Moscow.

The creators say it is the first to create a small amount of artificial meat in conditions of weightlessness. "It's one small nibble for man, one giant bite for mankind," said Yusef Khesuani of 3D Bioprinting Solutions, the Russian laboratory that created the bioprinter. The laboratory was founded by Invitro, a large Russian private medicine company. The Roscosmos space agency part-financed the experiment as of national importance.

"It was really a breakthrough both for Roscosmos and Russia as a whole," said Nikolai Burdeim, executive director of the state space corporation, which includes Roscosmos. "For us it was the first experience of international scientific collaboration in space," Khesuani said, using cells

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**KIRIKKALE, Turkey:** This handout picture shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan chairing the coordination meeting with the attendance of Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and other officials yesterday. — AFP



**MOSCOW:** Grigory Shalunov, project manager of the Bioprinting Solutions company, gestures as he looks at a 3D bioprinter developed in Russia during a press conference yesterday. — AFP



## Local

# Kuwait reiterates its rejection of all terrorism, extremism forms

## Kuwait supports helping countries obtain self-determination

**NEW YORK:** The state of Kuwait reiterated yesterday its firm stance of rejecting all forms of terrorism and extremism regardless of their causes, motives and sources, stressing the support of all international efforts to combat it. This came in a speech delivered by Chancellor at Kuwait's permanent mission to the United Nations (UN) Tahani Al-Nasser during the discussion of 'measures to eliminate international terrorism' in the sixth committee of UN general assembly. She pointed out that terrorism remains a serious threat in many parts of the world and threatens international peace and security, affirming Kuwait's condemnation against terrorism in all its forms.

Nasser added that the fight against terrorism requires concerted international efforts to counter this scourge by taking measures to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law and to address the conditions conducive to its spread by eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development and good governance. She mentioned that the world has recently witnessed a series of terrorist and subversive acts. This year, the Gulf region had a share of those acts that threatened freedom of navigation and endangered the flow of energy supplies.

Meanwhile, she stressed that Kuwait has sponsored resolutions related to combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief, including the terrorist incident in New Zealand, also supported actively the independent international neutral mechanism to investigate crimes committed in Syria since March 2011. She pointed out that Kuwait is making many efforts through establishing a number of workshops aimed at targeting the finance of terrorism, soci-

ety role in rehabilitation and spread awareness among families and young people and in renunciation of violence and extremism. She also noted Kuwait's participation in international and regional conferences and workshops in Morocco, Germany and Saudi Arabia and its keenness to abide by all international conventions and protocols related to the fight against terrorism.

### Self-determination

Meanwhile, Kuwait affirmed its stance backing the right of self-determination for nations that is a key principle of the UN Charter and General Assembly resolution 1514. This came in Kuwait's speech delivered by First Secretary Bashar Al-Duwaisan on Tuesday before the fourth committee of the UN General Assembly on ending colonization. The UNSC resolution 1514 calls for granting independence to non-self-governing states and nations as well as helping them get the right to self-determination, he noted. Although Palestine is not among non-self-governing states discussed by the committee, Kuwait stresses the

necessity of ending the Israeli occupation of the entire occupied Palestinian territories, Al-Duwaisan said. He underlined the importance of achieving the Palestinian people's full and legitimate political rights, including their right to self-determination.

This comes in implementation of the international legitimacy resolutions that allow Palestinian people to establish their independent state on their land and with East Jerusalem as their capital, and make Israel be committed to withdraw from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, he noted. This is the only solution to reach a just, permanent and comprehensive peace in line with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the land

for peace, the roadmap and the Arab peace initiative, he told the committee. Of the most outstanding achievements by the UN since its establishment was to help several countries and member states be independent, he stated.

Duwaisan urged the countries managing the non-self governing regions to cooperate with the fourth committee and provide it with accurate and correct data on educational, economic, political and social positions, and revive these regions in line with the UN Charter. He renewed Kuwait's support to the efforts by the UN, Secretary General and his former special envoy Horst Kohler that facilitated holding the first and second meetings of the parties to Sahara issue. He welcomed the participation of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario Front in the two meetings, in response to the UN Security Council resolutions 2440 and 2414. He lauded the positive atmospheres covered the two gatherings which aimed to find an acceptable peaceful resolution to all parties to the issue. He backs the UN Security Council resolution 2468, which stresses the necessity of making progress to find a practical, political, permanent solution to the Sahara issue based on consensus.

Duwaisan extolled Morocco's achievements made in human rights and its constructive interaction with mechanisms of the International Human Rights Organization (IHRO) in this matter. He renewed Kuwait's backing to Morocco's initiative on autonomy in Sahara to reach an acceptable resolution to all parties, stressing the necessity of respecting Morocco's unity and sovereignty as well as the unified Gulf stance on the Sahara issue that was clear in the 2016 Moroccan-Gulf summit.

### Developmental partnership

In the meantime, Kuwait stressed on the importance of an international cooperation atmosphere that contributes to creating more fair and balanced developmental partnership, and reducing the developmental



Tahani Al-Nasser

gap between the world's nations. Second Secretary of the Permanent Kuwaiti Mission to the United Nations Abdullah Al-Sharrah gave their remarks during a speech he gave during the panel discussions of The United Nations General Assembly Second Committee (also known as the Economic and Financial Committee, or ECOFIN) held yesterday. This requires from the developed countries to meet their commitments regarding offering official developmental aid by allocating 0.7 percent of its Gross national product (GNP) to allow developing countries to overcome their challenges, he affirmed.

The year 2019 is considered an important year development-wise, starting with the implement of UN General Assembly resolution number 72/279 aiming at elevating the role of the organization at various levels, especially in activities serving the development process, he added. Despite that fact that Kuwait is classified as a developing country of high income, yet this nation realized since its independence the importance of the developmental partnership by supporting developmental projects, led by Kuwait Fund for Arab economic development as it offered aid to more than 107 countries, he said. — KUNA



## Kuwait urges more developmental partnership



KUWAIT: US Air Quality and Health Speaker Dr Sumi Mehta speaks at the workshop.



A general view of people attending the workshop. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with the UK Cyber Security Ambassador at Department for International Trade (DIT) Henry Pearson. — KUNA

## 5m deaths per year related to air pollution: Mehta

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Air pollution is responsible for more than five million deaths annually throughout the world, an environment expert said yesterday. US Air Quality and Health Speaker Dr Sumi Mehta was invited for environmental talks and speaking engagements at Kuwait University and a four-hour special workshop for the local press at Radisson Blu Hotel in order to effectively use data in reporting about environment, air pollution and health issues.

Mehta's presence was sponsored by the US State Department, which has worked with governments around the world to improve environmental policies. Mehta provided information on how and where to get the data necessary for reporting and how to use them in reporting about the environment.

Speaking at the workshop, Mehta said the air pollution problem disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, especially women and children without access to clean household energy. Kuwait is not exempted, and according to data she showed during the workshop, air pollution in Kuwait is responsi-

ble for 10 percent of deaths annually. "More or less 10 percent of deaths are connected to air pollution. Records were derived from reliable sources - and I was involved in gathering some of the records - and they are all accurate data," she pointed out.

Mehta defines air pollution as a complex mixture of gases and aerosols which are manifested as dust, soot, smog or smoke with chemical components of particulate matter (PM). Sources of PM include household fuel combustion, especially from solid fuels, tobacco smoke and power generation, especially from coal, open burning of trash, agriculture waste and forests and motor vehicles like diesel engines. According to Mehta, health risk from PM depend on particle size. She said particles below 2.5 microns (PM2.5) are most harmful because they penetrate deep into small airways and air sacs of the lungs.

Other air pollutants include nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and ground level ozone, while traffic related air pollution is from the combustion engines of motor vehicles and diesel engines - reported to be the most polluting. Power generation, municipal and agricultural waste incineration also contributes signifi-

cantly to the quality of air. But there are natural sources of air pollution too, which include wind-blown dust, salt and sea spray, volcanic eruptions and forest and grassland fires.

Mehta said that even today, there are around 3 billion people in the world who rely on poor quality of fuel to survive. "In rural areas of India, China and Africa, many people are still relying on biomass (wood, animal dung, crop waste), charcoal, coal or kerosene for cooking, heating and lighting in their houses, and because of that, air pollution inside people's homes reaches up to 100 times higher than the acceptable 2.5 PM level," she mentioned.

In order to address air pollution, she recommends aggressive clean air action in various sectors from the areas of transportation (walking and cycling is highly recommended), residential (using LPG piped gas or electric cooking devices), electric power generation (more into renewable energies), industry (natural gas to replace coal for heating), waste management (ban on burning waste) and incentivizing people to take a more active role, taking into consideration shifting to cleaner fuels and technologies.

## Kuwaiti Interior Minister meets UK cyber security official

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah met yesterday with the UK Cyber Security Ambassador at Department for International Trade (DIT) Henry Pearson, discussing with him ways to bolster ties. A statement by the Interior Ministry revealed that Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah touched on issues of mutual interests as well as the deep relations linking the two coun-

tries especially within the security domain. Meanwhile, Ambassador Pearson commended the level of cooperation with Kuwait, saying that the Gulf country played a vital role in maintaining and boosting regional and international security. He hoped that both sides would continue to cooperate to improve relations to a level that achieve the goals set by the two nations. — KUNA

## Kuwait attends San Marino leaders' inauguration

**ROME:** Kuwait yesterday joined the festivities as the Italian enclave of San Marino's new dual heads of state, known as the Captains Regent, Mariella Mularoni and Luca Boschi, were sworn in. Amid the proceedings, the Gulf state's Charge D'affaires in Italy Sami Al-Zamanan conveyed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's warmest greetings to San Marino's new leaders, wishing them every success as they start their tenures as

Captains Regent. The Kuwaiti diplomat went on to highlight his country's eagerness to improve its ties with the government of San Marino, while the officials reciprocated the well wishes, according to a statement by the Kuwaiti embassy. Nestled in the Apennines Mountains in central Italy, San Marino is a wealthy enclave of 34,000 people and its two heads of state are elected every six months by its legislative body. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti charity offers housing for Gazans

**GAZA:** Kuwait's Mercy International Society handed over yesterday several renovated houses and apartments, which were affected by a previous Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip. Head of projects at the Kuwaiti charitable society Marwan Muhaisen said that the dwellings were handed over to Gazans who suffered from the Israeli military strikes back in May. Kuwaiti donors funded the project to resettle some 10 Gazan families in their dwellings damaged by Israeli aggression, said the official who commended the Kuwaitis firm stance in supporting their brethren in the Gaza Strip. Isamil Al-Ghazali, a house owner, expressed his deepest gratitude towards this generous Kuwaiti donation, saying that it would help in lessening part of the Gazans' suffering. — KUNA



GAZA: Kuwait Mercy Charitable Society hands over newly renovated homes destroyed by Israeli aggression. — KUNA



Local

# Kuwait's Deputy Amir receives state officials at Bayan Palace

## Prime Minister receives invitation to attend Formula 1 race in Abu Dhabi

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Deputy Amir and the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Moreover, His Highness the Deputy Amir received Kuwait's Ambassador to China Sameeh Hayat.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister received Director General of Kuwait's Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. The EPA head introduced the newly appointed Deputy Director for Administrative Affairs Jowhar Al-Saleh, and the Deputy Director for Environmental Control Affairs Engineer Sameera Al-Kandari.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak also received UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Saqer Nasser Al-Raesi. The Ambassador handed His Highness a written message from Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, inviting Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak to attend the Abu Dhabi Formula 1 Grand Prix. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Deputy Amir and the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Deputy Amir and the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Environment Public Authority officials.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received Arab Lawyers Association Secretary General Nasser Al-Karuween and Assistant Secretary General Ahmad Al-Qahtani at his office on Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by Kuwaiti lawmaker Al-Humaidi Al-Subaiee. — KUNA

## Government eager to support SME owners: Deputy PM



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh meets with the group of entrepreneurs. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh reiterated yesterday the Central Agency for Public Tenders' (CAPT) eagerness in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), involving them in tenders submitted by the state through the agency. SMEs represent a major nerve of the national economy, in which the National Assembly approved it during the last session of CAPT, Saleh

said in a press statement after meeting with a group of entrepreneurs who submitted their proposals and vision to the executive regulation of amendments. Saleh welcomed the proposals made by the group of entrepreneurs, approving their involvement with the authority in preparing executive regulations for amendments to the law of CAPT. He further underlined needing to achieve the full benefit of recent amendments for owners of SMEs. — KUNA

## Kuwait Airways promptness up to 96 percent

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Airways' flight punctuality rose to 96 percent in September from 93 percent in August, the state carrier said on Tuesday. The airline came fourth amongst 169 competitors in the Middle East, Africa and Europe regions in the promptness of its services, according to OAG, the world's provider of air service information. This high

position amongst the world's largest aviation firms reflects how well schedule policies have been adopted, it said in a statement. Founded in 1953 as the privately-owned Kuwait National Airways, the Kuwaiti government took full ownership of the company in 1962. Today, it operates flights around the world to 49 destinations. — KUNA

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## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A picture taken yesterday shows a view of Kuwait Towers in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Turkish-Kuwaiti joint committee bolstered ties: Assistant Foreign Minister Al-Khubaizi

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ANKARA: The high Turkish-Kuwaiti joint committee helped bolster ties between the two countries, said Kuwait's Foreign Ministry's Assistant Minister for European Affairs Waleed Al-Khubaizi yesterday. Speaking during the committee's second meeting in Ankara, co-chaired with Turkish counterpart Sedat Onal, Khubaizi said that the committee - formed in 2013 - focused on bolstering the 55 years of diplomatic ties. The strong diplomatic relations contributed to the strong commercial exchange between Kuwait and Turkey, which reached \$689 million last year, affirmed the Kuwaiti diplomat, adding that efforts to improve that digit will be discussed during the upcoming meeting for the Turkish-Kuwaiti high economic committee in Turkey in March 2020. Khubaizi revealed that the number of Kuwaiti tourists increased from 65,000 in 2012 to 259,000 this year, a testament of the strong desire to boost tourism ties. The Kuwaiti official took the chance to thank the Turkish authority for facilitating procedures for Kuwaiti citizens visiting Turkey, saying

that this would add to the level of relations between Kuwait and Turkey.

In the meantime, Onal lauded Kuwait's important position within the regional and international spheres, saying that the Gulf country plays an integral role in promoting peace, welfare, and stability worldwide. The Turkish official affirmed that both nations took strong strides to develop relations, indicating that joint meetings between Kuwait and Turkey were a major contributor to the bolstering of relations. Meanwhile, after a sideline meeting with Onal, Khubaizi said that the matter of resolving real estate dispute between Kuwaiti investors and Turkish owners was discussed, revealing that a protocol was signed in this regard. Khubaizi revealed that the final meeting for the Turkish-Kuwaiti joint committee - headed by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu - would be held soon with several agreements expected to be signed. — KUNA



The high Turkish-Kuwaiti joint committee.



ANKARA: The Kuwaiti delegation during the meeting. — KUNA



Local

# Kuwait police investigates Syrian family's alleged mass suicide plot

## Association condemns nurse's attack at local polyclinic

By Hanan Al-Saadoun, A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** A special police force was dispatched to the UN office in Kuwait yesterday in response to social media threats allegedly made by a Syrian family that all family members would collectively commit suicide. The special force comprising of 10 officers and 10 warrant officers and police patrols arrived to the scene, but nothing suspicious was detected. However, further investigations are in progress to identify the family pending taking legal action against them.

Separately, a border security officer was killed yesterday after he lost control over his vehicle and it turned over along Seventh Ring Road, said security sources. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the accident.

In other news, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS) concluded the 'Etiquette and International Protocol' training program held in the period of October 6 to 8, 2019 with the participation of 20 KFS department managers.

Chairman of Kuwait Nursing Association Bandar Al-Enezi strongly condemned a recent incident in which a Kuwaiti woman allegedly assaulted a female nurse at a local polyclinic. He further stressed that the association is ready to hire a lawyer to defend the nurse in court. Meanwhile, the misdemeanor appeals court yesterday abstained from punishing a man who had been sentenced to three months in prison for appearing naked and shouting on social media.

In other news, Municipal Councilmember Meshaal Al-Hamadhan said the council's legal affairs committee discussed the council's internal charter yesterday, and that further meetings will be held to complete the discussion. Responding to an inquiry about recurring proposals, Hamadhan said many of those made by municipal councilmembers get rejected, copied and resubmitted by municipal executive body members, giving examples such as a proposal made by Chairman Osama Al-Otaibi on building hotels in Mubarakiya, which was rejected, then re-proposed by the Municipality.

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department strongly denied reports attributed to the Environment Public Authority (EPA) about allegedly increasing the camping fee from KD 300 to KD 1,000, noting that EPA is not the body responsible for collecting the fee.

## 80% Kuwaitis rejected private sector jobs

**KUWAIT:** Recent government statistics alarmingly showed 59 percent of Kuwaiti youth refused to work in the private sector in 2017, and that the percentage jumped to 80 percent in 2019, Al-Jarida reported yesterday. The statistics, revealed in response to a parliamentary inquiry by MP Abdullah Al-Kandari, showed that the manpower authority had offered Kuwaiti graduates 6,861 job opportunities in the private sector in 2017, but 4,067 of them refused the jobs. "The job opportunities offered in 2018 were 5,778, but only 1,160 nominees accepted them," the sources added. The manpower authority's response stressed that as decided by the minister of education's resolution number 80/2013, it financially supports graduates effective from the date of graduation, professionally guides them and offers them job opportunities in various sectors.— Al-Jarida

## Irbil governor hails Kuwaiti humanitarian aid

**IRBIL:** Irbil Governor Dr Firsat Sofi said on Tuesday that the humanitarian aid provided by Kuwait over the past years has been a decisive factor in alleviating the suffering of thousands of displaced, refugees, vulnerable and poor citizens of the Kurdistan region of Iraq. In a statement to the press on the sidelines of his meeting with the Kuwaiti Consul General in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kandari, Sofi said that the Kuwaiti aid, which covered all fields, has helped the regional government in different ways. He pointed out to the difficult economic conditions experienced by the region in previous years because of the war against the so-called Islamic State (IS) and the presence of more than one million displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees in the region. The governor praised Kuwait's efforts and humanitarian aids over the past years.

Meanwhile, Consul Kandari affirmed that Kuwait is keen to build bridges of good relations with the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Over the past years, Kuwait has provided help to the Iraqi people through different activities, such as the 'Kuwait by your Side' campaign since its launch in 2015 until 2019. The campaign has varied between support for the relief sector and the health sector in addition to supporting the educational sector. Kuwait has launched the relief program within the campaign to include displaced people in and outside Iraq as well as areas that have been liberated from the control of the so-called Islamic State (IS) and the rest of Iraq.

Kuwait also provided water by digging wells in different parts of Irbil governorate. Ninewa Governorate was provided with water withdrawal pumps to treat its scarcity and contamination after the liberation of Mosul city, in addition to desalination plants scattered in several Iraqi cities. With regard to the educational sector, Kuwait has supported the sector significantly through the Kuwaiti Society for Relief and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society through the establishment of integrated schools in the liberated areas.— KUNA

## GCC approves 2020-2030 cultural strategy

**MUSCAT:** Cultural undersecretaries in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries approved, during their meeting in the Omani capital yesterday, the cultural strategy of GCC states 2020-2030, a senior Kuwaiti official said. The one-day meeting's outcomes and recommendations also approved establishing a translation and Arabization center based in Muscat with a focus on the Arabic language, Director-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) Kamel Al-Abduljaleel said. The Gulf senior officials also approved linking cultural activities and events with the Gulf cultural strategy and cultural action regulations, said Abduljaleel. They also agreed on a Gulf joint participation at regional and international cultural events with Arab and non-Arab countries, as well as communication with international cultural organizations and institutions, added the Kuwaiti official. Furthermore, Abduljaleel indicated the meeting saw full cooperation and serious desire to boost the Gulf joint action in the culture field and its various-related

components, in addition to reinforcing the national identity, traditions, and heritage of GCC nations.

Separately, Kuwait's Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri said yesterday that GCC states acknowledge the importance of boosting cultural tourism and attaining their joint vision to enhance culture and tourism sectors on broader prospects. Jabri, also State for Youth Affairs Minister, made his remarks as he left to Oman to attend the 23rd meeting of GCC Culture and Tourism Ministers. He lauded the Kuwaiti-Omani solid brotherly relationship, and said it continues to prosper thanks to the wise leaderships of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al-Said. The Kuwaiti minister, also Chairman of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL), underlined the importance of such a meeting in bolstering and activating joint-cooperation in culture and tourism. He said GCC states would see a major start in the culture and tourism sectors as projected by Gulf leaders' wise directions and visions, and the ministers' close follow-up.

These meetings are part of boosting the joint Gulf action, and drawing policies aimed to move on with cultural and touristic development plans and attain GCC visions in linking national heritage with cultural tourism, with a focus on their importance on the sustainable development march in GCC states, he noted. Jabri also added that GCC culture and tourism meetings are essen-



MUSCAT: Kuwait's Kamel Al-Abduljaleel attends the meeting.— KUNA

tial for reinforcing the national identity inside Gulf youngsters' spirits, tighten their bonds with their nations and history, and benefiting from their potential for the construction and development process.— KUNA



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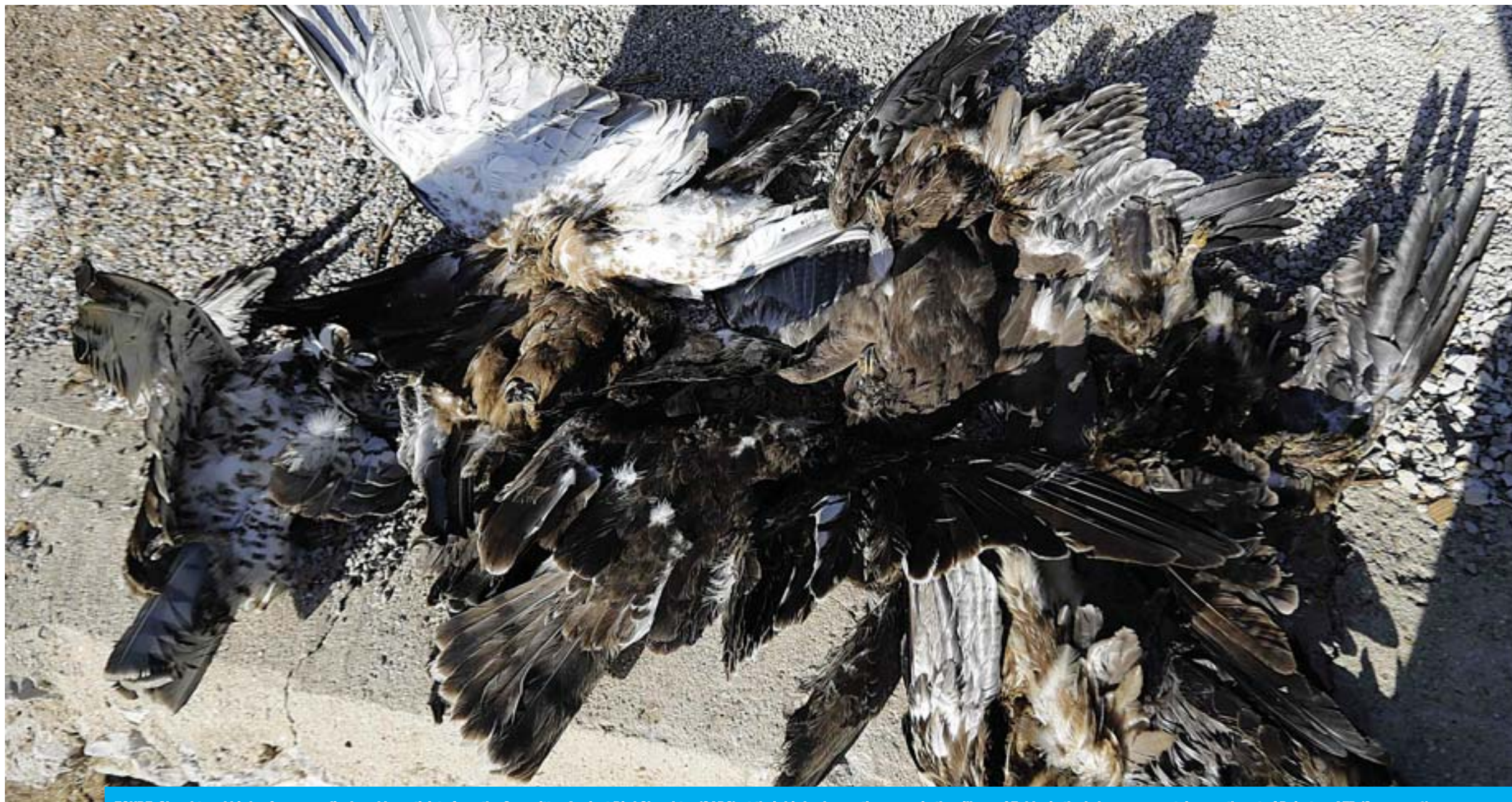


Rescued from sex slavery, red tape traps Bangladeshi girls in India

Page 9

Twitter admits phone numbers meant for security used for ads

Page 9



EGHBE: Slaughtered birds of prey are displayed by activists from the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) at their birds observation camp in the village of Eghbe in the Lebanese mountains, northeast of Beirut. —AFP (See page 8)

# UN in the red, staff salaries at risk

## ‘Worst cash crisis facing the United Nations in nearly a decade’

**UNITED NATIONS:** The United Nations has an overall annual operating budget of several billion dollars, covering everything from humanitarian work to disarmament, but right now, it's just trying to make sure its employees get paid after this month. How did the world body end up more than \$200 million in the red? The answer: Member states who have not paid their expected contributions, including the United States. On Tuesday, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned of the "worst cash crisis facing the United Nations in nearly a decade."

He cautioned the UN "runs the risk of depleting its liquidity reserves by the end of the month and defaulting on payments to staff and vendors." Several member states are behind in their dues payments. The UN will not publicly identify those countries, but sources told AFP the main culprits are the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Iran. In all, 64 countries owe money to the UN. Also on the list of budget delinquents are Venezuela, North Korea, South Korea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The last country to have paid up is war-racked Syria, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Tuesday at his daily press conference. In a letter sent Monday to the 37,000 employees at the UN

secretariat, which was obtained by AFP, Guterres said the UN had a deficit of \$230 million as of the end of September. On Tuesday, he indicated that if the world body had not taken the initiative to cut spending since the start of the year, the hole would have been even bigger in October - possibly \$600 million - and could have affected last month's General Assembly attended by world leaders.

### Travel cuts

In his statement on Tuesday, Guterres thanked the 129 member states who have paid up "and urged those who have not paid to do so urgently and in full." To limit expenditures from now until year's end, the UN chief has raised the possibility of postponing conferences and meetings, limiting all but essential official travel, and reducing services.

A UN official speaking on condition of anonymity said Guterres had raised the budget issues with member states as early as this past spring, asking them to pay up, but they refused. Not including what it pays for peacekeeping operations, the UN's operating budget for 2018-2019 is close to \$5.4 billion, with the United States contributing 22 percent. The portion still owed? Nearly \$1.4 billion. Washington is also the largest contributor to the UN



NEW YORK: In this file photo, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres speaks at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The United Nations is running a deficit of \$230 million, Secretary General Antonio Guterres said and may run out of money by the end of October. —AFP

peacekeeping tab. President Donald Trump's administration has taken a hard line on UN funding, cutting contributions and pushing for cost-saving reforms. —AFP

## Turkey femicide trial opens after viral video

**KIRIKKALE:** A high-profile trial began yesterday over the murder of a Turkish woman whose stabbing by her ex-husband was caught on video and triggered a debate over a spike in femicide. The killing of 38-year-old Emine Bulut in August sparked outrage across Turkey and reignited the debate over mounting violence against women in the country.

Bulut, who had divorced her husband four years earlier, was stabbed in a cafe in front of her 10-year-old daughter in the central Anatolian city of Kirikkale. She later died in hospital. A video of the aftermath of the attack was posted online showing Bulut in the cafe, covered in blood, screaming to her daughter: "I don't want to die." The tearful girl says: "Mum, please don't die." Bulut's ex-husband Fedai Varan, 43, faces life imprisonment for "deliberately killing with monstrous feeling" if convicted.

He told police Bulut had insulted him. He appeared via video link at the courtroom in Kirikkale, near Ankara where proceedings struggled to get underway due to the huge number of journalists and lawyers trying to watch proceedings. According to the women's rights group We Will Stop Femicide, 121 women were killed in 2011. In 2017 that figure was 409, while 440 were killed in 2018. A total of 354 women were killed in the first nine months of 2019.

### 'Provoked'

Experts say the violence is partly the result of women exercising greater freedoms - not always welcome in conservative sections of Turkish society. Divorcing or launching criminal complaints against violent partners can also lead to assault and murder in a society where many men still do not see women as equal.

Activists have criticized the fact that, in some murder cases, Turkish courts have handed down reduced prison sentences for defendants who contend that they were "provoked". Women's rights groups have called for demonstrations outside the courthouse yesterday. Turkey has ratified the Council of Europe's 2011 Istanbul Convention on preventing domestic violence and has relevant laws covering the scourge. But activists say the government must be much more proactive in applying the laws and working to protect women.

They point to a lack of shelters for women in need and underscore the importance of addressing the broader issue of gender inequality in Turkish society. "There needs to be widespread education. The laws must be applied as necessary by judges, prosecutors and by the police force," Nuray Cevirmen of the Human Rights Association in Ankara said. "Mechanisms to prevent violence against women and the number of refugees must be increased," she added. Cevirmen criticized suggestions in some court cases that women's actions or clothes had in some way brought on the violence against them. —AFP

## 2 killed in shooting in Germany's Halle

**BERLIN:** At least two people were shot dead on a street in the German city of Halle yesterday, police said, with media and witnesses reporting that a synagogue and a Turkish restaurant were the targets. "Early indications show that two people were killed in Halle. Several shots were fired," said police on Twitter, urging residents in the area to stay indoors. Police had earlier said the "perpetrators fled in a car" before saying later that one suspect had been caught.

It was not immediately clear whether there were other assailants. The central train station has been closed while the area is under lockdown, rail company Deutsche Bahn said. According to Bild daily, the shooting took place in front of a synagogue in the Paulus district, and a hand grenade was also flung into a Jewish cemetery. Police could not be reached immediately for confirmation. Jews around the world were marking Yom Kippur, one of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar yesterday.

An eyewitness, Konrad Roesler, told news channel NTV he was in a Turkish restaurant about 600 meters away from the synagogue when "a man wearing a helmet and military uniform" flung a hand grenade at the store. "The grenade hit the door and exploded," he said. "(The attacker) shot at least once in the shop, the man behind me must be dead. I hid in the toilet and locked the door." Speaking to NTV, a police spokesman said the motive of the suspect or suspects was not clear. "We don't have any indication about the motive of this act."

