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# Putin in Saudi, deepening Russia's Mideast influence

First trip in 12 years comes amid heightened regional tensions



RIYADH: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) and Saudi Arabia's King Salman (right) attend a meeting in Riyadh yesterday. — AFP

RIYADH: President Vladimir Putin signaled Moscow's growing Middle East clout yesterday by visiting Saudi Arabia for the first time in over a decade, buoyed by Russian military gains in Syria, strong ties with Riyadh's regional rivals and energy cooperation. Moscow accrued power in the Middle East in 2015 by sending troops to Syria, where it and Iran have been key backers of President Bashar Al-Assad amid civil war, while the United States pulled back. Saudi Arabia sided with Syrian rebels.

On the eve of Putin's trip, US troops were abruptly retreating from northern Syria as Russian-backed government forces deployed deep inside Kurdish-held territory under a deal to help fend off a Turkish cross-border offensive. Russia has also strengthened ties with both Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran, which are locked in a decades-old contest for influence that veered towards open conflict after a recent spate of attacks on oil assets in the Gulf that Riyadh and Washington blame on Tehran. Iran denies the charges.

Tensions with Iran, which is locked in several proxy wars with Saudi Arabia, have risen to new highs after Washington last year quit a 2015 international nuclear accord with Tehran and re-imposed sanctions. The Russian president, accompanied by his energy minister

and head of Russia's wealth fund, met King Salman at his palace along with de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, with whom Putin says he has friendly relations.

Deepening ties have seen non-OPEC Russia, once regarded as a rival in oil markets, join OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia in forming an alliance known as OPEC+ to support crude prices by restraining output. At a morning forum convening 300 Saudi and Russian CEOs, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman said OPEC+ countries were showing high commitments to the deal, and his Russian counterpart said there were no talks underway to change it.

Ahead of the visit, Putin, who offered to provide Russian defense systems to the kingdom after Sept. 14 attacks on its oil facilities, said he could also play a positive role in easing tensions with Tehran given good ties with both sides. Any progress on long-mulled Saudi plans to purchase the Russian S-400 surface-to-air missile systems would cause disquiet in Washington, which is sending 3,000 troops and additional air defense systems to Saudi Arabia.

US President Donald Trump has resisted pressure to sanction Riyadh over human rights abuses, including

Continued on Page 24

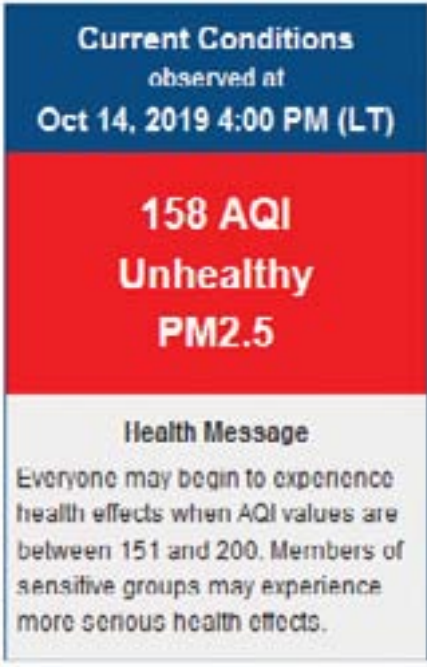
## EPA rebukes fears over dangerous air quality

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The quality of Kuwait's air has become a topic of concern in recent days, especially as humidity has risen and air quality indexes have signaled the air entering an 'unhealthy' state. To clarify the matter, Kuwait Times visited the Environment Public Authority to learn more about what the air index means, how it relates to pollution, air quality and to warnings from local, regional and international environmental groups.

According to an official from the Environment Public Authority (EPA) who asked that his name not be published, the air index monitor utilized by the US Embassy in Bayan is a relevant air quality monitor (AQM) - in other words, the index is accurate. According to the US embassy in Kuwait, the condition observed on October 14, 2019 at 3:00pm by the Air Quality Index (AQI) was 159 which is an unhealthy PM2.5.

Continued on Page 24



## MP Hayef to file grilling, targeting Finance Minister

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Islamist opposition MP Mohammad Hayef said yesterday that he will file to grill Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf today over his insistence to use usury or interest rates in loans given to pensioners. The lawmaker went to the Assembly Speaker's office yesterday to file the grilling but the acting Speaker MP Awdah Al-Awdah arrived at the Assembly only after the official hours, raising constitutional constraints for submitting the grilling.

Hayef told reporters that he will file the grilling today and that it will be based on two issues both related to the use of interest by the Public Institute for Social Security which is under the Finance Minister. The lawmaker, who grilled the Finance Minister just before the close of the previous Assembly term in June over the same issues, said that he made

his decision to file the new grilling after the outcome of the Assembly's Financial Committee meeting held on Sunday.

He said that the committee virtually made no change to the previous system which is based on taking a high interest on cash taken by pensioners for exchanging a part of their pensions. A number of lawmakers have pressed the minister and the government to change the system to abolish interest and provide pensioners a new system in compliance with Islamic Sharia law.

Hayef said that statements issued by the head of the financial committee clearly indicate that the Finance Minister has refused to change his mind and accordingly he is breaching the country's constitution and laws. The grilling will be listed on the agenda of the opening session of the Assembly's new term on October 29. The grilling could be debated on that day or delayed for the next session based on the readiness of the Finance Minister.

Hajraf has been threatened to be grilled by several lawmakers including one by MP Riyadh Al-Adasani over a variety of issues. Adasani described the grilling as one of the biggest in Kuwait's history that would tackle major financial issues like the budget and the country's sovereign wealth fund.



MP Mohammad Hayef

## Japan searches for survivors; Hagibis death toll hits 56



MARUMORI: A vehicle is buried in mud after a heavy flood caused by Typhoon Hagibis in Marumori, Miyagi prefecture yesterday. — AFP

TOKYO: Tens of thousands of rescuers worked into the night yesterday to find survivors of a powerful typhoon in Japan that killed at least 56 people, as fresh rain threatened to hamper their efforts. Typhoon Hagibis crashed into the country on Saturday night, unleashing high winds and torrential rain across 36 of the country's 47 prefectures, triggering landslides and catastrophic flooding.

The death toll from the disaster has risen steadily, with national broadcaster NHK saying that 56 people had been killed and 15 were still missing. It cited its own tally based on local reporting. The government has given lower numbers but is still

Continued on Page 24

## Saudi players visit Muslim holy site

JERUSALEM: Players from Saudi Arabia's national soccer team travelled to Jerusalem's Old City yesterday to pray at one of Islam's holiest sites. The players visited the Noble Sanctuary, a compound that houses the Golden Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest shrine in Islam. "This is the most beautiful day in my life," said Yasser Al-Mishal, the president of the Saudi Football Federation.

"Really, it's hard to express my feelings. I thank God that I could visit al-Aqsa mosque and pray inside the

mosque." The Dome of the Rock is built where the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is said to have ascended to heaven and it encompasses the Foundation Stone, a rock holy to Muslims, Jews and Christians. Jordan has custodianship of the holy sites.

The area is one of the most sensitive sites in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is revered by Jews as Temple Mount, the site of two biblical Jewish temples, and is situated in a part of Jerusalem captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed in a move that has not been recognized internationally.

Saudi football fans are delighted about their national team's historic match today against their Palestinian "brothers" in the occupied West Bank, but dismiss suggestions it marks a gradual normalization of ties between the kingdom and Israel.

Continued on Page 24



JERUSALEM: Saudi Football Federation chief Yasser Almisehal (center) and members of the Saudi football delegation visit the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Old City of Jerusalem yesterday. — AFP

## Trio wins economics Nobel for fighting poverty

STOCKHOLM: US-based economists Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer won the 2019 Nobel Economics Prize yesterday for work in fighting global poverty that has helped millions of children by favoring practical steps over theory. French-American Duflo becomes only the second female economics winner in the prize's 50-year

history, as well as the youngest at 46.

She shared the award equally with Indian-born American Banerjee and Kremer, also of the United States. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said their work had shown how poverty could be addressed by breaking it down into smaller and more precise questions

Continued on Page 24





# Oil industry faces major challenges; Kuwait committed to maintaining prices' stability

## Prime Minister sponsors, attends 4th Kuwait oil, gas conference



**KUWAIT:** Senior officials led by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attend the opening ceremony of the fourth Kuwait Oil and Gas Show and Conference. — KUNA photos

**KUWAIT:** The oil industry is facing major challenges affecting oil-producing countries, Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Khaled Al-Fadhel said on Sunday. Fadhel made the statement during the opening ceremony of the fourth Kuwait Oil and Gas Show and Conference (KOGS 2019) held earlier in the day, under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The challenges include developing the techniques of oil production and refining, digitizing product marketing, climate change and the risks of cyber terrorism, the minister told the conference.

### Stability of prices

Despite changes affecting the global oil industry, Kuwait has been committed to maintaining stability of global oil prices, in a way that does not negatively impact development march of oil-exporting countries, he noted. He stated that the oil markets have dealt with the volatility of prices, thanks to the unprecedented commitment to the implementation of what has been agreed upon among the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). He pointed to the role of Kuwait in boosting cooperation among member states and its commitment to restoring stability to the oil markets. He stressed the need to attract developed world expertise and boost the country's



**Minister of Oil Khaled Al-Fadhel speaks during the event.**

technical capabilities.

Fadhel extolled the country's pioneering and distinguished role on both local and international levels in all aspects of the oil and gas industry. "We always work on developing and bringing the latest technologies in the oil industry, and seeking to benefit from advanced technological methods," he said. He stressed Kuwait's faith in concerted efforts to protect the Earth from the risks of climate change. "Kuwait as an oil producing country works on adapting the oil industry to reduce green-



**His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives a memento during the ceremony.**



**KPC CEO Hashem Hashem delivers a speech.**

Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh as well as a number of ministers, and some senior officials of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), its subsidiaries and the Prime Minister's Divan. During the festival, some speeches were delivered by KPC Chief Executive Officer Hashem Sayed Hashem, CEO of Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah and President of the International Petroleum Society Sami Al-Naim.

In a press statement after the ceremony, His Highness the Prime Minister lauded the big participation of Arab, national and foreign companies as well as international organizations in the conference. He said the remarkable participation of these institutions confirms Kuwait's distinguished reputation and embodies its pioneering position in oil industry and energy. His Highness the Premier noted that the conference is a big event for those who are exploring available investment opportunities. He pointed out that the conference also is a chance to share expertise and display the latest techniques and achievements, and focus on obstacles facing the oil and gas energy. His Highness the Premier expressed his confidence in Kuwait's human resource working in this field. He stressed the full government's support to create a developed and healthy workplace environment to be able to enhance productivity of oil institutions. — KUNA

house gas emissions in the atmosphere and qualifying oil operations to become environment friendly," he said. He indicated that the Kuwaiti oil sector is taking into consideration climate change conventions and partaking in international events to aiming it protect the environment. (end)

### Distinguished reputation

The opening ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-



**Khaled Al-Fadhel with Eaman Al-Roudhan, Hamad Al-Marzouq, and Waleed Al-Khashti at Zain's booth in KOGS.**



**Khaled Al-Fadhel and Eaman Al-Roudhan discuss Zain's solutions for the oil and gas sector.**

## Zain showcases its latest innovations for oil and gas sector

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its participation - for the second time running - in the fourth Kuwait Oil and Gas Show and Conference (KOGS 2019) organized by the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) and Informa Markets with official support from the Kuwait Ministry of Oil, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries. The event, held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) and Kuwait International Fair in Mishref between 13 - 16 October, comes under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The opening ceremony witnessed the attendance of several prominent figures, led by His Highness the Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al Fadhel, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

Hashem Hashem, Chief Executive Officer of Zain Kuwait Eaman Al-Roudhan, Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, as well as a number of experts, professionals, and leaders of the regional and international oil, gas, and energy industries.

Zain's presence in this event for the second time running comes in line with its core objectives that aim at shouldering the advancement of the community as a whole on all levels, where the company reaffirms the principal of partnership through similar efforts with the aim of contributing to the further progress of national economy, being a national leading player in the Kuwaiti private sector.

Zain took the opportunity to provide high-speed Wi-Fi to cover all parts of the exhibition, which over 6,000 attendees and over 180 exhibitors from over 30 countries benefit from throughout a period of four days. KOGS par-

ticipants will benefit from a reliable, high-speed, and secure connection to access the Internet and other applications, as Zain was keen on providing free Wi-Fi in all of the exhibition's areas, being the leading digital service provider in the country.

Zain is also present at the exhibition through its own dedicated booth, where the company showcases a number of its 'Zain Business' services and solutions for corporate customers attending the exhibition, particularly those presented to the oil and gas industries. The solutions being showcased include NXN and Microsoft's analytics solutions using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), NXN's Smart District and Smart City Solutions, and Nokia's training and inspection solutions using Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR).

Zain's solutions also feature Huawei's 5G Robot for remote firefighting and gas leak control solutions, Zain

Drone services for oil and gas infrastructure digital inspections using drones, VSaaS (video surveillance as a service), LASILKI - a reliable and secured wireless Push-to-talk service (PTT) over 4G LTE technology, with Zain's fast speed and nationwide coverage, as well as superfast and secure Express Route solutions in collaboration with Microsoft, Oracle, and Amazon.

The fourth Kuwait Oil and Gas Show and Conference (KOGS), organized by the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), serves all areas of the oil and gas industry; including petroleum geosciences, exploration and production, refining, and petrochemical products and services. The parallel 4-day multi-disciplinary conference program focuses on science and engineering factors facing those working in Kuwait and the region. Together, the conference and exhibition combine to form the single biggest gathering of the oil and gas industry ever seen in Kuwait.



**Eaman Al-Roudhan and KNPC CEO Waleed Al-Bader with Zain's team.**



**Zain Business team.**



## Local

# Kuwait's Deputy Amir receives state officials, outgoing ambassador



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



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing Algerian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulhamid Abdawi.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday Sheikh Dr Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah. His Highness also received Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. His Highness also received the Algerian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulhamid Abdawi on the occasion of his tenure ending. Meanwhile, His Highness Deputy Amir and Crown Prince received Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz accompanied by several officials on the occasion of their appointment to their new positions at the ministry. They include Undersecretary Abdulaziz Shuaib, Assistant Undersecretary for Development and Administrative Planning Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi and Assistant Undersecretary for Cooperation Salem Al-Rashidi. Minister Kharraz also introduced the new officials to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah later yesterday. — KUNA



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz and the newly-appointed ministry officials.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz and the newly-appointed ministry officials.



## Amiri Diwan Minister receives UK Ambassador

KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace the UK Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport. Historical bilateral relations and issues of common

interest were discussed during the reception, which was also attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA

## Deputy FM chairs talks ahead of Somalia donor conference



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah presided over a meeting yesterday in preparation for a donor conference to support Somalia's ailing education sector, which will take place in the Gulf state next year.

The talks, attended by a number of Kuwaiti diplomats and education ministry officials, aimed to ensure that the gathering of international donors in Kuwait to support Somalia would go off without a hitch. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti, Russian speakers discuss cooperation

BELGRADE: Kuwaiti National Assembly speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem held talks yesterday with Chairwoman of the Federation Council, the Upper House of the Russian Parliament, Valentina Matviyenko. The talks dealt with cooperation between the two countries and means of promoting them, especially on the parliamentary side. The meeting was on the sidelines of the 141 st Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference in Belgrade, Serbia, which discussed topics

and agenda of the conference. Deputy Parliamentary Deputy MP Rakan Al-Nisf, MP Ali Al-Daqbasi, MP Safa Al-Hashem, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei, MP Nasser Al-Dosari and Kuwaiti Ambassador in Serbia Yousef Abdulsamad attended the meeting. Ghanem and his accompanying delegation arrived in Serbia on Saturday to take part in the 141st Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference, which concludes on October 17th. — KUNA



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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City view from Al-Shaheed Park. — Photo by Krishnadas Ramanujam (KUNA)

# EQUATE announces official start-up of MEGlobal Oyster Creek, TX site

## Plant producing fiber-grade, on-spec ethylene glycol on US Gulf Coast

**OYSTER CREEK, TX, USA:** EQUATE Group announced yesterday the official start-up of the MEGlobal Oyster Creek Site's commercial production of fiber-grade, on-spec monoethylene glycol. The plant has a nameplate capacity of 750,000 metric-tons-annually (MTa) of ethylene glycol and access to shipping routes to customers around the world.

The new plant will be operated by MEGlobal Americas Inc, a subsidiary of EQUATE Petrochemical Company and is the Group's first manufacturing facility in the United States. It will produce monoethylene and diethylene glycol, products used in a number of market applications including polyester fibers, polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles and packaging, antifreeze and coolants, paints, resins, deicing fluids, heat transfer fluids and construction materials.