### 'Big threat'

Yesterday's shootings came three months after the shocking assassination-style murder of local prominent politician Walter Luebecke in the western city of



LANDSBERG: Police secures the area between Wiedersdorf and Landsberg near Halle, eastern Germany, where shots were fired yesterday. —AFP

Kassel, allegedly by a known neo-Nazi. Luebecke's killing has deeply shaken Germany, raising questions about whether it has failed to take seriously a rising threat from right-wing extremists. Investigators have been probing the extent of suspect Stephan Ernst's neo-Nazi ties and whether he had links to the far-right militant cell National Socialist Underground (NSU). Interior Minister Horst Seehofer last month warned

of the rising danger of the militant far right, calling it "as big a threat as radical Islamism". Seehofer said that police had uncovered 1,091 weapons including firearms and explosives during probes of crimes linked to the far right last year, far more than in 2017 when 676 were found. At the same time, Germany has also been on high alert following several jihadist attacks in recent years claimed by the Islamic State group. —AFP



## International

# Kindness of strangers tips the scales in strife-wracked Mali

## Thousands flee as violence spread to the centre of the country

**SEGOU:** The courtyard of Issa Haidara's home in the central Malian town of Segou fills up rapidly at nightfall - testimony to the kindness of strangers. In quieter times, Haidara lived in the house with his wife, their five children and an aunt. But this night, 29 more people have filed in through a small metal door. "They're displaced, by the grace of God, this is how it is in Mali," said the householder, a tailor of 51 with a ready smile, clad in a flowing black African robe, or boubou.

Despite his meager income (8 euros on good days), Haidara has never hesitated to take people in when destitute villagers fleeing a bloody conflict flooded Segou in their thousands. "This is Mali, this is the custom, it is God who wills it," Haidara repeats firmly. A jihadist uprising began in northern Mali in 2012 on the back of a Tuareg rebellion in the Sahara. In January 2013, elite French troops helped to rid key desert towns, such as Timbuktu, of the fighters, but the conflict changed shape.

Armed Islamists initially fell back into the arid north-eastern badlands, but since 2015 violence has spread to the centre of the country, forcing tens of thousands to abandon their homes. Among the first to be taken in by Haidara six months ago were Amadou Semasekkou, 58, his wife and their five children, who fled an ethnic Fulani village in the region of Mopti, a central garrison town. Semasekkou's family had felt threatened by the warriors of radical Islamist preacher Amadou Koufa on the one hand and by communal conflict involving the Bambara and Dogon peoples on the other.

### Kidnapped by 'terrorists'

A specialized commission has counted more than

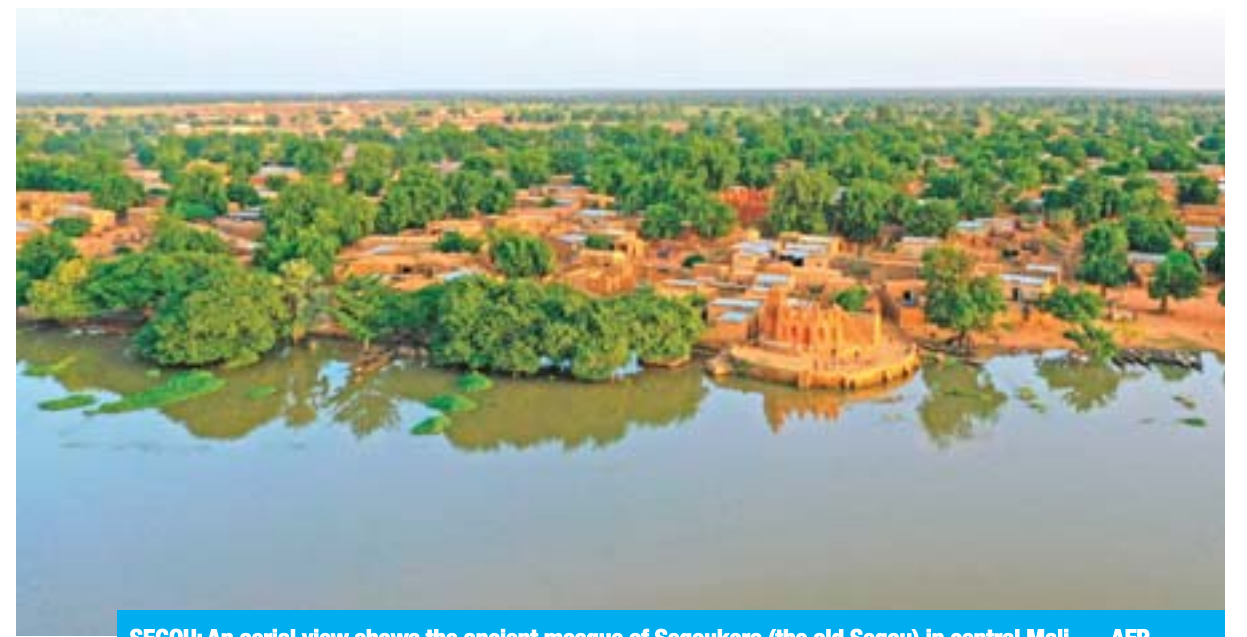
300,000 Malians far from home. Almost 140,000 have become refugees in neighboring Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, while more than 170,000 are displaced in their homeland. Some 20,000 people have come to Segou, a town that has so far been relatively free of violence.

Sleeping mats have been laid in the courtyard of Haidara's house and the living room rearranged to house those sheltering there. Semasekkou was a farmer cultivating millet at Mamba village near Mopti until 2017 when "terrorists" came and kidnapped him. "I spent a year and a half with them in the forest. I went out to the fields to grow food for them," he said, wearing a loose purple robe and glasses that had seen better days.

Semasekkou says he has no idea why the jihadists decided one day to let him go, but he managed to return to Mamba, be reunited with his family and take the road into exile. Their trek took several months and stops in several towns before they set foot in Segou and soon found a place to rest at Haidara's house. Semasekkou does odd jobs such as "building work, work in the fields," wandering around the town and offering his services for 1,500 CFA francs (2.3 euros) a day.

### Sharing the costs

Looking for work from street to street is also the daily lot of Awa Pamata, a woman of 27 caring for two children. She offers to wash residents' clothes in the broad Niger river and she charges 1,000 CFA francs (1.5 euros) for a day's labor. Though not much, "there's always this to add to the communal fund," Hamata says, for all the 37 people who benefit from the Haidara family land contribute to the joint effort. With cleaning work for the women, building



SEGOU: An aerial view shows the ancient mosque of Segoukoro (the old Segou) in central Mali. — AFP

site labor for men and market jobs like fetching and carrying for the youngsters, the members of this group earn money to feed everyone.

"Before they arrived, I bought 50 kilos of rice and it lasted a month. Today, we've gone up to 150 kilos a month and sometimes it isn't enough," Issa Haidara says, but there are food distributions by the government and some NGOs

that help. Every franc counts and all hands are useful, Haidara says, but he doesn't include children. Child labor is widespread in Mali and contributes to a low rate of school attendance. Still, almost none of the 15 children living in the compound goes to school. Instead they play and run around, proving quite a handful. "At least they're having fun," says Awa Pamata. — AFP

## Europol: Ransomware attacks getting bolder

**THE HAGUE:** Global ransomware attacks are on the decline, but such cyber strikes are getting bolder and homing in on more profitable companies, with data encryption a key target, Europe's police agency said yesterday. Europol said it was also worried about the rise of so-called "self-generated explicit material" by underaged children who share sexual images and videos with peers through smartphones, making themselves vulnerable to sexual offenders.

Police and the private sector "confirm a diminishing number of ransomware attacks targeting individual citizens" but that they were "becoming more bold", the agency said as it released its latest annual report on internet organized crime. One of the most visible ransomware



attacks happened in March last year when SamSam malware paralyzed the southeastern US city of Atlanta for several days. Although the attackers asked for a ransom of roughly \$50,000 (45.5 million euros) it cost the City of Atlanta more than \$2.6 million to respond to the attack, according to science and technology publication Wired Magazine.

"This only proved to be the tip of the iceberg," Europol said. "There are cases where a company's encrypted files have been ransomed for over one million euros," the agency said. Company data remained a key target, Europol said, not only for conventional ransomware attacks, but also sabotage. These attacks which permanently erase or irreversibly damage company data doubled during the first six months of 2019 with half focusing on the manufacturing sector, Europol said.

This included a new strain of malware called GermanWiper "which rather than encrypting the victim's files, rewrites the content resulting in the permanent destruction of the victim's data." The agency's Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment report also highlighted online child sexual exploitation as an ongoing major concern with children themselves contributing to the problem, helped by greater access to smartphones. "Self-generated explicit material has been a growing concern for several years, as more-and-more young children share explicit material online," Europol said. — AFP

## The Kurdish struggle for rights and land

**ANKARA:** Turkish forces are poised to advance into northeast Syria after US troops began vacating the area, in an abrupt policy shift by President Donald Trump widely criticized in Washington as a betrayal of America's Kurdish militia allies. Ankara says it plans to create a "safe zone" to resettle millions of refugees currently living on Turkish soil. This would then serve as a buffer against what Turkey sees as its main security threat in Syria - Kurdish YPG fighters who Ankara says are linked to militants waging an insurgency inside Turkey. Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran all have large Kurdish minorities seeking varying degrees of autonomy from central governments after decades of repression. This is an overview of their status.

### History

The Kurdish ethnic minority, mainly Sunni Muslims, speaks a language related to Farsi and lives mostly in a mountainous region straddling the borders of Armenia, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. Kurdish nationalism stirred in the 1890s when the Ottoman Empire was on its last legs. The 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which imposed a settlement and colonial carve-up of Turkey after World War One, promised them independence. Three years later, Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk tore up that accord. The Treaty of Lausanne, ratified in 1924, divided the Kurds among the new nations of the Middle East.

### Syria

Before Syria's popular uprising erupted in 2011, Kurds formed 8-10 percent of the population. The Baathist state, championing Arab nationalism, had deprived thousands of Kurds of citizenship rights, banned their language and clamped down on Kurdish political activity. During the war, President Bashar Al-Assad focused on crushing mainly Sunni Arab rebels with the help of Russia and Iran, turning a blind eye as Kurdish fighters carved out self-rule across the north and east.

Kurdish forces have emerged among the biggest winners, controlling about a quarter of the country - territory rich in oil, water and farmland. It is the biggest chunk of Syria not in state hands, now with its own forces and bureaucracy. Assad has said he will recover the northeast, but the two sides have kept some channels open.

The Kurdish YPG militia's power grew after joining forces with US troops to seize territory from Islamic State. While the US deployment has provided a security umbrella that helped Kurdish influence expand, Washington opposes the autonomy plans. Syrian Kurdish leaders say they do not seek partition but rather regional autonomy as part of Syria. Faced with the threat of a Turkish attack, the Kurdish-led authority in northern Syria has declared a state of "general mobilization" across north and east Syria.

### Turkey

Kurds form about 20 percent of the population. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) took up arms against the state in 1984, waging an insurgency for autonomy in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast. Since then, more than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured in 1999, tried and sentenced to death. That was later reduced to life in prison after Turkey abolished the death penalty.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has removed restrictions on using the Kurdish language. The government held talks with Ocalan, who is in jail on an island near Istanbul, in 2012, but they broke down and the conflict has revived. The United States, the European Union and Turkey classify the PKK as a terrorist organization. Turkey's military has often struck targets in Iraq's Kurdish region near the PKK's stronghold in the Qandil mountains. Erdogan has said he will crush Syria's YPG, which Ankara sees as a branch of the PKK, and has sent troops into northern Syria to mount offensives rolling back the Kurdish fighters.

### Iraq

Kurds form 15-20 percent of the population, mainly inhabiting the three northern provinces of Iraqi Kurdistan. Late President Saddam Hussein's rule targeted Iraqi Kurds in the late 1980s when chemical gas was used, villages were razed and thousands of Kurds were forced into camps. Their region has been semi-autonomous since 1991, has its own regional government and armed forces, but still relies on the Baghdad central government for its budget.

When Islamic State militants swept through much of northern Iraq in 2014, Kurdish fighters exploited the collapse of central authority to take control of Kirkuk, the oil city they regard as their ancient regional capital, as well as other territory disputed by Baghdad and the Kurdish north. Iraqi government forces and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, with US backing, defeated Islamic State which had captured swathes of northern Iraq.

Iraq's Kurds held a referendum on independence in September 2017, which backfired and triggered a regional crisis in the face of opposition from Baghdad and regional powers. The vote prompted military and economic retaliation from Baghdad, which retook the territory seized by Kurdish forces since 2014. Ties have since improved, but tensions remain over oil exports and revenue-sharing.

### Iran

Kurds form about 10 percent of the population. In 2011, Iran pledged to step up military action against the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan, a PKK offshoot that has sought greater autonomy for Kurds in Iran. Rights groups say Kurds, along with other religious and ethnic minorities, face discrimination under the ruling clerical establishment. The elite Revolutionary Guards have put down unrest in the Kurdish community for decades, and the country's judiciary has sentenced many activists to long jail terms or death. Iran's military has demanded Iraqi authorities hand over separatist Kurdish dissidents stationed there and close their bases. — Reuters

## US serial killer confesses to 93 murders

**LOS ANGELES:** The FBI is asking for the public's help in identifying dozens of victims of a convicted murderer who has confessed to strangling 93 people, claims the agency says are credible and make him the most prolific serial killer in US history. Investigators who have interviewed Samuel Little at a Los Angeles-area prison say they have confirmed 50 of the homicides he admitted to carrying out between 1970 and 2005 and have released videotapes of his jailhouse confessions as they investigate the remaining slayings.

"Even though he is already in prison, the FBI believes it is important to seek justice for each victim - to close every case possible," the FBI said in a statement posted to its website, which also includes drawings made by Little, 79, of many of the women he strangled. Little, who is serving life behind bars for his conviction on three murders committed in the 1980s, began confessing additional killings some 18 months ago to a Texas Ranger who interviewed him in his cell at the state prison in Lancaster, California, according to the FBI. He appears to have targeted mostly vulnerable young black women, many of them prostitutes or drug addicts, whose deaths were not well-publicized at the time and in some cases not recorded as homicides. — AFP



BAGHDAD: Iraqi police are seen deployed in Baghdad's predominantly Shiite Sadr City. — AFP

## Iraqi social networks still offline despite return to calm

**BAGHDAD:** Access to social media sites remained restricted in Iraq yesterday, despite calm returning to the streets after a week of anti-government protests that left dozens dead. For a week internet access in Iraq has been progressively limited. First access to certain social media sites disappeared, followed by internet connections for telephones, computers and even virtual private network (VPN) applications. Cyber-security NGO NetBlocks noted that "the state imposed a near-total telecommunication shutdown in most regions, severely limiting press coverage and transparency around the ongoing crisis." Since Tuesday, connection has intermittently returned to Baghdad and the south of the country. During these short reconstructions, social media sites were accessible via a VPN connection, and

images of protesters killed during marches began to be shared.

Yesterday, the connection remained unreliable. Providers told customers they were unable to provide a timetable for a return to uninterrupted service, information on restrictions, or any other details. Iraqi authorities have not commented on the restrictions, which according to NetBlocks affected three quarters of the country. In the north, the autonomous Kurdish region is unaffected.

Iraqi authorities cut off internet access last year in response to mass protests in southern Iraq. Those outages followed a similar pattern: social media was unavailable at first before a wider internet blackout across the entire country. Since October 1, according to official figures, more than 100 people have been killed, mostly protesters, and more than 6,000 others wounded.

The protests were unprecedented because of their apparent spontaneity and independence in a deeply politicized society. They began with demands for an end to rampant corruption and chronic unemployment but then escalated with calls for a complete overhaul of the political system. The protests and accompanying violence have created a political crisis, prompting President Barham Saleh to call for a "national, all-encompassing and frank dialogue... without foreign interference." — AFP

## Part-time hunters boost income with bushmeat in Congo

**MBANDAKA:** Once a month, Mohamed Esimbo Matongu leaves his home in the western Congolese city of Mbandaka and hunts for wild animals. Though he works for a government agency, he says he needs the income from selling most of what he kills to provide for his family. But bushmeat hunters like him are emptying Central Africa's forests at a high rate, researchers say. "When I was a teenager, I had to travel no more than 10 km upriver to find animals. But now I have to go as far as 40 km to come across a decent hunting ground," said 61-year-old Matongu.

When he goes hunting, he rents a dugout canoe and a couple of paddles, and packs a homemade rifle, a dozen cartridges and enough kwanga, a traditional bread made from cassava, to last a few days. He stays in a cabin on a tributary of the Congo river and roams the forest day and night in search of whatever quarry he can find, including monkeys, forest antelopes, crocodiles, pythons and river hogs. Until the 1990s, hunters like Matongu killed for personal consumption, but growing appetite for wild meat in cities has ramped up the scale of hunting.

The impact on wildlife numbers is clear, according to locals and researchers. Research shows around 6 million tons of bushmeat are sourced annually from the Congo Basin, whose forest spans across six countries and is second in size only to the Amazon. "Our surveys show that animals from many species are disappearing around villages," said Michel Bankanza, who works on community forests for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Mbandaka.

Many animals, including bonobo apes and pangolins, are protected by international law, but a lack of government oversight means these endangered species are regularly killed. Matongu says his monthly salary of about \$75 is not enough to cover the needs of his wife, four daughters, two brothers and nephew who live under his roof. — Reuters



## International

# White House rules out cooperation in Democrats' impeachment probe

## Trump's administration calling it 'constitutionally invalid'

WASHINGTON: The White House slammed the door in a letter yesterday on any cooperation by President Donald Trump's administration with the Democrats' impeachment probe, calling it "constitutionally invalid." The eight page letter to Democratic leaders, signed by White House counsel Pat Cipollone, rejected the entire process underway in the House of Representatives, which is examining whether Trump abused his office by seeking a corruption probe in Ukraine of 2020 election rival Joe Biden.

"President Trump cannot permit his Administration to participate in this partisan inquiry under these circumstances," the letter said. "Your inquiry lacks any legitimate constitutional foundation, any pretense of fairness, or even the most elementary due process protections," the letter said. The White House said it objected especially to the fact that the lower house had not held a formal vote to launch the impeachment inquiry.

That "has never happened," a senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told reporters. He accused Democrats of "purporting simply to proceed on the basis of a news conference." Democrats say that no formal House vote is needed because the impeachment process is in its earliest stages, equivalent to gathering evidence for an indictment. Only then would the Democrats call for a vote on whether to impeach, passing the matter on to the Republican-controlled Senate for a trial.

The decision means no members of the Trump administration will be authorized to testify in Congress and will ignore subpoenas, the official said. He insisted that the White House was "definitely avoiding saying there's no way we'd ever cooperate." However, he gave no explanation of how a change might come. The letter had been awaited for several days as part of Trump's strategy of stonewalling investigators and focusing on undermining

the credibility of Democratic leaders with his voter base.

Earlier Tuesday, the White House prevented the US ambassador to the European Union, Gordon Sondland, from showing up to testify. "He would be testifying before a totally compromised kangaroo court," Trump said on Twitter. In slightly more measured terms, the letter asks Democrats to drop the entire process. "We hope that, in light of the many deficiencies we have identified in your proceedings, you will abandon the current invalid efforts to pursue an impeachment inquiry and join the President in focusing on the many important goals that matter to the American people," it said.

### 'Russia helped Trump'

Meanwhile, a Senate Republican-led investigation said in a report Tuesday that Russia indeed sought to help President Donald Trump in the 2016 election, contradicting persistent White House claims to the contrary. The Senate Intelligence Committee's 2016 election investigation report said a sweeping social media manipulation campaign by the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency (IRA) represented "overt support of Russia's favored candidate in the US presidential election."

"The committee found that the IRA sought to influence the 2016 US presidential election by harming Hillary Clinton's chances of success and supporting Donald Trump at the direction of the Kremlin," it said. "IRA social media activity was overtly and almost invariably supportive of then-candidate Trump," it said. The committee, led by Republican Senator Richard Burr, issued its report as Trump continues to insist that the story of Russian meddling is "fake news" and a "Russian witch hunt hoax" peddled by Democrats. Trump and allied Republicans meanwhile are pressing an unsubstantiated theory that Ukraine colluded with Democrats to undermine Trump in 2016.



WASHINGTON: The US Capitol is seen in Washington, DC. Donald Trump yesterday called for outing the whistleblower behind the impeachment inquiry threatening his presidency and sought to transform the entire scandal into a boost for his 2020 reelection campaign. —AFP

The collision of the two versions of what happened in the 2016 vote are at the center of the newest allegations that Trump has sought Ukraine's help to find dirt on his possible 2020 Democratic election challenger Joe Biden. Trump is facing possible impeachment in the House of Representatives for seeking to involve Kiev in next year's election, and allegedly holding up military aid for the country to induce its help against Biden. Democrats called the moves a repeat of 2016, when Trump's campaign allegedly sought Moscow's support to defeat

Democrat Clinton.

Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into that election found numerous instances of attempted collusion between the campaign and Russians, but inadequate evidence of an illegal conspiracy to do so. The committee warned of a possible repeat of Russian meddling in next year's election. "The executive branch should, in the run up to the 2020 election, reinforce with the public the danger of attempted foreign interference in the 2020 election," the report said. —Agencies

## Lebanon skies a 'death trap' for migratory birds

AGHBEH: Bird protection groups called Tuesday for urgent action to save endangered migratory species that are being decimated by illegal hunters over Lebanon. For the 41 species in Lebanon listed as particularly endangered, "the situation is really critical," said Fouad Itani, president of the Association for Bird Conservation in Lebanon. "If nothing is done, their numbers will continue to drop and some species will simply disappear," he said.

According to official figures, 2.6 million birds from close to 200 species were killed illegally in the country in 2014. Itani believes the numbers killed have risen since then. Lebanon lies on one of the world's most important migration routes and for many species - such as storks, lesser spotted eagles and pelicans - the most dangerous part of their journey is flying over the small Mediterranean country. "Hundreds of thousands of white storks are killed in Lebanon every year," Itani said.

Bird protection groups have successfully raised awareness in some regions but the situation in the north remains "out of control", according to a joint statement by the Association for Bird Conservation in Lebanon and the Committee Against Bird Slaughter, based in Germany. The statement was released after a field visit organised for



EGHBE: Slaughtered birds of prey are displayed by activists from the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) at their birds observation camp in the village of Eghbe in the Lebanese mountains, northeast of Beirut. —AFP

Lebanese and foreign officials Tuesday. Itani said poachers in the north "are shooting for fun, big numbers. They shoot even at night, using spotlights... They have WhatsApp groups to track the birds together."

Countries such as Poland and others along migratory routes have pressured Lebanon to take action. Killing of birds has been reduced

in some areas this year through the awareness campaigns and in cooperation with authorities, the statement said, but improved bird protection laws have yet to be enforced by the security forces. The joint statement called for the creation of a professional and dedicated wildlife crime unit to curb poaching during migration periods. —AFP

## Belgium outrage over woman punched in burger advert

BRUSSELS: Belgium's advertising regulator said yesterday it has clocked up hundreds of complaints over a viral hamburger ad showing a comic-book version of a man punching a woman for handing him the wrong sandwich. Consumers and politicians called the online ad "sickening" and "irresponsible", saying it went directly against public campaigns denouncing domestic violence.

The ad, published on Facebook, aimed to publicize a Belgian hamburger brand, Bicky Burger. Its cartoon style borrowed from 1950s and 1960s American pop-art made famous by artist Roy Lichtenstein and by a panel from a 1965 comic showing Batman slapping his sidekick Robin that has been reworked into a long-running internet meme.

The Bicky Burger ad depicts a man in a suit swinging his fist to violently hit a buxom blonde woman carrying a fast-food container as he exclaims: "Seriously, a fake Bicky?" The head of Belgium's regulatory Advertising Council, Sandrine Sepul, said the agency had received 300 complaints from the public in 24 hours. She told AFP that a Dutch food company, Izico, commissioned the advertisement and her agency had transmitted the



BRUSSELS: Photo shows an ad published on Facebook aimed to publicize the Belgian hamburger brand, Bicky Burger, and depicting a man in a suit swinging his fist to violently hit a buxom blonde woman carrying a fast-food container as he exclaims: 'Seriously, a fake Bicky?'. —AFP

complaints to its counterpart in the Netherlands.

Izico was ordered to explain itself, she said, adding that possible punishment could be decided "in a few weeks". Belgian media ran indignant reports on the controversy, which led to the ad being pulled from Facebook - but it was relayed thousands of times in individual social media posts. Le Soir newspaper asked how such an advertising campaign could be created in 2019 when, in Belgium, "every 10 days a man kills his wife

or his ex. And every day a number of women are humiliated, raped, beaten."

Two regional politicians in charge of gender equality for Brussels and for the Wallonia part of Belgium said they had also called on the country's Advertising Council to act. One of them, Nawal Ben Hamou, said on her Facebook page she found the ad "sickening and totally irresponsible". The other, Christie Morreale, echoed that in a tweet saying that "using violence towards women in an ad is irresponsible". —AFP

## Wealthy couple gets prison terms for US admissions scam

BOSTON: The founder of a food and beverage packaging company and his wife were each sentenced to one month in prison on Tuesday for their roles in what prosecutors say is the largest college admissions scam uncovered in the United States. Gregory and Marcia Abbott received lighter sentences than the eight-month terms sought by federal prosecutors in Boston after they admitted to paying \$125,000 to have a corrupt test proctor secretly correct their daughter's answers on college entrance exams.

The couple's sentence by US District Judge Indira Talwani also includes a requirement that they each pay a \$45,000 fine. They previously pleaded guilty in May to conspiracy to commit mail fraud and honest services mail fraud. Lawyers for the Abbotts did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Abbotts are among 52 people charged with participating in a vast scheme in which wealthy parents conspired with a California college admissions consultant to use bribery and other

forms of fraud to secure the admission of their children to top schools. William "Rick" Singer, the consultant, pleaded guilty in March to charges that he facilitated cheating on college entrance exams and helped bribe sports coaches at universities to present his clients' children as fake athletic recruits.

The 35 parents charged in the investigation include executives and celebrities, such as "Desperate Housewives" star Felicity Huffman and "Full House" actress Lori Loughlin. Huffman was sentenced to 14 days in prison on Sept. 13 after pleading guilty to engaging in the college exam cheating scheme. Loughlin has pleaded not guilty. Prosecutors said the Abbotts in 2018 arranged through Singer to have an associate pose as a proctor for their daughter's ACT and SAT exams to correct her answers at a test center Singer controlled through bribery.

The proctor was Mark Riddell, a former counselor at a Florida private school who pleaded guilty in April to secretly taking SAT and ACT college entrance exams in place of Singer's clients' children or correcting their answers. Prosecutors said the Abbotts' goal was to improve their daughter's prospects for gaining admission to Duke University, Marcia Abbott's alma mater. In papers, the Abbotts' lawyers said they were good people who made an "aberrational, terrible decision." They argued the couple deserved a term of probation. —Reuters

## California set to end private prisons and immigrant camps

LOS ANGELES: America's largest state prison system is moving to quit the practice of farming out inmates to lockups run under contract by private companies, following a nationwide decline in the for-profit incarceration business. California Governor Gavin Newsom is expected to sign legislation this week designed to effectively ban private, for-profit corporations from running prisons or immigration detention facilities.

Sponsors of the measure say it will end a brief but hapless experiment in privately outsourced incarceration begun as a means to ease overcrowding - an endeavor Newsom branded an outrage when he took office in January. Bill supporters say private prisons, driven to maximize shareholder profits, lack proper oversight or incentives to rehabilitate inmates, and have contributed to a culture of mass incarceration by making it cheaper to lock up people.

They point to research cited in a 2016 US Justice Department Office of Inspector General report that found private prisons spend less on personnel, and are less safe, than public institutions. "This is a total and complete failure, and it's hurting and abusing Californians," said state Assemblyman Rob Bonta, a chief author of the bill. The facilities at

stake are low-security lockups operated by one of two leading US private prison companies, Florida-headquartered GEO Group or Tennessee-based CoreCivic.

Defending their business model, the companies say they provided a vital service when detentions in California's prisons more than doubled the system's capacity, sparking lawsuits that led to court-ordered cuts to inmate populations. "For 10 years, we provided safe, secure housing and life-changing re-entry programming for inmates that had faced extreme overcrowding," CoreCivic spokeswoman Amanda Gilchrist said. Separately, GEO Group cited its record as "an innovator in the field of rehabilitative services" and said the bill worked against the state's goal of lowering inmate recidivism.

### Significant loopholes

Inmate advocacy groups say the legislation does not go far enough, pointing to what they call significant loopholes, including an exemption for facilities that provide "educational, vocational, medical or other ancillary services" to inmates. "I cannot think of any prison that does not provide those services," said Kara Gotsch, director of strategic initiatives for the Sentencing Project, a criminal justice reform group. Several states, including New York, Illinois and Nevada, have adopted similar bans on private prisons, and nearly half of all states have no such facilities, Gotsch said. The bill sets the stage for the three remaining private prisons in California, collectively housing about 1,400 inmates, to close four years from now, when their contracts with the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation expire. —Reuters



International

# Twitter admits phone numbers meant for security used for ads

## Facebook extends fact-checking program to 10 new African states

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Twitter has apologized after “inadvertently” using phone numbers and email addresses for advertising even though the personal data was provided for account security. Twitter users’ phone numbers and email addresses - submitted to allow for account authentication - were matched with advertisers’ own data to enable targeted ads. “When you provided an email address or phone number for safety or security purposes this data may have inadvertently been used for advertising purposes,” Twitter said in an online post. “This was an error and we apologize.”

None of the user data was shared with partners outside the company, and it was unclear how many people were affected, the San Francisco-based company said. The issue was fixed in mid-September, Twitter said. “We’re very sorry this happened and are taking steps to make sure we don’t make a mistake like this again,” Twitter said. Privacy and internet data are hot political topics worldwide, with tech giants such as Twitter and Facebook in the crosshairs of regulators.

### Fact-checking program

In another development, Facebook has announced the expansion of its third-party fact-checking program to 10 new African countries in partnership with Agence France-Presse and other media. The program will be available in Ethiopia, Zambia, Somalia and Burkina Faso in partnership with AFP; in Uganda and Tanzania with Pesa Check and AFP; in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ivory Coast with France 24 and AFP and in Guinea and Ghana in partnership with Nigerian fact-checking platform Dubawa.

“The expansion of third-party fact-checking to now cover 15 countries in a little over a year shows first-hand our commitment and dedication to the continent, along-

side our recent local language expansion as part of this program,” said Kojo Boakye, Facebook head of public policy, Africa. “Taking steps to help tackle false news on Facebook is a responsibility we take seriously, we know misinformation is a problem, and these are important steps in continuing to address this issue.”

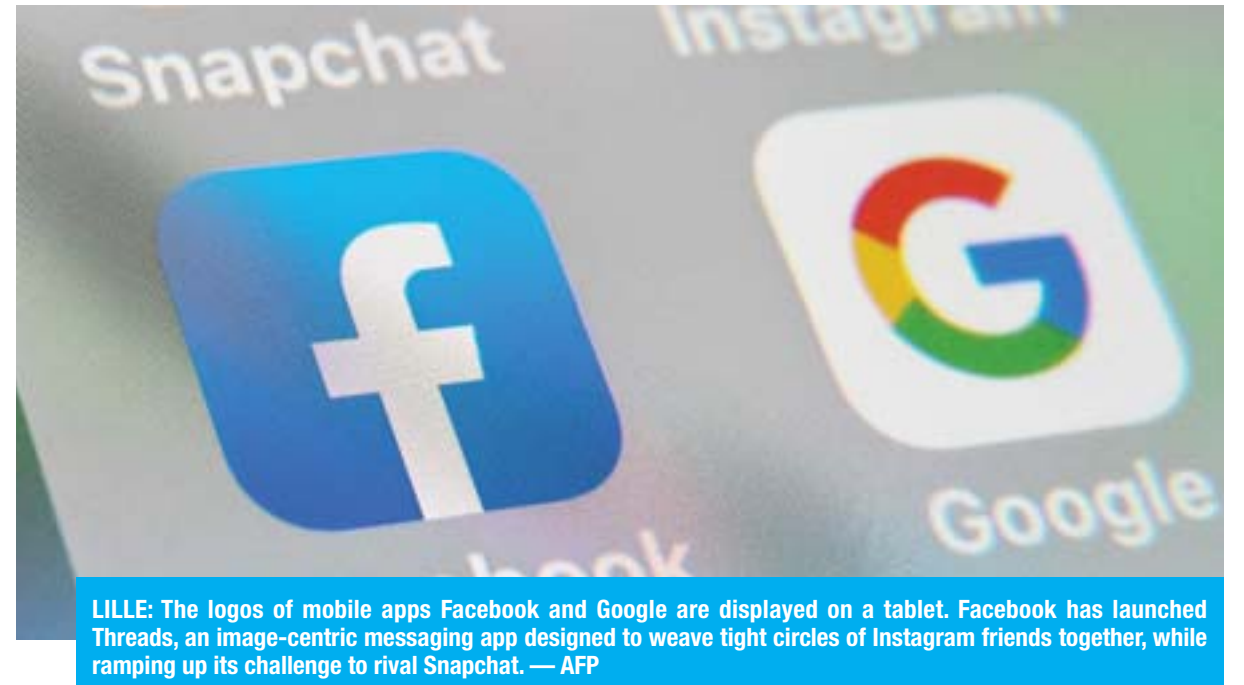
“We know that third-party fact-checking alone is not the solution, it is one of many initiatives and programs we are investing in to help to improve the quality of information people see on Facebook.” “AFP is delighted to be



### Facebook plugs booming business version into Portal

expanding its fact-checking project with Facebook. We are known for the high quality of our journalism from across Africa and we will be leveraging our unparalleled network of bureaus and journalists on the continent to combat misinformation,” said AFP Global News Director Phil Chetwynd.

AFP has fact-checkers in nearly 30 countries, working in nine languages. Eric Mugendi, managing director of Pesa Check, which will provide fact-checking services in Swahili and English, said: “Social networks like Facebook haven’t just changed how Africans consume the news ... They shape our perceptions of the world. “This project



LILLE: The logos of mobile apps Facebook and Google are displayed on a tablet. Facebook has launched Threads, an image-centric messaging app designed to weave tight circles of Instagram friends together, while ramping up its challenge to rival Snapchat. — AFP

helps us dramatically expand our fact-checking to debunk claims that could cause real-world harm.”

### Booming business version

Meanwhile, Facebook said Tuesday its Portal smart screens would be incorporated in its Workplace social network for businesses, which has grown to more than three million paid users. Workplace paid users grew by more than 50 percent in the past eight months, the com-

pany said as it kicked off its second annual Flow conference at a hotel in the Silicon Valley city of Menlo Park.

The Workplace platform was launched three years ago as a separate, private social network tailored for companies with tools for productivity and collaboration on the job. Workplace rivals include services fielded by Slack, Salesforce and Microsoft, which aim to foster better collaboration and eliminate dependence on overloaded email inboxes. —Agencies

## Ethiopia’s peacemaking prime minister emerges as the Nobel favorite

**NAIROBI:** During a high-level meeting at Ethiopia’s foreign ministry in July, officials were shocked by social media reports that their prime minister was visiting Eritrea. No one in the room had been informed of Abiy Ahmed’s trip, his second since clinching a peace deal last year that ended two decades of hostility between the two neighbors. “The foreign office was not in the loop,” said a senior official who was present. “We learned of it from the Eritrean media, on Facebook and Twitter.”

The surprise visit is typical of Abiy, who both fans and critics say often relies on bold personal initiatives and charisma to drive change instead of working through government institutions. Nebiat Getachew, the foreign ministry spokesman, said policy was well co-ordinated but he did not confirm that Abiy had made the July trip without informing the ministry. The deal with Eritrea won Abiy international plaudits. He is the bookmakers’ favourite to win a Nobel Peace Prize on Friday after climate activist Greta Thunberg.

But Abiy’s unpredictable style annoys some Ethiopians. It is unclear how much of the fractious ruling coalition-some form of which has been in power since 1991 - backs his reforms, or how durable those reforms would be without his leadership. He has already survived one assassination attempt: a grenade thrown at a rally last year. Lasting change cannot be built through a “cult of personality”, said Comfort Ero, Africa program director at the International Crisis Group think tank.

“None of Abiy’s promised transformational reforms are going to have any solid foundations unless he works through the institutions,” she said. Ethiopia has been among Africa’s fastest growing economies for more than a decade. But uncertainty over Abiy’s ability to carry out all his reforms worries both citizens and the foreign investors he has been courting to develop the country’s antiquated telecoms and banking sectors.

### Personal style or canny strategy?

Some observers say Abiy, a former military officer specializing in cyber intelligence, will sometimes bypass ministries because his reforms must maintain their breakneck momentum or become mired in bureaucracy. Those reforms - including unbanning political parties, releasing imprisoned journalists and prosecuting officials accused of torture - have drawn ecstatic crowds at rallies. “Abiy seems to have relied on his charismatic rule,” said Dereje Feyissa, a professor at Addis Ababa University. “The question is whether this is sustainable. Euphoria is subsiding.”

Other observers say Abiy’s rapid changes are a deliberate attempt to wrong-foot opponents from the previous administration, which was dominated by Tigrayans, a small but powerful ethnic group. Abiy, 43, is from the Oromo group, the nation’s largest, which spearheaded the protests that forced his predecessor to resign. Since taking office in April 2018, Abiy’s government has arrested or fired many senior officials - mainly Tigrayans - for corruption or rights abuses. “In the first six or seven months, he undercut the institutions ... The institutions were either not working or working against his agenda,” said Jawar Mohammed, an Oromo activist and informal adviser to the prime minister. “I don’t think he could have travelled this far without doing that.”

### Foreign policy

One of Abiy’s biggest victories was the peace deal, signed in July last year, which ended a nearly 20-year military stalemate with Eritrea following their 1998-2000 border war. Asle Sveen, a historian who has written several books about the Nobel Peace Prize, told Reuters the deal made Abiy exactly the kind of candidate Alfred Nobel had envisaged for the prize. “The peace deal has ended a long conflict with Eritrea, and he is very popular for having done this, and he is doing democratic reforms internally,” Sveen said.

But some benefits of the peace were short-lived. Land borders opened in July but closed in December with no official explanation. Will Davison, an Ethiopia analyst at Crisis Group, said that might be because Eritrea’s president had hoped Abiy would crack down harder on the old Tigray-dominated administration, which had fought



Abiy Ahmed

the war and refused to accept international arbitration over their disputed border. Nebiat, the foreign ministry spokesman, said Eritrea and Ethiopia had restored diplomatic relations, air links and phone connections. “Other engagements are well underway to further institutionalize relations,” he said.

### Personal initiatives

Abiy’s diplomatic forays - like his surprise trip - tend to be bold personal initiatives, analysts and diplomats said. The foreign ministry has been “completely sidelined,” said the senior ministry official, adding that “our interests abroad may be jeopardized”. He said Abiy had engaged with Eritrea, Somalia and wealthy Gulf states on major policy issues without building consensus within his government.

Nebiat disputed that. “There is always a well coordinated foreign policy and diplomacy implementation within the Ethiopian government,” he said. “Any other claims are simply baseless.” Some nations are pleased by Abiy’s personal touch. After Sudanese police killed more than 100 protesters in June, Abiy flew to Khartoum to convince Sudan’s new military rulers and the opposition to restart talks, and persuaded Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to back his mediation. The talks led to a power-sharing accord in August. “Abiy played a key role,” said Amjad Farid, a senior representative of the civilian group that led talks with the military. — Reuters

## Rescued from sex slavery, red tape traps Bangladeshi girls in India

**SOUTH 24 PARGANAS:** Priya was 15 when a relative in Bangladesh tricked her with the promise of a dream job as a singer, dragged her, and trafficked her across the border into the sex trade in India. After several failed attempts to escape the brothel in the eastern state of West Bengal where she was trapped for six years, Priya was rescued along with other girls from Bangladesh and India in a raid by police and anti-trafficking campaigners. Heading home and pursuing her musical ambitions beckoned, or so she thought. But three years after her rescue, the prospects of making it back to her family appeared ever more distant.

For Priya, now 24, was one of about 180 Bangladeshi sex trafficking survivors stuck in shelters in West Bengal - with many having waited years for official clearance to go home due to complex and lengthy bureaucracy across the two countries. “How long can I wait?”, said Priya, using her ‘brothel name’ to hide her identity for fear of being shamed in Bangladesh. “Maybe I won’t go now even if they ask me to,” she said last month at a shelter, sitting in a room adorned with paper roses.

Victims wishing to return home must first gain approval from police, social workers, judges, border forces and bureaucrats at both state and federal level, a process that involves about 15 steps, analysis by the Thomson Reuters Foundation has revealed. While the two nations are working towards faster returns, the long waits facing dozens of survivors could stymie their efforts to start life afresh back home and leave them vulnerable to being trafficked again, according to activists.

“Living in a shelter ... can be traumatic,” said Tariqul Islam of Justice and Care, a charity that reintegrates victims in Bangladesh. “When they return after two years or more, it becomes hard for them to adjust to the changes and recover.” “Traffickers often keep track of their victims even after they return home. When they notice that the girl does not have a job, or is finding it hard to adjust, they target her again.”

### Faster returns afoot

Thousands of Bangladeshis are trafficked to India each year - many of whom are sold into prostitution or domestic servitude - anti-slavery activists say, although official data is lacking. In the last eight years, Bangladesh has brought home about 1,750 trafficking survivors from India, predominantly women and girls in West Bengal and the western state of Maharashtra. However anti-slavery charities that help victims in India say most are kept in shelters for years - first awaiting the conclusion of court proceedings, then the repatriation process.

Justice is often slow and convictions are rare. One in four trafficking cases in India leads to conviction, while in Bangladesh, only 30 convictions have been secured under a 2012 law, with more than 4,000 cases still awaiting trial. India and Bangladesh signed a partnership in 2015 to speed up repatriations, but how a victim is treated - whether it is their experience with the judiciary or the wait to go home - varies from one Indian state to another, according to activists. —Reuters

## Pollution app back in Vietnam after online abuse ‘campaign’

**HANOI:** A leading pollution-monitoring app returned to Apple and Google Play stores in Vietnam yesterday, days after it was removed having been bombarded with negative comments online. The Swiss-based company AirVisual said this week it was the target of a “coordinated campaign” of abuse after publishing data showing several days of “unhealthy” pollution levels in Hanoi.

The data prompted a blitz of negative comments on AirVisual’s app and Facebook pages from Vietnamese users accusing the company of publishing misleading data to sell its products. Online abuse is rampant in Vietnam, where state-aligned netizens frequently attack activists and sites deemed anti-government. The app and AirVisual’s Facebook page were taken down, but the company said yesterday the service was back up in the country after its pages were flooded with positive messages from Vietnamese users instead.

The support showed the “strength and resolve of the community in Vietnam to raise awareness about the environment and tackle the air pollution problem”, the company said in a statement. “Efforts to suppress open and free air pollution data, rather than address the emission sources... have created the problem,” it added. “Great app! Thank you for your contribution to the world community for awareness of air pollution issues,” said Tam Dam on AirVisual’s Vietnam Facebook page.

Like much of Southeast Asia, Vietnam’s major cities have been plagued with smog in recent years linked to the rapid rise of coal-heavy industries, agricultural burn-



HANOI: A vendor waits for customers along a pavement in Hanoi. —AFP

ing and vehicle emissions. Last week the capital city’s air quality index reached above 150 - the threshold for “unhealthy” for several days in a row, prompting the government to warn vulnerable groups to stay inside. AirVisual is one of the most widely relied on pollution monitors in the country, and also sells purifiers, monitors and face masks.

Vietnamese social media had gone into overdrive over

the weekend after an influential teacher took to Facebook questioning AirVisual’s data in a post that quickly went viral. He accused the company of publishing pollution data in order to sell its equipment, sparking thousands of negative reviews and comments on AirVisual’s Vietnam pages. The teacher, Vu Khac Ngoc, later apologized on his Facebook page and said he hoped the app would soon return. —AFP



## Analysis

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## Deep in Guatemala's jungle, drugs, murder neighbors to palm oil

Bullet holes scar a wall in the only school in Semuy II, a remote village in northeastern Guatemala where three soldiers were shot dead early in September as they searched for jungle landing strips used by drug traffickers. In the village school's classrooms, books and open notebooks gathered dust on the desks, while on a board, the fateful date of the shootings was written in red ink: "September 3."

President Jimmy Morales said the soldiers were killed by villagers protecting a drug shipment. In response, the government gave the army temporary emergency powers over a vast swathe of surrounding territory, leading to some startling discoveries. Searches uncovered coca plantations and cocaine laboratories, including in Semuy II's municipality of El Estor, suggesting drug gangs have been operating freely in an area better known for its natural beauty, mining and African palm. The deaths occurred on the fringes of the Patate estate that supplies palm oil to Nestle and Cargill, with authorities saying landing strips on the estate had been used by traffickers.

"We've found landing strips, some of them clandestine. There are some strips that are legal, but there's evidence of planes landing with illicit goods," General Luis Alberto Morales, deputy head of the presidential general staff, told Reuters. Ministry of Defense spokesman Oscar Perez said investigators had also found the remains of torched planes in the wider area, a tell-tale sign the strips were being used for trafficking.

The discovery is a dramatic development in the drug war that brings fields and laboratories used to make cocaine closer to the US market than ever before. The development led Guatemala's interior minister to declare that the country was now a cocaine producing nation - a distinction previously reserved for Andean countries in South America. Images provided by the government of the army's discoveries show what appears to be a well-built laboratory, which Morales said could produce up to half a tonne of cocaine a day. He said the government had discovered 1.5 million coca plants along with the labs, estimating a street value of \$800 million.

Such numbers may be inflated. While Andean plantations vary widely in density of plants per hectare, it would be hard to fit so many plants on the apparently small areas of land so far discovered by the soldiers in the wake of the killings. Only last year, Guatemala discovered a small field of coca for the first time. However, the discovery of sophisticated laboratories fits with recent trends of Colombian gangs exporting half-processed cocaine to finish the product in countries with less strict policing, said Hernando Bernal, an official from the United Nations drugs and crime agency's illicit crop monitoring program.

### Fear, isolation

The events of Tuesday, Sept 3 are murky. Around noon, a patrol of nine soldiers with weapons at the ready tried to cross the village of Semuy II, the first time military officials had been seen in years, locals and authorities agree. At this point, the versions diverge. Authorities say the villagers ambushed the soldiers and shot three of them behind the school. Villagers say soldiers sparked a dispute and fired off rounds into the air, and then armed locals opened fire on the soldiers. However, none could say who had fired the fatal shots and no one has been arrested by the investigating authorities.

Speaking in the hills behind the village where he farms cocoa, community leader Vicente Perez, 43, denied the government's accusation that the villagers were growing drugs and protecting traffickers. "Everything the president is saying is a lie," Perez said. While he did not witness the shootings, he said it seemed that collective fear led the situation to spiral out of control. Soldiers and police had not been seen in the area since he was a child, during Guatemala's civil war, he said, adding that the soldiers should have requested permission from the elders of the village before passing through.

According to Edgar Caal, a marine who survived the attack, more than a hundred locals waited with shotguns, machetes, sticks and stones, and before attacking issued the patrol a warning: "Whoever comes to this village is already a dead man," he related in a video released by the government. "We ran for our lives," the young marine said from a hospital bed while the camera took in other injured comrades with scars on their hands, wrists and backs.

Any uptick in violence and drug trafficking in the area could create problems for local producers of palm oil, the world's second-most popular type of oil, used in consumer products ranging from soap to chocolate. Wedged between a jungle-clad hillside and a sprawling palm estate, Semuy II is built on land donated by NaturAceites, a company owned by one of Guatemala's richest families, which delivers the oil to commodities giants Cargill and Nestle. — Reuters

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



In this file photo taken on Jan 29, 2009, visitors look at gambling machines at the International Gaming Expo at the Earls Court center in west London. — AFP

## UK gambling grapples with underage problem

Raising the minimum legal age for betting and boosting education could be effective tools to tackle the scourge of problem gambling among children in Britain, say industry insiders. The figures are stark. The Gambling Commission, which licenses and regulates gambling, estimates that 55,000 children aged 11-16 have a gambling problem, with 450,000 gambling regularly. The National Health Service this week launched a children and young person's gambling addiction service.

NHS England chief executive Simon Stevens has condemned the "fraction" spent by the industry on helping customers and their families deal with the direct consequences of addiction compared with the amount spent on advertising and marketing. "The NHS should not be left to pick up the pieces," he said. "Gambling and internet firms have a responsibility to their users as well as their shareholders and should do their utmost to prevent rather than cash in on obsessive or harmful behaviour."

It comes at a time of growing concern that online gaming sites and targeted adverts are fuelling the problem. William Woodhams, chief executive of Fitzdares bookmakers, said he feared problem gambling among all ages was far worse than anyone imagined. "It is slightly like the opioid epidemic in the USA. You do not realize it is an epidemic as it happens privately," he told AFP at the Betting on Sports conference in London. "We cannot reverse technology (the apps) we have put in the market and

unfortunately bookies do seem to find legislation heavy-handed and want to self-legislate. But they have made so much money it is a tricky place to be in."

Woodhams believes raising the age limit from 18 is a logical step. "My view on principle is you should not bet until you are 21. We (Fitzdares) are probably the only ones who restrict it to 21 and over," he said. "My opinion is a student loan or money from your first job should not be spent on gambling. "Of course I advocate going racing and to football matches but I just think the other things you can do at 18 like voting is one thing, army is another and driving a car another. "However, spending money on sport needs another level of thought and maybe I am being rude to 18-year-olds but I think 21 is the right age. I was betting aged 16 but got my fingers burnt and stopped and learned my lesson that way."

### 'Life lessons'

Woodhams also believes that bookies talking about the perils of betting has a limited impact. "The advertisements on TV educating you on betting are being paid for by bookmakers," he said. "I would not ask Johnnie Walker how much I should drink." In its report last year, the Gambling Commission said 14 percent of 11 to 16-year-olds had spent their own money on gambling in the previous week - compared to 13 percent who had drunk alcohol.

## In Argentina, hunger cries ring in leaders' ears amid crisis

In the hard-up neighborhood of Claypole on the outskirts of Argentine capital Buenos Aires, Elena Escobar makes her way to the local Caritas Felices soup kitchen to serve food to street children who scrape by from meal to meal. Escobar, 53, says the volunteer-run kitchen has seen a surge of kids and families seeking help over the last few months, amid a biting recession and fast-rising prices that have pushed millions of people into poverty.

"There are many children in need, many malnourished, with kids that get to dinner time and don't have any food," said Escobar. The kitchen receives over 100 children each week, up from around 20-30 when it opened its doors in April. The rise in hunger and poverty creates a complex backdrop for the leaders of Latin America's no. 3 economy, who are in knife-edge talks with creditors to avoid default on billions of dollars of debt amid economic and political upheaval.

Ahead of a presidential election on Oct. 27, officials will head to Washington this month to meet with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a major backer that struck a \$57 billion funding deal with the country last year. Those talks are likely to weigh on the current administration of President Mauricio Macri and the next one, likely led by left-leaning Peronist Alberto Fernandez, the frontrunner to win the vote. The Claypole kitchen is far from alone in witnessing rising hardship, with government data showing poverty rates jumped to 35 percent in the first half of 2019 amid recession and steep inflation, from 27.3 percent a year earlier.

### 'A scourge'

Around 13% of children and adolescents went hungry in 2018, according to data from the Pontificia Universidad

Catolica Argentina, and rising food prices have become a regular target of popular anger in street protests around the country. Political leaders know something must be done, but face a complex juggling act: bolstering growth and spending to ease issues such as hunger, while cutting debt and averting a damaging default that would shut off access to global markets.

"We can't live in peace with such a scourge," left-leaning Fernandez said in a speech on Monday in reference to hunger, which he described as Argentina's "greatest shame". Fernandez, who has been buoyed by support for populist running mate Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, blames Macri and austerity measures agreed with the International Monetary Fund for the rise in poverty and hunger.

Macri's running mate, Miguel Pichetto, meanwhile, said on Monday the way to eradicate hunger was to generate employment and attract "big global companies" to Argentina. Both sides have said they would honor the country's debts with creditors, including the IMF, though neither has laid out a clear plan for how to do so while boosting spending at home. Most investors expect some sort of losses. Indeed, Moody's Investors Service anticipates holders of Argentina dollar bonds will need to write off 10 percent to 20 percent of their investments, while Fitch Ratings believes the government will write down local and dollar debt.

### 'Just no work'

Hunger and poverty are not new in Argentina, but have risen abruptly over the past two years amid a series of economic shocks that have rattled the grain-exporting nation, famed for its rich arable land and cattle. The issues have become a lightning rod for anti-government protests and marches, with the hardships of the poor brought into sharp focus as the government has been locked in talks with creditors about repayments on around \$100 billion in debts.

Driving the problem is stubborn inflation, a tumbling peso and a slump in domestic production and consumption, which have hurt spending power, incomes and jobs. "There is just no work," said 46-year-old Isabel Brites, a volunteer at the Los Piletones dining room in Buenos

Aires, who said that was the main message she heard from people eating at the kitchen, which serves around 2,000 meals a day.

Macri, looking to revive his election hopes, has rolled out plans to bolster jobs, including tax cuts for employers. He also announced a freeze on some food prices earlier this year. Sergio Chouza, an economist at the University of Avellaneda in Buenos Aires, said food prices have rocketed nearly 60 percent over the past year, with basics such as dairy up as much as 90 percent. "That results in a deterioration of diets and pushes many people below the poverty line," he said.

### More noodles, less meat

Poverty is a key reason for Macri's fall from grace. His economic austerity, part of the \$57 billion funding deal agreed with the IMF last year, reined in deficits but hit growth and voters' wallets. Macri was defeated heavily in a primary election in August. Since then, he has announced lower taxes for the middle class and higher subsidies for the poor along with food aid. The Senate approved an emergency food law last month.

"Perhaps we underestimated the impact of the economic situation on the elections. (The poverty issue) affected the vote for Mauricio," Eduardo Amadeo, a Macri ally and member of Argentina's house of deputies, told Reuters. "The reforms we launched have stabilized the economy and we have tried to reduce the impact from the devaluation in August on people's wallets," Amadeo said. A spokesman for the Ministry of Health and Social Development listed official measures to deal with the crisis, but declined to comment further on poverty rates.

In the meantime, even as soup kitchens flourish, some volunteers say meals are getting more meager amid tight funding conditions and as food donations dry up. "Previously, people donated some meat and chicken; now we only get noodles and rice," said Lorena Nievas, who works at the Abrazando Hogares soup kitchen in the southern Patagonian city of Puerto Madryn. For many residents, however, there is no choice. "I have people from the street who come in for their lunch and snacks here. It's all the food they get," she said. — Reuters

### Cheaper to run

The running cost per kilometre of Santiago's Chinese-made electric buses is around 70 pesos (\$0.10), a 230-peso decrease on the rate for a diesel vehicle. But the cost of a journey to the passenger remains the same. The electric buses have a range of around 250 km, meaning they can make three or four return journeys on city routes without needing to recharge at the terminal. They also have motion chargers which means they can top up while going downhill. The electric buses are purchased by the Chilean state and then leased to local private operators including MetBus.

"There's been an important commitment to electromobility in Chile, and (the technology) is here to stay," said Karla Zapata, director of Enel X Chile, the Italian energy subsidiary that provides power for the bus network. There are already 60 charging points for electric cars across the capital, but they are not yet widely used due to a lack of government incentives and regulation, Zapata said.

Social attitudes need to change and prices must fall for Chileans to embrace a shift to electric-powered cars, she said. "What we need to work on is motivating people to change from diesel to electric cars," Zapata said. The company hopes that slower-speed charging units could soon be installed in homes, medium-capacity chargers at workplaces, and fast-charging stations at motorway services and outside restaurants, she added. — Reuters

## Climate talks host Chile charges up electric transport

Electric and diesel buses pass in turn along one of the main avenues in Chile's capital Santiago, sweeping past the national football stadium and up towards the Andean mountains. The differences are stark. Bright red electric buses glide serenely by, while their old diesel-powered, smoke-belching counterparts grind to a halt with a thunderous clatter. "I use the new electric buses a lot. They're much quieter," said 26-year-old university student Camilo Miranda. "People often overlook noise pollution in a city where air quality has always been the main concern."

Santiago, a city of 5.6 million people, has positioned itself as a global leader in the use of electric buses, as the South American nation pushes forward with ambitious plans to adopt cleaner energy and cut emissions from public transport. With 386 electric buses, accounting for 6 percent of the city's fleet, Santiago has by far the largest fleet outside of global front-runner China, according to the World Resources Institute, a US-based think-tank. The first 100 electric buses bought from China hit the Chilean capital's streets just over a year ago, and the government

plans to introduce them in other cities, although it has not said where.

### UN conference

Worldwide, cities account for about three-quarters of carbon emissions and consume more than two-thirds of energy, meaning their success or failure in cutting emissions will have a big impact on whether global warming stays within agreed limits. Chile will be keen to highlight Santiago's use of electric buses when the city hosts this year's UN climate conference (COP25) in December.

In June, the government unveiled a more ambitious climate action plan that included targets to shut all coal power plants by 2040 and become a carbon-neutral economy by 2050, in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement to curb global warming. In Santiago, it is also hoped the zero-emission buses can help the battle to improve poor air quality, which sees a dense smog settle over the city on most cold winter days. "Ahead of the COP25, we want to reinforce the image of Chile as a country that has mobilised new public transport technologies with a focus on clean solutions," Chile's Transport Minister Gloria Hutt told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Our aim is to have all public transport in Chile electric-powered by the year 2040," she said. She added that the government's focus was on expanding the use of electric energy in public transport, with no subsidies or tax breaks in the pipeline to promote the use of electric cars.



# Business

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**12** NBK Capital: MENA sovereign bonds and sukuk constitute 20% of EM index



**13** Vertuo, a versatile coffee machine that provides ultimate brewing experience



**14** Final call for entries to Lexus Design Award 2020 as competition deadline approaches



PARIS: An illustration picture in Paris shows apps for Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple (GAFA) and the reflection of a binary code displayed on a tablet screen. The OECD published yesterday, its suggestions for a "unified approach" on fairly taxing digital giants to break a deadlock in a dispute that has raised tensions between the United States and some EU allies. — AFP

## MNCs risk heftier tax hit in major overhaul

### Decades old tax rules outdated for internet age; Overhaul to hit tax havens

PARIS: Governments will get more power to tax big multinationals like Google, Apple and Facebook doing business in their countries under a proposed overhaul of decades-old rules. Big internet firms have pushed tax rules to the limit as they can book profit and park assets like trademarks and patents in low tax countries like Ireland wherever their customers are.

The drive for a global rule book has received new urgency as countries unilaterally adopt plans for a tax on digital companies over frustration with current rules.

This year more than 130 countries and territories agreed that a rewriting of tax rules largely going back to the 1920s was overdue and tasked the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to come up with proposals. "The current system is under stress and will not survive if we don't remove the tensions," OECD head of tax policy Pascal Saint-Amans told journalists.

The OECD expects the first sign of whether there is broad political support behind their proposals next week when finance ministers from the Group of 20 economic powers discuss them at a meeting in Washington. The overhaul would have an impact of a few percentage points of corporate income tax in many countries with no big losers apart from big international investment hubs, Saint-Amans said. While that means countries like Ireland or offshore tax havens could suffer, countries with big consumer markets like the United States or France would benefit from the shake-up.

France adopted its own national tax on digital companies this year, sparking US threats of tariff on French wine and adding to global trade tensions. Meanwhile, companies are facing increased uncertainty about their tax bills as countries challenge arrangements to pay tax in countries like Ireland rather than where their markets are.

Apple is locked in an EU tax dispute over profits

booked in Ireland which could cost the iPhone maker \$14 billion. Meanwhile, Google agreed last month to pay more than \$1 billion to settle a tax case in France. Amazon, which the European Union has told to pay about 250 million euros in back taxes to Luxembourg, said the OECD proposals were an "important step forward". Shares in Apple, Alphabet, the parent company of Google, Facebook and Amazon opened higher on Wednesday as latest media reports raised hopes of progress in trade talks between the United States and China.

#### Tax revolution

The OECD proposals set a scope for the companies that would be covered by the new rules, define how much business they must do in a country to be taxable there and determine how much profit can be taxed there. The aim is to give the government where the user or client of a company's product is located the right to tax a bigger

share of the profit earned by a foreign company there.

Companies affected would be big multinational firms operating across borders with the OECD suggesting they should have revenue of over 750 million euros (\$821 million). They would also have to have a "sustained and significant" interaction with customers in a country's market, regardless of whether they have a physical presence there or not. Not only would big internet companies be covered, but also big consumer firms that sell retail products in a market through a distribution network, which they may or may not own.

Companies meeting those conditions would then be liable for taxes in a given country, according to a formula based on set percentages of profitability that remain to be negotiated. A French Finance Ministry official said that the Washington meeting should give "the needed political steer in order to achieve an agreement on international taxation in 2020". — Reuters

## Boubyan Bank posts net profits of KD 45m for period ended 30 Sept

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has announced net profits of KD 45 million for the period ended 30 September 2019, at a growth rate of 12 percent compared the previous year, with an earnings per share of 15.25 fils compared to 14.20 fils for the same period in 2018.

Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed, the Bank's Vice-Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, commented on such positive results by stating: "Thanks to Allah, the Almighty, the efforts of our staff, and the trust of our customers, we managed to achieve great results during this period despite the increasing challenges which made us determined more than ever to add more achievements."

He added: "This is a special year as we celebrate the bank's 15-year anniversary, and as it marks a 10-year milestone since the start of our transformation strategy back in 2009, leading to this level of excellence."

"Q3 has been the most remarkable quarter of this year owing to the number of awards received by the

bank whether for its services, products, or corporate social responsibility in addition to a special award received by the bank in the Human Resources domain," Al-Majed added.

Boubyan was named the Best Islamic Digital Bank in the Middle East by Global Finance. Additionally, the bank received another four awards, namely, the Best Islamic Digital Bank in Kuwait, the Best Mobile Banking App in Kuwait, the Most Innovative Digital Bank in Kuwait, and the Best Innovation in

IMAL Technology. Furthermore, the Noor Boubyan Initiative for eyesight-restoration operations in Africa was named the Best Social Humanitarian Initiative at the GCC level, and the bank received the GCC's Award for the "Replacement and Nationalization of Manpower in Kuwait".

#### Growth of all indicators

Al-Majed stated that all of the Bank's main indicators witnessed a remarkable growth until September 2019 where the total assets increased to KD 5 billion at a growth rate of 18 percent while the operating income increased to KD 109 million at a growth rate of 4 percent in addition to the increase in customers' deposits by 14 percent, to reach KD 4.1 billion. He further added that the total equity of the bank increased to KD



Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed

567 million compared with KD 396 million last year and that there was a notable increase in the financing portfolio to KD 3.6 billion with a growth rate of 14 percent in addition to the continuous growth in the bank's customers' base.