Dr Ramesh Ramachandran, President and CEO of EQUATE, said: "The successful execution of this project demonstrates EQUATE's ability to leverage its best-in-class practices across the globe. From safety to schedule to cost control, the MEGlobal Oyster Creek Site epitomizes our commitment to operational excellence and efficiency in order to serve the growing customer need for EG across the globe." The new facility is the first major invest-

ment by a Kuwait-based company on the US Gulf Coast. It built on the longstanding relationship between Kuwaiti partner, Petrochemical Industries Company in Kuwait (PIC) and US partner, Dow Inc (NYSE: DOW), a relationship that was forged during the liberation of Kuwait. That relationship led to the formation of the EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a joint venture between Dow and PIC (42.5 percent ownership each) as well as Boubayan Petrochemicals Company KSC (BPC) with nine percent ownership and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC) with six percent ownership."

EQUATE's Executive Vice President, Naser Al-Dousari, said, "The new Oyster Creek MEGlobal plant is an expansion of the Company's ethylene glycol business in order to

meet fast-growing global demand. It greatly enhances our global presence and falls under our continuous plans to maximize value as a leading ethylene glycol producer and supplier."

The MEGlobal Oyster Creek plant is leveraging the US shale gas advantage by utilizing ethylene from the Dow Oyster Creek facility. The site has also licensed Dow's METEOR(tm) technology for its processes. The project achieved several milestones in its construction, including more than 3.5 million consecutive safe work hours. It cre-



ated 55 new full-time and 25-35 contract jobs. It employed almost 2,000 construction workers during project's peak and will contribute approximately \$24 million per year to the local economy.



Capacity of 750,000 MTa of ethylene glycol



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for the Two Americas Reem Al-Khaled and Ambassador of the Republic of Peru Francisco Rivarola Rubio jointly cut the ceremonial cake at a reception held on the occasion of 198th anniversary of the national independence day of Peru. Senior officials, diplomats and media persons attended the event, which took place at JW Marriot Hotel Sunday evening. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



## Local

# Municipal Council approves Amiri Diwan takeover of Entertainment City development

## 2,650 million square meters area allocated for new Entertainment City

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council yesterday approved the Entertainment City's development project, accepting the Cabinet's decision for the Amiri Diwan to take over it instead of the Touristic Enterprises Company. During a regular session yesterday, the council allocated an area of 2,650 million square meters for the Amiri Diwan for the purpose of developing the Entertainment City, provided the latter submits the project's blueprints for approval within the new structural plan.

"The new Entertainment City project will be 2,650 million square meters," said Dr Hassan Kamal, Municipal Council member and Chairman for the Capital Governorate Committee. The Municipal Council had issued a decision in 2016 to annex the Sheikh Zayed Park, which is adjacent to the current Entertainment City's location, into the project, Dr Kamal noted. He explained that the previous decision for the new project required allocation of land for the Sheikh Zayed Park in another location where the park currently has more than 1,200 trees.

The Sheikh Zayed Park is adjacent to the current entertainment city that belongs to the Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), which still has contracts to maintain the park, Dr Kamal pointed out. The Municipal Council has accepted the decision of the Cabinet for Amiri Diwan to take over instead Touristic Enterprises Company, he added. In

addition, the Municipal is responsible for evaluating the final plan for the new Entertainment City that overlooks the Gulf. Dr Kamal pointed out that the Amiri Diwan will design the new Entertainment city through international companies, hoping this project will attract many people and it is vital to have in Kuwait. In 1984, the current Entertainment City was established in Al-Doha area and was considered one of the major entertainment centers in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the Municipal Council also approved a proposal made by member Humoud Al-Enezi on building fences for protection against stray dogs in border areas and around houses. Enezi also urged PAAAFR to fight stray dogs using the latest methods in this field. In addition, the council approved a request made by Kuwait Ports Authority to add new commercial activities to its new administrative building at Shuwaikh Port, such as bank branches, cafeterias, money exchangers, supermarkets, long distance calls, travel agent, a barber, insurance company and custom clearance services.

Separately, Kuwait Municipality labor union's chairman Mohammad Al-Arada said that the syndicate had demanded incentives for employees working in engineering positions who use their own vehicles in doing their jobs, adding that Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahad Al-Shola had been contacted in this regard and agreed to covey the demands to the Civil Service Commission (CSC).



KUWAIT: A general view of Municipal Council members attending a session yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Govt to save on publications' expenses

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A number of state departments received instructions recently to suspend issuing weekly or periodic publications in order to cut down their expenses and rationalize in using the state budgets, said informed sources.

"According to the Finance Ministry, those publications became redundant with the presence of social media," the sources explained, noting that the ministry had submitted a memo in this regard to the Cabinet explaining that those publications cost a lot of money for the printing paper without making any revenues in return - not even from commercial ads.

The Finance Ministry had issued the new instructions to the Ministry of Electricity and Water, Kuwait Airways, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait University, Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, and other ministries who have their own publications or magazines, the sources said.

In its memo, the finance ministry also highlighted

that the majority of those working in such publications are not Kuwaitis, which goes against government plans to replace expatriate workers with citizens. Further, the sources said that the Finance Ministry urged government bodies to change the topics published in those publications into electronic ones to be posted on each ministry's official social media accounts.

### Housing units

In other news, Director of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare Bader Al-Weqayyan announced the authority's readiness to hand over housing units at the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak project. Weqayyan added that the second contract at the Metlaa project belongs to the Chinese government and that a meeting was held at the authority's headquarters and attended by the Chinese ambassador to Kuwait to have the company's CEO sign an affidavit to stick to the first phase's schedule by the end of February 2020. The second phase, which includes 6,342 units, would be finished by the end of June 2020, he noted.

### Attestation fees

Responding to social media reports about collecting KD 2 from citizens to attest sick leaves, the Ministry of Health released a statement yesterday in which it explained that the attestation department only attests sick leaves issued by private clinics with a KD 2 fee in the form of a revenue stamp.

## Two delivery companies questioned for 'monopoly'

KUWAIT: Based on reports made by the Competition Protection Authority (CPA), Ministry of Interior (MOI) investigations showed that two foreign restaurant delivery companies had been monopolizing the local market, making over KD 4 million from their operation in Kuwait, Al-Jarida daily reported yesterday.

In this regard, informed sources said that CPA had urged the two companies to remove violations they had committed and pay a fine equal to what they had made from this monopoly, but they refused to adhere within the legal grace period, which means they have to pay twice as much now. Furthermore, the sources

added that most of the manpower hired by the two concerned companies hold article 20 visas (domestic laborers), which is a violation of residency laws.

Notably, investigations revealed that the two companies had signed contracts with various restaurants in 2017 and forced them not to cooperate with other delivery services, which made many restaurants cancel contracts they had signed with other companies; forcing those companies to file several complaints to CPA in June 2018. After that, the two companies allegedly informed restaurants that they would charge them an extra two percent on operations in case they sign contracts with other delivery services. —Al-Jarida



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality said yesterday that its Farwaniya branch campaigns resulted in closing 54 stores in addition to removing 4,800 square meters of encroachments on state property. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

## DAI chief takes part in tourism economy forum

BEIJING: The Global Tourism Economy Forum 2019 kicked off yesterday in Macau, China, tackling means of enhancing commercial relations with China, especially in the tourism industry field, with the participation of Director General of Kuwait's Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah (DAI) Sheikhha Hessa Al-Sabah. Kuwait's General Consul to Hong Kong and Macau

Salah Al-Seif said that Sheikhha Hessa Al-Sabah is participating in the forum held between October 13-15, as being an official speaker in the main discussion panel of the event. Sheikhha Hessa's distinguished efforts exerted in the field of Islamic antiquities gave her the opportunity to take part in this forum as she is scheduled to give a speech on the key role culture plays as a diplomatic tool among world nations. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ambassador to China Sameeh Hayat hailed choosing Sheikhha Hessa to participate in this global event, which he said reflects deep-rooted historic ties between Kuwait and China. The Global Tourism Economy Forum is held annually in Macau with the support of China, with the European Union as an official partner. It aims at encouraging the world tourism economy. — KUNA

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Mobile phones back in Kashmir, but internet still down

## Spain jails Catalan separatist leaders for independence bid

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BAGHDAD: Iraqi municipal workers clean up Tayaran Square in central Baghdad on October 5, 2019 after a curfew was lifted following a day of violent protests. —AFP

# Without reforms, unrest in Iraq will reignite

‘It’s been a long time since people had confidence in the government’

**BAGHDAD:** Calm may have returned to Iraq after protests were violently suppressed, but the threat of further unrest remains, experts say, amid public rejection of politicians and a failure so far to heed calls for reform. In six days of demonstrations from October 1, more than 100 Iraqis died, mostly protesters killed by live ammunition fired into crowds. The perpetrators have not been arrested, or even identified.

Mohammed Al-Kaabi, a 28-year-old unemployed graduate, says he is ready to return to the streets at any time. “We protested and will protest again to denounce the poverty, unemployment and corruption that ruin our lives,” he said. Unproductive meetings in parliament held since haven’t convinced him otherwise, he said.

Nor have proposed reforms-unemployment aid, housing allowances, an online job portal-promised by a government that he would like to see fall. “What are these reforms and why were they only announced after young people died?” he asked. “It’s been a long time since people had confidence in the government,” he said, adding that politicians “spend their time making promises without ever keeping them.”

According to Falah Al-Khazaali, an MP for the Fatah party, the current cabinet “isn’t responsible for the errors of its predecessors.” Fatah is the political arm of Hashed Al-Shaabi-the paramilitary force dominated by pro-Iran groups-and is part of the ruling coalition. “But whether

protests continue will depend on the government’s ability to fulfill its promises to the Iraqi people,” he added.

**‘Fire in the street’**

During protests-which started in Baghdad and spread to southern Iraq-demonstrators denounced an absence of jobs and lack of functioning public services while leaders benefited from corruption, which reached \$450 billion (410 billion euros) in 16 years according to official figures. In a country where voter turnout is declining amid polls regularly tainted by fraud, “the failure of the political system is the principal reason for this movement,” Iraqi political analyst Essam Al-Fili told AFP.

Facing protester demands for radical change, reforms proposed in recent days by a government already heavily in debt “are not an action but a reaction, without planning or strategy,” said Fili. “They’re just trying to put out the fire in the street, but if nothing changes, fires will flare again,” he added.

**‘Crisis of confidence’**

According to political analyst Wathiq Al-Hachemi, the root problem-“a crisis of confidence between the people and power”-isn’t new. “Successive governments have promised reforms without ever putting them in place,” he said. But this time, an inability to implement

reform is compounded by “a political and economic crisis and allegiances abroad,” he said, with factions choosing sides between Iran and the United States, the two major foreign powers in Iraq.

Mounting tension between Tehran and Washington is a serious challenge to Iraq, scene of four decades of conflict and violence. For Zine Al-Abidine Al-Bediri, a 27-year-old lawyer who demonstrated in the southern city of Kut, the situation calls for a total overhaul. “I want to change the political system, the politicians and even the constitution,” he told AFP. If the protest movement stops before having obtained all this he said, it’s because demonstrators find themselves facing “political parties and their militias.”

During the unrest, protesters were targeted by gunmen, who the government labeled “infiltrators”. Human rights groups accused security forces of the attacks. Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, spiritual leader for Iraq’s Shiite majority, said “the government is responsible when, under the eye of law enforcement, protesters are fired on illegally.” In response, the government launched two enquiries, one to investigate protest deaths and injuries, and another to hold to account security forces who acted illegally. Despite the violence, “the youth braved bullets without fear,” said Bediri. And if their demands are not met, “we will show them something even bigger and stronger.” —AFP

## India tightens security ahead of temple ruling

**NEW DELHI:** Authorities have tightened security restrictions in the northern Indian flashpoint city of Ayodhya ahead of a crucial Supreme Court ruling over the disputed site fiercely contested between Hindus and Muslims. Hindus and Muslims have for decades been bitterly divided over the 16th-century Babri mosque in Ayodhya, a city in Uttar Pradesh state.

Tensions boiled over in 1992 when Hindu zealots destroyed the mosque, sparking religious violence that killed 2,000 people. The Supreme Court is expected to conclude on October 17 hearings into appeals against a key 2010 court ruling that the lion groups should split the site, with Hindus granted the both shares.

The restrictions under section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure prohibiting more than four people to assemble were first imposed on August 31. Ayodhya’s district magistrate Anuj K Jha said Sunday, but were tightened further on Saturday. “The order has been issued considering safety and security of Ayodhya and those visiting here as Govt’s paramount concerns,” Jha tweeted late Sunday.

The new orders said that “drones, unmanned aerial vehicle, unknown flying objects or anything that can be weaponized are banned without prior permission from district authorities”. The district also banned firecrackers popular during this time of the year when Hindus mark several major religious festivals, some involving Hindu deity Ram who they believe was born in Ayodhya.

The orders will be in place under December 10. The Supreme Court is expected to hand down its ruling before Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi retires on November 17.

Many Hindus believe the medieval mosque that stood there for 460 years was only built after the destruction of an earlier temple. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu nationalist party has campaigned on constructing a new temple on the site of the razed mosque. —AFP

## White House reporters condemn ‘fake video’ of Trump killing press

**WASHINGTON:** The White House Correspondents’ Association (WHCA) has condemned a video that depicted a fake image of US President Donald Trump slaughtering members of the news media, shown at a gathering of his supporters at a resort owned by the president. News of the video was first reported by the New York Times after someone who attended the gathering leaked a cellphone video of

it to the newspaper. The video shows Trump’s head superimposed on the body of a man wearing a pinstriped suit opening fire at a “Church of Fake News” with parishioners’ faces covered with logos of various news organizations or replaced with those of prominent critics of the president, the Times reported.

“All Americans should condemn this depiction of violence directed toward journalists and the president’s political opponents,” Jonathan Karl, president of the association, said in a statement. “We have previously told the president his rhetoric could incite violence. Now we call on him and everybody associated with this conference to denounce this video and affirm that violence has no place in our society,” Karl added.

Reuters has not obtained a copy of the video for review and had not been able to contact organizers of the event. The political action group hosting the event, American Priority, denounced the violence in the video and are investigating as to how it was shown. It said in a statement on Twitter that it had not been aware of the video and did not approve it. “This video was not approved, seen or sanctioned by the ... organizers,” the group said, adding that the video had been shown in a “side room.”

American Priority states on its website it supports free speech as protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution, which also protects freedom of the press. White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham wrote in a post on

Twitter that Trump had not yet seen the video, but condemned it “based upon everything he has heard.” Trump’s son Donald Trump Jr and a former spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders were scheduled to speak at the three-day conference in Miami, but the Times reported that neither had seen the video.

The Times reported that the video appeared to include edited scenes from the 2014 dark comedy “Kingsman: The Secret Service”. Trump has repeatedly called the media “the enemy of the people” in comments that critics have said could incite violence against journalists. In 2018, a gunman killed five people in a Maryland newspaper office in one of the deadliest attacks on journalists in US history. —Reuters



International

# Official results to seal conservative outsider's victory in Tunisia polls

## Contest reflected Tunisia's shifting post-revolution political landscape

**TUNIS:** Tunisia's electoral commission was expected to confirm that voters gave conservative political outsider Kais Saied a sweeping mandate to be the next president, thanks largely to young people who flocked to his side. In a contest that reflected Tunisia's shifting post-revolution political landscape, Saied, an independent, scooped up more than 70 percent of the vote, polls showed — sweeping aside his rival, charismatic media magnate Nabil Karoui. "He was elected very comfortably," political scientist Selim Kharrat said.

With his three million estimated votes, Saied won double that of all 217 lawmakers combined who were elected in October 6 general elections. This win "is a message to parliament," Kharrat added. "Voters have opted for a plan to clean up politics, fight corruption, and give more power to local entities." Official results were set to be announced at 7:00 pm (1800 GMT), according to the electoral commission ISIE, which reported turnout was at least 58 percent, a steep rise from the first round.

Saied, a retired law professor with a rigid and austere demeanor that earned him the nickname "Robocop", was carried to victory by young voters, wooed by his anti-establishment platform. Around 90 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds voted for Saied, according to estimates by the Sigma polling institute, compared with 49.2 percent of voters over 60. In his first reaction, Saied thanked the country's young people "for turning a new page", and vowed to try to build "a new Tunisia". Thousands of people took to the streets of the capital Tunis late Sunday to celebrate Saied's victory, honking horns and singing the national anthem.

"Kais Saied, voice of the people," a gathered crowd chanted. "Long live Tunisia!" The runoff pitted Saied against another newcomer, businessman Karoui, who has been dubbed Tunisia's "Berlusconi". Karoui had been jailed for the majority of the campaign, only walk-

ing free on Wednesday after more than a month behind bars on suspicion of money-laundering. He has dismissed the charges as politically motivated.

**'Peaceful transition'**

Saied and Karoui both trounced the old guard in a September 15 first round, highlighting voter anger over a stagnant economy, joblessness and poor public services in the cradle of the Arab Spring. The country's high unemployment rate disproportionately affected young graduates, fuelling their calls for political change. The poll, Tunisia's second free presidential election since its 2011 revolt, followed the death of president Beji Caid Essebsi in July.

Saied, a 61-year-old constitutional law expert, campaigned on the values of the 2011 revolution, based on opposition to Westernized and corrupt elites, and in favor of radical decentralization. "Tunisians were looking for integrity", said newly elected conservative lawmaker Lotfi Mraïhi. He supported Saied because he thought he embodied "the will to cut ties with the old system and to revive the hope that had been buoyed by the revolution". Tunisians took to social media, many voicing pride in a successful democratic process. "Congratulations to Tunisia... for showing a continued commitment to resolving differences via peaceful transitions," said HA Hellyer, a senior fellow at the Royal United Services Institute in London, in a tweet. The Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party, which won the most seats in parliament in the general elections, had called on supporters to back Saied.

**Sharp contrast**

While the candidates were both seen as anti-establishment figures, the contrast between them was sharp. A social conservative, Saied has defended the death penalty, criminalization of homosexuality and a sexual



TUNIS: Tunisians gather to celebrate the victory of Kais Saied in the Tunisia's presidential runoff. —AFP

assault law that punishes unmarried couples who engage in public displays of affection. Karoui presented himself as a candidate for the poor whose appeal stemmed largely from his media empire and philanthropic activity.

While his arrest cemented his outsider status, he had been a longtime key supporter of president Essebsi,

with ties to the political establishment. For Kharrat, what set the two finalists apart was primarily a difference of "moral principles". "Karoui represents a leading political class that is dishonest and uses money for its own personal interests," he said. Karoui however called the election result a "denial of justice", saying he had been penalised by his incarceration. —AFP

## Presidential hopeful Sanders seeks to shrug off heart attack

**WASHINGTON:** US Senator Bernie Sanders may be 78 and recovering from a heart attack, but he is determined to prove he has lost none of his appetite for political battle ahead of elections next year. The pugnacious left-winger is seeking to put his campaign for the Democratic nomination back on track after earlier suggesting that he would have to slow down his schedule due to his health scare.

"There's nobody who has run a more vigorous campaign," Sanders told ABC News in an interview broadcast on Sunday. "We're talking about three or four rallies a day and town meetings... I think after a short period of time, we'll probably be able to return to that." Sanders, who is polling third behind Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren in the race to take on President Donald Trump in 2020, is renowned for his rigorous work ethic and reluctance to discuss personal matters.

But he offered a rare insight into how he felt before and during the heart attack — which he brushed off as a minor issue.

"Heart attack is a scary word," he said. "What I had was a 45-50 minute procedure, two stents were placed in my heart, which had a blocked artery. "It's a fairly common procedure, and people are back on their feet pretty soon, as is the case with me. "I was more fatigued, despite a heavy schedule, than I should have been. I wasn't sleeping as well as I should have been. "Occasionally, I was a little bit wobbly. And I should have put two and two together, and I didn't."

**'Get back into the groove'**

Sanders has pushed back after mentioning that he might reduce his workload. "I misspoke the other day," he told NBC on Wednesday. "The media drives me a little bit nuts to make a big deal about it. "We're going to get back into the groove of a very vigorous campaign. I love doing rallies and I love doing town meetings." He also dismissed criticism that his team had been slow to release news of the heart attack, which he suffered on October 1 at a campaign event in Nevada.

"The first thing that we're trying to do is understand what's going on and not run to The New York Times and have to report every 15 minutes," he said. "This is not a baseball game. So I think we acted absolutely appropriately." He was released from the hospital after three days and is due to join rival candidates on Tuesday for a grueling TV debate before next weekend holding a "Bernie's Back" rally in New York.



HOUSTON: In this file photo taken on September 12, 2019 Democratic presidential hopeful US Senator for Vermont Bernie Sanders asks for time to speak to the moderators during the third Democratic primary debate of the 2020 presidential campaign season hosted by ABC News in partnership with Univision at Texas Southern University. —AFP

Sanders is the oldest candidate vying to lead the Democrats. Biden is 76 and Warren is 70, while Trump is 73. Sanders said he would "fight even harder" to introduce universal health care after his heart attack. His health has generally been good and it has been Biden who has had to bat away questions about his stamina and mental sharpness. A self-described Democratic socialist, Sanders laid out his radical personal vision to ABC, saying that "business as usual, and

doing it the old-fashioned way, is not good enough." "What we need is, in fact, I don't want to get people too nervous, we need a political revolution. "I am, I believe, the only candidate who's going to say to the ruling class of this country, the corporate elite, enough with your greed and with your corruption. We need real change in this country." Sanders pushed Hillary Clinton to the wire in 2016, but ultimately lost the race to become the Democratic nominee. —AFP

## For Syria Kurds, the end of autonomy?

**BEIRUT:** After years of working towards autonomy, Syria's Kurds have been dropped by their US ally and forced to call in the Damascus regime to stem a six-day Turkish offensive. But as President Bashar al-Assad's forces deploy towards the northern border, is the Kurdish minority giving up on autonomy?

**Why bring in the regime?**

Syria's Kurds have largely stayed out of the country's eight-year civil war, instead building their own institutions in regions they control in northern and northeastern Syria. After decades of marginalization, they have their own authorities, security forces and even schools in areas along the country's northern border.

Across the frontier, Turkey has eyed this push for independence with suspicion and considers the Syrian Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units (YPG) as "terrorists". Until earlier this month, the presence of American troops in YPG-held territory acted as a buffer against repeated Turkish threats of an imminent invasion.

But after US President Donald Trump announced US special forces would pull out, Turkish troops and their Syrian rebel proxies on Wednesday launched a cross-border attack. Feeling deeply betrayed after years of helping to fight the Islamic State group, and with the Pentagon on Sunday saying all 1,000 US troops would withdraw, the Kurds said

they had struck a deal with Damascus to intervene.

**What's at stake?**

The Turkish-led assault has seen the self-proclaimed Kurdish authorities lose a 120-kilometre (70-mile) long strip of the frontier. It has killed almost 130 Kurdish-led fighters and nearly 70 civilians, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor says. But they could lose even more in the roughly one third of the country they hold.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces control the country's main wheat-producing region, as well as major oil fields in eastern Syria. The YPG has spearheaded the US-backed fight against IS in Syria, expelling the extremists from their last patch of territory in March. After years of battle, they hold thousands of alleged IS jihadists in their jails, as well as related women and children in overcrowded camps, including foreigners.

They have warned any Turkish invasion would divert their security forces to the border and risk mass break-outs, and possibly a return in force of the extremists. Despite the territorial defeat of IS, the jihadists have continued to claim deadly attacks in SDF-held areas. On Sunday, the Kurds said around 800 IS-linked foreign women and children had escaped their custody after Turkish bombardment nearby, though Ankara has accused its foes of forcing them to leave.

**Kurdish autonomy up in smoke?**

Assad's regime has since 2015 gained back large swathes of the country from rebels and jihadists with key military backing from Russia. It is now in control



Syrians return to their homes in the town of Ayn Al-Arus, south of the border town of Tal Abyad, on October 14, 2019, after it was taken over by Turkish-backed Syrian fighters during their assault on Kurdish-held border towns in northeastern Syria. —AFP

of around 60 percent of the country and has vowed to eventually retake every inch of Syrian soil. The Kurdish authorities on Monday said all its institutions should continue to work normally after what it described as a purely "military agreement to defend the Syrian border".

A top foreign affairs official with the Kurdish authorities, Aldar Xelil, has described the deal as just "an emergency measure" that does not affect the status of the autonomous region. In talks until now, Damascus has demanded a full return of government institutions to Kurdish-majority areas, but the Kurds have sought to hang on to some degree of new-found autonomy. With the expected US withdrawal, those dreams

may have come to a screeching halt.

SDF chief Mazloum Abdi has acknowledged that help from Assad's government would mean making some concessions. "We know that we would have to make painful compromises with Moscow and Bashar al-Assad if we go down the road of working with them," he wrote in a Sunday editorial in the Foreign Policy magazine. But that, he said, was better than "genocide". "The Kurds have their back up against the wall so the Damascus regime is making the most of it," international relations analyst Karim Bitar said. Assad's government "feels it is in a position of strength, and will certainly make no concessions," he said. —AFP

## Israeli police arrest Palestinian officials in Jerusalem

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli police arrested the Palestinian governor of Jerusalem and a local official of the mainstream Fatah party in dawn raids yesterday in the disputed city, their lawyer said. Police arrested governor Adnan Ghaith and the Fatah general secretary for Jerusalem, Shadi Mutour, in raids on their homes in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, lawyer Mohammed Mahmud told AFP. He said they were accused of engaging in activity on behalf of the Palestinian Authority in the city.

Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told AFP that "two representatives were arrested by police and are being questioned", but did not confirm their names or give any further detail. PA activities in Jerusalem are barred by Israel, which occupied east Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community. It considers the entire city its capital, while the Palestinians see the eastern sector as the capital of their future state.

About 320,000 Palestinians live in east Jerusalem. Senior Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi condemned Ghaith's arrest in a strongly-worded statement. "Governor Ghaith's detention is an act of political persecution," she wrote. "It is an illegal abduction that must be roundly and firmly condemned by all concerned parties." "Israel is waging war against everything Palestinian in Jerusalem," she added. Ghaith has been taken in for police questioning several times. —AFP

## Extinction Rebellion co-founder in court for 'drone plot'

**LONDON:** A co-founder of the Extinction Rebellion movement is to face trial over an alleged attempt to disrupt air traffic at London's Heathrow Airport using a drone, a judge ruled yesterday. Judge Martin Edmunds said Roger Hallam will be tried on February 17 on a single charge of conspiring to cause a public nuisance. Hallam, 53, was not in court but followed proceedings via video link from prison where he is being held on remand. He spoke only to confirm his name, date of birth and nationality.

No plea was entered. The bearded activist from Wandsworth, southwest London, was one of a number of people held in September after a protest by an offshoot of Extinction Rebellion, Heathrow Pause. The group, which is against the construction of a third runway at Heathrow, aimed to disrupt the travel plans of tens of thousands passengers by flying toy drones near the airport. But the devices failed to get off the ground, prompting claims from activists that police had used jamming devices.

London's Metropolitan Police have moved to try to minimize wide-scale disruption in the British capital since the start of a two-week Extinction Rebellion protest which began last week. That includes corralling climate change activists to a designated spot in Trafalgar Square using little-used powers under public order legislation. A total of 1,336 people had been arrested up to 8:00 am (0700 GMT) on Monday, Extinction Rebellion said. Among those arrested was a man dressed as a head of broccoli. —AFP



## International

# Populists set to win Poland vote, raising fears of new EU tensions

## ‘Poland must change more and it must change for the better’

**WARSAW:** Poland’s governing right-wing populist party was poised to win a weekend election, latest results showed, and appeared on track to keep a parliamentary majority that would allow it to pursue a judicial reform agenda that has put it at loggerheads with the EU. The triumph by the Law and Justice (PiS) party followed a campaign focused on a raft of new welfare measures coupled with attacks on LGBT rights and Western values.

“We have four years of hard work ahead. Poland must change more and it must change for the better,” said PiS party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski after an exit poll showed him winning with an expanded majority. His party controlled 239 of the 460 seats in last parliament. Near full official results provided by the state elections commission on Monday did not provide a seat count. Condemning the PiS’s anti-LGBT drive and close church ties, but sharing the its welfare goals, the left returned to parliament after a four-year hiatus.

A far-right libertarian party, known for its anti-EU views, also made it over the five percent threshold to enter parliament. Experts believe that a strong PiS win would see it continuing court reforms that risk undermining judicial independence and the rule of law, something likely to further stoke conflict with the European Union. Should full results confirm an expanded majority, “we can expect the PiS to further limit liberal democracy,” Warsaw University political scientist Anna Sosnowska-Materska told AFP.

The PiS scored 44.57 percent of the vote, outpacing the centrist Civic Coalition (KO) opposition with 26.65 percent support and a leftist coalition that took 12.27 percent, based on 91 percent of official results published by the state elections commission yesterday. The PSL farmers/Kukiz 15 alliance took 8.63 percent of the vote for 30 seats. The new far-right libertarian Confederation party, captured 6.76 percent support for 13 seats.

### Welfare state

In office since 2015, Kaczynski’s PiS has focused on poorer rural voters, coupling family values with the introduction of welfare state spending like a popular child allowance, tax breaks for low-income earners and hikes to pensions and the minimum wage. “The PiS is finally taking care of the weakest, most vulnerable members of society,” Kasia, a 40-year-old psychologist working at a women’s shelter, told AFP after voting in Warsaw on Sunday. “I’ve seen it first hand at work.”

Kaczynski, who is widely regarded as Poland’s de facto leader, has also stoked deep social division by attacking sexual minorities and rejecting Western liberal values, all with the tacit blessing of Poland’s influential Catholic Church which holds sway over rural voters. He is among several populist leaders in the European Union seeking greater national sovereignty over the federalism championed by France and Germany. The PiS has sought favor with the Trump administration. Poland has long regarded the United States as the primary guarantor of its security within the NATO alliance and as a bulwark against Russia, its Soviet-era master with whom tensions still run high.

### ‘Safeguard future’

Backed by outgoing EU Council President Donald Tusk — from Poland and Kaczynski’s arch-rival on the domestic scene — the opposition Civic Coalition has drawn support mainly from urban voters upset by the PiS’s divisive politics, judicial reforms threatening the rule of law, graft scandals and monopolization of public media. “I voted for democracy, to safeguard the future of my grandchildren,” Jadwiga Sperska, a 64-year-old working pensioner and KO supporter, said outside a Warsaw polling station.

“The current government’s direction could lead us out of the EU,” she added. “I support an open, tolerant society, without aggression and with same-sex unions,” said Monika Pronkiewicz, a 31-year-old public sector worker



**WARSAW:** Leader of Poland’s ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party, Jaroslaw Kaczynski reacts after the first exit polls during the party’s electoral evening. —AFP

and left-wing voter in Warsaw. Kaczynski has tapped into a populist backlash against liberal elites, similar to trends in Western Europe and the US. His party’s bid to build a welfare state appeals to Poles who felt left behind amid the explosive growth and unfettered free-market drive after communism fell in 1989. Analysts suggest the social outlays have made the PiS a “teflon party”, cushioning its reputation amid a string of graft scandals

involving senior members. The KO had vowed to reverse PiS court reforms, which the EU says threaten judicial independence, but otherwise offered voters few concrete measures. Critics attribute strong economic growth under the PiS to favorable external factors. A tight labor market in the EU country of 38 million people saw it become the world’s top temporary migrant labor destination in 2017, according to the OECD. —AFP

## British pedophile jailed for Malaysia abuse found dead

**LONDON:** A British pedophile convicted in 2016 of raping 22 children in Malaysia has died in a British prison, officials said yesterday, as media reports suggested he had been stabbed. Richard Huckle, who preyed on children in a poor part of the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, was serving 22 concurrent life sentences for his crimes. Multiple media outlets in Britain cited unnamed sources saying he had been stabbed.

A Prison Service spokesman confirmed Huckle had died on Sunday at Full Sutton Prison in northern England. “It would be inappropriate to comment further while a police investigation is ongoing,” he added. Media reports said he was found dead in his cell after being attacked with a makeshift knife. At his trial in 2016, Huckle admitted a total of 71 offences against children he had groomed while posing as a volunteer working with Christian communities in Malaysia between 2006 and 2014. He posted pictures of the abuse of boys and girls on a website. The youngest victim was believed to have been around six months old. Huckle was eventually caught as part of an Australian investigation into the site. British police arrested him at London’s Gatwick Airport in December 2014 as he returned home from Malaysia to spend Christmas with his parents. He was carrying a heavily-encrypted computer and camera that contained more than 200,000 images of child sex abuse — over 1,000 of which showed him committing offences including rape. —AFP

## UK parliament car attacker jailed for life

**LONDON:** A London judge yesterday jailed for life a man convicted of trying to “kill as many people as possible” with his car outside Britain’s parliament last year. Judge Maura McGowan told Salih Khater, 30, he would serve a minimum of 15 years in jail following his conviction for attempted murder in July. A jury found that Khater deliberately tried to plough his car into cyclists, pedestrians and police in Westminster in August 2018, in an attack that McGowan said aimed to imitate previous terror incidents.