Al-Majed stated as well that the market share, in financing, increased to approximately 9 percent in the meantime, while Boubyan Bank's share of the retail finance increased to approximately 12 percent. Besides, the bank recorded outstanding growth in the corporate credit portfolio which grew by 16 percent. This was achieved by attracting a number of operational companies known for their financial and economic creditworthiness while continuing to maintain the highest standards of credit quality, monitoring and diversifying risks.

Boubyan Bank's Key Financial Indicators  
In KD Million

Indicator	September 2019	September 2018	Growth
Net profits	45	40	12%
Operating income	109	105	4%
Customers' deposits	4,102	3,594	14%
Financing portfolio	3,637	3,193	14%
Assets	5,033	4,253	18%

## Greece in first-ever negative interest rate sale: PM

ATHENS: Greece, which needed three international bailouts earlier this decade, joined yesterday the growing ranks of countries able to sell debt at negative interest rates. "A few minutes ago I was informed that Greece borrowed money at a negative interest rate for the first time ever," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told parliament according to state agency ANA.

The Greek debt agency had earlier announced it had sold a batch of 3-month treasury bills at -0.02 percent, compared to 0.095 percent in an equivalent sale in August.

A growing number of countries are selling bonds at negative interest rates, when investors effectively pay for governments to hold their money, as monetary authorities have slashed borrowing costs in an attempt to boost the economy. Greece, which saw the yields on its 10-year bonds soar over 40 percent in the secondary market at one point earlier this decade, was able to place on Tuesday 1.5 billion euros at that maturity at a rate of return for investors of 1.5 percent.

As Greece's economy has begun to rebound and the government has kept its finances in check, the country's borrowing costs have fallen, although they remain far above those for its eurozone counterparts. Both Germany and France are able to borrow for 10 years at negative yields, while the yields on Italy's 10-year bonds is roughly 0.87 percent.

Greece expects its economy to grow by 2.8 percent in 2020 whilst respecting fiscal pledges to the country's creditors, a draft budget released Monday said. —AFP







## Business

# Vertuo, a versatile coffee machine that provides ultimate brewing experience

## Nespresso Kuwait renovates one of its branches at 360 Mall

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Nespresso Kuwait renovated one of its branches in Kuwait at 360 Mall just in time for the official launch last week of its new coffee machine Vertuo, the next generation of at-home coffee systems. Vertuo is a new coffee system which is unique - an intelligent machine that can make coffee by using the newest technology which reads the barcode on coffee capsules.

At a touch of a button, Vertuo brewing technology offers high-quality coffee in a variety of cup sizes. Coffee lovers can now enjoy their favorite drink any way they like. The new Nespresso Vertuo is available in two models - VertuoPlus and VertuoPlus Deluxe. Vertuo Plus comes in one color: White, white Vertuo Plus Deluxe is available in black and silver. The machines and coffee are now available at all Nespresso boutiques all over Kuwait.

"To make it easier to understand, Vertuo is a versatile and intelligent system that can fit all the needs of coffee lovers, from small to large servings," Nespresso Middle East and Africa Regional Business Manager Julien Mario told Kuwait Times. "We have three sizes that can be served using the Vertuo. The coffee capsules will be placed in the machine, and it will determine the class of coffee and the size of coffee you want. It will automatically select the coffee you want, a unique trademark we named Centrifusion. It is predetermined by the machine, and the machine will work tirelessly to make your best coffee taste even better. The system will proceed if the right temperature and water flow are present. The water temperature must be same all the way to make it perfect from the first till the next coffee service," he said.

Nespresso pioneered the portioned coffee segment with high quality espresso and has now redefined the large cup of coffee with the introduction of the new Vertuo brewing system. The name Vertuo is derived from the word "Virtuoso", which means mastering an expertise. In this case, the name aims to underpin Nespresso's mastering of the highest quality coffee for consumers' pleasure.

Nespresso specializes not just in coffee machines and its accessories, but also sells the best coffee in town, hailing from various sources around the world. "This Nespresso concept is unique - delivering a new coffee concept to sophisticated coffee lovers in Kuwait. One of the best known Nespresso

endorsers is George Clooney, whom we all consider the epitome of Nespresso clients. He embodies the entire group of clients because his personality is adored by men, women, youth and even LGBTs. Despite his age, he encompasses all generations, young and old. His image is so refined that all ages can relate to him," Mario added.

With Nespresso, Mario said they managed to revive the coffee industry in Sudan. "Because of the war in many areas close to them, the coffee industry in Sudan was adversely affected, but we managed to revive it. But we don't only have one country to produce the best coffee; in fact, our coffee comes from nine more countries, mostly located along the equator, that produce the best coffee. We partner not just to compensate for coffee, but what we want is sustainability and environment-friendly technology," he added.

Nespresso has a 1 percent market share for coffee worldwide, sourcing from 120,000 farmers all over the world. "We have 900 agronomists. We have three coffee plants in Switzerland to make sure about the quality of the beans till our clients' cup of coffee," Mario said.

Currently, aside from 360 Mall, Nespresso has outlets at The Avenues mall and Al-Kout mall. Its presence here can be traced back to 1997. "We opened 22 years ago in Kuwait with our partner NESCO," Mario noted. Nespresso Kuwait is doing great in Kuwait, especially since most Kuwaitis want the best for their families and offices. "We do have a very strong buying population of Kuwaitis for our products. They trust us and we are happy to provide the best for them. Knowing the capacity of people and the quality of life many Kuwaitis have, the machine of this type is the best, in addition to our best coffee ever," he concluded.

**How is the crema formed? What is the importance of crema?**

Crema is a naturally formed foam of coffee and air. It is produced during the extraction process and is a sign of ultimate coffee quality, enhancing the tasting pleasure. The crema protects coffee aromas, sealing them in the cup until they are released as the coffee drinker enjoys his/her coffee. The crema allows consumers to benefit from the full aromatic profile. This is the first single-serve system to brew a large cup coffee with crema, as crema has traditionally been a feature of



Nespresso Middle East and Africa Regional Business Manager Julien Mario. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

espresso.

**Why is there not an integrated milk solution?**

With Vertuo you can easily get an outstanding in-cup result by simply pouring milk before the coffee is extracted. While the coffee is filling the cup, milk will nicely mix with the crema and the coffee to give a unique smooth and indulgent beverage.

**Is Vertuo coffee the same as an Americano?**

No. The new Vertuo system produces both authentic Espresso, Gran Lungo as well as large-cup coffee with an espresso style crema, bringing the signature of espresso to the world of coffee. An Americano is a coffee-based recipe, consisting of adding hot water to espresso, which doesn't have any crema. The crema protects coffee aromas, allowing consumers to benefit from the full aromatic profile of the coffee.

**Can I change the extraction parameters on Nespresso Vertuo to adapt the in-cup result to my preferences?**

The Nespresso Vertuo system features an extremely high level of precision, designed with specific brewing parameters for each blend. Nespresso Vertuo utilizes an intelligent extraction system that recognizes each expertly developed and adjusts the brewing parameters (such as temperature, flow rate, rotational speed, and the time the water is in contact with the coffee) to deliver the best in-cup result. Each coffee is developed from the interplay between the extraction parameters and the coffee blends.



**Can I regulate the heat of Nespresso Vertuo?**

No. Specific extraction parameters are set for each blend, thereby optimizing each coffee to deliver the best in-cup result, and each coffee is developed from the interplay between the extraction parameters and the coffee blends.

**How does Vertuo crema compare to Original crema?**

The crema is part of the coffee character and as each coffee preparation is different, the crema also differs between the coffees. The crema of Original Espressos and Lungos is dense and creamy while the crema from the Vertuo is more generous.

**What is the pressure of the Vertuo system?**

Pressure is not the key parameter for systems based on Centrifusion technology. Over time, the ways in which coffee is extracted has evolved. Centrifusion is a revolutionary

new technology, which works by spinning the capsule within the system. When rotation of the capsule starts, a pressure is applied due to the centrifugal forces. The final pressure will mainly depend on the water inlet pressure and the rotation speed, and reach values of around 2 bars.

**How can you call this espresso if it is not produced in the same way as a traditional espresso coffee?**

The sensory in-cup result for espresso brewed through Centrifusion is similar to that of espresso produced through high pressure extraction. Over time, the ways in which coffee is extracted have evolved.

**Who designed the Vertuo machine?**

Swiss designer Antoine Cahen.

**Which machine partner built the Vertuo machine?**

Nespresso has teamed up with different companies based in the European Union to produce Vertuo.

## AUB wins the 'The Most Innovative Digital Banking Initiative Kuwait 2019'



A group photo of AUB management and employees in front of the branch at the Avenues Mall.

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) has been awarded the "The Most Innovative Digital Banking Initiative (Smart Branch) Kuwait 2019" by Global Banking & Finance Review - a leading magazine in publishing the latest global developments in finance and banking-, for the digital branch AUB opened at the Avenues Mall, Phase IV.

AUB received this prestigious award in recognition of its dedication to maintain its leadership and excellence in the digital banking services for its customers. According to the magazine, AUB continues its focus on meeting the needs of its customers, which is affirmed by its initiative to design a digital branch at the Avenues Mall. AUB pays great attention to enhance the experience of its customers through the use of technology, where the branch is equipped with state-of-the-art tools, including advanced ATMs, cutting-edge kiosks, a 24/7 video and text chat room, as well as a digital queuing system and easy-to-use applications. The magazine noted that AUB is recognized because of its outstanding performance and achievements and by scoring well in investment in technology, introduction of new innovative digital services, use of technology to enhance customer experience, value driven business philosophy and strategic vision.

AUB was granted this award after the magazine's research team scrutinized the nomination to ensure that it meets the specific criteria for an award in the selected category.

Commenting on this achievement, Tareq Muhmood, AUB Acting Chief Executive Officer said: "We are delighted to receive this award, which manifests our success in continuously enhancing and improving our banking services. This increases the satisfaction of our customers and adds value to their banking transactions. AUB will continue to keep pace with the latest technological developments in banking services to help us provide advanced services at the highest standards of quality and excellence. We are continuing to achieve our strategic goal of practical and effective digital transformation as we have many initiatives that will be launched soon".

Ranjan Sen, General Manager of Retail Banking at AUB, said: "This award reflects the great progress we have achieved on the path of digital transformation. The digital element is being integrated into all customer journeys so that AUB customers have a seamless, technology assisted experience benchmarked to the best of global practices. This branch serves as a robust milestone, and as we continue to evolve and grow our digi-



Tareq Muhmood receiving the award in the presence of Ranjan Sen and Mishari Al-Jassim

tal capabilities, this branch too is evolving and growing. As we contribute to providing sophisticated and time-saving services, we are working to transform all other branches to have them offer such digital banking services".

Mishari Al-Jassim, Deputy General Manager of Retail Banking at AUB said: "Receiving this award is a true recognition of the various efforts by AUB to achieve digital transformation that includes added-value for all customers. The AUB digital branch at the Avenues Mall is equipped with the latest technologies, including a digital queuing system to inform customers via their mobile phones when it is their turn to be served. The branch also provides self-service devices that enable customers to carry out their banking transactions easily and safely in a few minutes. The branch also pro-

vides tablets and smart screens that allow customers to browse the Bank's social media platforms, as well as explore offers and services provided by AUB. AUB is the only Bank in Kuwait that has branches opening six days a week at commercial complexes, which the Avenues Mall and Boulevard Salmiya. Moreover, the branch contains advanced ATMs in addition to a 24/7 video and text chat room which provides the Bank's customers the privacy to have direct voice or video chat with the AUB's customer service to provide the customer with guidance and assistance for any inquiries or needs. Children accompanying customers may enjoy digital games available on the self-service devices while their parents are carrying out their banking transactions, which is the first of its kind in Kuwaiti banks".

## GOVERN, UIC hold governance program

KUWAIT: In collaboration with GOVERN Center - a niche advisory and research center specializing in economic and corporate governance in emerging markets - UIC's investment studies center organized a specialized training program on governance and stewardship on Oct 7-8, 2019. The program was presented by Alissa Amico, a governance expert and former governance advisor at



## Eurozone turns heat on Dutch, Germans to spend more

LUXEMBOURG: Germany and the Netherlands, which run budget surpluses, should invest more to help boost economic growth at home and throughout the euro zone, top euro zone officials said yesterday, echoing a call from the European Central Bank last month.

Eurozone economic growth is slowing as its biggest economy, Germany, teeters on the brink of a recession, keeping inflation subdued. But despite an ECB call for a fiscal stimulus, the eurozone is not planning any concerted action. Instead, top eurozone officials put pressure on Germany and the Netherlands to use their "fiscal space" - EU jargon for sound public finances - to invest more

OECD, with the participation of a number of investment and financial companies operating in Kuwait.

UIC's technical support manager and acting GOVERN director Fadwa Darweesh said this training program is part of programs UIC regularly organizes to meet the needs of investment and financial companies. Darweesh added that investment and financial companies have been focusing on governance applications in recent years as supervising investors' interests has been gaining significance, in view of the restructuring of the Kuwait stock exchange. Special certificates were distributed to participants on the conclusion of the program.

and boost growth in their own economies and in the whole eurozone.

"There are two kinds of countries - those who need to go further with their fiscal efforts and those who need to invest in growth. Namely Germany and the Netherlands have to understand that, because it is in their own interest and in the collective interest of the eurozone," European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs Pierre Moscovici said. In a discussion paper, the European Union's executive arm said the slowing euro zone economy needs pre-emptive fiscal stimulus or it will face a long period of low growth and that economic activity will not rebound this year.

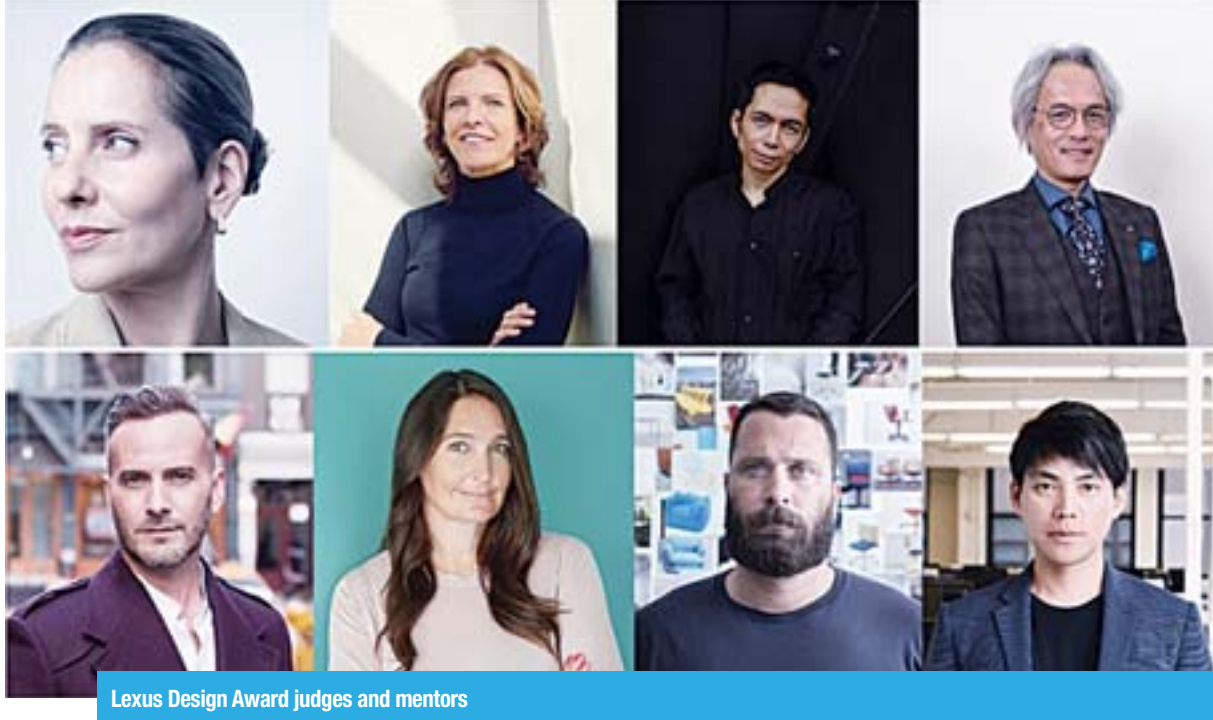
The chairman of the 19 ministers representing eurozone countries, Mario Centeno, said fiscal policy in the euro zone should respond to the economic situation. "The fiscal stance must play together with the economic conditions of the eurozone," Centeno told reporters. "We need to look carefully ...who has fiscal space to act and ... who does not, (so that they) continue to reduce their debt." — Reuters



## Business

# Final call for entries to Lexus Design Award 2020 as competition deadline approaches

Six finalists to receive around \$25,000 each to cover prototype production costs



Lexus Design Award judges and mentors

**KUWAIT:** The submission period for entries to the prestigious Lexus Design Award 2019, which is being held this year under the theme 'Design for a Better Tomorrow,' is drawing to a close, with aspiring creators having a few days remaining to submit their ideas for consideration. Now in its eighth year, the distinguished international competition offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for talented creators from around the world, whose innovative works will be showcased as part of the globally renowned Milan Design Week 2020.

The next generation of designers who would like to participate this year will need to consider how their creative ideas incorporate three fundamental principles from the Lexus brand, namely: 'Anticipate,' 'Innovate,' and 'Capture,' as well as how their designs predict the needs of tomorrow's society. They will have to develop innovative designs that bring new, imaginative solutions. At the same time, their ideas and designs should be captivating and engaging to the audience, and more importantly, to the esteemed judging panel. The six finalists are due to be announced in early 2020, and each will benefit from a unique opportunity to put their ideas into practice under the guidance of prominent figures from a range of design backgrounds. The exclusive mentorship program offers an individual production budget of up to JPY 3 million (over \$25,000), allowing participants to turn their design concepts into functional prototypes that will be exhibited at the Lexus design installation as

part of Milan Design Week 2020.

The Grand Prix winner will be chosen following the presentation of prototypes by each of the six finalists on a global stage during a press day at Milan Design Week 2020. This year, Jeanne Gang, named one of 2019's Most Influential People in the world by Time Magazine, joins other esteemed design leaders to form the panel of judges. Gang, whose projects include an expansion to the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the O'Hare Global Terminal in Chicago, has been recognized internationally for a design process that expands beyond architecture's conventional boundaries to foreground relationships between individuals, communities, and environments. The richly diverse panel also includes luminaries such as Paola Antonelli, Senior Curator of Architecture & Design at The Museum of Modern Art; John Maeda, Technologist and Chief Experience Officer at Publicis Sapient; and Yoshihiro Sawa, President of Lexus International.

Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "At Lexus, we believe in the power of creativity and design to change the world and build a better future for everyone, and the Lexus Design Award offers us an opportunity to take this belief forward and continue our passion for creating amazing experiences. Through the Lexus Design Award, which is being held this year under the theme 'Design for a Better



'Tomorrow,' Lexus is supporting the next generation of designers and creators by offering them a platform to explore their creativity and develop their unique design ideas while working under expert guidance to showcase their designs to the world."

Miyamoto added: "We look forward to revealing this year's shortlisted participants and seeing what they will bring during this eighth edition of the award. I want to thank everyone involved in the Lexus Design Award for contributing to this valuable platform, as well as our loyal customers, whose continuous support inspires us all to reach beyond the conventional and create amazing experiences."

To mentor the six finalists, Lexus welcomes a stellar ensemble of creative pioneers from around the globe.



These include Joe Doucet, a designer, artist, entrepreneur, inventor, and creative director who exhibits globally and has been honored with numerous international awards; celebrated British designer Bethan Gray, whose distinctive furniture and furnishings are inspired by world cultures and made in collaboration with master craftspeople; British-Canadian Philippe Malouin, an award-winning architectural, interior, and product designer, also known for his art objects and installations; and renowned architect Shohei Shigematsu, who heads OMA New York and will again be bringing out the creative potential of young designers - as he did during last year's Lexus Design Award.

The closing date for entries to the Lexus Design Award 2020 competition is October 14, 2019. Please visit [LexusDesignAward.com](http://LexusDesignAward.com) for additional information.

## Warba Bank prepares for 'Sunbula' mega draw in 360 Mall

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing the 3rd Mega Draw this year in a special event at 360 Mall presented by Ali Najem who will announce the winners today (10th of October) at 7 pm in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry along with Bank officials.

Two draws will take place during this special event: first the Sunbula Kids monthly draw and later the Sunbula 3rd Mega Draw alongside many other activities. A kids section will be available that includes many different activities, competitions and prizes.

Al Sunbula account is the ideal account for those who wish to save money and achieve steady returns, additionally, account holders gather chances as they grow their deposits to win prizes in the Sunbula draws held throughout the year. Warba Bank continuously enhances its Sunbula campaign, the year 2019 witnessed the introduction of the Quarterly draws. Weekly draws remain throughout the year, with 5 winners getting KD 1,000 each. As per the quarterly (mega) draws, there are five winners: 1 winner of the KD 100,000 grand prize and 4 win a new Toyota Land Cruiser VXR. However, in the final Mega draw that will be held in January 2020, Warba Bank will be giving out the KD 100,000 grand prize and 6 Land Cruiser VXRs.

As per the chances, the account holder gets a chance for every KD 10 in the Sunbula Account. The more money deposited, the more chances the customer gets. Additionally, Warba Bank introduced its Sunbula Fixed Deposit, that promises an expected rate of 3.5 percent with returns distributed based on customer preference whether monthly, yearly, or at maturity. Furthermore, the Sunbula Fixed Deposit also rewards its depositors with chances to win in the weekly and quarterly Sunbula draws.

## 'A Gift of Gold' offers at Malabar Gold & Diamonds

**KUWAIT:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the largest jewellery retailers globally with a strong retail network of 250 outlets spread across the globe has revealed its much-awaited festive season offer, 'A Gift of Gold', giving a golden chance for the customers to win assured gold coins with Gold & Diamond Jewellery purchases.

In Kuwait, the offer is starting from today and will be spanning till 27th October, 2019. Also, the company has unveiled the latest Festive Jewellery collection at special offer prices in gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery featuring the most eye-catching and unique trends bound to captivate the customers.

'A Gift of Gold' by Malabar Gold & Diamonds gives unmatched chances for the customers to win gold coins with their gold & diamond jewellery purchases. Customers can win a

## Huawei launches next-generation AI powered solutions at GITEX

**DUBAI:** At GITEX Technology Week 2019, Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT), announced the launch of three new products within its enterprise portfolio: next-generation, all-flash storage product OceanStor Dorado; AI-native database GaussDB, and the highest-performance distributed storage yet, FusionStorage 8.0. OceanStor Dorado Intelligent All-Flash Storage; Ever Fast, Ever Solid, and AI-Powered

### The OceanStor Dorado comprises the following innovative features:

- No. 1 Performance with Chip-Powered Architectures: Based on the Kunpeng 920, network chip, management chip, SSD controller chip, and AI-powered Ascend 310 processor, the OceanStor Dorado end-to-end platform delivers best-in-class 20,000,000 IOPS and 0.1 ms latency, meeting real-time application requirements.
- Always-On Applications with SmartMatrix-based Reliable Layouts: The fully interconnected, high-reliability SmartMatrix architecture ensures service running even when seven out of eight controllers fail simultaneously, setting a new benchmark for storage reliability.
- Efficient O&M with Edge-Cloud AI Synergy: The industry's first intelligent storage product with built-in Ascend AI processors provides semantic association of machine learning, improving the read cache hit ratio by 50 percent. Additionally, edge-cloud AI synergy implements intelligent lifecycle management and builds an automated data management system with a complete three-layer architecture, reducing customer OPEX. GaussDB: The industry-leading AI-Native database GaussDB represents two major breakthroughs:
  - First, GaussDB pioneers the embedding of AI capabilities into the full lifecycle of distributed databases, making their self-O&M, self-tuning, self-diagnosis, and self-healing possible. In

guaranteed gold coin or up to 50 gold coins instantly on purchase of gold jewellery worth KD 250 via 'Scratch & Win' coupons. Adding to the above, customers also get two gram gold coin on diamond jewellery purchase of KWD 500 and a one gram gold coin on purchase of diamond jewellery worth KWD 250. Above offers are valid at all outlets in Kuwait until 27th October only.

Also, customers will have a great opportunity to get protected from the increasing gold rate by just paying 10 percent of the entire amount on your favorite gold jewellery. This offer is valid until 25th October only.

The latest jewellery collection launched in celebration of the festive season includes both traditional and contemporary designs in 18 & 22K gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery and are guaranteed to suit the tastes of their multicultural and multinational customers. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has incorporated these designs as a part of various brands presented at Malabar Gold & Diamonds' namely Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Precia - Gem Jewellery, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewellery and Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery.

online analytical processing (OLAP), online transaction processing (OLTP), and hybrid transaction/analytical processing (HTAP) scenarios, GaussDB uses the optimality theory to create the industry's first reinforcement learning self-tuning algorithm, improving tuning performance by over 60 percent.

• Secondly, thanks to its innovative heterogeneous computing framework, GaussDB harnesses the power of diversified computing, including x86, ARM, GPU, and NPU computing. In the TPC-DS benchmark test, GaussDB ranked No.1 in terms of performance, 50 percent higher than the industry average.

GaussDB supports multiple deployment scenarios, including local deployment and deployment on private or public clouds. On Huawei Cloud, GaussDB provides a full spectrum of high-performance data warehouse services for customers in financial, internet, logistics, education, and automotive industries.

FusionStorage 8.0: The world's highest-performance distributed storage

The intelligent world will raise standards even higher for the performance, scale, and manageability of storage systems. In response, FusionStorage 8.0 offers three innovative features:

- First, FusionStorage 8.0 boasts the industry's highest distributed storage performance. In the SPC-1 test, FusionStorage 8.0's read-write performance per node reached 168,000 IOPS in Ims, powering distributed storage for the first time to support critical enterprise applications.
- Secondly, FusionStorage 8.0 simultaneously supports block, file, object, and Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS) protocols, allowing a single storage system to manage an entire data center.
- Thirdly, FusionStorage 8.0 integrates AI into full-lifecycle storage management, from resource planning and service provisioning, to system optimization, risk prediction, and fault location. Alan Qi, GM of Data Center Solution Sales, Huawei Enterprise Middle East, launched the products during GITEX. He said: "In today's digital economy, new connections and applications are accelerating data flows and the way we protect our data. With the rapid development of cutting-edge technologies such as 5G, AI, and the Internet of Things (IoT), a diverse range of applications and massive amounts of data have been generated, posing serious demands on real-time data processing. Data infrastructures must be upgraded to fulfill these demands. OceanStor Dorado intelligent all-flash storage solution embodies Huawei's years of experience in all-flash storage technologies, and helps customers get the most possible value from their data."



DUBAI: Alan Qi, GM of Data Center Solution Sales, Huawei Enterprise Middle East, speaks during GITEX

"Huawei has gained strong momentum in the Middle East enterprise market, with products in the Intelligent Data and Storage domain receiving high acclaim. This new OceanStor Dorado all-flash product, oriented to the Middle East market, sets a new benchmark in performance, stability and intelligence. I'm confident that it will better serve our enterprise customers in the future, helping them create more business success," he said.

## Burgan Bank announces third and last batch of winners of 200% cash back draw

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank is pleased to announce the third and last group of its summer campaign 200 percent Cash Back draw winners for the month of September.

### The lucky winners of the Cash Back draw are:

1. Hamad Sulaiman Dashti
2. Abdalamin Bader Al-Mutawaa
3. Humoud Alazemi
4. Ebtesam Mohammed Al-Omar
5. Ghaida Yaqoub Alhabib
6. Tareq Meshari Al-Bahar
7. Fatma Mutlaq Al-Qahes
8. Mohammad Amjad Ameen
9. Mohammad Ramadhan Al-Jaber
10. Shimah Jbail Al-Dousari

Supporting its customers' seasonal financial needs and demands, Burgan Bank's recent summer campaign entitles its credit, debit and prepaid cardholders a chance to win back double their spending when using their cards. The seasonal offer is designed as a three-month campaign that started on June 16th and ended on the 29th of September 2019 and announced a total of twenty winners who have won 200 percent cash back.

Burgan Bank debit, prepaid and credit cards accommodate customers' different needs with flexibility and convenience for all financial transactions.





What's On

# Safir Fintas Kuwait Hotel participates in breast cancer awareness campaign



Safir Fintas Kuwait Hotel participates in the global pink ribbon campaign for breast cancer awareness during the month of October 2019. All colleagues wore a pink ribbon to heighten the support for the breast cancer prevention. During the celebration, one of the highlights were the engagement of colleagues in "Hand Pink-Ting" where they painted their palms pink hoping to share awareness and support to all. A visit was planned to breast cancer patients at the Hussain Makki Al Juma Center for Specialized Surgery, to share small gifts to patients as part of our sincere thoughts which will be always valued.

Saif Edeen K Mohamad, General Manager of the Hotel, expressed his full support for such campaigns as part of the hotel's commitment towards the society and its responsible business approach. "We believe that recognizing October as breast cancer awareness month is a valuable reminder for everyone to highlight on the importance of breast cancer screenings. By spreading the word, we support efforts for early detection and reduce the number of deaths from breast cancer," he said. October known worldwide as the Breast Cancer Awareness Month, receives focus from entities around the world, including governments, media as well as survivors of cancer.



Members of the diplomatic corps designated in Kuwait and foreign minister assistant for ceremonial affairs, Dhari Ajan Al-Ajran recently held a special ceremony to bid outgoing Ambassador of Algeria, Abdul Hameed Abdawi and Ambassador of Thailand, Dusit Manapan farewell on concluding their tenures in Kuwait.

## ACK awards athletes and club members

The student life department at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) awarded a number of students for their efforts this year as a part of their annual Appreciation Award Ceremony. This annual event is organized by the student life department to reward outstanding athletes and active club members for their excellent involvement, participation and efforts during many events and competitions that ACK participates in.

A total of forty students were nominated to receive their certificates of appreciation, twenty were from the sports teams and the other twenty

students were from different ACK students' clubs. The awarded students were dynamic members of clubs, such as the Cooking Club, the Art Club, the Photography Club and the Music Club, who showed their extra efforts and active involvement with their club activities and performances.

Also dedicated athletes were chosen from ACK sport teams such as football, futsal, volleyball and basketball. The awarded athletes were the ones who showed their commitment by attending all trainings and showed outstanding performances during the games. "The student life department considers the recognition of students' performances important as it will motivate them and will increase their engagement during the college events and club activities", said Basel Dana, Manager of the Student Life Department.



## Canary .. Everyone's favorite since 1970



Canary Restaurant is celebrating its 50th anniversary today since the first launch in 1970 at this branch (Hawalli Branch) with a new look that enhances the old taste that you are accustomed to. Canary Restaurant is one of the most important and most magnificent and outstanding restaurants that are interested in providing fast food of a Shami taste in Kuwait. Canary has branches within Kuwait in many areas namely Shuwaikh, Salmiya, Hawalli, Jahra and Sharq, and many people of all ages, with simple income and rich from various nationalities. Canary serves delicious fast food and various meals such as chickpeas

(Homos), falafel and other Shami fast food that we have enjoyed its taste for fifty years. Through its new look, Canary is keen to keep pace with the development in the field of fast food restaurants to contribute to providing customer service and the provision of falafel, homos and many new kinds with high standards and quality. Today, and on this occasion we are opening Hawally Branch to revive it

in a new image to take the form of reputable restaurants in the speed of meeting the demands of customers through the work of the mechanism of food preparation and delivery faster than before, while preserving the originality of taste. We have also prepared special places to sit and enjoy meals of Canary with a team that has been keen to provide high-quality food through packaging sandwiches and plates in a new way while maintaining the content that customers of Canary are accustomed to since 1970. This is in terms of form, but in terms of taste, Canary has been keen to ensure that the original taste is consistent with the addition of new items to the menu of Canary food to satisfy all tastes. In the end, we say that no matter how grow, the memories remain and are engraved within us to remind us of the beautiful and wonderful days of Canary through a delicious meal to recall our memories through the genuine taste of Canary to remain the favorite of all since 1970.