“Your undoubted intention was to kill as many people as possible and by doing so spread fear and terror,” she told London’s Old Bailey court in passing the sentence. “You replicated the acts of others who undoubtedly have acted with terrorist motives,” she added, noting Khater presented “a significant risk of causing serious harm to the public in the future”. The Sudanese-born British national did not kill anyone in the August 14 attack, which saw his car end up crashing into security barriers. Several people were injured.

During his trial, the court heard that Khater — who was granted asylum in Britain in 2010 — drove around Parliament Square several times before veering off at speed to strike a jogger. He then mowed down a group of 14 cyclists before accelerating towards two uniformed police officers standing by a security barrier outside parliament, who leapt away to avoid being hit. The jogger was left lying on the ground with abrasions and heavy bruising, while six of the cyclists received injuries including a broken collar bone and bruising. —AFP

## Spain jails Catalan separatist leaders for independence bid

**BARCELONA:** Thousands of angry protesters took to the streets of Barcelona yesterday after Spain’s Supreme Court sentenced nine Catalan separatist leaders to between nine and 13 years in jail for sedition over the failed 2017 independence bid. As the news broke, demonstrators turned out en masse, blocking streets in Barcelona and elsewhere as police braced for what activists said would be a mass response of civil disobedience.

The long-awaited ruling capped weeks of rising tension, and puts the Catalan question at the heart of the political debate less than a month before Spain heads into its fourth general election in as many years. Ahead of the ruling, Barcelona had woken up to a heavy police presence, with forces noticeably visible around the regional high court, the main Sants train station and El Prat, Spain’s second busiest airport. “I feel very affected by the sentence even though I expected it. I feel fury and a sense of powerlessness,” said Joan Guich, a 19-year-old maths student who was protesting on Gran Via. “They have been convicted for an ideology which I agree with.”

The 12 defendants were put on trial in February for their role in the banned October 1, 2017 referendum and the short-lived independence declaration that fol-

lowed it. The harshest sentence of 13 years was handed to former Catalan vice president Oriol Junqueras who served as the main defendant in absence of Carles Puigdemont, the region’s leader who fled Spain to avoid prosecution.

### ‘An outrage’

In a tweet from Brussels, Puigdemont denounced the sentences as an “outrage”. “100 years in all. An outrage. Now more than ever, by your side and those of your families. It is time to react as never before,” he wrote. And in a letter to his supporters released on Monday, Junqueras said the story was far from over. “Nothing ends today, you neither win nor convince,” he wrote in remarks directed at Spain’s central government. “We will come back even stronger... and win.”

Spain’s government has expressed hope that the trial’s end would allow it to move on from the crisis in the wealthy northeastern region, where support for independence had been gaining momentum over the past decade. “Following the Supreme Court decision we need to turn the page based on peaceful co-existence in Catalonia through dialogue,” Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said, speaking in English.

### ‘Democratic tsunami’ of protest

But Junqueras’ leftwing ERC party has said dialogue would not be possible without an “amnesty” for “political prisoners and those in exile”. Barcelona Football Club also tweeted its own response to the ruling, saying: “Prison is not the solution.” The resolution of the conflict in Catalonia must come exclusively from political dialogue.” The separatist move-



**BARCELONA:** People protest in Barcelona on October 14, 2019, after Spain’s Supreme Court sentenced nine Catalan leaders to prison terms ranging from nine to 13 years for sedition and misuse of public funds for their role in a failed 2017 independence bid. —AFP

ment is hoping the guilty verdicts will unite their divided ranks and bring supporters onto the streets.

“It is time to rise up against the authoritarian fascism of the Spanish state and its accomplices,” tweeted the radical CDR, whose activists briefly blocked Barcelona’s Sants station on Sunday and cut traffic on one of its main streets. “It is time for the #PopularRevolt.” “Democratic Tsunami”, a newly formed group set up to coordinate the response, called on demonstrators to meet in Barcelona’s Plaza Catalunya yesterday afternoon, while the Catalan National Assembly (ANC) and Omnium Cultural, the region’s two biggest grassroots pro-independence

groups, have called an evening rally.

In the coming days, demonstrators will march from five towns towards Barcelona where they will congregate on Friday, when a general strike has been called. For many, the situation has brought back memories of tensions in the street in the run-up to the October 1, 2017 referendum which was marred by police violence, and ahead of the short-lived independence declaration that followed on October 27. Former parliamentary speaker Carme Forcadell was handed 11 years and six months in prison, while five other former ministers were jailed for between 10 years and six months and 12 years. —AFP

## Britain, EU enter make-or-break Brexit week

**LONDON:** Prime Minister Boris Johnson repeated yesterday that Britain must leave the EU on October 31, as divorce talks resumed in Brussels in a pivotal week that could define how and when Brexit finally happens. In an elaborate ceremony in parliament in London, Queen Elizabeth II set out Johnson’s legislative program for the coming year, with leaving the EU top of the agenda.

“My government’s priority has always been to secure the United Kingdom’s departure from the European Union on October 31,” she said in a speech to robed peers from a gilded throne in the upper House of Lords. “My government intends to work towards a new partnership with the European Union, based on free trade and friendly cooperation.” But this depends on the outcome of closed-door discussions in Brussels, where officials are racing to reach a deal on Britain’s exit terms before a summit of EU leaders starting on Thursday. If he cannot get a deal by Saturday, Johnson will fall foul of a British law demanding he ask the EU to delay Brexit for a third time rather than risk a potentially disastrous “no deal” departure. “A deal is possible and it’s possible this month,” Irish Deputy Prime Minister Simon Coveney said as he arrived for talks with EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg. “It may even be possible this week but we’re not there yet.”

Michel Barnier, the bloc’s chief Brexit negotiator, briefed EU ambassadors late Sunday after a weekend of talks between officials described as “intense” and “constructive”. After weeks of gloom, the last few days have given a glimmer of hope that an agreement can be reached but there has so far been no decisive breakthrough. Barnier warned on Sunday that “a lot of work remains to be done”. This message echoed by Johnson’s spokesman in London, who said on Monday: “The talks are constructive but there is a lot of work still to do.” More than three years after the 2016 referendum vote to leave the EU, divorce talks remain stuck on how to avoid customs checks between British Northern Ireland and Ireland. After British MPs rejected a previous plan, Johnson put forward fresh proposals earlier this month — but they have been met with a cool response in Brussels.

### ‘Release the chutzpah’

Johnson took over from his predecessor Theresa May in July vowing no more delays, after she postponed Brexit twice in a failed attempt to get her own divorce deal through the British parliament. But he has no majority in the House of Commons, leaving him powerless even to call an election without the support of opposition parties. In a statement issued alongside Queen Elizabeth II’s speech, Johnson said the British public were “tired of stasis, gridlock and waiting for change”.

It was time to leave the EU and seize new opportunities, “to tear away that bureaucratic red tape, to set our own rules, and to release the talent, creativity,



**LONDON:** A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament’s Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson (bottom) gesturing towards the Leader of the opposition Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn (C) whilst speaking in the House of Commons. —AFP

innovation and chutzpah that exists in every corner of our United Kingdom”. As well as a commitment to Brexit, the Queen’s Speech included a raft of domestic measures, from tackling domestic violence to plastic pollution.

### ‘The clock is ticking’

Earlier, finance minister Sajid Javid announced the government’s first post-Brexit budget would take place on November 6 “to shape the economy for the future”. But Johnson is unlikely to get any of his plans through the Commons, and if an election comes, a new Queen’s Speech

will be necessary. “I’m not sure they’ll still be in office on November 6 and it doesn’t appear to be at all certain that we will leave the EU on October 31,” said Scottish National Party leader Nicola Sturgeon. Some resolution is expected when the British parliament holds its first Saturday sitting since the 1982 Falklands War. A law passed against Johnson’s wishes last month requires him to ask the EU to delay Brexit by three months if MPs have not approved a Brexit deal or a “no deal” departure by October 19. Johnson could theoretically refuse, although he would face an immediate court challenge. —AFP



## International

# Mozambique leader campaigns on gas riches, but will poor benefit?

## Some have already dubbed the country the ‘new Qatar’

**MAPUTO:** The discovery of vast gas reserves on Mozambique's remote northern coast has the potential to transform the economy of one of the world's poorest countries and lift millions out of poverty. That's the message President Filipe Nyusi has repeated at every opportunity as he campaigned ahead of the country's general election today.

"With this project, the children of farmers will become doctors and the children of miners will become lawyers," he said on the campaign trail. But since the underwater treasure was identified almost a decade ago, questions have been raised about whether the colossal riches will ultimately benefit the nearly half of the southeastern African country living in poverty. The size of the discovery is staggering.

Estimated at up to 5,000 billion cubic meters (175,000 billion cubic feet), the gas deposits have the potential immediately to turn Mozambique into one of the world's biggest exporters of liquefied natural gas. Some have already dubbed the country the "new Qatar". Energy consultancy Wood McKenzie forecasts that state revenue from LNG will reach \$3 billion a year from 2030 — single-handedly doubling current revenue.

But development at the sites in the northernmost province Cabo Delgado has been repeatedly delayed — in part due to deadly attacks by a shadowy jihadist insurgency in the area — and has only recently started to make headway. Construction began in August on a \$25 billion project that French energy giant Total acquired from US firm Anadarko as part of the latter company's takeover by Occidental. And American gas giant Exxon Mobil is expected to finalise a \$30 billion investment next year.

### For the many or the few?

Nyusi's Frelimo party has been in power since the country gained independence in 1975, but its popularity has recently taken a hit due to a financial crisis linked to

state corruption. The president, running for a second term, has been keen to talk up the gas projects, estimated to create 5,000 direct jobs and 45,000 indirect jobs.

Of course, history is littered with examples of countries with huge energy wealth that enriches only those in power. "Some countries have had natural resources for a long time, but a majority of their population stayed poor," Nyusi said last week. He pledged that would not be the case in Mozambique: "We want and we have to make a difference." Nyusi said last month that the state would spend \$880 million it expects to receive as part of the Occidental takeover on rebuilding areas devastated by cyclones Idai and Kenneth earlier this year, as well as paying off state debt and closing the budget deficit. With 46 percent of the country's around 31 million population living below the poverty line, according to the World Bank, such huge sums raise the hopes of some voters.

"These resources will benefit everyone," said Sara Lucas, a 35-year-old mother at Nyusi's final campaign event in the capital Maputo on Saturday. But this enthusiasm is not shared by everyone, with critics accusing the regime of entrenched corruption. "As with everything else, these resources will only benefit the few," said Stelio Inacio, a 41-year-old official from the former rebel group turned main opposition party Renamo.

### Fears of fresh violence

Even paying off state debt is contentious after it was revealed in 2016 that the government secretly borrowed \$2 billion, plunging the country into the worst financial crisis in its history. The "hidden debt" scandal uncovered a vast network of corruption with close links — allegedly including family members — to the regime.

"They said they would use the gas revenues to pay for the 'hidden debt'. We do not want that," said opposition MP Simon Macuani. "The revenues must first serve the economic development of the country." The opposition is



**MATOLA:** Mozambican ruling Party FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) Presidential Candidate and Incumbent Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi gestures as he delivers a speech during his party's last Mozambican General Election campaign rally. — AFP

not alone in fearing the wealth may not trickle down. "Our forecast is that the poorest of the poorest in Mozambique are not really going to benefit," said Liesl Louw-Vaudran, an analyst at South Africa's Institute for Security Studies.

"It is still crucial to have stability... Frelimo and Renamo

have to stick to their political agreement if things are going to improve in Mozambique." The two arch-foes signed a peace deal in August hoping to turn the page on decades of conflict, including a brutal 1975-1992 civil war that left nearly a million dead. — AFP

## Britain's William, Kate to begin 'complex' tour of Pakistan

**ISLAMABAD:** Prince William and his wife Kate will arrive in Pakistan today for their "most complex" tour to date, British officials said, with Islamabad eager to tout improved security after years of violent militancy. Details of the five-day visit are being kept under wraps, with security expected to be tight for the couple's first official trip to Pakistan, and the first visit by a British royal since William's father Charles and his wife Camilla came in 2006.

In addition to Islamabad they are set to visit the ancient Mughal capital of Lahore, as well as the mountainous north and the region near the border with Afghanistan in the west, according to British High Commissioner Thomas

Drew. "I've always been struck by the warmth in Pakistan towards the Royal Family," he said in a video published to Twitter late Sunday. The couple's program will pay respect to Britain's historic relationship with Pakistan, once part of colonial India, he said.

"But it will focus largely on showcasing Pakistan as it is today, a dynamic, aspirational, and forward-looking nation," Drew continued. They are expected to see Pakistan's efforts to combat climate change and learn about the "complex security" of the region, among other issues, a statement from Kensington Palace said earlier this month. Pakistan has waged a long, bloody battle with militancy which has seen tens of thousands of people killed in the past 15 or so years.

Charles' and Camilla's 2006 trip was tainted when they were forced to pull out of a visit to Peshawar over safety concerns after the military launched an airstrike on a religious school that killed 80 people. But security has improved dramatically since the army intensified a crackdown on militant groups in 2015, with several countries changing their travel warnings for Pakistan as a result, and Islamabad eager to promote both tourism

and foreign investment. There are promising signs, such as British Airways return earlier this year after more than a decade, and the slow but steady revival of international cricket. Analysts have long warned that Pakistan is not yet getting to the root causes of extremism, however, and militants retain the ability to carry out attacks, including in urban areas. Kensington Palace has called the trip "the most complex tour undertaken by The Duke and Duchess to date, given the logistical and security considerations".

The couple are also expected to meet Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was close friends with William's mother, the late Princess Diana. Last week, foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi invoked the memory of Diana, who charmed Pakistanis when she visited in her official capacity in 1991. She also made several private visits in later years to help Khan — then a cricketer-turned-opposition politician married to her friend Jemima — raise money for a cancer hospital in Lahore. "We will always remember late Princess Diana's visit and her selfless service to humanity, not only in Pakistan but all over world," Qureshi said.

## Philippine drug war chief quits amid narcotics scandal

**MANILA:** In other news, the Philippines' top policeman, who leads the nation's deadly drugs crackdown, quit yesterday as he faces allegations of protecting officers accused of selling a huge haul of seized narcotics. Though the scandal dates from before Oscar Albayalde's time as national police chief, it has raised fresh criticism of President Rodrigo Duterte's signature anti-narcotics campaign, which is key to his massive popularity among Filipinos.

As part of Duterte's internationally condemned initiative, police have killed thousands of alleged dealers and users since mid-2016, but critics say the wealthy and powerful have been largely untouched. Albayalde's resignation comes days after two former police officials implicated him in a 2013 raid in which officers in a province near Manila allegedly seized and then sold parts of a large methamphetamine haul.

One former official claimed Albayalde intervened to protect the officers from disciplinary action, while the other said he received money from the drug sale. Criminal charges against the officers allegedly involved in the matter were dismissed in 2017. However, prosecutors have now re-opened the case and summoned the men for questioning. Albayalde, then the province commander, has vehemently denied any wrongdoing. He said the allegations may have been an effort to gain publicity for people interested in his job.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for his trust and confidence," Albayalde said in a message announcing his departure. Though the issue has been bubbling for weeks in Senate hearings, Duterte has remained largely silent on the matter. He had pledged to root out deep-seated corruption in the Philippine police but has repeatedly expressed frustration and anger with the extent of the problem.

Neri Colmenares, a lawyer for families pushing for an International Criminal Court prosecution of those behind the drug war, branded the allegations against Albayalde a "major embarrassment". "Even the presiding officers of the PNP (national police) are involved in drugs themselves," he said. It "shows what we've been saying all along, this is targeted against the poor".

Philippine police say they have killed just over 5,500 suspects who fought back against arrest, but rights groups say the true toll is four times higher and may amount to crimes against humanity. International Criminal Court prosecutors have launched a preliminary probe of the killings, and the UN's top human rights body has approved a review. — AFP



**MANILA:** This file photo taken on August 8, 2018 shows Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (R) reviewing policemen along with national police chief Oscar Albayalde (L) in a sudden downpour during the 117th police anniversary celebration at the national headquarters. — AFP

## Attempts to split China risk 'smashed' bodies: Xi

**BEIJING:** President Xi Jinping has warned that any attempts to split China would result in "bodies smashed and bones ground to powder", amid four months of anti-Beijing unrest in Hong Kong. Xi issued the dire message during a weekend visit to Nepal, according to a foreign ministry statement released on Sunday.