Health

# From the Mediterranean biggest nesting ground, turtles swim to uncertain future

**KYPARISSIA:** Freed from its eggshell by a volunteer, the tiny turtle hatchling clambers across a pebble-strewn sandy Greek beach in a race to the sea, the start of a hazardous journey that only one in 1,000 will survive. Kira Schirmacher, 22, donning black gloves to gently ease the newborn loggerhead turtle on its way, grins at suggestions that she's a kind of "midwife". "Yes, I do that all day," says the German social sciences student, of her role.

She's one of several volunteers monitoring the beaches of Kyparissia Bay, the Mediterranean's largest nesting ground for the loggerhead, whose scientific name is *Caretta caretta*. Tourism, climate change and good fortune all weigh on the future of the loggerhead population, which the International Union for Conservation of Nature lists as vulnerable. Even sun loungers on the beach that can snag the turtles and bright lights that lure the hatchlings away from the water at night are potential threats, say environmentalists.

**Growing in the Med**

Their overall numbers are unknown but some Pacific and Indian Ocean populations are critically low, while conservation measures have bolstered their presence in the Mediterranean, environmental groups say. With around 44 kilometers of coastline, Kyparissia on the western Peloponnese, had over 3,700 nests this year, up from 3,500 in

2018, says the Athens-based Archelon turtle protection organization. "It seems (more of) our female turtles survive and come back to nest," says oceanographer Dimitris Fytilis, head of the organization's rescue centre for injured turtles in the coastal Athens suburb, Glyfada. Each nest contains up to 120 eggs but up to a fifth may fail to hatch at all.

**In danger from birth**

Loggerheads can live to 80 years of age, grow to more than half a meter and weigh up to 80 kilos (175 pounds) but face mortal danger from birth. Newborns must evade dogs, jackals, foxes, seagulls and other predators just to make it to the sea. Once in the water, the five-centimeter turtle will swim non-stop for at least 24 hours to work its lungs and find food but is prey to crabs, fish and even adult turtles.

More than 600 turtles turn up dead in Greece every year, mostly on beaches but also in the water, trapped in nets or sick, the rescue centre says. It has treated more than 1,100 injured turtles since it began in 1994 and receives some 70 new cases every year. The turtles ingest fishhooks and plastic debris but more than half of their injuries are caused by humans, usually by blows to the head with oars and axes. Fishermen are often blamed as repairing fishing nets damaged by turtles can be costly.

**Hit by 'global warming'**

Climate change has also created the potential to shift the turtle gender balance, as males cannot incubate at a nest temperature above 29.3 degrees C (84.7 F). "There is already an effect in some countries... in Australia for example, more females are born now because of global warming," Fytilis said. Another key nesting ground at Laganas Bay, in Zakynthos on the Ionian island of Zante, attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists annually. Like in other popular tourist destinations, environmental groups have for decades tussled with hotels and restaurants that chafe against protection efforts.

**'Natural treasure'**

"We don't really get support from the locals," says Schirmacher, in Kyparissia. But one hotelier in the resort suggests the area should develop its turtle tourism. "There should be a glass-bottomed boat for turtle watching, but the authorities here can't even build a proper road to the beach," he fumes. Adding to ecologists' concerns are moves by Greece's new conservative government to relax environmental restrictions to promote further tourism investment.

Plans to expand energy prospecting in the Ionian Sea and near Crete have also sparked anger. WWF and Greenpeace last month warned that a planned lease of 50,000



**KYPARISSIA:** Newborn loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) head towards the sea after got free from their eggshells at a beach in Kyparissia, south west Greece. — AFP

square kilometers (20,000 square miles) of sea for oil exploration would endanger "emblematic tourism destinations... that contribute billions of euros and hundreds of thousands of jobs to the national economy."

Archelon stresses that the turtles' presence is a key indicator of sea water quality. "We are fortunate to have these habitats. This is a natural treasure. It needs to be protected, not exploited," warns Fytilis. — AFP

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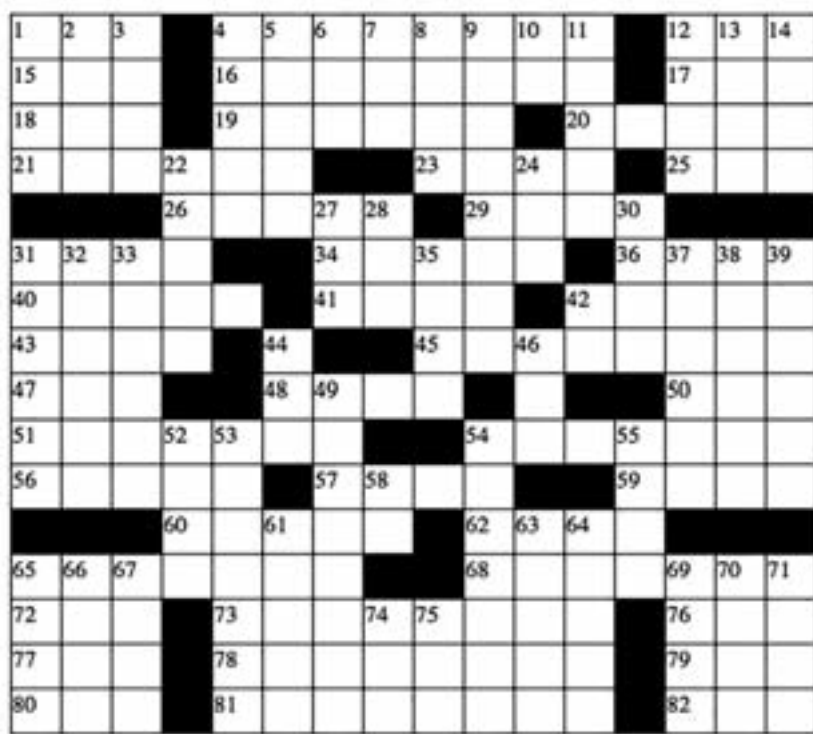
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Stars

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ACROSS

- Edible tuber of any of several yams.
- A city in southwestern California east of Los Angeles.
- A device for creating a current of air by movement of a surface or surfaces.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- Inability to urinate.
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
- An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
- A burn cause by hot liquid or steam.
- Tranquilizer (trade name Haldol) used to treat some psychotic disorders and Tourette's syndrome.
- An informal term for a father.
- Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand.
- The Uralic language spoken by the Yeniseian people.
- A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
- Make reference to.
- A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
- An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
- The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- A dissolute man in fashionable society.
- Small tree with pear-shaped fruit whose oil is used in perfumery.
- (usually followed by 'to') Naturally disposed toward.
- A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A highwayman who robs on foot.
- The younger brother of Edwy who became king of Northumbria when it renounced Edwy.
- A long depression in the surface of the land that usually contains a river.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A stick that people can lean on to help them walk.
- Of or pertaining to Sabah or its people.
- A personal belief or judgment that is not founded on proof or certainty.
- A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
- The mane of a horse.
- A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
- A unit of length of thread or yarn.
- Of or relating to acetone.
- An intricate network suggesting something that was formed by weaving or interweaving.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- A valve that regulates the supply of fuel to the engine.
- (Babylonian) The sky god.

DOWN

- Not only so, but.
- The capital of Western Samoa.
- A public area set aside as a pedestrian walk.
- South African writer (1903-1988).
- Small arboreal tropical American insectivorous lizards with the ability to change skin color.
- A quantity of money.
- Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
- No longer having or seeming to have or expecting to have life.
- An act of scaling by the use of ladders (especially the walls of a fortification).
- A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
- State in northeastern India.
- A mass of small bubbles formed in or on a liquid.
- (prefix) Indicating difference or variation.
- A quantity of no importance.
- United States industrialist who manufactured plows suitable for working the prairie soil (1804-1886).
- The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- Syndrome resulting from a serious acute (sometimes fatal) infection associated with the presence of staphylococcus.
- An enclosed space.
- A city in northern India.
- Any of various small terrestrial or aquatic crustaceans with seven pairs of legs adapted for crawling.
- Large dark-colored food fish of the Atlantic coast of North America.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- A large fleet.
- African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
- Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- Someone who advances.
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- Heat beforehand.
- An additional (usually a second) count.
- Chief port of Yemen.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- (law) The seat for judges in a courtroom.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- A daughter of your brother or sister.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in Iowa and Minnesota and Missouri.
- German naturalist whose speculations that plants and animals are made up of tiny living 'infusoria' led to the cell theory (1779-1851).
- (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
- (often followed by 'of') A large number or amount or extent.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You tend to be radical when it comes to self-analysis, which includes health care, food and physical well-being. Serving and caring for yourself and others is a primary source of inner growth and change. You are sensitive to criticism. Today, at work, you may have to make some adjustments—someone could be in a criticizing mood. Decide to make whatever changes you need and then move forward. This evening a loved one or friend is receptive and will listen to your words. You love social life and relationships of all kinds—partners, marriages, teachers and such. You are very responsive yourself and value this in others.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a high-energy day where many doors of opportunity are opened and many unfinished projects can be completed. When you least expect it, there will be a little boost, some sort of extra support or recognition from those around you. You may feel that you are in touch with others and everything is working in your favor. The support you need is available. You develop a knack for organizing things and people as a sense of ambition and practicality takes hold. Work, achievement and ambition are the things that mean a lot to you. Take a little trip, or get outside during the day. You may want to break your routine.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your positive outlook is catching! Your intuitive powers are strong toward making things work in your favor. This is a good time to ask for a raise. Your ideas are very well-received at this time. Your enthusiasm is strong and can win the support of a valuable supporter. There are upcoming opportunities to meet your special love this week. Those of you that have experienced problems in your love relationship will find answers soon. A more concrete foundation is in the works. Find ways that you can appreciate just who you are and what you are doing with your life now. The happier you are with your life and your accomplishments, the happier the people around you will become. Give careful attention to the everyday relationships.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The energies are right today for team effort. People just want to add their energy to a project... Everybody wants to be included! It is easy for you to make correct decisions. Problems seem manageable and easy to solve. Even though the intensity of this period diminishes fairly soon, you will continue to feel that easy manner you have now, throughout the rest of this year. Exercise or some team sports competition may not go as well as you expected this afternoon. You may feel that you are not able to hold up to the stamina that is required of you just now. Set reasonable fitness goals and concentrate on releasing tension and stretching.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may feel that a co-worker is absent this morning and this person usually does not miss work. This is a temporary situation, so at the noon break you may call and chat. This workday is stuffed with projects, meetings and communication with complicated customers. Your intuitive and psychic abilities are enhanced at this time—you may find it easier to understand different types of personalities. Challenges help to improve problem-solving skills and by the time work is over this day, you may feel as though you have gained in your work experience. Keep notes on your accomplishments so that you can improve your resume. You may be invited to a community social this evening and you could be quite pleased at how this busy day is all forgotten.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Vacation time will be the most comfortable if taken or begun sometime this month. It is possible that you will be traveling in order to tend to business. Who owes what, who owns what and who decides these things are some of the major issues now. Understanding inner motivations and seeing through to the core is your real path of power. You may find that you can really use your mind to think through things and make clear choices. Career decisions are straightforward. You make your way through ideas, concepts and your ability to communicate and express them to others. Make this evening a time of relaxation—a massage could be quite enjoyable. Pay attention to community activities where you could volunteer your creative talents.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find it an easy effort to obtain a loan at this time. You could be most persuasive with others. You are in a good position to communicate and could even be lecturing or teaching. There are all sorts of opportunities for you to express yourself—you may see many areas of your life improve and expand. Obtaining and exchanging information takes on more importance for you. Being more involved with neighbors or siblings after work satisfies a deep emotional need. Communicating feelings becomes most important and it seems your patience over the last few days has paid off—others are listening. A good conversation with a loved one is possible this evening. If you are not married, plans can now be arranged for the ceremony.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

If professional advice is needed, today is the most productive time to seek advice. You could find a teacher or guide, a new approach to your career, etc. Career insights and breakthroughs are possible. Your ambition is intensified. You might discover that exceptional solutions to life's problems or new directions and paths are in order. Emotional seriousness, a sober orientation and a practical awareness of the nature of time are all keystones of your mindset. There is a tendency to be too strict with yourself and to insist that whatever does not contribute to security and other long-term goals is trivial. Your inner resources and emotions are accented.



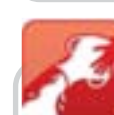
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today brings with it opportunities to understand and heal most any situation. You help to change attitudes and bring new goals into focus. The energies are working with you to bring about a balance in any area you feel needs your attention. The ultimate answers are unavailable to the strictly secular or rational approach, because the whole is a lot more than just its parts. Financial gain and material wellbeing are among the brighter prospects looming before you now, as you focus on how much things really mean to you. Consider including a neighbor in your exercise routine this afternoon—to keep each other motivated.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. You are pleased to be approved for this next project and your efforts will be successful. You may be helpful in setting prices or scheduling people. You have friends and acquaintances that are positive and upbeat and all of you put an effort into encouraging each other. Surround yourself with the most positive people. These are the people that help you stretch and encourage you to reach your highest potential. They may be people that could be mentors for you by observing their behavior.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You may find that your mind is overworked this day. Yesterday was the past, tomorrow is the future and yes... Today is a gift! Use today to the best of your ability and change those worries into positive actions. Tear it down and build it up again, reach in and pluck out the offending element: that's what this day's energy involves. Power becomes a compelling idea, perhaps even an aphrodisiac—you have a stronger than usual supply of it now. Use it—do not abuse it, you might find that it's a two-edged sword! Others value you for your ability to make practical decisions, and clear decisions affecting others could be made now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are trying to understand big business today. You may even be thinking of ways that you could go into business for yourself. The power of organization on a social scale—business, political, etc.—seems to take on a larger-than-life feel today. It's as if ambition and authority are answers in themselves, rather than only a means to an ideal objective. This can lead to confusion and ambitious schemes that tend to become lost along the way. Real power is always hidden—finding it means delving into the secret places and that's where you are bound to look now. If you are still yearning for Mr. Or Ms. Right, do not waste time reminiscing. Instead, become involved in creative or pleasurable situations. Someone exceptional will come to your attention soon.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hanukkah

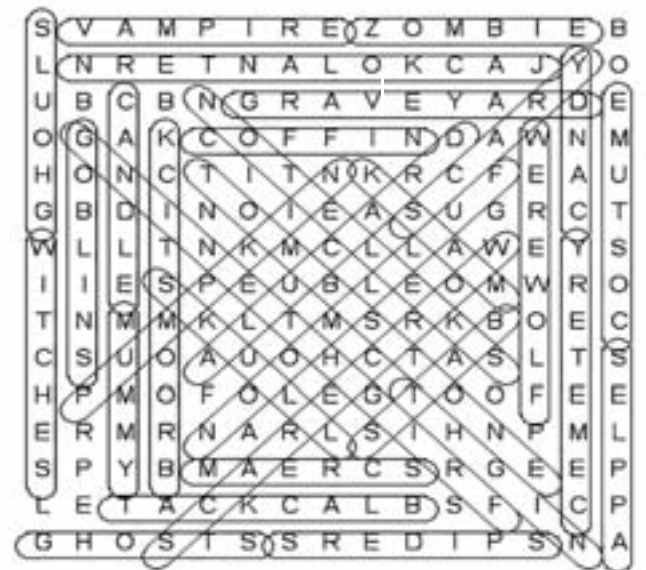
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 42 letters spell a secret message.



- |              |                |            |            |
|--------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| BIMUELOS     | FESTIVAL       | LATKE      | PSALMS     |
| BLESSINGS    | GAMES          | LEVIVOT    | SEVIVON    |
| CANDLES      | GELT           | LIGHTS     | SHAMASH    |
| CHANUKIAH    | GIFTS          | MA'OT TZUR | SONGS      |
| CHARITY      | HALLEL         | MACCABEES  | SUFGANIVOT |
| CUSTOMS      | HANEROT HALALU | MATSYAHU   | TALMUD     |
| DAIRY FOODS  | HEBREW         | MENORAH    | TORAH      |
| DREIDEL      | HOLIDAY        | MIRACLE    | TRADITION  |
| EIGHT DAYS   | HOLY TEMPLE    | OLIVE OIL  | YEARLY     |
| FAMILY FEAST | JERUSALEM      | PONTSHKES  | YEHUDIT    |
|              | KISLEV         | PRAYERS    |            |

Yesterday's Solution

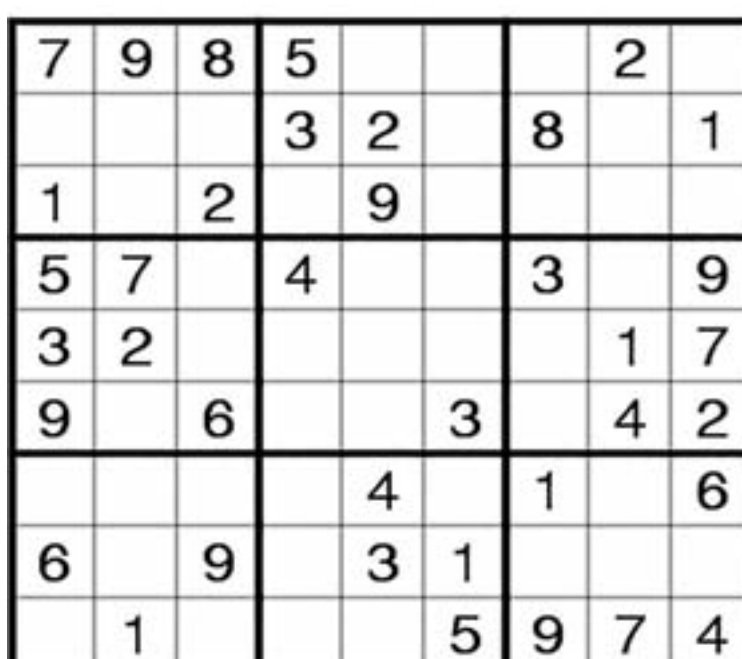
Halloween



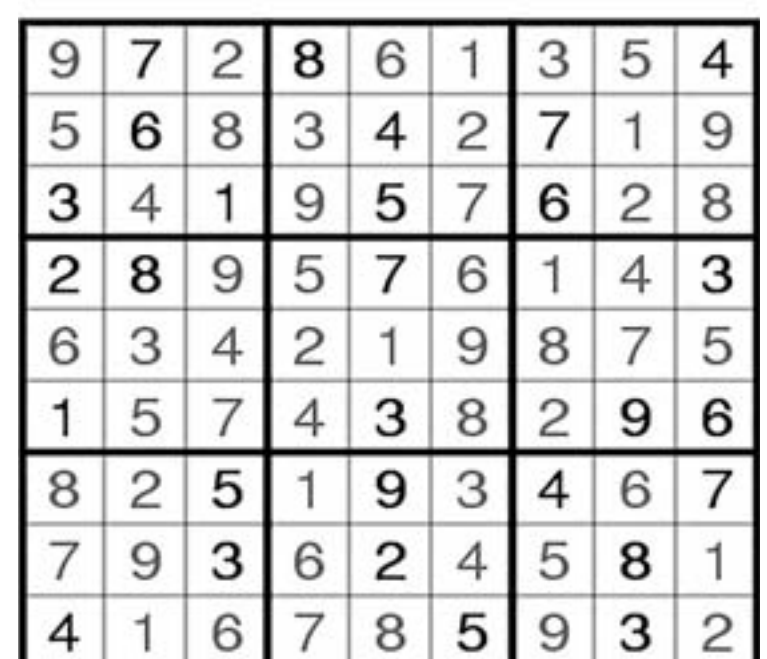
- |            |             |                |           |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| APPLES     | COSTUME     | JACK O LANTERN | SKELETON  |
| BATS       | DRACULA     | MASK           | SKULL     |
| BLACK CAT  | FRIGHTENING | MUMMY          | SPIDERS   |
| BROOMSTICK | FULL MOON   | NIGHT          | TOMBSTONE |
| CANDLE     | GHOSTS      | PUMPKIN        | VAMPIRE   |
| CANDY      | GHOULS      | SCARECROW      | WEREWOLF  |
| CEMETERY   | GOBLINS     | SCARY          | WITCHES   |
| COFFIN     | GRAVEYARD   | SCREAM         | ZOMBIE    |

The hidden message is: BOBBING FOR APPLES

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2019



This photo shows a devotee dressed as the Hindu goddess Kali during the last day of the Navaratri Hindu festival in Bangkok. — AFP

## Filmmaker sheds new light on Britain's role in 1953 Iran coup

Filmmaker Taghi Amirani calls them the documents that changed the fate of his country, casting light on Britain's role in organizing the overthrow of Iran's leader six decades ago. His film, "Coup 53", screened at the London Film Festival last weekend, purports to find fresh evidence that a British spy spearheaded the ousting of popular prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953. With the help of the CIA, the covert operation led to the removal of Mossadegh, who had ruled London by moving to nationalise the UK-controlled oil industry.

The United States effectively conceded playing a role when in 2013 it released some CIA archives showing its involvement, but Britain has never admitted its part in the plot. Amirani, an Iranian physicist turned award-winning filmmaker who has been based in London for 45 years, said finding proof that an agent from Britain's MI6 intelligence agency coordinated the coup was "a monumental lightbulb moment". "It will in a way confirm everything Iranians have been saying for decades about the Brits," he told AFP in an interview at the festival, where his film is competing for a best documentary prize.



Iranian director Taghi Amirani, left, and US editor Walter Murch of the film 'Coup 53', pose in London. — AFP

"The Brits are famously known in Iran as 'the old fox'... there's huge distrust." Amirani said 1953's events were "more relevant than ever" and help explain the current heightened tensions between Iran and Britain and the US. "No one can claim to really understand the dynamics and the volatile relationship... well unless they know what happened in '53," he added. "It casts a lot of light on this."

### A lightning bolt

Appointed prime minister in 1952, Mossadegh quickly became a hugely popular leader inside Iran but irked the British by moving to take over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the predecessor of modern-day BP. He had also angered the shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, by trying to limit his powers and the king left the country later that year in protest. In August 1953, a military coup saw Mossadegh arrested and then jailed for three years, before

being placed under house arrest. He died in 1967.

The shah returned immediately after the ousting to rule Iran for nearly three decades, before he was then overthrown in the 1979 Islamic revolution. Together with Oscar-winning editor Walter Murch, Amirani uses never-seen-before archival footage, interviews with historical figures and new research to forensically examine the events. "Like all counter-intelligence stuff there's a lot of smoke drifting over the tracks of who did what when," said Murch, whose credits include "Apocalypse Now" and "The Godfather" movies.

"But the film really does throw a lightning bolt across that landscape that makes it very clear what was going on." The pair stumbled upon a 1980s British TV documentary which had identified and interviewed a former MI6 operative named Norman Darbyshire, who admitted helping mastermind the coup. The now-deceased Darbyshire is conspicuously absent from the program that aired, with suggestions the British government may have intervened to have him omitted.

Amirani discovered a transcript of his interview with the documentary makers, and enlists Oscar-nominated actor Ralph Fiennes to play the ex-spy in a re-enacted interview. "The actual running of the coup from our side was my responsibility," Fiennes recounts Darbyshire saying. Britain's Foreign Office did not respond to a request for comment.

### Hopes and dreams

For Amirani, 59, making a film about Mossadegh's overthrow felt "as personal as it can get". "As a kid I lived through the consequences of the coup that gave rise to the shah's rule for 25 years," he said. His interest was piqued after seeing pictures of the long-deposed prime minister at pro-democracy protests in Iran in 2009. That resonated with a deeply-held sense that the country's recent history could have been radically different had Mossadegh remained in power. "He, for many including myself, presented the hopes and dreams of a democratic secular Iran," Amirani said.

During his decade-long quest to make "Coup 53", relations between Iran and the West deteriorated markedly, with a 2015 nuclear deal unravelling and rising military frictions in the region. Tensions between Tehran and London also increased due to the detention of several British-Iranian dual nationals and, more recently, the seizure of oil tankers by both sides. Amirani said he could feel history repeating itself.

"Everything that happened in '53 was unfolding in the news headlines during our editing," said Amirani. "The relevance of this film grew more and more the longer we spent making (it)," he added. "What the film can tell us is what (former US President) Harry Truman said: 'there is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know.'" Amirani recounted.—AFP

## Suon documentary tackles ghosts of genocides past

French-Cambodian filmmaker Guillaume Suon grew up haunted by the ghosts of his mother's past. It was her refusal to acknowledge them that led the 36-year-old to make the documentary "The Taste of Secrets", which made its world premiere at this week's 24th Busan International Film Festival in South Korea. "I wanted to look at what war leaves behind," said Suon of the film, which is in the running for BIFF's main Wide Angle documentary prize. "My mother never told me full stories, only pieces, and these haunted me, and my dreams."

Suon's film examines the notion of how survivors of genocide-and their families-deal with memories. It contrasts the story of his mother Eng, who escaped the brutal reign of the Khmer Rouge in her homeland, with that of the French-Armenian photographer Antoine Agoudjian, who scours the Middle East as he documents mass killing while also tracing the memories of family members who survived the massacres of Armenians in Turkey in 1915.

One person wants to escape the ghosts of her past: the other is searching for ways to capture them through his images. "At first I was shooting these stories in parallel, but then I realized this is the same film," said Suon. Eng had escaped to a Thai refugee camp by the end of the 1970s, but family members travelling with her were killed along the way. They were among the up to two million estimated to have lost their lives during the Khmer Rouge's brutal reign, that lasted from 1975 to 1979. "When you witness an execution you can never forget it, even if you don't know the person," she says at one point.

### Poignant scenes

But Eng is keen only to discuss what she witnessed in Cambodia when she is among fellow survivors-and even then only fleetingly. In some of the film's more poignant

scenes, we see Eng cooking at home in the south of France and reflecting, quietly, on how close she feels to her lost family when she uses recipes that have been passed down through the generations.

In the end she returns to Cambodia and, finally, talks more about her past. "I think she found some relief," said Suon. "My brother (Julien, the soundman on the film) and I found out more about who she is and who she was, and I think she started to feel that she was not alone with these memories anymore." Agoudjian, meanwhile, comes across as obsessed with the past and with coming to terms with the ghosts he says have followed his life.

Through numerous trips to the Middle East-including a harrowing one through Iraq with the filmmakers-he believes he has come closer to understanding the grief and guilt his family felt for being survivors of massacres estimated to have claimed up to 1.5 million lives. "The places he goes are like a nightmare," said Suon. "But this is his way, I think, of connecting with his family's past and what they experienced."

"For my mother, there is a different feeling. She told me that if you go out and try to find death, you lose. Death will never leave you then." Suon has previously won acclaim for "The Storm Makers", his look at the issue of human trafficking in Cambodia. He previously worked under the mentorship of Oscar-nominated director Rithy Panh ("The Missing Picture"), also a survivor of the Khmer Rouge and the driving force behind the country's Bophana film archive, while he champions the cause of young Cambodian filmmakers.

Many of them have been exploring similar themes to those traced by Suon, including this year's Oscar hope from Cambodia, director Caylee So's "In the Life of Music", which traces a romance that is haunted by the Khmer Rouge reign of terror. So-whose family fled the country when she was an infant-believes a current crop of emerging Cambodian filmmakers are collectively finding "new landscapes" when it comes to dealing with their homeland's recent and tragic past. "It such a big part of our lives and our history," said So. "We are finding that through film we can in some ways start to address some things that none of us can escape."—AFP



This undated handout photo shows documentary subject Eng Suon and her filmmaker son Guillaume Suon aboard a boat on their return to Cambodia during the shooting of 'The Taste of Secrets'. — AFP





## Drowning rocks Mexico's idyllic floating gardens

Noe Carmona is poling his small boat around Mexico City's floating garden district, Xochimilco, trying to sell roasted corn to tourists in the colorful gondolas that lazily ply the canals. It's after noon, but clients are scarce, and he has yet to make a sale. Visitor numbers have plunged by 80 percent since a young man drowned here on September 1, authorities say.

"I'm thinking about looking for another job," says Carmona, a lithe man of 32 who supports his three children doing this—his profession since he was eight years old. "I used to make about 2,000 pesos (\$100) a day. Now I'm making about 200 or 300," he tells AFP. "Look at this: there's hardly anyone here," says another vendor, 55-year-old Isabel Chavez. She sells handmade sweets, but has left much of her stock at home, fearing it will go unsold and spoil. Her sales are down by 90 percent, she estimates.

Xochimilco, a maze of canals and artificial islands created centuries ago by the area's indigenous peoples, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that draws around one million tourists a year. An idyllic splash of green improbably tucked into the sprawl of this capital of nine million people, it is a perfect place for a relaxing getaway with family and friends. Floating mariachi bands serenade visitors, and vendors in small boats drift past selling food, drinks, flowers and handicrafts.

But then, like a large rock thrown into a peaceful pond, "the incident" happened: an intoxicated 20-year-old fell off a gondola and drowned. Xochimilco is still struggling with the ripple effects. Fending off safety fears, local authorities sharply restricted alcohol sales this month, began requiring life jackets and banned sound systems from party boats. But so far, the new rules exist mainly on paper. And locals say the restrictions are not helping bring the tourists back anyway.



Visitors aboard 'Trajineras' sail in Xochimilco, Mexico City. — AFP photos



### Horror, then helplessness

On September 1, a group of young friends from Puebla state, just east of Mexico City, rented several gondolas, or "trajineras," for a birthday party at Xochimilco. Drinking and dancing, they started climbing from boat to boat, when a 20-year-old identified as Jose Manuel fell in the water. "No! No!" shouted his friends, as one kept recording video on a cell phone. After a moment of horrified shock, they tried to help him. But Jose Manuel never resurfaced. His body was found the next day. It was not the first drowning in Xochimilco.

At least six people have drowned here in the past two years, according to El Heraldo de Mexico newspaper. But it was the first such incident to be filmed. The clip went viral online and was picked up by Mexican media. "It was the video and the social networks that did us in," says Jose Zaldivar, director-general for tourism in Xochimilco's local government.