"Anyone who attempts to split any region from China will perish, with their bodies smashed and bones ground to powder," Xi said, according to the ministry. "Any external forces that support the splitting of China can only be regarded as delusional by the Chinese people," he said. While Xi did not mention any region by name, his comments came as riot police and pro-democracy protesters clashed again in Hong Kong on Sunday and amid tensions with self-ruled Taiwan.

Rallies erupted in multiple neighborhoods of Hong Kong, with some protesters blocking roads, sabotaging train tracks, and trashing pro-China businesses in the financial hub. China has accused "external forces" of fuelling unrest in the semi-autonomous city, a former British colony that enjoys rights unheard of in the mainland, such as freedom of speech. The protests were sparked by opposition to a now-scrapped proposal to allow extraditions to mainland China, but have since morphed into a larger movement for democracy and police accountability.

There have been concerns that China could send in troops to put an end to the unrest, but Beijing has so far said it believes Hong Kong's police force is capable of handling the protests. Few analysts believe Beijing would risk international condemnation by repeating its 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, when it deployed tanks and troops to quash the uprising, leaving hundreds, perhaps more than 1,000, dead.

Beijing has also hardened its stance with democratic Taipei since President Tsai Ing-wen was elected in 2016, as her government refuses to acknowledge that Taiwan is part of "one China". Taiwan has ruled itself since the end of a civil war in 1949, but China views the island as its territory and has vowed to seize it — by force if necessary. Another sovereignty flashpoint is Tibet. Nepal is home to around 20,000 exiled Tibetans, but under pressure from Beijing the current communist government has taken an increasingly hardline stance on their activities. Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli told Xi that his country, which borders Tibet, would "never allow any forces to use Nepalese territory for anti-China separatist activities", according to the foreign ministry statement. — AFP

## Mobile phones back in Kashmir, but internet still down

**SRINAGAR:** Mobile phone networks were restored in Indian Kashmir yesterday after a 72-day blackout, authorities said, but the internet remains off-limits to the region's seven million-plus people. India cut access to mobile networks in the restive Kashmir Valley in early August citing security concerns as it scrapped the region's semi-autonomous status and imposed a lockdown.

The easing yesterday covers around four million post-paid mobile phone contracts, but only for calls and text messages. The internet is still unavailable both on cell-phone and fixed line networks. Landlines were restored previously, although residents say connections are erratic. The stripping of Kashmir's special status on August 5 also saw New Delhi send in tens of thousands of extra troops to what even before was one of the world's most heavily militarized zones. Several hundred Kashmiri politicians, activists, lawyers and others remain in custody, mostly without charge. Several thousand ordinary Kashmiris were also detained, including children as young as nine, with protesters and security forces clashing at regular rallies. Most have since been released.

### Harsh words for Modi

UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said last month she was "deeply concerned" while Washington called for the "rapid" lifting of restrictions. Mohammad Akbar, a businessman, told AFP in the main city Srinagar that he was pleased that mobile phones were working again, but had harsh words for the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Mobile phones are a commercial service that we pay

## Afghan gets 26 years jail for Amsterdam terror stabbing

**THE HAGUE:** Dutch judges yesterday sentenced an Afghan man to 26 years and eight months in jail for stabbing two American tourists at Amsterdam's Central station in a terror attack. The 20-year-old, identified only as Jawed S., was also ordered at Amsterdam district court to pay almost three million euros (\$3.3 million) in damages following the August 31, 2018 assault.

One of the two victims remains in a wheelchair after the attack, which sent midday commuters at the city's busiest station into a panic. Police shot Jawed S. in the lower body before arresting him. "He never showed any regret or remorse during his trial, repeatedly saying he would do the same again if his religion was insulted," the judges said. "The risk of a repeat

offence is therefore very high and the court finds it essential that society is protected against him as long as possible."

During his trial at a heavily-fortified courtroom, Jawed S. said he travelled to the Netherlands from Germany to "protect the Prophet Mohammed". He also mentioned anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders, and his knife assault came a day after the far-right MP announced he was cancelling moves to stage a cartoon competition to caricature the Prophet Mohammed. Dutch prosecutors charged Jawad S. with two counts of attempted murder with a terrorist aim and judges found all accusations against him had been proven.

"He (Jawed S.) came to the Netherlands to kill as many people as possible," the judges said. The wheelchair-bound victim has a severe spinal cord injury, while the second American man was stabbed in the right chest and arm. "Despite the fact that the threat was short-lived, it had a devastating effect on the two Americans and their spouses," the judges said. The wife of one victim also had a miscarriage two months after the attack. "The question whether she'll ever have children remains," the judges said. — AFP



## Analysis

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## Police hunt kingpin of vast Asian meth syndicate

The largest ever task force assembled to fight organized crime in Asia has identified a long-time drug trafficker, a China-born Canadian national, as the suspected kingpin of a crime syndicate that police say dominates the \$70 billion-a-year Asia-Pacific drug trade. The suspected syndicate leader is Tse Chi Lop, 55, an ex-convict who formerly lived in Toronto and has moved between Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan in recent years, according to counter-narcotics officers from four countries as well as law enforcement documents reviewed by Reuters.

Authorities have not publicly identified Tse as the boss of the drug trafficking group. The syndicate he is suspected of running is known to its members as "The Company." Law enforcers also refer to it as "Sam Gor," or Brother Number Three in Cantonese, after one of Tse's nicknames. The Australian Federal Police (AFP), which has taken the lead in the sprawling investigation, has compiled a list of top syndicate members that identifies Tse as "the senior leader of the Sam Gor syndicate."

The group, the list says, has "been connected with or directly involved in at least 13 cases" of drug trafficking since January 2015. The list, reviewed by Reuters, does not provide specific details of the cases. A flow-chart of the syndicate in a Taiwanese law enforcement document identifies Tse as the "Multinational CEO" of the Sam Gor syndicate. A US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) alert circulated among regional government agencies this year says Tse is "believed to be" the leader of the syndicate. "Brother Number Three is target number one," said one AFP officer.

Reuters was unable to contact Tse Chi Lop. In response to questions from Reuters, the AFP, the DEA and Taiwan's Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau said they would not comment on investigations. According to interviews with regional law enforcers from eight countries, as well as a review of law enforcement documents, the syndicate produces vast quantities of high-grade methamphetamine in Myanmar and trafficks the drug to countries stretching from Japan to New Zealand.

The group is "conservatively" raking in \$8 billion a year and could be earning as much as \$17.7 billion annually, according to an estimate by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). "Tse Chi Lop is in the league of El Chapo or maybe Pablo Escobar," said Jeremy Douglas, Southeast Asia and Pacific representative for UNODC, referring to Latin America's most legendary narco-traffickers. "The word kingpin often gets thrown around, but there is no doubt it applies here."

The syndicate is the major factor in the fourfold increase in region-wide meth trafficking in the past five years, the UNODC says. The supply of the highly addictive drug has surged, causing the street price to plummet in many countries. In a report in July, the UN agency said the meth trade had reached "unprecedented and dangerous levels," and was a "direct challenge to the public security and health of the region."

### Triad alliance

The AFP has identified 19 top syndicate leaders, four of whom are Canadian nationals, the target list shows. Other suspected leaders hail from Hong Kong, Macau, mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Myanmar and Vietnam. Some have links to drug trafficking that go back decades, according to the target list and investigators from four countries, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Tse has not been arrested. Counter-narcotics agents said they suspect he has long been aware he is under surveillance. So far, at least one senior member of the syndicate has been arrested, according to investigators and police documents.

Tse has previously been involved in drug trafficking. In the late 1990s, he was arrested and extradited from Hong Kong to the United States on charges of conspiracy to import heroin into America. He was tried in New York and in 2000 sentenced to nine years in prison, which he mostly served in the federal correctional institution in Elkton, Ohio. The investigation, which involves about a dozen countries, has been dubbed Operation Kungur. Counter-narcotics agencies from China, Myanmar, the United States and Thailand are also leading participants, along with Australia, Taiwan, while not a formal member, is also assisting.

At the core of the syndicate are at least five triad groups that originated in Hong Kong, Macau, China and Taiwan but which have global reach, AFP officers said. These are the 14K, Wo Shing Wo, Sun Yee On, the Big Circle Gang and the Bamboo Union. To get its drugs to market, the Sam Gor syndicate works closely with Japan's Yakuza, Thai organized crime, and Australian motorcycle gangs, among other crime groups, according to regional anti-narcotics agents and documents reviewed by Reuters.

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



Relatives cook outside during a prayer in homage to the victims after gunmen suspected of belonging to the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group raided the village of Tungushe, killing a soldier and three residents. — AFP

## Secret abortions spike with Boko Haram chaos

Kellu became pregnant after a Nigerian soldier offered her food and shelter in exchange for sex. But the destitute teenager - who lost her family when Boko Haram militants attacked her village two years earlier - did not want to have the baby. After moving to a camp for displaced people in northeastern Borno state, where she relied on neighbors for food, 18-year-old Kellu wanted an abortion but did not know where to go - like a growing number of women since the Islamist insurgency began.

"If I continue with this pregnancy, it will ruin my life," Kellu, who guessed she was about two months pregnant, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, sitting on a mat in a building pock-marked with bullet holes. "Everyone will know what I did. They will stigmatize me for having a baby without a husband. Also, I have no money to take care of myself. How am I supposed to look after a child?" asked Kellu, who declined to publish her real name. Nigeria has some of the world's most restrictive abortion laws, which only allow abortion to save the life of the mother.

The Johns Hopkins University estimates that 2.7 million abortions are carried out in Nigeria each year, the majority performed secretly and in dangerous conditions, with poor, uneducated women most at risk. Health and aid workers say unsafe abortions have surged in northern Nigeria since the start of the Boko Haram conflict in 2009, which has driven 1.8 million Nigerians from their homes, according to the United Nations.

At least 40 women and girls come in for emergency post-abortion care each month, said Aminu, a senior nurse in a busy government clinic in Yobe state - west of Borno state - about three times the average of 10 to 15 a month a decade earlier. Nigeria has the fourth highest maternal

mortality rate globally, according to the World Health Organization, with about 100 women and girls dying each day. Death rates in the northeast - where clinics and hospitals have been destroyed as armed groups fight to create an Islamic caliphate - are the worst in Nigeria, government data shows.

Women and girls go to pharmacies, vendors of locally made drugs and older women to terminate pregnancies, using medication, herbs or tools like sticks, Aminu said. Fatima, is was in her 40s, went to an aunt who gave her herbs that caused a miscarriage in a few hours. "It wasn't a choice, I had to end it," said Fatima, who declined to publish her real name, who was raising five children and four grandchildren in a displaced camp in Borno state.

"Men say it's immorality. But they are not the ones who have to give birth and look after the babies. When your children are telling you they are hungry, how can you have another one?" she asked, adding foetuses are often found in the camp's toilets. Nigerian officials insist the law is upheld. "Regardless of circumstances, abortion is prohibited except for medical reasons," said Ali Grema, deputy director of emergency medical response in the health ministry in Borno state. "It is not allowed for social reasons."

### Taboo

With many husbands missing, detained or dead, more women are having sex outside marriage, aid workers said. While some women choose to get into new relationships, the United Nations has recorded thousands of cases of sexual violence and transactional sex, particularly by women and girls who lack food, shelter or money. "Many people who are displaced live with hosts who take advantage of them. If they say no, they may lose their housing," said Maryam Aje, head of the African Youth for Peace Development and Empowerment Foundation, which gives women business grants.

Pointing to a poster in a Maiduguri camp encouraging women to space their children, Hadiza - a nurse working in a nearby clinic - said family planning messages focused on married women because of conservative attitudes. "Women will ask for contraception but they don't want husbands to know," said Hadiza, who declined to publish her real name. "(They) come at night, when nobody is around." Hadiza said she often received calls or visits from young women after working hours, asking for the morning-after pill. "It's better to prevent such pregnancies than try and deal with them when they happen," she said. Many girls do not even know sex can make them pregnant, said Lucy Dlama of Women in New Nigeria, which supports rape survivors with health care. "Our culture means it is taboo for parents to discuss sex education with their daughters," said Dlama, who encourages mothers to teach girls about their bodies. "They can think it is stomach pain, give birth and then panic."

Aminu, the nurse, said most of his patients needing post-abortion care were teenagers who tried to abort after several months because they did not know they were pregnant or hid it. "They do not die if we admit them to hospital," he said. "But there are so many more cases where women and girls take herbs on their own, do not come to the hospital and die because they do not want to expose themselves." Pregnancy outside marriage is a taboo, even when it is the result of rape by soldiers, militias or camp officials. — Reuters

## The convicted: Who are the 12 Catalan separatist leaders?

Twelve Catalan separatist leaders, most of them members of the former regional government, were convicted by Spain's Supreme Court yesterday for their role in a controversial independence bid in 2017. Nine of them were handed jail terms and three were fined. The defendants included nine ex-ministers, the parliamentary speaker and key figures in Catalonia's biggest pro-independence grassroots organizations who were all put on trial for their role in organizing the banned October 1, 2017 referendum.

### Catalan vice president: 13 years

Oriol Junqueras, who became the main defendant after former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont fled to Belgium to avoid prosecution, was handed a 13-year jail term for sedition and misuse of public funds. Prosecutors had called for a 25-year sentence on the more serious grounds of rebellion. A former historian who heads the leftwing ERC party, Junqueras, 50, was charged by Puigdemont with organizing the referendum which was followed by a short-lived declaration of independence. Arrested in November 2017, this portly politician, who has been a lifelong supporter of Catalan independence, has spent nearly two years in pre-trial detention.



Protesters hold a banner reading 'Free political prisoners' at El Prat airport in Barcelona yesterday as thousands took to the streets after Spain's Supreme Court sentenced nine Catalan separatist leaders to between nine and 13 years in jail for sedition over the failed 2017 independence bid. — AFP

### Parliament speaker: 11.5 years

Like Junqueras, Carme Forcadell, the former speaker of the Catalan regional parliament, was convicted of sedition, with the 64-year-old handed a sentence of 11 years and six months. A former head of the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), a civil society group responsible for organizing mass pro-independence rallies, Forcadell was accused of ignoring legal warnings about pushing through laws which laid the ground for the referendum and for secession.

### Grassroots leaders: 9 years

The Supreme Court also handed sentences of nine years to Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart, two influential civic leaders who were convicted of sedition for calling huge rallies to try and stop the police from following a court order to halt the referendum. Known as 'Los Jords', the pair were repeatedly flagged up by the separatists as "political prisoners", with Amnesty International calling for their release, denouncing the charges against them as "unfounded". At the time of the referendum, Sanchez, now 55, was head of the ANC, while Cuixart, 44, was and still is leader of Omnium Cultural. Both were placed in pre-trial detention on October 16, 2017 for calling a demonstration outside a public building as it was being searched by police, preventing them from leaving. Nobody was hurt but several police cars were damaged.

### Regional ministers: 10.5- 12 years jail

Five former regional ministers were handed sentences ranging from 10 years and six months to 12 years. Among them were Joaquim Forn, 55, who - as Catalan interior minister at the time - was responsible for regional policing and let the referendum go ahead. Also in the dock were Josep Rull, 51, Raul Romeva, 48, Dolors Bassa, 60, and Jordi Turull, 53.

### 3 others: 60,000-euro fine

Three other former regional ministers, who faced lesser charges, escaped jail time and were handed fines of around 60,000 euro (\$66,000). Santi Vila, 46, resigned from the Catalan government on the eve of the independence declaration in late October 2017; Carles Mundo, 43, and Meritxell Borrás, 55. — AFP

## What do we tell the kids? Children's TV struggles with LGBT

Once upon a time in children's television land frogs were kissed but princesses only ever married princes. Now Prince Charming might just as easily ride off into the sunset with another man, as happens in the hit new Hulu cartoon series, "The Bravest Knight", while the Disney Channel has just had its first gay romance in its live-action tween show "Andi Mack".

Program makers are struggling to better reflect the world young people are growing up in, with the first tentative steps to embrace non-traditional families and LGBTQ characters. But even as experts warn that it is key for children's well-being to see their reality mirrored on screen, the backlash against some of the first wave of gay characters has been sharp. Earlier this year the Alabama affiliate of the US public broadcaster PBS pulled the same-sex wedding episode of its popular animated show "Arthur" in which the teacher Mr Ratburn marries his "special someone".

### 'We can't not talk about it'

Yet Nickelodeon introduced a bi-racial gay couple into

its "The Loud House" three years ago, and two female characters married without much fuss on the Cartoon Network's "Steven Universe" cartoon last year. While "The Bravest Knight" received critical plaudits, a fierce battle has raged on its Facebook page between its critics on the religious right in the US and its liberal defenders. The Canadian show's producer Shabnam Rezaei said that she embraced the debate.

"That is how you make progress. If they want to attack us that is great if they can be transparent about their feelings and reasoning. Let's have that conversation." But she warned that the basic issues of gender and diversity won't go away. "Everyone is figuring this stuff out. I don't know that anyone has the answers," Rezaei said on Sunday at MIPJunior, the world's biggest gathering of children's TV makers in the French Riviera resort of Cannes.

"But to not want to talk about it, to want to keep people in the dark, to shove it under the carpet, we know that is the wrong thing to do. That is what causes self-hate and suicides," Rezaei added, saying Hulu has donated \$50,000 (45,000 euros) to the suicide prevention charity, The Trevor Project, after the new show raced to its 50,000 streams target in four days rather than four months.

### 'Kids not born prejudiced'

Iranian-born Rezaei admitted that "there are whole parts of the world I do not pitch to", while a Middle Eastern producer told AFP that it was just not possible to broach such sensitive subjects in most Muslim countries.

Many Asian networks are also resistant to storylines that include LGBTQ characters or blended families, while Helsinki-based producer Thatcher Mines said the anti-gay "propaganda" law had led to a wave of "self-censorship and worse" in Russia.

Kenya also controversially banned a whole slew of children's cartoons in 2017, claiming they were "deliberately designed to corrupt moral judgment" and pass "bizarre messages intended to promote the LGBT agenda in the country". A decade before, US conservatives had similarly questioned the sexuality of SpongeBob SquarePants.

However, a new study by analysts Dubit found only seven percent of children's shows airing or streaming in the UK had LGBTQ characters and "not a single episode had same-sex parents". British producer Sallyann Keizer, who produces diverse programs for pre-school and older children for the BBC, told AFP "that children are not born with prejudice". "And there's a lot of academic research proving that. They are just beautiful vessels. As producers and entertainment people, we have a massive responsibility" to be inclusive and make minority groups less invisible, she added.

Young Belgian director Charlie Dewulf, who has come out as bisexual and non-binary, said that "we have to put shame aside and allow children and adolescents to recognize themselves" on screen. "When I was small I had to watch adult films to see people like myself and I was afraid my mother would catch me," the 25-year-old said. "Everybody is moving forward on this. It is going to change with our generation," she added. — AFP



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2019

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NEW YORK: Traders and financial professionals work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City. — AFP

# Wall St flat as trade deal optimism fades

## Energy companies among biggest drags; investors eye Q3 earnings season

**NEW YORK:** US stocks halted a three-day winning streak yesterday, as oil prices dived 2 percent and rising doubts over how quickly a partial US-China trade deal announced on Friday could be sealed.

Energy majors such as Exxon Mobil Corp and Chevron Corp were the biggest drags on the S&P 500 index, as oil prices gave up last week's gains following caution around the trade deal.

The S&P 500 and Dow Jones indexes had ended Friday with their first weekly gain in a month after Washington signaled the two sides had taken a major step in easing the tit-for-tat measures that have hammered global growth this year. Trump, however, acknowledged the agreement could still collapse and a handful of media reports and comments from Treasury

Secretary Steven Mnuchin left investors feeling less upbeat about what had really been achieved.

Mnuchin said in a CNBC interview that he had "every expectation" that if a US-China trade deal was not in place by Dec. 15, additional tariffs would be imposed, although he said he expected a deal to be agreed by then. Shares of companies with a sizeable exposure to China, including Nvidia Corp, Advanced Micro Devices Inc and Micron Technology Inc, slipped slightly in early trading after gaining on Friday. The Philadelphia Semiconductor index was off 0.3 percent.

"It's more of the fact that it was a handshake deal," said Peter Cardillo, chief market economist at Spartan Capital Securities in New York. "On Friday, we closed off the highs of the day as investors began to realize

that while on the surface this is good news, there's no substance to the deal just yet."

Investors will now be looking at third-quarter earnings to gauge the impact of the trade conflict and a sluggish domestic economy on corporate America. The reporting season kicks off today, with the biggest US banks expected to report a 1.2 percent decline in earnings due to falling interest rates, a raft of unsuccessful stock market flotation and trade tensions. Citigroup Inc, Goldman Sachs Group Inc and Wells Fargo & Co were down between 0.1 percent and 0.4 percent. The S&P 500 bank index had logged its best day in a month on Friday.

Overall, analysts are forecasting a 3.2 percent decline in profit for S&P 500 companies for the quarter from a year earlier, based on IBES data from Refinitiv.

Fastenal Co was down 1 percent after two brokerages downgraded the stock. The company had logged its best day in three decades on Friday after reporting strong results.

Nike Inc was the top gainer on the Dow Jones index after Bank of America Merrill Lynch upgraded the stock to "neutral" from "underperform". Shares of US construction and engineering company AECOM rose 5.6 percent after it agreed to sell its management services unit to private equity firms for about \$2.4 billion. Declining issues outnumbered advancers for a 2.08-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and for a 2.07-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq. The S&P index recorded one new 52-week highs and two new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded nine new highs and 51 new lows. — Reuters

## Poll: Sub-Saharan Africa's economic outlook uncertain

**JOHANNESBURG:** Sub-Saharan Africa's economy will accelerate going into next year but could be derailed as the world moves onto an uncertain path that could bring an end to the recent synchronized uptrend, a Reuters poll showed yesterday. Economists' views differ starkly about where exactly in the cycle the global economy is and some reckon it is already in a downturn. Africa's trading partners are a mixed bag, the US has reached almost full employment but Europe is struggling and China is mired in a trade war.

Highlighting the uncertainty, the spread between forecasts was huge. The most pessimistic forecaster for the sub-Saharan Africa region expected growth to slow to 1.3 percent next year while the most bullish said it would expand 3.5 percent. Aly-Khan Satchu, CEO of Rich Management in Nairobi, said the continent's biggest economies would likely grow softly due to lower Chinese demand for the region's exports, a consequence of the world's second biggest economy being involved in a trade war.

Still, the survey median showed economists expect growth next year of 3.1 percent, in line with a World Bank projection. In 2019 it is estimated to grow 2.5-3.0 percent.

Nigeria - which clubbed together with South Africa

makes around half of sub-Sahara's regional gross domestic product - is expected to grow 2.1 percent this year and 2.5 percent next, much slower than predicted in the previous survey. South Africa is expected to grow 0.6 percent in 2019 and 1.2 percent in 2020, almost in line with last month's consensus. "South Africa, Angola and Nigeria - will remain a drag on the overall SSA GDP performance during 2019," said Thea Fourie, senior economist at IHS Markit. Kenya, East Africa's biggest economy, is expected to grow 5.7 percent this year and stretch that by 0.1 percentage point next year while Ghana will probably hit 6.2 percent this year and 6.0 percent next year, both better than the continent's biggest economies.

Nigeria is currently experiencing a sustained period of "stagflation", characterized by slow economic growth and high inflation and while the poll expects price pressures will ease over the next two years the inflation rate will remain in double digits. Nigerian inflation is expected to average 11.3 percent this year, slowing 0.2 percentage points next year and to 10.8 percent in 2021.

Financial Derivatives Company's (FDC) research team in Lagos said the Central Bank of Nigeria seems to be leaning towards a combination of options that will keep interest rates high until inflation falls below the upper limit of its 6-9 percent target. "However, this looks most unlikely if you consider the full implications of the border closure on prices," FDC wrote in note. Nigeria has partially closed its western border with Benin to curb rice smuggling that is threatening the country's attempt to boost local production. It wants to be self-sufficient in rice but import controls have kept prices high and led to smuggling from Benin into Nigeria. — Reuters

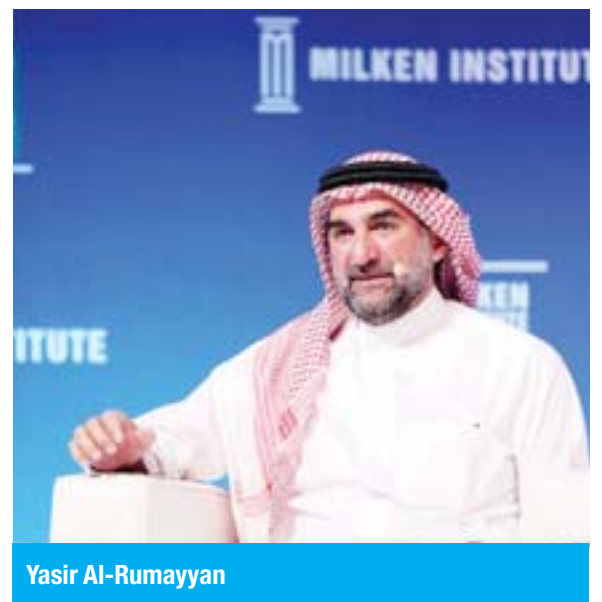
## Aramco to announce IPO 'very soon': Head

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia's energy giant Aramco will announce its long-awaited stock market debut "very, very soon," its chairman said yesterday. Aramco has said it plans to float around five percent of the state-owned company in 2020 or 2021 in what could potentially be the world's biggest stock sale.

"Aramco's IPO will take place sooner than you think," said Aramco chairman Yasir Al-Rumayyan at a Saudi-Russian forum in Riyadh. "I think that the announcement will be very, very soon."

According to Bloomberg, Aramco's board is expected to give final approval by the end of this week to proceed with the sale. The mammoth initial public offering (IPO) forms the cornerstone of a reform program envisaged by the kingdom's de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to wean the Saudi economy off its reliance on oil. It aims to raise up to \$100 billion based on a \$2 trillion valuation of the company, but investors have debated whether Aramco is worth that much and there have been repeated delays in the launch originally envisaged for 2018.

The Saudi government has not given any explanation for the delays, but apart from holding out for the big-ticket valuation, they are also said to be concerned the IPO could bring intense legal scrutiny of the secretive company's finances and inner workings.



Yasir Al-Rumayyan

The prospect of falling short of the \$2 trillion valuation desired by Saudi rulers is widely considered the reason the IPO has been delayed.

In September, Aramco said its first half net income for 2019 slipped nearly 12 percent to \$46.9 billion on lower crude prices. It was the first time the company has published interim financial results and comes after Aramco opened its accounts for the first time in April, revealing itself to be the world's most profitable company. — AFP



# NBK, the only Kuwaiti bank among the world's 50 safest banks in 2019

## Recognition demonstrates NBK's exceptionally strong ratings, and successful strategy

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) maintained its listing in The World's 50 Safest Banks in 2019 list by Global Finance for the 14th consecutive time; topping international financial heavyweights. NBK is the only Kuwaiti bank in Global Finance's list.

According to the new ranking, NBK ranks 46st on Global Finance's list of the World's 50 Safest Banks for 2019 and. This recognition demonstrates NBK's exceptionally strong ratings, successful strategy, high standards and rigorous risk management discipline and governance.

National Bank of Kuwait has maintained this prestigious ranking for more than a decade, reflecting the strength and consistency it has enjoyed. During this period, which witnessed many challenges in the banking industry, NBK demonstrated its ability to overcome the obstacles within a changing environment and strengthen its leadership position. Global Finance rankings are based on collective long-term credit ratings from Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings in addition to the total assets of the 500 largest banks worldwide. For 27 years, Global Finance's listings have been

well-recognized and trusted standards for the creditworthiness of financial institutions.

Safest Banks rankings consider as one of global standards to compare the reliability of banks across the world and trusted metric to aid readers in their decision-making processes regarding which bank they use especially among changing trade policies are having an impact on countries everywhere.

NBK continues to enjoy one of the highest credit ratings in the MENA region and internationally, with ratings of Aa3 from Moody's, A+ from Standard & Poor's and AA- from Fitch, all

ratings carry a stable outlook. The Bank's ratings are supported by NBK's conservative strategy, strong capitalization & asset quality, prudent lending policies, wise risk management and a highly stable management team.

NBK enjoys a wide banking presence with an international footprint spanning across the world's leading financial centers including London, Paris, Geneva, New York and Singapore, as well as China (Shanghai). NBK's MENA presence extends to Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Turkey.



### NBK International Markets Report

## Global markets recover after a torrid August

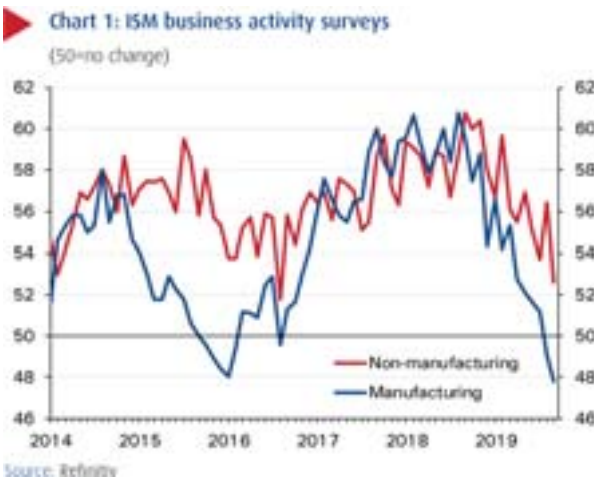
**KUWAIT:** After a torrid August, financial markets recovered somewhat in September, helped by a more stable trade war climate - followed in October by a limited deal between the US and China that removed near-term tariff hikes - and looser monetary policy by both the US Fed and the ECB. Major equity indices rose around 2-5 percent and bond yields edged back up from September's multi-year lows, though 10-year yields remain negative across parts of Europe and Japan. The oil market however was rocked by attacks on Saudi oil facilities that saw oil prices surge, before falling as Saudi production recovered and markets returned their focus to the deteriorating global growth outlook.

**US manufacturing weakens again**

In the US, there has been more evidence that economic activity is softening. Most alarming was the manufacturing ISM index, which dropped even further into negative territory at 47.1 in September, and a 10-year low amid heavily contracting export orders and trade pessimism. But also concerning was the decline in the non-manufacturing equivalent to a three-year low of 52.6. Meanwhile however, the jobs market remains strong, underpinning still reasonable growth in consumer spending. Non-farm payrolls rose a decent 136,000 in September and the unemployment rate fell to a 50-year low of 3.5 percent. One concern is that the labor market is a lagging indicator, and that slower business activity will eventually generate cracks in the jobs market that cause the consumer sector to buckle; indeed, the pace of hiring has already slowed from the average of 223,000 per month recorded last year. But at the same time, slower jobs growth need not be a sign of economic weakness if it reflects an economy close to full employment.

Against this uncertain outlook, the Federal Reserve as expected cut interest rates by 25 bps in September - the second cut of the year - leaving the Fed Funds target range at 1.75-2.00 percent. The move was however interpreted as somewhat 'hawkish', with two out of 10 members voting for no cut (though one supported a larger 50 bps reduction), and the bank's 'dot plot' projections pointing to no further rate cuts in 2019-20. It also left its forecasts for growth and inflation next year, at 2.0 percent and 1.9 percent respectively, unchanged, implying no strong need for further policy action. Markets however continue to take a different view, pricing in an 85 percent chance of at least one further cut by end year (probably October).

The Fed has also been tackling a sudden and unexplained liquidity shortage in the money markets, which saw interbank interest rates temporarily spike in mid-September and resulted in the bank offering emergency short-term loans. These injections saw the Fed's balance sheet record its first meaningful rise since it halted its quantitative easing program in 2014, with some analysts dubbing it 'QE lite'. The Fed in October then outlined a larger program of purchases of \$60 billion per month of short-term treasury bills through 2020.



Source: Refinitiv

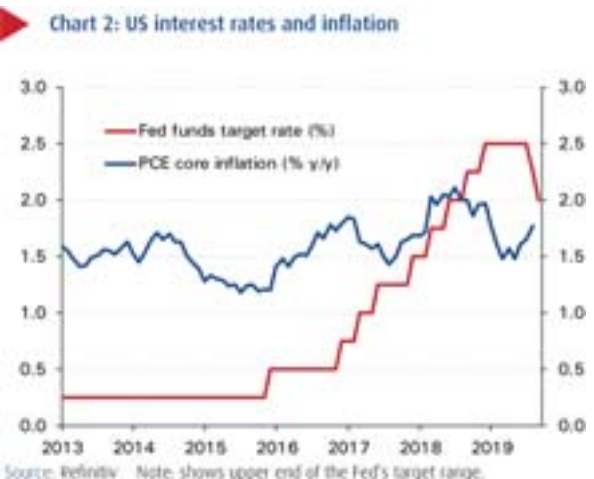
### Manufacturing gloom

News on the eurozone economy has become still more downbeat, with manufacturing in decline in most of the region and growing signs of spillover effects on the until recently more upbeat service sector. Germany's manufacturing PMI plunged to a 10-year low of 41.7 in September amid investment cuts and accelerated job losses on the back of slower trade and Brexit-related uncertainty. The broader composite PMI at 48.5, saw its first sub-50 reading since 2013 and points to a decline in GDP in Q3 that would put the economy in recession following a 0.1 percent q/q contraction in Q2. Equivalent results for the Eurozone as a whole (50.1) point to economic stagnation at the end of Q3, presenting the risk of a fall into recession if momentum continues to weaken going forward.