### Rules and reality

Zaldivar's office presented gondoliers at the Nuevo Nativitas docks with 116 life jackets on Saturday, then

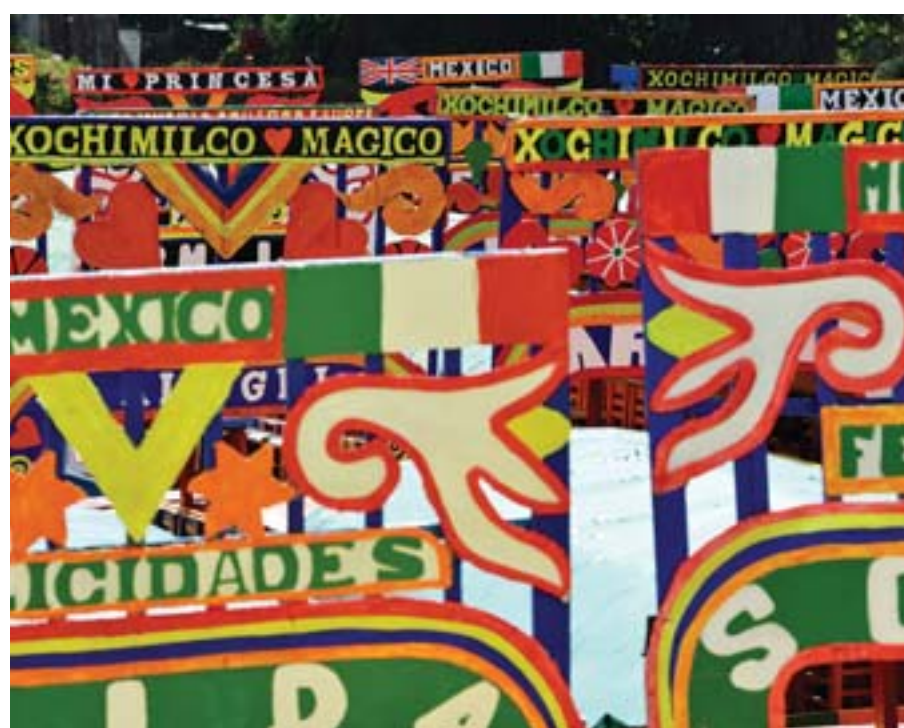
passed the new regulations inside their boats. In addition to requiring life jackets, the measures limit alcohol consumption to one liter of hard liquor per boat or three beers per person. They also forbid climbing from boat to boat. But rules are one thing. Reality is another.

There are not nearly enough life jackets to go around—just two or three per gondola, even though the boats have a capacity of 18. The release forms passengers are supposed to sign if they do not want to wear life jackets have not yet been printed. Then there is the question of how to regulate alcohol consumption. Authorities have increased patrols in Xochimilco since the drowning, but even Zaldivar admits they are largely relying on visitors' goodwill.

"It's impossible to have 1,100 people out here supervising every gondola in Xochimilco," he says. He acknowledges there is a fragile balance between safety and fun. For some visitors, life jackets and booze limits undermine the carefree liberty that Xochimilco is all about. "Kids my age, we want to be happy, we like to drink," says 19-year-old student Tania Silvan on her way to a trajinera.

Locals are split over whether the solution is more reg-

ulation or less. "This is a first step, but they need to do more... like provide first-aid training," says Amaury Iniestra, 23, who sells handicrafts at the docks. The authorities have proposed such training, but say they still have to work out the details. Other vendors—especially those who sell alcohol from floating bars or the artificial islands known as "chinampas"—complain the new regulations are hurting their livelihood, and say individuals should take responsibility for their own behavior. There is consensus on one thing, though: tourism has yet to bounce back.—AFP





## Lifestyle | Features

Alaska's Fat Bear  
contest crowns Holly  
'Queen of Corpulence'

A rotund and furry grandma bear has been crowned the fattest of them all. Fat Bear Week for Alaska's grizzlies has become a national internet sensation, pitting individual bears against each other in an online voting contest. This year's champion fat fan favorite is Holly, organizers of the event said late Tuesday, with the winner selected by popular vote based on photos displayed on Facebook. "All hail Holly whose healthy heft will help her hibernate until the spring. Long live the Queen of Corpulence!" Katmai National Park and Preserve said on its Facebook page, which featured photographs of salmon-fattened Katmai brown bears.

Katmai, in southwestern Alaska, is known for its brown bears, which grow to massive sizes by gorging on salmon. Holly, who did not have cubs this year to distract her, had an especially big finish to the season. "She's just a great bear. When she doesn't have cubs, she looks like the Michelin Man," said Naomi Boak, a Katmai Conservancy media ranger who has been managing this year's Fat Bear Week event. Holly, who won in a field of 12 contenders, has been single-minded this year in her pursuit of salmon at Brooks Falls, the park's best-known bear-gathering spot.

"She doesn't stop fishing. It was really hard to get pictures of her because she just doesn't get out of the water," Boak said. Fat Bear Week, an event that combines tongue-in-cheek competition with science education, highlights the Katmai bears' preparation for winter hibernation. Bears typically lose a third of their body weight during their winter sleep, so the body fat they accumulate in summer and fall is crucial to survival. Thanks to Katmai's bounty of salmon, along with its abundant berries, the park's male bears can eat their way to more than 1,000 pounds and females to about two-thirds that weight before they retreat to their hibernation dens in the mountains.

Even before this year's Fat Bear Week, Holly was well-known to fans of Alaska wildlife. She has been a regular to millions of viewers who watch footage from the livestream "bear cam" at Brooks Falls that was set up and is operated by the site Explore.org. Holly was already famous for adopting a yearling cub that had been abandoned by its mother. Adoption is "very, very unusual" among brown bears, Boak said, prompting Holly's bear-cam followers to dub her "Supermom."

Although she had no cubs this year, Holly has offspring, including another adult female with cubs of her own. The three generations spent much of the summer at Brooks Falls, Boak said. As well as the bears' bodies, Fat Bear Week's following also swelled this year. There were about 187,500 online votes cast in the 2019 competition, more than three times as many votes tallied in last year's Fat Bear Week. —Reuters



This picture shows Mona Lisa after it was returned at its place at the Louvre Museum in Paris. — AFP

Mona Lisa's smile a touch clearer  
through Louvre's protective glass

Visitors to the Louvre in Paris should have a clearer view of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" after the museum installed a new, more transparent form of bullet-proof glass to protect the world's most famous painting. The Mona Lisa has been behind safety glass since the early 1950s, when it was damaged by a visitor who poured acid on it. Since then there have been several other unsuccessful attempts at vandalizing the painting.

Vincent Delieuvin, curator of 16th-century Italian art at the museum, told Reuters Television that glass technology has improved significantly in recent years and the painting's previous 15-year old bullet-proof glass no longer gave the best possible viewing experience. "Today, the

Mona Lisa is behind extremely transparent glass, which really gives the impression of being very close to the painting," Delieuvin said.

On Oct 24, the Louvre will open an exhibition celebrating the works of Leonardo da Vinci to mark the 500th anniversary of his death. The exhibition will feature nearly 120 pieces, including paintings, drawings, sculptures and manuscripts from European and American institutions, but not the "Mona Lisa" which will remain in its dedicated room in the Louvre's Denon wing. — Reuters

## High-tech jacket allows deaf people to feel the music

Twin sisters Hermon and Heroda Berhane love dancing but can't hear the music because they're both deaf, so the invention of a jacket with sensors that enables them to feel the different sounds has transformed their nights out in London clubs. The "Sound Shirt", created by London-based fashion company CuteCircuit, has 16 sensors embedded in its fabric, so wearers can feel violins on their arms, for example, while drums beat on their backs.

The Berhane twins, who lost their hearing at a young

age, say modeling the shirts has given them a brand new experience. "It's almost like feeling the depth of the music," says Hermon. "It just feels as though we can move along with it." Francesca Rosella, co-founder and chief creative officer of CuteCircuit, which designs fashion wearable technology, said the shirts allowed deaf people to feel music through sensations.

"Inside the shirt - that by the way is completely textiles, there are no wires inside, so we're only using smart fabrics - we have a combination of microelectronics ... very thin

and flexible, and conductive fabrics," she said. "All these little electronic motors are connected with these conductive fabrics so that the garment is soft and stretchable."

Sound Shirts don't come cheap, as they are expected to go on sale at more than 3,000 pounds (\$3,673), but Heroda believes it's a price worth paying for deaf people who enjoy music as much as she and her sister do. "I think it could definitely change our lives," she said. — Reuters

Hanoi closes trackside cafes  
thronged by selfie-seeking tourists

It's the kind of shot every Instagram connoisseur yearns for: century-old railway tracks cutting through dusty backstreets, flanked by tourists drinking beer or iced tea mere inches from the slow-moving trains. The sight has become such a draw in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi that authorities have set a weekend deadline for the removal of dozens of cafes that have cropped up, citing safety concerns.

"I love it. It's crazy, and completely different to anywhere I've been before," said Australian tourist Laura Metzke, after a train rumbled by. "I can also see why they would close it down because it's pretty dangerous." Built in 1902 under French colonial rulers, the railway to Vietnam's northern provinces carries passengers and cargo mostly between Hanoi and the eastern city of Haiphong, and the remote towns of Lang Son and Lao Cai, on the mountainous border with China.

It uses an old-fashioned French narrow gauge, and is so old that when North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited Hanoi in February for a summit with U.S. President Donald Trump, he had to stop at the border and continue by car. In Hanoi, the line brushes the rear of houses and

shops as it snakes through the city's dense centre. Vendors stroll on the tracks, selling snacks on skewers, while some visitors sit on the railway lines and soak in the vibe.

In recent months, crowds of tourists have gathered along the railway to snap selfies with passing trains or lounge at trackside cafes. On Sunday, a train had to make an emergency stop soon after leaving Hanoi railway station to avoid hitting tourists, state media said. The next day, the city's governing body ordered the cafes removed by Saturday to "ensure traffic safety", at the request of the transport ministry.

"Though the railway cafes attract tourists, they are, in fact, violating some regulations," Ha Van Sieu, a government tourism official, told media on Tuesday. New and creative tourism products are encouraged, but must conform to legal regulations, Sieu added. Vietnam received 12.87 million foreign visitors in the first nine months of this year, up nearly 11% on the year, government data shows. — Reuters

Call of Duty: Mobile  
smashes records

The mobile version of videogame franchise "Call of Duty" racked up 100 million downloads in its first week, industry site Sensor Tower said on Tuesday, dwarfing the debuts of previous smashes including "Fortnite" and "PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds" (PUBG). PUBG, Fortnite and Electronic Arts' "Apex Legends" scored 26.3 million, 22.5 million and 25 million respectively in their first week of release. "This is by far the largest mobile game launch in history in terms of the player base that's been built in the first week," said Randy Nelson, head of mobile insights at Sensor Tower.

"Call of Duty: Mobile" was launched by its publisher Activision Blizzard Inc on Oct. 1 and Sensor Tower said the numbers reflected worldwide unique downloads across Apple's App Store and Google Play in the period since. The smash hit is a "first-person-shooter game" that allows gamers to portray elite soldiers hunting down targets in different parts of the world.

The game's console-based editions have enjoyed a loyal following but the

meteoric rise of free-to-play online games have forced companies to adapt and develop their games for the smaller screen. "Call of Duty" was developed for mobile by Chinese internet giant Tencent Holdings Ltd, which also has a stake in PUBG's Bluehole and Fortnite's Epic Games and is credited with popularizing the battle-royale format, where dozens of online players battle each other to death.

The United States was mobile edition's main draw, with 17% of the downloads in its launch week, followed by India, where PUBG has a strong foothold. Tencent is yet to launch the game in China. Activision, which will launch the next console edition of "Call of Duty" on Oct. 25, has labeled 2019 a "transition year". The company said in May it would cut 800 jobs and invest heavily to develop its key game franchises "Call of Duty", "Candy Crush", "Overwatch", "Warcraft", "Hearthstone" and "Diablo". — Reuters



New on the menu:  
Could 'dark kitchens'  
gobble up Britain's high  
street restaurants?

When Eccie Newton and her sister began making fresh salads and sandwiches to deliver to London office workers, their start-up company Karma Cans became so popular they soon had to expand - and hit a common roadblock: space. "We just couldn't find any kitchen space - it was almost impossible," Newton recalled of their venture in 2014. So, the 29-year-old set up her own "dark kitchen", a catering warehouse in Hackney - a hipster area in east London - that hosts about 85 catering businesses making culinary delights from granola to kimchi and cold-brew coffee.

Dark kitchens - also known as "virtual" or "ghost" kitchens - take their name from large retail warehouses that cater directly to online customers, bypassing stores. Often in under-utilised buildings, portacabins or warehouses on the outskirts of cities, dark kitchens allow chefs to cook up everything from burgers to biryanis and serve food directly to online consumers. The rapid rise of these food factories has some property experts predicting the death of bricks-and-mortar restaurants and, subsequently, local high streets in Britain as online deliveries become the norm.

"As it plays out, it's going to put a lot more pressure on the high street," which could mean people going out less to socialise or lead to the loss of local jobs, said independent professional property buyer Jonathan Rolande. But fans of the no-frills kitchens say they offer a new lease of life to abandoned properties and help small catering brands compete. Newton sees the new properties as being akin to co-working spaces, which are also increasingly common in cities.

Often regulated to the same standards as restaurants, far from replacing them, dark kitchens provide a "complement to food culture", she said. "The teams that work in virtual restaurants in our kitchen ... they're run exactly like a team in a restaurant - it's not robots making your food, it's real people," said Newton.

## Food for thought

From New York to Shanghai, hungry city dwellers in search of food are increasingly reaching for a phone, rather than heading to the kitchen, using apps such as Uber Eats and Deliveroo. In Britain, there were almost 5 million fewer trips to full-service restaurants in the 12 weeks to March 24, 2019, compared with a year earlier, according to data analytics firm Kantar. Dark kitchens, originally popular with small, independent food companies, have gained favour with larger chains too.

Firms such as noodle restaurant Wagamama are joining the trend to provide customers with their food in places where they lack a physical restaurant presence or where demand for online delivery is high. Uber co-founder Travis Kalanick is joining the bandwagon with his CloudKitchens venture, a delivery-only "smart kitchen" enterprise that rents out catering spaces and provides its clients with marketing support. In CloudKitchens' first attempt to crack an overseas market since Kalanick bought its parent company last year, the Los Angeles-based firm started operations in South Korea in May.

## Out of business

The boom in online food delivery services comes with a raft of social implications, according to property experts. Rolande envisages that as food delivery apps become the norm, big restaurant brands could be "in a position to walk away from high streets". Prominent British television chef Jamie Oliver shuttered most of his UK restaurants in May, culling about 1,000 jobs as his restaurant chain Jamie's Italian went into administration.

Two months earlier, the Boparan Restaurant Group announced it was going to close more than a third of its Giraffe and Ed's Easy Diner outlets. And well-known chains Carluccio's, Prezzo, Strada and Gourmet Burger Kitchen all closed branches in 2018. Rolande said the convenience of ordering food online likely contributed to those closures, and that the growth of dark kitchens could help fill property space that would otherwise sit empty.

But he does not think this will necessarily bring economic benefits to the communities in which they are located. More likely, he said, society could well get to the point where people no longer require kitchens in their own homes. "In central London, you could start to get people building little pods to live in rather than having big eating spaces ... It could eventually have a social impact on the size and types of property that could be developed," he said.

That future may not be far off, with some homes in places like Bangkok and Singapore - where a plethora of street food and online eateries exist - already being built with shared or only partial kitchen facilities. To ensure local businesses do not lose out however, cities like London are taking steps to invest in and protect high streets, such as public campaigns to fill empty shops.

## Convenience and speed

Bridget Outtrim, a director in the industrial team of real estate agent Savills, sees dark kitchens as part of the evolution of online parcel delivery services and the general gig economy, where convenience and speed are key. But far from contributing to the death of the high street, Outtrim said such sites could help "fill gaps" in the reach of restaurant chains by giving them the chance to sell their food in areas where they cannot or do not want to rent a space. "Dark kitchens" are a way of expanding into locations without making that massive property commitment," she said. Dark kitchens are far cheaper to lease, said restaurant property expert David Rawlinson, who has scouted properties for Michelin-starred restaurants across London. Rent on a communal kitchen in the city averages 25 pounds (about \$30) per square foot, while restaurants in central areas such as Soho and Mayfair go for up to eight times as much, he said. That makes dark kitchens an affordable way for businesses to trial new foods and areas, he said. —Reuters



## Lifestyle | Gossip

## Fashion House VoleeYu, a royal style that never goes out of style

Fashion House VoleeYu is a unique, authentic fashionable Ukrainian brand with its own special philosophy based on the centuries-old cultural heritage of mankind. VoleeYu is a combination of aristocratic fashion, designer accessories, expensive tableware design and royal interiors in one brand. Fashion House VoleeYu was created in 2014 by Katsianova Yuliia in Kiev, Ukraine. A successful architect and designer with 16 years of experience, Yulia has created a unique fashion house of her own. The fashion house has combined all the directions in the world of design, which include the design of clothes, accessories, interiors and designer expensive gifts.

**Q: Good afternoon, Yuliia! Please tell us about yourself and your work?**

Good afternoon! My name is Katsianova Yuliia Vladimirovna. I am the owner of the international brand VoleeYu, a designer and architect with 16 years of experience, a TV presenter on Ukrainian television channels of the country, an artist, author and creator of unique accessories that are unique in the world. President of the Ukrainian Designers Association. Fashion House VoleeYu - was created in Ukraine, an authentic fashionable Ukrainian brand with its own special philosophy based on the centuries-old cultural heritage of mankind. VoleeYu is a combination of aristocratic fashion, designer accessories, expensive tableware design and royal interiors in one brand!

VoleeYu is the style of new aristocrats and a whole philosophy of life!

The brand has 4 main areas:

- (1) Women's clothing (suits, dresses, coats),
- (2) Accessories (bags, shoes, belts, hats),
- (3) Gold jewelry (jewelry accessories for the bathroom, dishes made of precious metals)
- (4) Interiors (creation of author's interiors, furniture, decor).

A unique combination of world masterpieces and new technologies in manufactured products!

**Q: Your brand has an unusual name, tell me where the name comes from?!**

Yes, indeed, the brand name is of French origin, because I have a great-great-grandmother from an ancient aristocratic French family, but I was born in Ukraine. The name of the brand consists of two words Volee (from the French language - take-off, up, flight) and Yu (the name of Yulia), so the brand's products carry a lot of flight energy, take-off in life!

**Q: Please tell me, what great success has your brand made during its existence?**

Over the 5 years of the brand's existence, 20 thematic collections have been created, each of which is not like one another and impress with its creative scope and flight of thought. Each year 4 collections are created - this is a very high indicator, which is available in the world of world Fashion!

VoleeYu brand conquers one country after another, a boutique in France, presentation to America, Canada, Qatar, Monaco, Kazakhstan, UAE, China, Japan and many other countries. In May 2017, Prince of Monaco Albert II, personally noted the VoleeYu brand style!

Also, under the auspices of my brand, the Association of Designers of Ukraine was created in order to combine the creativity of Ukrainian talents and designers.

**Q: What is the most distinctive feature of your products?**

First of all, as an architect, I see the creation of products and accessories from a different angle. Characteristic

thoughtful style that never leaves anyone indifferent is the Baroque style.

**Q: Tell me, what was your way to the eastern countries? Why exactly the East?**

I have long dreamed of getting to the East and creating beautiful elegant dresses and abaya for eastern women. My style is not like anyone else, so when my products were first shown in Dubai, they immediately found their customers. When creating collections for the East, I carefully studied and delved into the ornaments and traditions of the East. I created oriental dresses, but as a European designer, with my characteristic style and most important-



recognition VoleeYu - the author's diverse and unique embroidery, it is this feature of decorating fabrics and genuine leather that has become recognizable all over the world! Embroidered birds, people, architectural masterpieces, elements of the Baroque style, patterns from the walls of Versailles and much more, comes to life on fabrics in the collections of the VoleeYu brand!

**Q: What styles do you prefer? What inspires you?**

I really love the nature and ancient architecture of Europe, there I feel inspired by the great heritage of mankind. All my work is saturated with historical styles, a symbiosis of antique products and the interweaving of unique ideas in conjunction with a modern look. I love birds, beautiful nature, castles and lakes, and I especially like to draw my collections on the shores of the oceans. The power of water gives a unique stream of creativity.

My favorite style is Baroque and Rococo, because the style of Versailles has no equal anywhere in the world. I travel a lot and I know for sure that the most refined and

ly, embroideries, which is what my brand is famous for, were made in combining French ornaments from Versailles with oriental ornaments from mosques. Such things, carry in themselves, not only a very beautiful aesthetic component, but also an educational idea, because this is the union of two cultures.

**Q: What did you create especially for women of the East? What are successful projects?**

I can brag that I'm probably the first Ukrainian designer to be hosted in the house of Arab sheikhs. I am invited as a full-fledged member of the family in an Arab home, and this is important, because I see the needs and desires of oriental women. I see their traditions and communication, this gives me a unique opportunity to create original products for individual orders. Now I was invited to an Arabian wedding, from which I just flew from Abu Dhabi. I saw a real oriental feast, but most importantly, a large number of women were present at the wedding, to whom I created designer dresses and they were not like

one another, but this important!

I was especially pleased, and I am proud that the dress for the bride of the second day of the wedding was made exactly by my brand VoleeYu!

**Q: Tell me, please, how did you get to Kuwait? What brought you to us, share the information?**

Yes, this is an interesting story! My visit to Kuwait was planned long ago with the help of our wonderful Ambassador of Ukraine to Kuwait, Alexander Balanuta. I am proud that we have such wonderful state diplomats who contribute and help expand cultural ties and establish joint work with the state of Kuwait. Alexander Balanuta



introduced me to Bushra Alaidan, a famous Kuwaiti designer of wedding dresses, a meeting that took place in Dubai. And today, I brought a chic designer embroidered oriental dress for the bride on the second day of the wedding. Unfortunately, I could not attend the wedding, because I was invited to another wedding in Dubai.

**Q: What are your plans for further stay in Kuwait?**

"I have high hopes for a long-term cooperation in Kuwait, and I try very hard and make efforts to make my dresses and style like the women of Riyadh." We also have an agreement with designer Bushra Alaidan that my dresses are perfectly suited to the style of oriental women, especially on the second day of the wedding, so my products will be placed in the salon of wedding dresses that can be seen by everyone. I really hope that my products will be in demand in Kuwait!



## Becky G to host the MTV EMAs

The singer songwriter and actress has been given hosting duties for the annual awards ceremony, which will be held at the FIBES Conference & Exhibition Centre of Seville, Spain on Sunday, November 3. She said: "I can't wait to arrive in Seville to host the year's hottest global music celebration. See you soon, Beasters!" Becky has also been nominated at this year's ceremony, going up against Ariana Grande, Camila Cabello, Halsey, the Jonas Brothers and Shawn Mendes for the Best Pop song. Bruce Gillmer, global head of music and talent at Viacom and co-brand head at MTV International, added: "Becky G is an exceptional multifaceted talent who's no stranger to the global stage. We can't wait to see her light up the MTV EMA stage in Seville!" Becky G may just be 22-years-old but she has already secured some serious accolades to her name including two number one hits on the Billboard Latin Airplay Charts, with 'Mayores' and 'Sin Pijama', a role in the 'Power Rangers' movie as well as a guest slot in 'Empire'. Becky is also the recipient of two 2018 Latin American Music Awards - one for Favorite Female Artist and another for Favorite Urban Song for 'Mayores'. She has also been given YouTube's Diamond Play Button for surpassing 10 million followers on the video sharing platform. Becky G has a whole host of famous faces in her corner and has toured alongside Katy Perry, Demi Lovato, J Balvin, Fifth Harmony and Jason Derulo as well as recording collaborations with Pitbull, Daddy Yankee, Maluma, ZAYN, Bad Bunny and CNCO. The MTV EMAs take place in Spain on November 3, with voting now open at mtvema.com until November 2.

## Jonas Brothers inspired to get back by college-age guys

The 'Cool' hitmakers have revealed it was a Twitter exchange between a group of young men, which encouraged them to get back together as a band. Now Nick thinks there is a whole new group of fans "who actually were embarrassed to like the Brothers at a certain point in their life and now they can actually just enjoy it". Joe, Nick and Kevin had to learn to "be a family again" after years of feuding following the band's split years ago. Nick said: "It got us to a point where I think we realized we had to learn how to be a family again. So once we were able to ... realize that we really do love spending time together, separate to our work and all that we

were doing, there was a real joy there, a real happiness. We think the solo efforts that I made and Joe's work with DNCE and Kevin's time focusing on family life, we were able to find ourselves to be able to come back and fuse all that happiness into the music itself. [The sound] had to be authentic to me, and it had to be similar to Joe's work with DNCE, which was his most authentic self, and then Kevin's influence is really the glue that holds everything together." And Joe admits he was the last of the three to get on board.



## Zoey Deutch says anxiety is her superpower

The 24-year-old actor admits her condition can be "debilitating" sometimes but she also sees it as one of her "key motivators". She said: "I used to hold my breath from anxiety when I was a baby and it would make me faint. There are times when it's debilitating, and there are times when it makes me laugh, like in the car today when I lost the plot entirely. But I actually feel like my superpower is my anxiety. It's one of my key motivators, and it's at the centre of my ambition." And the 'Zombieland: Double Tap' star is "nearing" her a quarter life crisis. She added to Cosmopolitan magazine: "I think I'm nearing it ... or in it. There's nothing I can do. I just have to ride the wave. I fully have existential thoughts. What does it all mean? How are we here? What were we put on this earth to do? Then I'm like, 'Zoey, just stop.'" Zoey previously confessed she is "really ambitious" with her career. She said: "I love what I do. I really do ... And I'm really ambitious. But ambition is a dirty word to some people. All it means is that you're willing to work hard to do what you love. [My mother] works harder than anyone I know. I remember when I was a kid, she never said, 'I'm so sorry I have to go to work.' She would just say, 'I love you, and I'm going to work.' We knew that she was proud of it, and she was also an excellent mother. There were no apologies necessary."



## Jennifer Aniston thinks age limit could benefit social media

The 'Morning Show' star has lamented over the obsession with smartphones and social media nowadays and wouldn't think it was too crazy for there to be some sort of restriction on sites such as Facebook and Instagram, like there is for drinking or for driving. Speaking about the success of 'Friends', she said: "It's a phenomenon that I am amazed by. To have a whole new generation of children adoring the show as much as they did back in the day when it was airing for the first time is incredible. I want to know what people love so much about it, because there wasn't any of this. Now most people's consumption is the [phone] screen, which I'm very conflicted about. If you can't drive until you're 16 and you can't drink until you're 21, why should you be allowed to have social media? Like to have a distraction that prevents you from learning to connect with people?" And the 50-year-old actress hates the "compare and despair" element of social media. Asked if she thinks there should be an age limit for social media, she shared to Variety magazine: "I don't know. I don't have kids. I just know that I'm watching my girlfriends' children and they're all struggling because of social media. Do you know that mental health has gone through the roof? And primarily what they've discovered, it's because of social media. It's compare and despair, over and over again. Do they like me? Do they not like me? Am I good enough? It's hard enough as it is being a kid without the damn 'likes' or 'not likes'. 'I wish they would remove the 'like'. Why do they need them? Why do we need a comments section, where these trolls with no lives try to be hurtful?"

## Kim Kardashian West to monitor her kids on social media

The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star insists that when her children - North, six, Saint, three, Chicago, 21 months, and Psalm, four months - get older, she will be keeping an eye on how they use sites like Instagram. She said: "There's a lot of downfalls with social media such as having to deal with negativity on it. The aspect of how many followers you have can maybe affect the younger users. However, there are amazing benefits from social media. I would definitely be that mom monitoring my kids on social media as they grow up. I don't know what it would be like to grow up with social media. I grew up before cell phones, so I don't know what that would be like!" Meanwhile, Kim previously confessed she is always careful about how much she posts about her children on social media and whilst she does feel "comfortable" posting pictures and videos of her brood online, she does feel the need to "pull back a little bit" sometimes. Asked if she's ever worried about her children being on social media, Kim said: "Yeah, absolutely. There's times where I'm comfortable to post, and then times when I pull back a little bit. There's certain things that I ... even when North was doing my make-up and she was having the tantrum, I'm like 'Do I wanna post that?' And then I was like, oh it's too funny I have to. But there are some things when I'm like, you know what, let's not post that. Because there's so many cousins, I do feel like they have this sense of ... you know they grow up so normally and have so much fun, and I never want them to feel like things are for social media or anything like that. We definitely have the conversation about it." — Bang Showbiz





# Classifieds

Thursday, October 10, 2019



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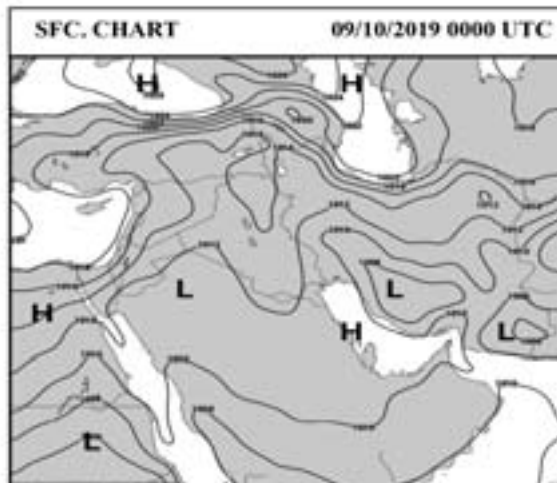
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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 09/10/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	40 °C	30 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	42 °C	25 °C			
ABDALY	42 °C	26 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	43 °C	28 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	37 °C	30 °C			
AHMADI	37 °C	29 °C			
NUWASIB	41 °C	25 °C			
WAFRA	42 °C	25 °C			
SALMY	41 °C	27 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	MAX. Temp.	MIN. Temp.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Thursday	10/10	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	42 °C	25 °C	NW-SE	12 - 40 km/h
Friday	10/11	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	38 °C	23 °C	NW-SW	06 - 30 km/h
Saturday	10/12	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for light fog forming at night	38 °C	20 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Sunday	10/13	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear with	37 °C	21 °C	VRB-SW	06 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:28
Sunrise	05:47
Zuhr	11:35
Asr	14:55
Sunset	17:24
Isha	18:40

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	37 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	87 %
MIN. RH	44 %
MAX. Wind	SE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

## CHANGE OF NAME

I Rosamma Mathew Kallukuzhy, Kallukuzhy House, Umbidi P.O, Thottackad, Kottayam (holder of Indian Passport No. K5294494) presently residing in Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: Rosamma Mathew, Surname: Kallukuzhy. (C 5453) 10-10-2019

Old name: D COSTA FILIPE  
ROCHA FULIPINA, new name:  
FELIPE DA COSTA FILIPA  
ROCHA, Passport No: K7034936,  
ID 271121603451. (C 5452)  
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## MATRIMONIAL

32 year old Goan Catholic boy looking for suitable Goan Catholic life partner. He has graduated in industrial engineering from a reputed university in the US. He is currently employed in Kuwait and looking forward to settle down very soon. He is 5'10" tall, fair and good looking. If you think you are the right match please contact at 96765696 ASAP Email: if8016037@gmail.com (C 5454) 10-10-2019



Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1



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## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 10/10/2019				Departure Flights on Thursday 10/10/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	241	Alexandria	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MSC	406	Sohag	00:15
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50
PGT	828	Istanbul	02:00	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	PGT	829	Istanbul	02:59
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:35	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
JZR	734	Cairo	02:35	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	JZR	111	Doha	03:25
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:40	JZR	409	Delhi	03:30
JZR	254	Amman	02:40	JZR	701D	Asyut	03:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	713	Sohag	03:50
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	THY	769	Istanbul	03:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
JZR	262	Beirut	03:10	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JZR	1735	Cairo	04:40
JZR	406	Kochi	03:30	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15
MSR	0516	Cairo	04:25	MSR	0517	Mumbai	05:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
THY	1414	Trabzon	05:05	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	745	Sharm el-Sheikh	06:45
IGA	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	212	Bahrain	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	251	Amman	07:10
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR	121	Dubai	07:15
KAC	548	Alexandria	05:55	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	BAW	156	London	07:40
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	KAC	173	Munich	07:55
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:25	JZR	211	Jeddah	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	KAC	193	Trabzon	08:10
KAC	106	London	06:40	KAC	181	Paris/NCE	08:10
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	IRA	606	Mashhad	08:10
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	IGO	1756	CNN	08:10
QTR	8511	Doha	06:55	KAC	163	MXP	08:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	505	LCA/Beirut	08:40
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	KAC	177	Vienna	08:45
JZR	112	Doha	07:05	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	QTR	8512	Doha	08:55
IRA	601	Tehran	07:10	KAC	121	AGP	09:00
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:50	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	117	New York	09:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	791	Madinah	09:10
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	QTR	1085	Doha	09:10
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	157	Istanbul	09:20
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	731	Cairo	09:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
IRA	675	Lar	09:55	KAC	301	Istanbul	09:55
JZR	702D	Asyut	09:55	OMA	642	Muscat	10:00
KAC	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	101	London	10:05
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	GFA	210	Bahrain	10:05
JZR	714	Sohag	10:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:55
OMS	223	Muscat	11:00	SVA	513	Riyadh	10:55
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	11:00
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
AHY	119	Baku	12:05	OMS	224	Muscat	11:40
JZR	410	Delhi	12:10	JZR	309	BJV	11:45
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	746	Sharm el-Sheikh	12:25	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30				



# Storied Malaysian newspaper abruptly shuts after 80 years

## Rihanna blasts Trump in new Vogue interview

**NEW YORK:** Rihanna speared President Donald Trump as perhaps "the most mentally ill human being in America" over his position on gun rights in a candid Vogue interview published yesterday that also touched on immigration and racism. Asked about the back-to-back shootings earlier this year in the US cities of El Paso and Dayton, the superstar performer who recently cemented her place in the upper echelons of the fashion industry with her own luxury line called the gun violence plaguing American society "devastating."