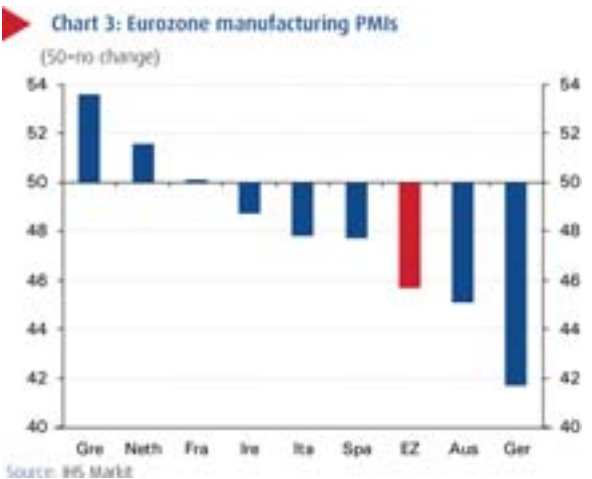
Despite this worrying outlook, a degree of opposition surrounded the European Central Bank's (ECB) loosening of monetary policy in September. The bank announced a package of easing policies, cutting the deposit rate to -0.5 percent and restarting its asset purchase program from November. The move drew rare public criticism from some current and former ECB officials, who see 'ultra-loose' policy as threatening financial stability, a backdoor attempt to finance highly indebted governments and also unjustified in the absence of a clear deflationary threat (inflation has been at 1 percent or higher for the past three years). The controversy could set the stage for a battle when Christine Lagarde replaces Mario Draghi as ECB president in November. This is important, as the bank's perceived commitment to looser policy could be key in transmitting its effects through the markets.

In the UK, PM Boris Johnson's suspension of parliament was ruled unlawful by the Supreme Court, resulting in MPs returning to the legislature. Before leaving, MPs had already passed a law forcing Johnson to request a three-month extension to the current end-October Brexit deadline, should a deal not be agreed with the EU by mid-October. There was optimism that the outline of a deal - with new arrangements to address the sensitive Irish border issue - may be close yet Johnson continues to insist that the UK will leave the EU with or without a deal in October.

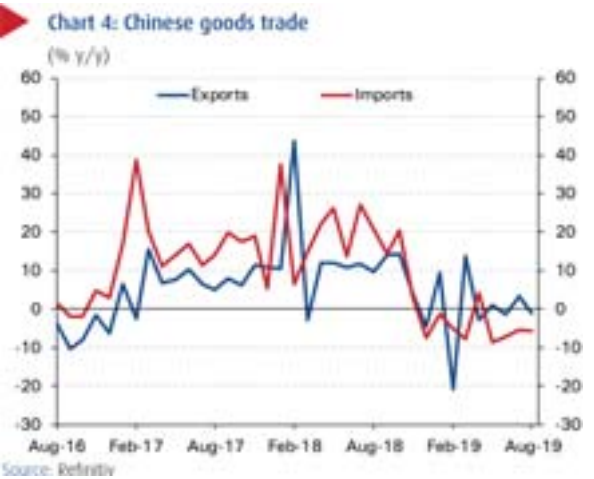
The EU may still be expecting that the UK could be forced to request an extension, and that a new, more pro-EU government may be elected in a general election. Despite the uncertainty, UK GDP surprisingly rose 0.3 percent 3m/3m in August following a decline of 0.2 percent q/q in Q2, thereby reducing the risk of a recession in the near term. However, the serv-



Source: Refinitiv. Note: shows upper end of the Fed's target range.



Source: IHS Markit



Source: Refinitiv



Source: Refinitiv

ices PMI fell back into contraction territory in September with job shedding at its fastest since 2010.

**Japan moves ahead with sales tax hike**

After delaying twice, Japan decided to stick with its decision to raise its sales tax from 8 percent to 10 percent this month - a move aimed at improving its weak public finances - even as growth concerns persist. Indeed, the economy slowed more than initial estimates suggested in Q2 after annualized growth was revised down from 1.8 percent to 1.3 percent. The economy continues to face headwinds from weaker global growth and the ongoing trade war between the US and China, which have weighed heavily on Japan's external sector. Exports fell for the ninth consecutive month in August (-8.2 percent y/y), while imports declined for the fourth straight month (-11.9 percent) reflecting ongoing softness in the domestic economy. While the Bank of Japan stood pat on monetary policy last month, it reportedly discussed the possibility of unleashing further stimulus measures in the near-to-medium term to prop up the economy.

**Oil prices fall back**

September closed with oil prices trading at or below where they were on the eve of the Houthi-claimed missile strike on Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure. The price of Brent spiked in the immediate aftermath of the Abqaiq/Khuras attacks by more than 20 percent to \$71.9 in intraday trading - the biggest surge in oil prices since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. However it ended the month at \$60.8, up just 0.6 percent m/m and remained around the \$60 mark in early October.

The 14 September attacks knocked out 5.7 mb/d of Saudi crude output, close to half of the kingdom's capacity, and 5 percent of global oil supplies. But the geopolitical risk premium that initially pushed oil prices higher has all but evaporated, partly due to Saudi reassurances of export commitments, ample global stocks and a faster-than-expected recovery in Saudi oil production but also due to the markets' refocusing on the poor health of the global economy. The narrative of weakening economic growth was given extra impetus by weaker-than-expected US data and the re-emergence of US-Europe trade tensions.

**GCC developments**

It was a mixed bag in terms of economic indicators for the GCC in September. The PMI for Saudi Arabia showed private sector activity continuing to gain traction, improving for the third month in a row to 57.3 on gains in output and new orders. Official data meanwhile showed Saudi non-oil GDP growth of 2.9 percent y/y in 2Q19 (from 2.1 percent in 1Q19). By contrast, the UAE PMI continued to ease at 51.1 in September from 51.6 in August, amid weakening domestic demand. Meanwhile Bahrain's fiscal deficit narrowed by 38 percent y/y in 1H19 to 3.4 percent of GDP, on the back of cost-cutting measures and revenue-boosting reforms, including the addition of VAT, under the Fiscal Balance Program. Earlier in September, central banks in Saudi, the UAE and Qatar followed the US Federal Reserve in cutting their benchmark interest rates by 25 bps. Taking advantage of lower rates, GCC bond issuance proceeded apace in September: Abu Dhabi issued \$10 billion and Bahrain sold \$2 billion worth of conventional/Islamic bonds.

## EXCHANGE RATES

| Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.       |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES |         |
| US Dollar Transfer            | 304.550 |
| Euro                          | 337.440 |
| Sterling Pound                | 385.560 |
| Canadian dollar               | 231.510 |
| Turkish lira                  | 52.970  |
| Swiss Franc                   | 307.630 |
| US Dollar Buying              | 297.150 |
| ASIAN COUNTRIES               |         |
| Japanese Yen                  | 2.811   |
| Indian Rupees                 | 4.297   |
| Pakistani Rupees              | 1.959   |
| Sri Lankan Rupees             | 1.681   |
| Nepali Rupees                 | 2.685   |
| Singapore Dollar              | 223.360 |
| Hongkong Dollar               | 38.831  |
| Bangladesh Taka               | 3.592   |
| Philippine Peso               | 5.916   |
| Thai Baht                     | 10.046  |
| Malaysian ringgit             | 77.890  |
| GCC COUNTRIES                 |         |
| Saudi Riyal                   | 81.268  |
| Qatari Riyal                  | 83.702  |
| Omani Riyal                   | 791.553 |
| Bahraini Dinar                | 809.220 |
| UAE Dirham                    | 82.972  |
| ARAB COUNTRIES                |         |
| Egyptian Pound - Cash         | 20.900  |

| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 18.736       |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Yemen Riyal/for 1000      | 1.223        |
| Tunisian Dinar            | 111.150      |
| Jordanian Dinar           | 430.000      |
| Lebanese Lira/for 1000    | 0.203        |
| Syrian Lira               | 0.000        |
| Morocco Dirham            | 31.923       |
| Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd |              |
| Rate for Transfer         | Selling Rate |
| US Dollar                 | 304.740      |
| Canadian Dollar           | 230.725      |
| Sterling Pound            | 375.885      |
| Euro                      | 333.495      |
| Swiss Frank               | 307.075      |
| Bahrain Dinar             | 810.415      |
| UAE Dirhams               | 83.370       |
| Qatari Riyals             | 84.610       |
| Saudi Riyals              | 82.160       |
| Jordanian Dinar           | 431.105      |
| Egyptian Pound            | 18.729       |
| Sri Lankan Rupees         | 1.672        |
| Indian Rupees             | 4.308        |
| Pakistani Rupees          | 1.949        |
| Bangladesh Taka           | 3.609        |
| Philippines Peso          | 5.872        |
| Cyprus pound              | 18.130       |
| Japanese Yen              | 3.815        |
| Syrian Pound              | 1.595        |
| Nepalese Rupees           | 2.697        |
| Malaysian Ringgit         | 73.635       |

|                              |          |          |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Chinese Yuan Renminbi        | 43.065   |          |
| Thai Bhat                    | 10.935   |          |
| Turkish Lira                 | 54.365   |          |
| Singapore dollars            | 220.536  |          |
| BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL |          |          |
| CURRENCY                     | BUY      | SELL     |
| Europe                       |          |          |
| British Pound                | 0.376624 | 0.390524 |
| Czech Korune                 | 0.004984 | 0.014284 |
| Danish Krone                 | 0.040878 | 0.045878 |
| Euro                         | 0.328238 | 0.341938 |
| Georgian Lari                | 0.101520 | 0.101520 |
| Hungarian 0.000918           | 0.001108 |          |
| Norwegian Krone              | 0.029456 | 0.034656 |
| Romanian Leu                 | 0.053645 | 0.070495 |
| Russian ruble                | 0.004735 | 0.004735 |
| Slovakia                     | 0.009106 | 0.019106 |
| Swedish Krona                | 0.026968 | 0.031968 |
| Swiss Franc                  | 0.299024 | 0.310024 |
| Australasia                  |          |          |
| Australian Dollar            | 0.198132 | 0.210132 |
| New Zealand Dollar           | 0.185790 | 0.195290 |
| America                      |          |          |
| Canadian Dollar              | 0.225006 | 0.234006 |
| US Dollars                   | 0.300450 | 0.305750 |
| US Dollars Mint              | 0.300950 | 0.305750 |
| Asia                         |          |          |
| Bangladesh Taka              | 0.002963 | 0.003764 |

|                   |          |          |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Chinese Yuan      | 0.041783 | 0.045283 |
| Hong Kong Dollar  | 0.036737 | 0.039487 |
| Indian Rupee      | 0.003707 | 0.004479 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000017 | 0.000023 |
| Japanese Yen      | 0.002725 | 0.002905 |
| Korean Won        | 0.000247 | 0.000262 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 0.069305 | 0.075305 |
| Nepalese Rupee    | 0.002626 | 0.002966 |
| Pakistan Rupee    | 0.001349 | 0.002119 |
| Philippine Peso   | 0.005717 | 0.006017 |
| Singapore Dollar  | 0.216958 | 0.226958 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee  | 0.001319 | 0.001899 |
| Taiwan            | 0.009835 | 0.010015 |
| Thai Baht         | 0.009665 | 0.010215 |
| Vietnamese Dong   | 0.000013 | 0.000013 |
| Bahraini Dinar    | 0.801674 | 0.809732 |
| Egyptian Pound    | 0.018646 | 0.021387 |
| Iranian Riyal     | 0.000084 | 0.000086 |
| Iraqi Dinar       | 0.000214 | 0.000274 |
| Jordanian Dinar   | 0.424644 | 0.433644 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar     | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound    | 0.000151 | 0.000251 |
| Moroccan Dirhams  | 0.021208 | 0.045208 |
| Omani Riyal       | 0.789808 | 0.793808 |
| Qatar Riyal       | 0.082996 | 0.083830 |
| Saudi Riyal       | 0.080127 | 0.081427 |
| Syrian Pound      | 0.001291 | 0.001511 |
| Tunisian Dinar    | 0.103036 | 0.111036 |
| Turkish Lira      | 0.045118 | 0.054963 |
| UAE Dirhams       | 0.082285 | 0.083113 |
| Yemeni Riyal      | 0.000990 | 0.001070 |



# French energy giant Total to buy 37% stake in India's Adani Gas

Total plans to spend \$600 million to expand its Indian presence



PARIS: Total will make an open offer to Adani Gas shareholders to purchase up to 25.2 percent in equity. — AFP

**MUMBAI:** Total has agreed to buy a 37.4 percent stake in India's Adani Gas, the two firms said yesterday, with the French giant spending \$600 million to expand its access to the energy-hungry country. The Indian firm, part of the Adani Group conglomerate, is one of the four main distributors of city gas in the country, and plans to increase its coverage to six million homes and 1,500 outlets to supply vehicles over the next decade.

Under the terms of the deal, Total will make an open offer to Adani Gas shareholders to purchase up to 25.2 percent before buying the remaining equity from the company, leaving the French and Indian firms with an equal share. "Energy needs in India are immense and the Indian energy mix is key to the climate change challenge," Patrick Pouyanne, Total chairman and chief executive, said in a statement.

"The natural gas market in India will have a strong growth and is an attractive outlet for the world's second-largest LNG player that Total has become," he added.

Natural gas currently represents a fraction of India's energy consumption—around seven percent—while a June report by the Centre for Science and Environment think-tank found that the country's gas-based power plants were running at 24 percent of their capacity.

On Sunday, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said New Delhi was investing over \$60 billion to build pipelines and other infrastructure aimed at increasing the use of natural gas in the country, the Press Trust of India reported. "Our government is exploring strategic partnerships for overall development of oil and gas sector. The role of private sector—both domestic and from abroad, for bringing in investments with necessary innovations for future energy landscape in the country, will remain crucial," he said in Delhi.

India has set a target to increase natural gas consumption to 15 percent by 2030. "Total's investment in Adani Gas reinforces India's natural gas and demand potential. We look forward to working together towards delivering India's vision for clean and green energy," said Gautam Adani, founder of the mining-to-logistics conglomerate. The Indian group has faced fierce criticism over the environmental impact of a huge coal mine scheduled for construction in Australia, with conservationists saying it will increase global warming, threaten local vulnerable species, and damage the Great Barrier Reef.

Shares in Adani Gas closed nearly 10 percent higher in Mumbai yesterday following the news of the acquisition. Total shares were off 1.76 percent in Paris. —AFP

## Russian CB signals rate cut with an eye on US Fed

**MOSCOW:** The Russian central bank sent a clear signal yesterday that it would cut interest rates soon, saying that expected monetary easing by the US Federal Reserve should justify rate cuts in Russia.

Alexei Zlotnik, head of the monetary policy department at the Russian central bank, said the Fed is expected to cut US borrowing costs twice in the first half of 2020. "This gives an extra space for monetary policy easing in emerging market countries and in Russia in particular," Zlotnik told a monetary policy meeting in Russia's lower house of parliament.

Zlotnik also said that slowing inflation means the Russian central bank is considering a rate cut "in the near future". The bank is gradually cutting rates as it normalizes policy after economic and financial shocks caused by Western sanctions on Russia, and as inflation, its key area of responsibility, has slowed to its 4 percent target.

If the key rate is cut from its current level of 7 percent, it will dive below that mark for the first time since March 2014 and into the 6-7 percent range that the central bank deems neutral. Zlotnik said it was too early to revise the neutral range but it was possible in the future.

Zlotnik's comments echoed those of his boss, central bank governor Elvira Nabiullina, who said last week that the bank could now cut rates faster than previously thought. Nabiullina's comments moved the market last week, boosting prices of government bonds that move inversely with yields. Investors are keen to buy into Russian debt before rates fall, possibly as soon as central bank meetings due on Oct. 25 and Dec. 13. —Reuters

## Shares in state-run Indian Railways soar on Mumbai debut

**MUMBAI:** Shares in the catering and ticketing arm of state-run Indian Railways more than doubled in value after its debut on Mumbai's Sensex stock exchange yesterday, as New Delhi looks to raise funds and kickstart a stuttering economy.