After the August shootings Rihanna had decried Trump's classification of the violence as the result of a "mental illness problem." "People are being murdered by war weapons that they legally purchase. This is just not normal. That should never, ever be normal," Rihanna told the fashion magazine that featured her on its cover for the sixth time.

"And the fact that it's classified as something different because of the color of their skin? It's a slap in the face. It's completely racist. Put an Arab man with that same weapon in that same Walmart and there is no way that Trump would sit there and address it publicly as a mental health problem," the 31-year-old continued. "The most mentally ill human being in America right now seems to be the president."

Earlier this year Rihanna removed her catalogue from the blanket "political entities license" agreement that had allowed the president to play her songs during his rallies. The native of Barbados has used her massive social media platform - she boasts 75.9 million followers on Instagram alone - to urge US citizens to vote, including in last year's midterm election. Rihanna also confirmed reports that she had turned down the National Football League's offer to play the coveted Super Bowl halftime show in solidarity with former player Colin Kaepernick.

Kaepernick, who has not played in the NFL since opting out of his contract with the San Francisco 49ers in March 2017, began kneeling in protest of social injustice and racial inequality during pre-game renditions of the US national anthem three years ago. "I couldn't dare do that. For what? Who gains from that? Not my people. I just couldn't be a sellout. I couldn't be an enabler," she said of the opportunity.

Turning to the subject of immigration, Rihanna said the controversies surrounding the issue in recent



Donald Trump



Rihanna

years have made her "sick to my stomach". Currently the world's richest female musician, Rihanna has centered her focus on fashion in recent years, making history by becoming the first black woman to head a fashion house for the French powerhouse LVMH, which owns legacy brands including Fendi and Givenchy. She has also made waves with her inclusive lingerie and make-up lines that offer a wide range of sizes, styles and skin colors. Rihanna's fierce fan base has been clamoring for her ninth album, "R9," however, which she said will be "reggae-infused" and hinted is nearly finished. — AFP

## 3D printer makes meat...

Continued from Page 1

provided by Israeli and US food-tech companies. "Thank God the experiment went successfully... All the cells showed a good result in space," he added.

Astronauts eat meat on board that is vacuum-packed or dried on Earth but this technology could ultimately be necessary for long voyages into deep space, said veteran cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko. "If we're going to fly further from Earth to other planets in

the solar system, we can't take that volume of food with us," he told AFP. "In any case we will have to grow and produce food onboard the spaceship. I think progress is developing very quickly, science and knowledge, and I think this will be within our lifetimes," he said.

Creating larger amounts of meat in the Russian segment will need more complex equipment than the current printer, said Khesuani. "Then we can create not just small objects but big ones, made of a large mass of cells. I hope we will continue these experiments." Other space agencies are also carrying out experiments in this area as making human tissue in space is easier than in conditions of gravity. An American 3D printer launched to the station in July can manufacture human tissue and is also being used for experiments by the European Space Agency. — AFP

## Hashem welcomes 100% hike in...

Continued from Page 1

Hashem referred to, such as elderly laborers and teachers and staff members working in private schools other than their sponsors. "Deportation will also include the deportee's family members," the sources stressed. However, the sources said limiting expats' residency in Kuwait to five years renewable once for a maximum of five more years is an impractical proposal as it would lead to losing well-experienced and trained workers.

In another development, MP Ahmad Al-Fadhl yesterday denied a newspaper report that the finance ministry has completed plans to impose taxes and charges on many public services. The lawmaker said he contacted officials at the ministry, who said apart from two laws imposing value added tax (VAT) and selective taxes on cigarettes and energy and soft drinks, the ministry has no plans to impose any other taxes. Fadhl however said the finance minister had informed the National

Assembly that the country's fiscal position has been deteriorating and that in the best-case scenario, the state's reserve fund will run out of money by 2023 and Kuwait will only be left with assets in the future generations fund.

In the meantime, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei yesterday warned the interior ministry against taking any action against a senior officer at the ministry following a stand-off with a member of the ruling family. Head of the traffic licenses department Maj Salah Al-Rashed posted on social media a phone conversation in which the ruling family member insulted him and warned him of disciplinary action after he refused to accept an illegal transaction to renew registration of vehicles the sheikh owns. Tabtabaei warned that if the ministry harms the officer, he will use his constitutional tools.

Later yesterday, Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah ordered filing a case against the ruling family member and prosecuting him for insulting a police officer on duty. The interior ministry noted on its Twitter account that it is investigating the audio circulating on social media, adding it reserves the right to take all legal actions in such cases. Notably, the accused sheikh had been previously imprisoned for two years for slandering III the Amir before he apologized and was released.

10 trillion dollars into the global economy, productivity-enhancing investments such as new infrastructure, R&D and skills development in the current and future workforce have been suboptimal.

As monetary policies begin to run out of steam, it is crucial for economies to rely on fiscal policy, structural reforms and public incentives to allocate more resources towards the full range of factors of productivity to fully leverage the new opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution," Schwab writes.

Improving Kuwait's competitiveness has been a key focus of government policy in recent years, with a slate of initiatives aimed at easing investor access to local markets, reforming the bourse and establishing entities like KDIPA (Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority) to facilitate and promote foreign investment in the country. At the same time, the government has set up 'business centers' aimed at reducing bureaucracy in starting new businesses.

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's oldest Malay-language newspaper, Utusan Malaysia, yesterday abruptly ceased publication and placed more than 800 employees on leave, citing declining readership and advertising revenue. Utusan was founded during British colonial rule in 1939 by Yusof Ishak, who later became Singapore's first president. The paper played an important role in the formation of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), a political party that would rule Malaysia for more than six decades after independence in August 1957.

UMNO, which took a controlling stake in Utusan in the 1950s, was ousted in a shock election defeat last year. Utusan's board agreed on Monday to undertake a voluntary liquidation as it was no longer able to pay salaries or clear its debts, chief executive Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir said yesterday in a memo to staff and seen by Reuters. "This step had to be taken as the board of directors is of the opinion that the company is no longer solvent to continue business," Abdul Aziz said, adding that all staff had been put on leave until Oct 31.

Mohamad Taufek Abdul Razak, chairman of Utusan's press union chapter, confirmed the authenticity of the memo. Utusan's management had not informed employees beforehand of the sudden closure and would only address questions over termination,

and compensation on Oct 30, Mohamad Taufek said. "It was a spineless move by Utusan's management," he told reporters at the newspaper's Kuala Lumpur headquarters. Utusan employees, some in tears, were seen carrying their belongings out of the building yesterday. Local media reported that staff were asked to clear the company's office and it was sealed off. A total of 862 staff were affected by the closure, said Mohamad Taufek.

Utusan Melayu (Malaysia) Berhad was listed on the Malaysian bourse in 1994, and the daily hit a peak of 350,000 copies sold a day during the decade. But in recent years, Utusan's finances have been hurt by a sharp decline in circulation and revenue, which were compounded by UMNO's loss of power in May 2018. The paper has also been accused of stoking racial sentiment in the multiethnic country, due to its strong Malay nationalist editorial stance. Ethnic Malays make up about 60 percent of Malaysia's 32 million people, with the rest are mostly ethnic Chinese and Indians.

In August, Utusan raised the prices of its newspapers in a bid to keep the firm afloat. It was delisted on Aug 30 after missing a deadline for a regularization plan, citing ongoing losses, cash flow constraints, and lack of investors. As well as Malay-language newspapers, Malaysia also has English-, Chinese- and Tamil-language publications. — Agencies

## Trio wins Nobel for developing...

Continued from Page 1

Goodenough built on Whittingham's prototype, substituting a different metal compound and doubling the potential energy of the battery to four volts. This paved the way for far more powerful and durable batteries in the future. In 1985, Yoshino instead used a carbon-based material that stores lithium ions, finally rendering the battery commercially viable. The culmination of the trio's research resulted in the most powerful, lightweight and rechargeable battery ever seen.

"This is such a wonderful thing, and I am very surprised," Yoshino told reporters in Tokyo. He said he had only got a cell phone in recent years. "I have long felt a bit of rejection towards mobile phones, so I have never had one until recently. I know the lithium-ion battery really benefited mobile phones," he said, adding he did "not really" feel that he had helped make a product that benefited his life. For Yoshino, a good scientist needed two qualities. "One thing is that you have to have a flexible brain. Flexibility. The other is tenacity. You stay persistent and never give up."

Goodenough, who was in London when he received the news, said he, like Yoshino, didn't expect to be honored, but expressed more pride in the worldwide impact of his work. "I'm extremely happy that my discovery has been able to help communication through the world. We need to build relationships, not wars. I am happy if people use this for good, not evil," he told reporters during a press conference.

Whittingham, 77, said he was "overcome with grati-

tude at receiving this award". His research "has helped advance how we store and use energy at a foundational level, and it is my hope that this recognition will help to shine a much-needed light on the (US) nation's energy future," he said on the website of Binghamton University in New York where he is a professor. Yoshino, 71, works at the Asahi Kasei Corporation in Tokyo and is a professor at Meijo University in Nagoya, Japan, while Goodenough holds the Cockrell Chair in Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin.

The trio will receive the prize from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of scientist Alfred Nobel who created the prizes in his last will and testament. Last year, the honour went to US scientists Frances Arnold and George Smith and British researcher Gregory Winter for developing enzymes used for greener and safer chemistry and antibody drugs with fewer side effects.

Arnold was just the fifth woman to clinch chemistry's most prestigious honor since Marie Curie in 1911. This year's Nobel season kicked off on Monday with the Medicine Prize, followed by the Physics Prize on Tuesday. The Literature Prize will follow today, with two laureates to be crowned after a sexual harassment scandal forced the Swedish Academy to postpone the 2018 award, for the first time in 70 years.

Names creating a buzz ahead of this year's literature prize include Canadian poet Anne Carson, Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Romanian poet and novelist Mircea Cartarescu and Polish writer and activist Olga Tokarczuk. Tomorrow the action moves to Norway with the Peace Prize is awarded, with bookies predicting a win for Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. The Economics Prize will wrap up the Nobel prize season on Oct 14. — AFP

## Turkey launches Syria push with...

Continued from Page 1

residential areas, the source said. A Reuters cameraman in the Turkish town of Akcakale saw several explosions across the border in the Syrian town of Tel Abyad, where a witness reported people fleeing en masse. Large explosions also rocked Ras al Ain, just across the border from the Turkish town of Ceylanpinar, a CNN Turk reporter said. The sound of planes could be heard above and smoke was rising from buildings in Ras al Ain, he said. The SDF said military positions and civilians in the city of Qamishli and the town of Ain Issa - more than 30 km inside Syria - had been hit, and said there were initial reports of civilian casualties. Turkish media said mortar and rocket fire from Syria struck the Turkish border towns of Ceylanpinar and Nusaybin. There were no immediate reports of casualties there.

World powers fear the action could open a new chapter in Syria's eight-year-old war and worsen regional turmoil. Ankara has said it intends to create a "safe zone" in order to return millions of refugees to Syrian soil. In the build-up to the expected offensive, Syria had said it was determined to confront any Turkish aggression by all legitimate means. It was also ready to embrace "prodigal sons", it said, in an apparent reference to the Syrian Kurdish authorities who hold the northeast.

Turkey views Kurdish YPG fighters in northeast Syria as terrorists because of their ties to militants waging an insurgency inside Turkey. An influx of non-Kurdish Syrians would help it secure a buffer against its main security threat. Amid deepening humanitarian concerns, Germany said Turkey's action would lead to further instability and could strengthen Islamic State, which the US-armed SDF helped defeat in Syria.

The SDF halted operations against Islamic State because of the Turkish offensive, two US officials and a Kurdish source said. One of the officials said US training of stabilization forces in Syria had also been affected. The United Nations Security Council will meet today at the request of European countries, who expressed alarm at the offensive, and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that the bloc would not fund Ankara's plans in the region. "If

the plan involves the creation of a so-called safe zone, don't expect the EU to pay for any of it," he told the EU parliament.

Kurdish-led forces have denounced the US policy shift as a "stab in the back". Trump denied he had abandoned the forces, the most capable US partners in fighting Islamic State in Syria. The Kurdish-led authority in northern Syria declared a state of "general mobilization" before the looming attack. "We call on all our institutions, and our people in all their components, to head towards the border region with Turkey to fulfill their moral duty and show resistance in these sensitive, historic moments," it said in a statement.

Erdogan's communications director Fahrettin Altun said Turkey had no ambition in northeastern Syria except to neutralize the threat against Turkish citizens and to liberate the local people from what he called "the yoke of armed thugs". Turkey was taking over leadership of the fight against Islamic State in Syria, he said. YPG fighters could either defect or Ankara would have to "stop them from disrupting our counter-Islamic State efforts", he wrote in a tweet and in a column in the Washington Post.

Turkey's Demiroren news agency said Syrian rebels had travelled from northwest Syria to Turkey in preparation for the incursion. They will be based in Ceylanpinar, with 14,000 of them gradually joining the offensive. "Strike them with an iron fist, make them taste the hell of your fires," the National Army, the main Turkey-backed rebel force, told its fighters in a statement.

Russia, Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's strongest foreign ally, urged dialogue between Damascus and Syria's Kurds on solving issues in northeast Syria including border security. "We will do our best to support the start of such substantive talks," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters during a visit to Kazakhstan. Another Assad ally, Iran, urged Turkey to show restraint and avoid military action in northern Syria, although it said Turkey was "rightfully worried" about its southern border.

On Monday, Erdogan said US troops started to pull back after a call he had with Trump, adding that talks between Turkish and US officials on the matter would go on. Trump's decision to pull back troops has rattled allies, including France and Britain, two of Washington's main partners in the U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State. Senior Republican senator Lindsey Graham addressed a tweet to the Turkish government saying, "You do NOT have a green light to enter into northern Syria. There is massive bipartisan opposition in Congress, which you should see as a red line you should not cross." — Agencies

## Kuwait leaps ahead in WEF...

Continued from Page 1

"The Global Competitiveness Report is designed to help policymakers, business leaders and other stakeholders shape their economic strategies in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution," writes WEF founder Klaus Schwab in the report's preface. Performance of economies across the globe, however, received mixed ratings and the WEF report notes that changes to fiscal policy and other political tools may be needed in the coming decade to exploit the disruptions created by the technological and digital revolutions.

"The report demonstrates that 10 years on from the financial crisis, while central banks have injected nearly



Sports

# Hamilton can land KO blow at typhoon-threatened Japanese GP

Sebastian Vettel is all but out of the hunt with 128 points behind Hamilton

TOKYO: Lewis Hamilton may not be able to clinch a sixth world championship at the typhoon-threatened Japanese Grand Prix this weekend, but knows he can knock all but teammate Valtteri Bottas out of the title race.

There are only 104 points to be won after Japan and a victory for Hamilton to follow his triumph in Russia will leave only Finland's Bottas able to pass the Englishman. However, a wild weekend of weather is promised at Suzuka which could mean disrupted practice, chaotic qualifying and a wet race punctuated by safety cars.

Japan's weather bureau said yesterday that Super Typhoon Hagibis was projected to hit Tokyo, some 300 kilometres (185 miles) east of Suzuka, on Saturday. "The Honshu main islands will see heavy rains from as early as Friday, and the peak of the bad weather will be on Saturday and Sunday," Japan Meteorological Agency official Yoshinori Muira told AFP.

French driver Jules Bianchi crashed in the 2014 Japanese Grand Prix after a typhoon brought wet conditions and reduced visibility to the Suzuka circuit.

He died of his injuries the following year, becoming the first and only driver killed as a result of a Formula One racing accident since 1994.

**FERRARI RESURGENT**

Ferrari's resurgence since the summer break rattled Mercedes and Hamilton as the Italian marque sped to a hat-trick of grands prix wins. But the Maranello outfit's failure to turn Charles Leclerc's pole position into another win at Sochi gave Mercedes a surprise one-two.

It also handed Hamilton a 107-point advantage over

the Monegasque with Red Bull's Max Verstappen a further three adrift. Sebastian Vettel is all but out of the hunt, 128 points behind the Englishman.

Hamilton knows a solid result will put him in pole position to wrap up the title in Mexico on October 27, but he insists he is not yet dreaming of his sixth title — a total matched only by Michael Schumacher.

"I just don't try to think about it," Hamilton said after winning in Russia, aware of Ferrari's performance edge. "It's getting harder and harder as the season goes on. Of course the races are counting down but we are just trying to take things one race at a time, put one foot in front of the other and not stumble."

**'SUZUKA IS INCREDIBLE'**

Rain or shine, Suzuka has the ingredients to be a classic — a rejuvenated Red Bull team pressing the top two, plus a circuit renowned for exciting racing with sweeping bends and dramatic elevation changes.

"It's going to be awesome," said Hamilton of the race which will draw fans in huge number despite being staged during a Rugby World Cup which has captivated Japan.

"Suzuka is incredible, it's one of the most exciting parts of the year and now so more than ever before because you've got three solid, incredibly fast teams pushing each other."

Leclerc was denied a potential third win of his rookie season in Russia because of the team's botched tactics but sees Japan as another great chance. "We've been quick in Singapore, we've been quick in Monza and both of them are the complete opposites so there are no reasons for us to be slow in Japan. But it doesn't mean that we will have an



SOCHI: File photo shows winner Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates on podium after the Formula One Russian Grand Prix at The Sochi Autodrom Circuit in Sochi on September 29, 2019. —AFP

easy life," said Leclerc.

"I've only been to Suzuka once but it's a track I loved. It was just a really great experience, so I'm really looking forward to going back." The Silver Arrows'

unexpected one-two in Sochi means Mercedes can seal a record-equalling sixth successive constructors' championship this weekend if they manage to increase their lead over Ferrari by 14 points or more. —AFP

## Benn denies being refused licence to fight again at 55

LONDON: Former world boxing champion Nigel Benn has denied being turned down for a licence to make a comeback at the age of 55 and said yesterday he welcomed further medical tests to prove his fitness to fight.

The Briton, who last fought in 1996, is coming out of retirement for a Nov. 23 fight in Birmingham against

Cameroon-born Australian Sakio Bika, a 40-year-old ex-world champion.

The former WBC super-middleweight champion confirmed he had made a formal application to the British & Irish Boxing Association (BIBA) for a licence. "I refute the claims that I re-applied for a licence with any other accredited sanctioning body (as has been stated in the press)," he said in a statement. "Therefore, I have not been refused a licence as alleged."

The Daily Telegraph newspaper quoted British Boxing Board of Control (BBBofC) general secretary Robert Smith last month as saying Benn had asked them about a licence. "He was told that we would not consider it, given his age and how long he has been away from the sport. We will not be licensing this event,

it will not be under our jurisdiction," he said then.

Benn acknowledged the risks and need to satisfy medical experts, but said also that he felt discriminated against because of his age. "I've welcomed the requirements of BIBA to clearly establish that I am 'fit to box'," he said. "I have undergone numerous and regular medical investigations to confirm this, including periodic MRI brain scans."

Benn said he would have further tests in the next few weeks, including another brain scan, "to provide clear clarification of my state of health" and there would be extra safety measures at the fight.

He has said he wants to fight again for 'closure', and personal peace of mind, rather than any financial reasons. —Reuters

## Mercedes can seal sixth successive title at Suzuka

SUZUKA: Mercedes have their first chance to seal a record-equalling sixth successive Formula One constructors' championship in Japan on Sunday, at a track where they have won for five years in a row.

Despite their domination since the start of the V6 turbo era in 2014, Mercedes and Lewis Hamilton — winner of four of the last five Japanese Grands Prix — are still wary of tempting fate.

A team preview of the race at Suzuka steered well clear of any title talk. "We'll bring some minor upgrades

to the car in Japan which will hopefully help us take a step in the right direction," said team boss Toto Wolff.

"However, we know that we need to extract absolutely everything from our car and the tyres if we want to be able to challenge for a win. "We have a strong track record there... but we expect this year to be challenging given the strength of our opponents," added the Austrian.

Mercedes are 162 points clear of Ferrari, who racked up a record six titles in a row between 1999-2004 and are the only ones who can stop the runaway leaders with five races remaining. Third-placed Red Bull are 260 points behind Mercedes with a maximum 220 points still to be won.

To clinch the title at Suzuka, Mercedes need to score 14 more points than Ferrari. Hamilton, 73 points clear of Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas, will have to wait until at least Mexico two weeks later to

complete an unprecedented title double for the team with his sixth drivers' championship.

Another Japanese Grand Prix victory would equal retired Ferrari great Michael Schumacher's record of six. Mercedes have won 11 of the season's 16 races, eight in one-two formation and with the most recent — Hamilton's ninth of the campaign — coming in Russia.

Despite their strength on paper, Mercedes are feeling the heat from Ferrari. Monegasque Charles Leclerc has started the last four races from pole position and he and German team mate Sebastian Vettel, a four-time winner at Suzuka, converted three of those into successive wins.

But for a virtual safety car interlude, triggered ironically by Vettel stopping just off the track, Ferrari could have celebrated four wins in a row after Sochi. The technical, fast sweeps of the 5.8-km Suzuka track should give the

Italian team another chance to confirm their resurgence. "We know that in order to be at the front in Japan, every aspect of our work must be perfect," said Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto, who has had to manage tensions between his drivers after Russia. "If we can do that, then we hope to be able to be as competitive as we have been in recent races." Honda, who power the two Red Bull teams, could also be set for their happiest homecoming since they returned to Formula One as an engine supplier in 2015.

Red Bull have two wins this year with Max Verstappen and local fans will be able to cheer reigning Japanese Super Formula champion Naoki Yamamoto when he drives a Toro Rosso in Friday's opening practice. Rain could upset all predictions, though, with Typhoon Hagibis making its way toward Japan. The storm is forecast to strike the Tokyo area, about 400km north of Suzuka, on the weekend. —Reuters

## 'Old sports' must adapt, says surf chief ahead of Olympics debut

MIYAZAKI: As "cool" sports such as surfing, skateboarding and climbing prepare to make their Olympic debut in Tokyo, the president of surfing's governing body has told Reuters that more traditional sports must adapt or face being dropped from the Games. Karate will also make its debut in 2020 while baseball and softball return to the program after a 12-year absence. The additions are part of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) bid to reach a younger audience and International Surfing Association (ISA) President Fernando Aguerre said the impact of the changes could not be overstated.

"The IOC, and I think the world, wanted youth," Aguerre told Reuters at last month's ISA World Surfing Games in southern Japan. "So in the beach and ocean, coolest sport? Surfing. Streets, coolest sport? Skateboarding. Outdoor coolest sport? Climbing."

"So suddenly, in one giant stroke they add the three environments: the outdoor, the ocean and urban. "It will be the single most important program change in decades, probably ever." Instead of leaning on the experience of established Olympic sports in preparing for Tokyo 2020, Aguerre thinks some of the traditional disciplines could learn a thing or two from surfing, which has also been provisionally included in the program for Paris 2024. "The old sports need to adapt," said Aguerre. "(IOC) President (Thomas) Bach is very clear about that from the first speech he made when he accepted his election he said 'change or be changed.'"

"The evolution of the species is one of those that change... or the ones that didn't change that are nowhere to be found." Some sports, including badminton, taekwondo and modern pentathlon, have come under pressure to justify their inclusion in the Olympics while question marks hang over the futures of weightlifting and boxing due to financial irregularities and doping scandals.

**BUSY SURFING**

Aguerre pushed hard for an Olympic slot after becoming ISA chief in 1994 but the seeds were sown 80 years earlier when surfing pioneer and Olympic gold medallist swimmer Duke Kahanamoku first proposed its inclusion at Stockholm 1912.

Yet it was not until Argentine Aguerre had a discussion with then-IOC presidential candidate Bach in 2013 that things began to gain traction. Three years later in Rio de Janeiro Aguerre finally got the news he had been hoping for. "It is something that I dreamed about for many, many, many years," said a beaming Aguerre. "It was very hard. Basically it seemed impossible for a couple of decades and then suddenly a set came and we were in the right place to paddle and catch that Olympic wave." While it took a long time for surfing to get on the Olympic program Aguerre puts it down to the carefree nature of the sport. On the evening of the vote in Rio three years ago, a journalist asked him why it had taken 100 years to get surfing into the Olympics.

"My answer is: 'maybe we were busy surfing,'" Aguerre laughed. "It is true, it sounds like a joke but in reality we are surfers. We are not really an organised sport to the point where you need fields, gloves, memberships, lockers, we don't have anything."

"Basically you arrive at the beach, wrap ourselves in a towel, put on a wetsuit if it is cold, get on the beach and then go." — Reuters

## Gulf Bank 642 Marathon registration open

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank launches 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' for the fifth consecutive year in partnership with Pro-Vision Sports Management.

The much-anticipated community event invites challenge-seeking athletes as well as beginners to participate in the race on November 16, 2019. Last year's marathon was an unprecedented success with over 7,500 attendees representing over 66 nationalities competing at the event.

Commenting on the annual event, Tony Daher, CEO at Gulf Bank, said: "It is a privilege to see what the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon continues to accomplish year after year, and to witness just how much joy this annual event brings to the public. At Gulf Bank, we are always working to support and empower Kuwaiti youth and local entrepreneurs, and we are proud to continue our CSR programs and initiatives that benefit the Kuwaiti community. Today, we are delighted to renew our strategic partnership with Pro-Vision Sports Management, whose support and commitment are key to the success of the event. We invite everyone to participate in this day of family fun and look forward to welcoming participants from all over the world."

Ahmed Al Huzami, CEO of Pro-Vision Sport Management, said: "We are proud to extend our partnership with Gulf Bank for the fifth year in a row. The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon is no longer just a local sporting activity, having placed Kuwait on the map for international sporting events, and



receiving accreditation from the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF Athletics). We are delighted to be continuing on this journey with Gulf

Bank and look forward to this year's event."

For event registration and more information regarding participation as a corporate or in groups, please visit [www.gulfbank642marathon.com](http://www.gulfbank642marathon.com) or access the Instagram account @GulfBank642.



## Sports

# As typhoon nears, Wales weather Fiji storm to reach WCup quarter-finals

## England and France are due to play their final Pool C game on Saturday

**TOKYO:** Wales weathered a furious Fijian onslaught to reach the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals yesterday, sending Australia through in the process, as Scotland thrashed Russia to set up a showdown with hosts Japan.

With approaching Typhoon Hagibis threatening to cause havoc with this weekend's final pool games, the Welsh found themselves in a storm of their own before emerging from a physical battering with a 29-17, bonus-point win.

The result guarantees Wales and Australia's progress from Pool D, which the Welsh top by three points ahead of their remaining game against Uruguay. Australia play Georgia on Friday.

"Look, that was tough. They've got some unbelievable individuals and we just had to stay in it," said Wales coach Warren Gatland.

"We've got a tough four-day turnaround to Uruguay. I think the medics are going to be working pretty hard in the next 24-48 hours. But pleasing to get that bonus-point win," he added.

With the pool stage culminating this weekend, officials warned that Hagibis, currently classed as "violent" — the top end of Japan's storm scale — is on track to hit parts of Japan's coast, possibly barreling straight into Tokyo on Saturday.

England and France are due to play their final Pool C game on Saturday in Yokohama, adjacent to Tokyo. If the game has to be moved, Oita in Japan's south-west is the most likely alternative venue, a source close to the French camp told AFP. World Rugby is due to give an update on the situation on Thursday. The typhoon could also affect this weekend's Formula One Japanese Grand Prix in Suzuka, west of Tokyo.

In Pool C, Oita was treated to an end-to-end clash marked by heavy challenges and a sickening, accidental blow to the head which ended Wales fly-half Dan Biggar's involvement.

Josua Tuisova smashed through three defenders to

score Fiji's first try before Kini Murimurivalu made it 10-0 after just eight minutes, with Ben Volavola missing both conversions.

But Josh Adams leapt high to gather Biggar's cross-field kick and get Wales on the board, and he dotted down again to make it 14-10 at the break as Tevita Cavubati and then Ken Owens spent time in the sin-bin — the first two of four yellow cards in all.

### 'WE'VE GOT TO DELIVER'

In a breathless second period, Fiji were awarded a penalty try and Biggar — who failed a head injury assessment just 10 days ago — was apparently knocked groggy after an aerial collision with Liam Williams.

Replacement fly-half Rhys Patchell kicked a long-range penalty to square it at 17-17 before Adams completed his hat-trick with an acrobatic touch-down in the corner. A Gareth Davies break through midfield released Williams to seal the win at 29-17.

In Shizuoka, Adam Hastings — son of Scotland great Gavin — starred with 26 points, including two tries, as the Scots thrashed already-eliminated Russia 61-0 to set up their showdown with Japan.

Scotland coach Gregor Townsend rested the likes of big guns Greig Laidlaw, Finn Russell, Stuart Hogg, Blade Thompson and Johnny Gray, with only a four-day turnover before facing the Brave Blossoms in Yokohama on Sunday.

But Townsend's bet on a largely second-string side producing enough to seal the win paid off as Hastings ran the show with aplomb at Shizuoka's Ecopa Stadium. "That's stage one of a two-stage week completed," Townsend said.

"We've watched a lot of Japan. I know they will have watched a lot of us too... we've just got to make sure we deliver our best performance," he added. Scotland will be anxiously watching reports on the incoming typhoon, as they will be eliminated if Sunday's game is



**OITA:** Fiji's wing Josua Tuisova (C) is tackled by Wales' number 8 Ross Moriarty (L) during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool D match between Wales and Fiji at the Oita Stadium in Oita yesterday. —AFP

cancelled and marked down as a 0-0 draw, giving them only two points.

Earlier, fly-half Nicolas Sanchez showed Argentina what they had been missing with a masterful first-half performance as the Pumas restored pride with a 47-17 win against the United States.

Sanchez was controversially left out of the matchday

23 for the crunch match against England last Saturday, which Argentina lost 39-10, resulting in their first pool-stage exit since 2003.

But the Stade Francais playmaker ran the show against the United States in Kumagaya, which also witnessed the last appearance of 87-Test veteran Juan Manuel Leguizamón. —AFP

## Brave Blossom bonanza as rugby shirts fly off shelves

**TOKYO:** It is early morning outside the sportswear store near the Prince Chichibu Memorial Rugby Stadium and customers are already queuing to get their hands on Japan's hottest property: a Brave Blossoms replica shirt.

The red-and-white jerseys are flying off the shelves as the Japan team continues to defy expectations at the Rugby World Cup, winning three from three and on course for a historic quarter-final.

Japan games are played in front of a sea of red-and-white shirts and sales have exceeded even the most optimistic forecasts — with 90 percent of the stock for the whole tournament already gone.

Shirts are being sold as soon as they can be replaced, said Danny Robinson, manager of the Rugby World Cup megastore in Tokyo.

"Everybody loves the Japanese jerseys. It's much, much more than we anticipated. Every day people are waiting at the door and coming in to grab the jerseys. So it's very difficult to keep them on the shelves. We keep bringing them in every day," he told AFP.

However, it's not just Japanese who are snapping up the shirts. Robinson estimates that around half of the people buying Brave Blossom jerseys are foreigners. Jesai Knight, an Australian rugby fan, has been searching high and low for his souvenir.

"I came today to get one of those Japanese jerseys. We came here yesterday at about 9:30 in the morning, and they were sold out already at that point. And they told us to come back at like 9 o'clock today to get one," said Knight.

The 38-year-old has also encountered an issue many foreigners living in Japan find infuriating — finding the right size for the Western build. "I am an extra large... it was a little difficult," he told AFP, gleefully snapping up the one XL jersey available.

The availability of Brave Blossom shirts has not been helped by a supply problem with a warehouse in Chiba, to the east of Tokyo, that was affected by Typhoon Faxai a fortnight before the tournament began. "The warehouse actually lost electricity," said Robinson. "So people were picking by hand with flashlights to get the products here."

The hiccup was resolved "a long time ago" and deliveries are now coming in two or three times per week, he added. The World Cup has been a bonanza for Canterbury, the company that produces the Brave Blossom shirts along with other rugby gear.

They had forecast sales of 200,000 throughout the tournament — which ends on November 2 — and "90 percent has already been sold", said Yoshi Katsuta, head of Rugby World Cup operations for Canterbury Japan. "We are truly sorry" that some fans cannot get their hands on a Brave Blossoms jersey, but such demand was "really difficult to predict", Katsuta told AFP. "We expected foreigners to also buy Japan shirts but not on this scale," he admitted.

Another feature of this World Cup — the first held in Asia and in a non-traditional rugby hotbed — is how the home fans have "adopted" teams and dutifully bought their replica jerseys.

"I'm not sure we've ever seen a World Cup where the home fans have supported all of the teams this well," tournament organiser Alan Gilpin told AFP in a recent interview. —AFP

## England calm before storm as typhoon threatens World Cup

**TOKYO:** England will not suffer from any loss of momentum if this weekend's Rugby World Cup clash with France is cancelled due to violent weather, prop Dan Cole insisted yesterday. The heavy-weight Pool C game on Saturday and hosts Japan's crunch Pool A showdown with Scotland a day later, both at Yokohama, are in danger of being washed out by an approaching typhoon.

But Cole promised that England coach Eddie Jones would have the players match-sharp for the quarter-finals if the fixture is called off — which would

see England advance as group winners along with France.

"I think if anything does happen, I'm sure Eddie and the staff will be primed," he said. "We won't just be sat twiddling our thumbs in the hotel room. We'll be out working and making sure we maintain our sharpness throughout the tournament." Cole squirmed a little when asked about life under Jones, whose abrasive style has ruffled feathers wherever the Australian has gone.

"It's never easy because he sets such high demands," admitted Cole. "Eddie pushes the team hard but if you want to be successful you've got to be pushed hard and the boys have responded to that," he added.

"Eddie has won World Cups before and been in World Cup finals. He has the experience and has been there before and done it. "He has a plan and he's never satisfied with what's happened before

## Australia are through but plenty on the line in Georgia clash

**TOKYO:** Australia have already qualified for the quarter-finals of the Rugby World Cup courtesy of the Wales' victory over Fiji yesterday but the Wallabies will still be anxious to stamp their authority on their final Pool D match against Georgia.

The twice world champions and 2015 finalists head into Friday's match at Shizuoka Stadium with another much-changed line-up and have yet to produce a commanding 80-minute performance in Japan.

Coach Michael Cheika is convinced the permanent

revolution in his team selection is working, though, and has named a third starting flyhalf in four matches for Australia's first test meeting with the powerful Georgians.

Matt To'omua has already led the line in Japan, coming on for Bernard Foley against Wales and firing Australia's ultimately fruitless comeback in a loss that will almost certainly condemn the Wallabies to second place in the pool. Cheika will expect the David Pocock-captained side to hit the ground running after slow starts in all three of their previous matches in Japan and believes he has a reasonable idea of what Georgia will bring to the game.

"They are very physical, that's quite obvious and they like the set pieces. It's a real challenge for us," the coach told reporters on Tuesday. "A lot of their players are playing in the professional leagues in France and England as well. They are well attuned to competition at the high level.

"We want to show them how we play our rugby and I

## Scotland need to be 'spot-on' against Japan: Townsend

**SHIZUOKA:** Scotland will have to be "spot-on" when they take on Japan on Sunday for a place in the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals, coach Gregor Townsend has warned. The Scots, with Adam Hastings shining at fly-half, notched up a nine-try, 61-0 drubbing of winless Russia yesterday to ensure a mouth-watering showdown with the hosts in Yokohama next week.

Japan are unbeaten in their three Pool A matches, having notably claimed the shock scalp of Six Nations giants Ireland. "All aspects of our game have to be spot-on against Japan," Townsend said, underlining that his team had to make the best use of the ball when in possession against what he called a very well drilled Japanese outfit.

Scotland opened their campaign with a 27-3 defeat by Ireland before rebounding to rack up an impressive 34-0 victory over Samoa. "The Ireland game is already in the history books, it was a missed opportunity where we didn't get our best game in place," Townsend said.

"You move on to the next game and what the players have done since that Ireland game, I couldn't ask any more of them. "It's two games now we haven't conceded a try or even a point, which is very encouraging."

Townsend added: "If we hadn't got the bonus point, Sunday would have been more difficult." The former fly-half rested a quintet of front-line players in Greig Laidlaw, Finn Russell, Stuart Hogg, Blade Thompson and Johnny Gray as he juggles his 31-man squad on a punishing four-day turnaround for the Japan game.

"It's always been in our schedule," Townsend said. "It's a challenge, we know the opposition have had a good rest going into the game. "It's really important we recover well tomorrow... and do our best to play our best rugby Sunday."

Townsend said Scotland would be in close touch with World Rugby as a typhoon bears down on Japan, threatening to disrupt the weekend's games. Scotland could be eliminated if Sunday's game with Japan is cancelled.

"We'll be getting updates from World Rugby over the next two days as to what contingencies are," he said. Russia coach Lyn Jones said he wouldn't know who to bet on between Japan and Scotland. "If I had 10 yen, I wouldn't know who to go for on the night!" the former Wales flanker joked.

"Scotland have speed and skill and if

— Eddie brings that ability to make sure everybody is aligned."

Defence coach John Mitchell also denied that England were concerned about weather disruptions as Typhoon Hagibis nears, also putting this week's Japanese Grand Prix in Suzuka at risk.

"We don't let that kind of noise deter our preparation," he said about alarmist weather reports. "We pride ourselves on being adaptable and flexible for anything that's thrown at us," added Mitchell, who confirmed that England are likely to rest Billy Vunipola's sore ankle until the quarter-finals. "Ultimately if there are factors outside of our control, we'll find other ways to prepare." Mitchell brushed off suggestions that England's 44-8 Six Nations thrashing of France at Twickenham earlier this year would give them a psychological advantage this weekend.

"That really hasn't come into our thinking," said the New Zealander.

"World Cup rugby is a totally different beast — it's a one-off and has its different pressures. As you can see from some of the big games in this tournament, the pressure is immense."

England, still the only northern hemisphere side to lift the World Cup after Jonny Wilkinson's extra-time drop goal floored Jones's Australia in the 2003 final, are unbeaten in Pool C after wins over Tonga (35-3), the United States (45-7) and Argentina (39-10).

But Cole conceded that the English — who have minor injury concerns over Joe Marler (back) and Jack Nowell (hamstring) — have yet to hit top gear. "We want to keep the momentum going that we've built in the first three games," said the Leicester prop.

"We haven't played our best game of rugby yet — that's evident from the first three games, but we're still building and still getting better." —AFP

am sure they will be showing us how they play theirs." Australia are also determined to remove from their game the high tackles which have seen them heavily penalised in the pool stage.

Totemic Georgian flanker Mamuka Gorgodze, who plays in France's Top 14, can take some tackling and does out a few big hits as well. Gorgodze will renew his acquaintance with his former Toulon team mate James O'Connor, who starts in the Wallabies centres with Samu Kerevi.

Georgia coach Milton Haig, whose eight years with the team comes to an end after the match, said he was quite clear what his players could expect from the Australians.

"We know what they'll bring — they've got skill, they've got pace and they've got a couple of boys in the midfield that they'll use to get gain line," the New Zealander said. "They've improved their forward play over the last 12 months as well. —Reuters



**SHIZUOKA:** Russia's number 8 Nikita Vavilin (L) is tackled by Scotland's lock Ben Toolis during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool A match between Scotland and Russia at the Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa in Shizuoka yesterday. —AFP

they can put pace on Japan and get outside... "But Japan are so well drilled, they're an incredibly difficult side to play against. "It's going to be a hell of a game!"

Jones said Russia exited the tournament with their heads held high despite previous defeats by Japan (30-10), Samoa (34-9) and Ireland (35-0). "It's been a huge success as a late inclusion into the tournament," Jones said, describing Tier One rugby as "supersonic".

"The level is another sport for Tier Two nations." But Jones insisted that the experience of playing in a World Cup was invaluable to his players. "We're going to benefit from this and we look forward to the future with some optimism, we can only get better," he said.

"The physical potential in Russia is unlimited," Jones said. "It's a sleeping bear, a sleeping giant, we need to shake it awake." —AFP



## Sports

# Twitter spat between footballers' wives Rooney, Vardy grips Britain

'There has been so much information given to them about me and my friends'

**LONDON:** Coleen Rooney says someone using Rebekah Vardy's Instagram account has leaked stories about her as a Twitter spat between the two footballers' wives gripped Britain yesterday.

Rooney, married to former England international Wayne Rooney, told her 1.3 million Twitter followers that she had spent five months attempting to work out who was sharing stories based on her personal social media posts.

She said she worked out that the stories were coming from the account of reality TV star Vardy, the wife of Leicester City striker and ex-England international Jamie Vardy, following a sting operation.

She wrote on Twitter: "For a few years now someone who I trusted to follow me on my personal Instagram account has been consistently informing The SUN newspaper of my private posts and stories."

"There has been so much information given to them about me, my friends and my family — all without my permission or knowledge."

Rooney, 33, said she had a suspicion of who it might be and blocked everyone apart from an Instagram page belonging to Vardy from seeing her Instagram stories.

She said she had posted a series of false stories, some of which made it into the Sun tabloid.

"I have saved and screenshotted all the original sto-

ries which clearly show just one person has viewed them," she said. "It's ... Rebekah Vardy's account."

Vardy tweeted in response: "If you thought this was happening you could have told me & I could have changed my passwords to see if it stopped."

"Over the years various people have had access to my insta & just this week I found I was following people I didn't know and have never followed myself."

The former star of British TV reality show "I'm A Celebrity ... Get Me Out Of Here!" added: "I'm not being funny but I don't need the money, what would I gain from selling stories on you?"

Vardy, 37, who is pregnant with her fifth child, said she was "so upset" that Rooney had made the accusation, adding: "I'm disgusted that I'm even having to deny this."

"You should have called me the first time this happened." The Sun has reported on Rooney and Vardy's exchange and their article states: "Each of the stories provided to the Sun was put to Coleen's representatives before publication, and on each occasion they declined to comment." The two women were trending on Twitter.

Streaming service Netflix appeared to make a joke about the spat, tweeting: "We're going to have to make a documentary about this, aren't we." — AFP



Coleen Rooney (left) and Rebekah Vardy

## Fallen giants AC Milan gamble on Pioli

**MILAN:** Fallen Italian giants AC Milan yesterday appointed Stefano Pioli as their new coach a day after his predecessor Marco Giampaolo was sacked after just seven games in charge. The 53-year-old former Inter Milan boss arrives on a two-year deal, reported to be worth in the region of two million euros (\$2.2 million) a season.

Giampaolo was fired after just 111 days in the job as the former seven-time European champions slipped to 13th place in Serie A, following a run of four defeats in seven games.

The appointment of Pioli, an experienced coach but one who has never won a trophy in his 16-year managerial career, was a surprise one for the 18-time Serie A champions, who won their last league title in 2011.

"It's a choice that has been weighed up," Milan technical director Paolo Maldini told a press conference in the city. "Being the seventh round it can be seen as a gamble, but we want to be protagonists this season."

"This is why we decided to change with an experienced coach. For a young team we wanted a coach with

strong ideas." Pioli managed city rivals Inter Milan in the 2016-2017 season, but has been without a team since resigning from Fiorentina last April.

He has solid experience coaching top Italian clubs including Bologna, Lazio, Inter and Fiorentina, but has never won any trophies as a coach. The #PioliOut hashtag quickly trended worldwide on Twitter thanks to the angry reaction from Milan fans unhappy at his lack of trophies.

"I'm preparing for this adventure with great enthusiasm," said Pioli. "This is one of the most prestigious clubs in the world. I'm taking over a good team with serious potential and therefore think I can do a good job. "The fans have the right to criticise, but for me this is a further stimulus to make my work even better." Pioli's first game in charge will be against Lecce on October 20 in the San Siro. "Giampaolo is a great coach, but he has different ideas from me," continued Pioli. "I have to get these ideas to the players as soon as possible. Our ambition is to fight for the Champions League."

Pioli becomes the eighth manager to sit on the Milan bench in five years, not counting caretaker coach Mauro Tassotti, who took charge for one match after Massimiliano Allegri was sacked in January 2014.

Allegri was the man who led Milan to their last 'Scudetto' and went on to win five Serie A titles with Juventus. The club have tried everything since from Sinisa Mihajlovic, to former club icons such as Gennaro Gattuso, Clarence Seedorf and Filippo Inzaghi, and

most recently Giampaolo.

But nothing has managed to get a former European powerhouse back on the path to emulate past glories, with their last Champions League campaign in the 2013-2014 season.

The cash-strapped outfit finished fifth last season under Gattuso but surrendered their Europa League berth this season after breaching UEFA's financial fair play rules.

Giampaolo's run of defeats, including a 2-0 derby loss to Inter, leaves the club struggling just three points above the relegation zone. However they are also only four points away from the Champions league places and it is hoped Pioli, a former defender who won the Serie A title as a player with Juventus in 1986, can bring stability to the club that has experienced its share of backroom drama after being sold twice in the last two years. He led Lazio to the Champions League in 2015 and was praised with how he guided a Fiorentina in turmoil after captain Davide Astori died in his sleep ahead of a match last year.

Italian media mogul and former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who oversaw Milan's glory years during his 31-year ownership, sold the club to Chinese businessman Li Yonghong in 2017 with US hedge fund Elliot Management assuming control in July 2018.

Ex-Brazil international Leonardo stepped down as sporting director earlier this year to move to Paris Saint-Germain with former stars Maldini and Zvonimir Boban taking over. — AFP

## Messi says tax problems made him want to leave Barcelona

**MADRID:** Lionel Messi has admitted he wanted to leave Barcelona when he was under investigation from the Spanish tax authorities but insists now he intends to finish his career at the club. In an interview with Catalan radio station RAC1, Messi also said he had expected Neymar to sign for Real Madrid last summer after Barca failed to strike an agreement with Paris Saint-Germain.

Messi and his father Jorge were found guilty of defrauding Spain of 4.1 million euros in taxes between 2007 and 2009, for which they paid close to 10 million euros and Messi was handed a 21-month suspended prison sentence.

Asked on Tuesday night if he had ever wanted to leave Barcelona, Messi said: "In 2013-14, when I started having the tax problems, it was very difficult for me and my family." "My children were young and we had a very bad time. At that time, I had it in mind to leave, not because I wanted to leave Barca but because I wanted to leave Spain. I felt mistreated and I didn't want to be here anymore."

The 32-year-old's current contract expires in 2021 and Messi believes extending his deal "will not be a problem". "Today it is clearer that my idea is to finish here," Messi said. "For how I am at the club, for what I feel, and for the family and the children and how settled we are in this city. I would not like to disrupt that."

"Of course anything can happen but in principle, the idea is to stay here." Messi began playing football aged six for Newell's Old Boys, the Rosario club he supports in Argentina. "I always dreamed of being able to play again for Newell's and to have the experience of playing football in Argentina," he said. "But I have already told them that sometimes you have to think about what is best for your family."

Messi was keen to be reunited with Neymar last summer but Barcelona were unable to agree a fee with PSG. "I honestly thought at one time, especially in this market, that if he did not come here, he would go to Real Madrid because I thought he wanted to leave," Messi said.

"I wanted Ney to come because as a footballer, he is one of the best in the world. He is unpredictable, different and having him in our team would have given us more options."

Barcelona did sign Antoine Griezmann from Atletico Madrid, despite him rejecting the Catalans the year before. Messi denies suggestions of a rift between him and the Frenchman.

"The first year when we wanted to sign Griezmann, I said he was one of the best and that the best are always welcome," Messi said. "I have never had problem with him coming. So it's a lie."

Messi also offered his support to Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde, who has been under pressure after a bumpy start to the season followed the team's Champions League collapse against Liverpool in May.

"It was not the coach's fault but it was also not my decision for him to stay," Messi said. "The club decided Valverde would continue and for me that was a joy, good for stability and he is a coach we support and love."

"If another coach comes, we will be with him. To achieve success, we all have to be united." Messi scored his first goal of the season in a 4-0 thrashing of Sevilla on Sunday, after two months spoiled by calf and thigh injuries.

"I'm still a bit short but I'm feeling better," Messi said. "My legs hurt against Sevilla but it's what happens when you come back. I'm getting closer." — AFP

## England prepared to walk off if they are racially abused: Tammy

**LONDON:** Tammy Abraham says England are prepared to defy UEFA rules on racism and walk off the pitch if they face abuse during Euro 2020 qualifiers.

Gareth Southgate's team travel to the Czech Republic and Bulgaria for back-to-back matches on Friday and Monday. The second game, in Sofia, will be closely watched as the hosts will be playing in the Vasil Levski National Stadium, partially closed as a sanction following previous incidents of racism.

England's players received similar abuse in their qualifier against Montenegro in Podgorica earlier this year, where they stayed on the pitch and won 5-1. Southgate has said England will follow UEFA's three-step protocol for racial abuse.

The first step is for the referee to be made aware of any racism and halt the game for an announcement to be made. If the abuse continues, the referee will suspend the game for a period of time. The third and final step will see the official abandon the game.

But Abraham, 22, suggested that if England's players believe someone is not comfortable, captain Harry Kane could lead them off the pitch before the three steps are played out if they are not working.

"We've touched base on how to deal with the situation," said the Chelsea forward. "Harry Kane even said that if it happens and we're not happy with it, we speak to the player and if he's not happy, we all come off the pitch together."

"It's a team thing. Don't isolate one person, we're a whole team. If it happens to one of us, it happens to all of us." Defender Trent Alexander-Arnold, 21, believes the protocols will be followed but that in any potentially threatening situation a different course of action may be appropriate.

"We need to be professional athletes," said the Liverpool player. "We have an obligation to follow the protocols, that's what we need to do. If it does get to the extreme, maybe different action might be taken." Ashley Young was subjected to monkey chants in Sofia during an England game in 2011. The Bulgarian Football Union was fined 40,000 euros (£36,000) by UEFA for "discriminatory" chanting and for the lighting and throwing of fireworks.

Abraham suffered racial abuse online earlier this season, targeted by trolls after missing a penalty in the Super Cup shoot-out defeat to Liverpool. — AFP



Novak Djokovic

## Djokovic says pressure to stay No 1 'a privilege'

**SHANGHAI:** Novak Djokovic said yesterday that he was "embracing" the pressure of being world number one and reigning champion at the Shanghai Masters this week. The 32-year-old from Serbia made a fast start to his title defence, easing past young Canadian Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 6-3 with minimum fuss.

Fresh from winning career title 76 in Tokyo, Djokovic will play big-serving American John Isner in the last 16 in China. The 16-time Grand Slam champion said he had no pain from the shoulder injury that forced him out of the US Open last 16 and is "confident that I can perform at my best". Djokovic said that sky-high expectations are "part of what we do". "But it's also a privilege and a sign or kind of an indicator that you're doing something that is important and that you're doing well," he said.

"I think when you feel pressure you're doing well. It's something that is inevitable so you might as well embrace it and accept it." Also in action today will be Roger Federer, who faces Belgium's David Goffin, and third seed Daniil Medvedev. The Russian faces Canadian qualifier Vasek Pospisil.

Two rising stars of men's tennis went toe-to-toe when Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece and Felix Auger-Aliassime clashed. Tsitsipas defeated the 19-year-old 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/3) for his first victory over the Canadian stretching all

the way back to their junior days.

The 21-year-old Tsitsipas, who plays Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in the last 16, said that he had always been behind Auger-Aliassime in his physical development — until now.

Standing 6ft 4ins (193cm), the seventh-ranked Greek insists he is still not as strong as some on the ATP Tour. "I think something that probably I'm trying to cover that deficiency that I have is not concentrate too much on my power and my strength and how hard I can hit," he said.

"Maybe play smarter and play more with my mind and not with my physical power." Another of the new generation hoping to usurp the likes of Djokovic and Federer is the 22-year-old Alexander Zverev.

The young German had a bout of dizziness during an incident-packed victory over French underdog Jeremy Chardy, 7-6 (15/13), 7-6 (7/3).

Zverev apologised to a television cameraman after he accidentally hit a ball square into his jaw in winning a point. Zverev was also seen by a doctor in the first set and in another colourful moment he smashed his racket on the floor during the mammoth first-set tie break.

The second-set tie break had a lighter moment — Zverev losing his grip while hitting a shot, his racket flying into the crowd. "It was definitely interesting," smiled Zverev, who plays Russia's Andrey Rublev. — AFP



**25** Hamilton can land KO blow at typhoon-threatened Japanese GP

**26** As typhoon nears, Wales weather Fiji storm to reach WCup quarter-finals

**27** Twitter spat between footballers' wives Rooney, Vardy grips Britain



## Oilers ride Neal's 4 goals to win

Marchand, Bruins extend perfect start in Vegas



NEW YORK: Brock Nelson #29 of the New York Islanders falls on the ice as Zack Kassian #44 of the Edmonton Oilers takes possession of the puck during the third period of their game at the NYCB's LIVE Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, New York.—AFP

**NEW YORK:** James Neal collected a natural hat trick in a span of less than nine minutes bridging the first and second periods and finished with a career-high four goals Tuesday night as the Edmonton Oilers cruised to a 5-2 win over the New York Islanders in Uniondale, NY. Zack Kassian also scored for the Oilers, who are 3-0-0 for the first time since the 2008-09 season. Goalie Mikko Koskinen made 25 saves in his season debut. Anthony Beauvillier and Matt Martin scored for the Islanders, who lost two of three on a season-opening, three-game homestand. Starting goalie Semyon Varlamov was chased after giving up four goals on 19 shots. Thomas Greiss made seven saves in relief. Neal became the third Oilers player this century to collect four goals in a game and the first since teammate Connor McDavid did it against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Feb. 5, 2018.

### STARS 4, CAPITALS 3 (OT)

Tyler Seguin scored 43 seconds into overtime as visiting Dallas recorded its first win of the season by defeating Washington. Alexander Radulov, who scored in the third period, skated up the left wing on an odd-man rush before sliding a feed that Seguin converted at the right post as Dallas improved to 8-1-0 in its past nine visits to Washington. Roope Hintz scored his team-leading fourth goal. Nick Caamano netted his first career NHL tally and Ben Bishop made 29 saves for the Stars. Evgeny Kuznetsov scored in his return from a season-opening three-game suspension for Washington.

### HURRICANES 6, PANTHERS 3

Carolina, off to a 4-0 start for the first time since moving to Raleigh in 1997, scored the game's first five goals and held on to win in Sunrise, Fla. The Hurricanes had prevailed in their first three games despite trailing in the third period, rallying to win after regulation each time. But on Tuesday, they raced to a 4-0 first-period lead with goals by Jordan Staal, Teuvo Teravainen, Dougie Hamilton and Ryan Dzingel. Goalie James Reimer, traded by

the Panthers in June for minimal return (a sixth-round pick and a player no longer in the NHL), stopped 47 shots to defeat his former team. Sergei Bobrovsky, the goalie signed by the Panthers in July for \$70 million over seven years, stopped 10 of 14 shots and was lifted after just one period.

### PREDATORS 5, SHARKS 2

Roman Josi scored a pair of goals to carry host Nashville past winless San Jose. Kyle Turris, Filip Forsberg and Dante Fabbro contributed goals, and Matt Duchene recorded his sixth assist, tying him with Edmonton's Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl for the NHL lead. Pekka Rinne stopped 33 of 35 shots to improve to 2-0-0. Brent Burns had a goal and an assist, and Evander Kane netted a goal in his return after a three-game suspension for the Sharks, who at 0-4-0 have matched the worst four-game start in franchise history.

### BRUINS 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3

Brad Marchand had two goals and an assist, and David Pastrnak added a goal and two assists as visiting Boston scored four unanswered goals en route to a victory in Las Vegas. Torey Krug contributed a goal and an assist for the Bruins, who have won the first three games of a season-opening, four-game road trip that concludes on Thursday night at Colorado. It is Boston's first 3-0-0 start in 18 years. Max Pacioretty and Mark Stone each had a goal and an assist, and Reilly Smith also scored for Vegas, which took its first loss in three games this season. Marc-Andre Fleury made 31 saves.

### JETS 4, PENGUINS 1

Despite being depleted on the blue line, Winnipeg got three goals from defencemen in a win at Pittsburgh. Ville Heinola, Tucker Poolman and Neal Pionk scored, along with winger Nikolaj Ehlers, for the Jets, who played without defencemen Josh Morrissey (upper-body injury) and Dmitry Kulikov (personal reasons). Mark Scheifele and Patrik Laine each added three assists, and

goalie Connor Hellebuyck made 37 saves for Winnipeg. Sidney Crosby scored his first goal of the season for Pittsburgh.

### KINGS 4, FLAMES 3 (OT)

Drew Doughty scored the game-winner 50 seconds into overtime for Los Angeles, which surrendered a three-goal lead before beating host Calgary for its first victory of the season. Ilya Kovalchuk collected a goal and two assists, and Jack Campbell made 26 saves for the Kings, who rebounded

from a 6-5, season-opening loss to the Oilers on Saturday. Doughty added two assists. Tyler Toffoli contributed a goal and an assist, and Sean Walker also scored for Los Angeles. Matthew Tkachuk had two goals and an assist for the Flames, including the tying tally with 1:04 left in regulation. Noah Hanifin also scored for Calgary.

### DUCKS 3, RED WINGS 1

Nick Ritchie and Jakob Silfverberg scored 47 seconds apart midway through

the third period, and Anaheim topped host Detroit. Rickard Rakell also scored in the third period off a Silfverberg assist as Anaheim remained unbeaten through three games. Ducks goaltender John Gibson made 31 saves. Filip Hronek scored for Detroit while Jimmy Howard stopped 26 shots. Anthony Mantha, who scored four goals against Dallas on Sunday, came up empty on four shots on goal as the Red Wings lost for the first time in three games this season. — Reuters

## Iran women to attend football match for first time in decades

**TEHRAN:** Thousands of Iranian women fans are to attend a football match freely today for the first time in decades, after FIFA threatened to suspend the country over its controversial male-only policy. The Islamic republic has barred female spectators from football and other stadiums for around 40 years, with clerics arguing they must be shielded from the masculine atmosphere and sight of semi-clad men. World football's governing body FIFA ordered Iran last month to allow women access to stadiums without restriction and in numbers determined by demand for tickets.

The directive came after a fan dubbed "Blue Girl" died after setting herself on fire in fear of being jailed for dressing up as a boy to attend a match. Women were quick to get their hands on tickets to attend Iran's 2022 World Cup qualifier against Cambodia at Tehran's 100,000-capacity Azadi Stadium today. The first batch sold out in less than an hour, and additional seats were also snapped up in short order, state media said.

One of the 3,500 women to have secured a ticket was Raha Poorbakhsh, a football journalist. "I still can't believe this is going

to happen because after all these years of working in this field, watching everything on television, now I can experience everything in person," she told AFP.

### 'BLUE GIRL'

But Poorbakhsh said she was aware of many other women enthusiasts left without tickets. There have been rare occasions in recent years when Iranian women have been allowed to watch matches, but this time they were free to buy their own tickets, albeit a set number. Using the hashtag #WakeUpFifa, women have taken to social media to demand more tickets. While women have already taken up their entire allocation, only 2,500 men have so far purchased electronic tickets for the more than 70,000 seats available to them, ISNA news agency said.

Those lucky enough to attend will be segregated from men and watched over by 150 female police officers. People in Tehran supported the decision to let women attend. "I would like there to be freedom for women, like men, to go freely and even sit side by side without any restrictions, like other countries," said a woman who gave her name only as Hasti. Nader Fathi, a businessman, said the presence of women could improve the atmosphere. But he said "they will regret it" if they are exposed to "really bad swear words" and "bad behavior".

The bumpy road Iranian women have travelled to gain such access to stadiums has not been without tragedy. Sahar Khodayari died last month after setting herself ablaze outside a court in fear of being jailed for trying to attend a match. Dubbed

"Blue Girl" because of the colors of the club she supported - Esteghlal FC - she had reportedly been detained last year when trying to enter a stadium dressed as a boy.

Her death sparked an outcry, with many calling for Iran to be banned and matches boycotted. The judiciary dismissed reports she had been told she would be jailed. Amnesty International condemned the limited allocation of tickets for women as a "cynical publicity stunt" following her death. "The Iranian authorities should lift all restrictions on women attending football matches, including domestic league games, across the country," it said.

### SHADOW OF FIFA

Ahead of Qatar 2022, FIFA has pressed Iran to allow women to attend qualifiers. But Iran denied its decision to allow women into Thursday's match was a result of "foreign pressure". "The presence of #women in stadiums is due to the internal social demands and government's support of those demands," government spokesman Ali Rabiee tweeted. The ban on women in stadiums is not written into law or regulations, but it has been strictly enforced.

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, women have only rarely had access to stadiums in Iran. About 20 Irish women attended a World Cup qualifier in 2001, and four years later a few dozen Iranian women watched the national team take on Bahrain. In October, as many as 100 "handpicked" Iranian women watched a Bolivia friendly. The day after, the prosecutor general warned there would be no repeat, saying it would "lead to sin". —AFP