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corp Ltd (IRCTC), which has a monopoly on online ticket sales, enjoyed a massive initial public offering (IPO) that was oversubscribed nearly 112 times. Shares opened at 644 rupees (\$9.05), peaking at 743.80 rupees before ending at 728.60 rupees — 127 percent higher than the issue price of 320 rupees.

Analysts say yesterday's performance, while not in line with valuations of other public sector IPOs this year, offers hope to India's beleaguered government, which is aiming to raise 800 billion rupees this fiscal year after announcing a cut

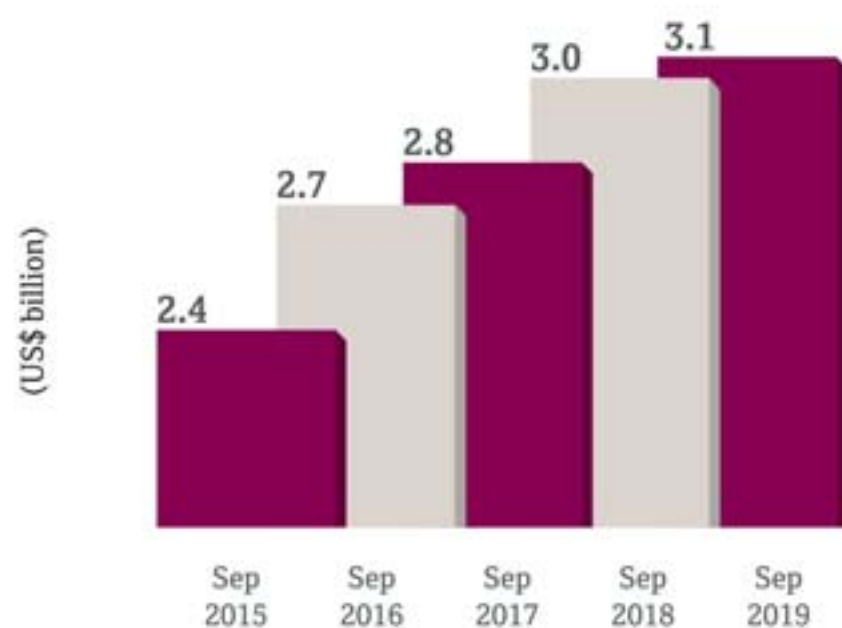
in the corporate tax rate. They added that the huge demand was in part caused by the small number of shares released by the government, and by how well-known the IRCTC is in India, home to one of the world's largest rail networks.

"The shares are riding on unsustainable speculative expectations," founder of Mumbai-based Equinomics Research and Advisory Private Limited, G. Chokkalingam, said. "There will be course correction, hence government should offload more and generate revenue rather than letting speculators reap the benefits." Asia's third-largest economy has been in the throes of a prolonged slowdown, with growth rates falling to five percent in the June-ended quarter as consumer demand shrinks. The automobile sector, often seen as a barometer of economic health, reported a sales slowdown for the eleventh month in September as major manufacturers including Ashok Leyland and Mahindra & Mahindra halted production.

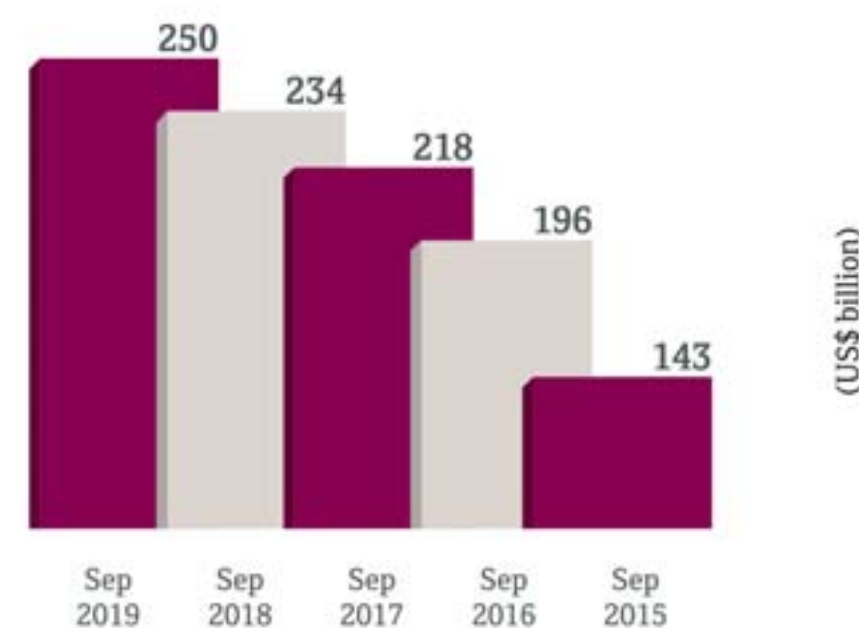
Earlier this month ratings agency Moody's revised the country's GDP growth forecast to 5.8 percent for the financial year 2019-20, lower than the 6.1 percent predicted by India's central bank. Besides online ticketing, IRCTC also operates a catering service and sells packaged drinking water and tourism holiday packages. — Reuters

QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the MEA region, continues to deliver strong results for the nine months ended September 2019

Net Profit US\$3.1 billion, up by 4% on September 2018



Total Assets US\$250 billion, up by 7% on September 2018



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## Business

# Global stock markets added to BBYN brokerage platform

## Boubyan Capital upgrades Boubyan online and mobile brokerage service

**KUWAIT:** Boubyan Capital Investment Company “BCIC”, Boubyan Bank’s investment arm, has announced an upgrade of Boubyan Brokerage Service thereby giving customers access to global stock markets in the US, Europe and the UK. Boubyan Brokerage underwent improvements so as to provide customers with the best customer experience by using state-of-the-art innovated technologies whether online or through the mobile App.

In this context, BCIC’s Executive Director - Asset Management & Brokerage, Badria Hamad Al-Humaidhi said: “The addition of new international markets to Boubyan Brokerage Service whether online or through Boubyan Mobile App is but the fruit of constant pursuit of expansion and developing the services we offer to investors by providing developed brokerage systems that enable clients to easily and smoothly navigate through the platform”.

Al-Humaidhi went on to explain that “BCIC is one of the leading companies in Kuwait that provides customers with online Sharia-compliant stock trad-

ing in the GCC and other international markets through Boubyan Brokerage website or Boubyan Brokerage App”.

On his part, BCIC’s Analyst - Brokerage Department, Suliman Khalifah Al-Enazi stated: “Boubyan trading clients may now trade in the GCC and other international markets using one brokerage account with direct access to Sharia-compliant stocks in international markets, which is a perfect solution for clients interested in increasing their wealth or managing the same beyond the GCC region.”

Al-Enazi also stressed the availability of various services and facilities through the e-trading service platform where clients would be able to execute purchase, sale, change or cancellation orders easily and interactively, view portfolio details, account summaries and manage their brokerage accounts in various markets as well as have direct access to analysis, charts, and market data to file immediate orders and review latest stock market news, statements, graphs and developed stock analysis tools.

Furthermore, Al-Enazi added: “Boubyan clients can flexibly link their bank accounts to their brokerage accounts, as this enables them to transfer funds to brokerage accounts via K-net or direct transfer from their personal accounts held with the bank. Boubyan Brokerage service provides a unique experience for clients giving them access to a full package of brokerage services in the GCC and international capital markets.”

Clients may open a brokerage account with a minimum of KD 1,000 (in cash or stocks). For further information about Boubyan Brokerage, clients may contact the brokerage service center at 1803800.

Boubyan Capital Investment Company (Boubyan Capital) was established in 2007 as a sharia-compliant company. BCIC proudly provides diverse outstanding investment solutions, striking a balance between long-term goals and short term needs to deliver an intensely resourced pool of wealth management solutions to BCIC clients. BCIC is continually guided by a key principle of abiding by its fiduciary responsibility to ensure



Badria Hamad Al-Humaidhi



Suliman Khalifah Al-Enazi

that investors’ financial interests are placed ahead of its own at all times, backed by the highest levels of privacy protection. BCIC focuses on providing three core services, namely: Asset Management, Brokerage Services, and Alternative Investments.

## Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 13th October 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 06 - 10 October 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

### The winners this week are:

Talal Zaid Mohammed Al-Tawari  
Jaber Ahmad Jaafar Sanaseeri  
Ali Adel Mohammed Al-Matrook  
Nivin Mohammed Sadeq  
Thamer Abdulatif Ahmed Al-Hashash  
Gulf Bank’s final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank’s online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the ‘Al-Danah Chances’ calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Gulf Bank’s Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer’s account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Furthermore, loyal Al-Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year which are added to the customer’s chances the following year. Terms and conditions apply.

The Al-Danah draws are all approved by and held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce. Furthermore, Gulf Bank have partnered with Ernst and Young Kuwait (EY) with reference to “Al-Danah Prize Draw” system in order to assist in assessing processes, technical controls considering relevant parameters and provide recommendations in-line with industry leading practices. The study was conducted in line with industry standards and control requirements relevant to similar prize draw schemes wherein, a detailed review of prize draw management system along with draw scheme parameters, data extraction for draw, filtration of customers as per defined business criteria and necessary system interactions was conducted to advise on any potential areas of improvements.

## Ooredoo Kuwait obtains latest ISO 9001:2015 re-certification

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait is proud to announce the successful achievement of obtaining the latest ISO 9001:2015 Re-certification. Ooredoo Kuwait was the first Mobile Telecommunications Company in Kuwait to successfully complete and implement the newest International Quality Standards back in 2016, the certification audit of this international standard was conducted by Bureau Veritas Kuwait. The re-certification was successfully completed on September 18th, 2019.

As a result of Ooredoo Kuwait’s management and staff’s professional commitment, the overall achievement and effort in maintaining and achieving such Quality Standards ensures continual improvement within the company’s processes.

Amine Tazi, Chief Strategy & Support Officer at Ooredoo Kuwait, stated that “this milestone adds to the

continuous efforts to maintain internationally recognized standards, in line with Ooredoo Kuwait’s Management System. Maintaining ISO 9001:2015 certified management system is important for Ooredoo Kuwait to translate to its commitment for providing a sustainable value for the Customers and Stakeholders. Ooredoo Kuwait has been consistently driving continual improvement initiatives through the application of best internationally-proven practices in every aspect possible to offer the best in-class Customer Experience”.

ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 164 national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.



Amine Tazi

## Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) promises authentic 5G experience

**KUWAIT:** The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is the latest in the line of Huawei’s innovations. Packed with powerful features that allow it to do what other 5G smartphones in the market can’t, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) sets the benchmark for the 5G industry with powerful innovations, strong hardware and customer-centric features.

Today’s growth of the 5G sector has catapulted it into a commercial stage. This has led to various countries and regions adopting two network architectures, the Non-Standalone (NSA) and the Standalone (SA) 5G networks. The NSA networks, supported by existing 4G infrastructure, are used today, but network operations eventually will transit to the SA 5G networks in order to embrace the true 5G solutions. SA networks also have the added advantage of simplification and efficiency, but the key is that 5G users should not notice the eventual migration from

NSA to SA by operators. Additionally, to ensure device longevity and uninterrupted connectivity, users have to ensure their 5G device supports both SA and NSA networks, as devices with NSA support might not work in regions with SA networks fully deployed. However, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) provides users with the best solution to this situation, by being the world’s first smartphone to support both NSA and SA networks, allowing for the best connectivity across different scenarios.

The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) makes this possible thanks to its dual-chipset setup that consists of the Balong 5000, the world’s first 7nm multi-mode chipset and the Kirin 980, Huawei’s fastest chipset yet. While the Balong 5000 helps users in unprecedented connectivity with download rates up to 4.6 Gbps, the Kirin 980, delivers with ultimate performance. In addition to this, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is also the world’s first 5G smartphone to support Dual-SIM (5G SIM + 4G SIM) functionality. Thanks to this dual-card design, users can stay connected to 5G networks while travelling along with support for both 4G and 5G dual-SIM use.

The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) also delivers in terms of entertainment. Thanks to its Ultra-Large 7.2” AMOLED display, users can enjoy watching movies, browsing the web or even playing the latest games. This

is further complemented by the famous GPU Turbo 3.0, which enhances graphics for a better viewing and more immersive gaming experience. Photography fans are not forgotten either, with the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G)’s powerful Matrix Triple Camera system. The Leica triple camera’s 40MP wide angle, 20MP Ultra-Wide angle and the 8MP telephoto lenses users can take stunning pictures in any scenario from macro to ultra-wide.

However, running such powerful hardware and 5G systems are quite power consuming. Keeping this in mind, Huawei has fitted the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) with a large 4,200 mAh battery with a 40W Huawei SuperCharge feature. The phone is also kept cool with the new Huawei SuperCool Technology consisting of a graphene film and vapor chamber. Thanks to this setup of powerful hardware such as the Balong 5000 and Kirin 980 dual chipsets and the 4200 mAh battery, and a wide range of unique features such as NSA/SA support, Dual-SIM card features, and the massive 7.2 inch display, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is capable of doing it all, be it entertainment, performance or most importantly a 5G experience like no other. You can try it out yourself, as the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is available at your nearest Huawei showroom or retail store.



## AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draw

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank announced on the 09th of October 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al-

Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period. The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Abdulaziz Ahmed Alsadeeqi.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000. They are: Maisam Ahmad Mustafa, Mohammad Rahman Albussain, Falah Saeed Al-Saeb, Taher Mohammad Al-Failakawi, Eman Mohamed Salam, Jaafar Saleh Boshehri, Zaabi Hussain Al-Zaabi, Yousef Abdulaziz Al-Muraikhi, Fahad Nayef Aldabbous, Saleh Hamad Saleh, Ghazi Masoud Saafak, Alhatham Mahmoud Mohammad, Fahad Yaseen Edrees, Mohammad Ibrahim Al Khabbaz, Ali A Mohsin Ali, Ali Khalil Ebrahim, Marwa Mohamed Elzemrany, Radhiya A

Mohsin Al-Mahroos , Maha Moahmmmed Yousif and Richard Pereira.

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

## Pound resumes drop at start of key Brexit week

**LONDON:** The British pound slid against the euro and dollar yesterday, the start of a pivotal week for Britain and the European Union to strike a Brexit deal. European stock markets also retreated as weak Chinese data offset a partial trade deal between China and the United States, analysts said.

Asian investors had earlier yesterday saluted the trade deal, sending regional equity markets rallying, though observers were skeptical about the overall significance of the agreement. Official data meanwhile showed Chinese imports and exports

fell more than forecast in September, as US tariffs and cooling demand at home and abroad hit trade in the world’s second largest economy.

The figures weighed heavily on the oil market, with crude futures slumping two percent. They had surged Friday, fuelled by a blast on an Iranian tanker and news of the US-China deal. “Although the US and China made some progress late last week and President Trump suspended tariffs due to come in in mid-October, the damage from the existing trade restrictions is being felt,” noted Fiona Cincotta, senior market analyst at City Index trading group.

She added: “The pound has dropped like a stone overnight after Brexit negotiations didn’t lead to any significant progress over the weekend.” Sterling rallied late last week after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his Irish counterpart

Leo Varadkar said after meeting that they could see a “pathway” to reaching a Brexit deal.

But European officials on Sunday said obstacles remained on how to manage trade and customs between EU-member Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is a part of the United Kingdom. Time is running out to sign off on any deal at an October 17-18 European Union summit, the last such meeting before Britain’s scheduled departure from the European Union at the end of the month.

Sterling “has given back some of last week’s major gains as traders are less hopeful about the prospect of a Brexit deal being reached”, said David Madden, analyst at CMC Markets UK. “The mood is a little less hopeful that some sort of arrangement will be struck. On Friday, UK banks, like RBS, Lloyds plus Barclays all made sizeable gains, but... they are all in the red” in midday deals. —AFP



In this file photo British one pound sterling coins are arranged in front of a Union flag for a photograph in London. —AFP



What's On

# Burgan Bank continues sponsorship of Ahmadi Music Group's performances



**B**urgan Bank, a leading contributor to the arts and cultural scene in Kuwait, announces its 6th year of sponsorship of Ahmadi Music Group's 2019 - 2020 season performances. As part of its ongoing commitment to fostering creativity and enriching the cultural life of the local community, Burgan Bank and the reputable arts organization share a mutual objective that will raise the level of musical standards.

The locally and internationally famous group is one of the oldest and largest performing arts group, and is

the most prominent in the country for its orchestral, choral, operatic, jazz and pop music. Having conducted the largest concerts in Kuwait with over 100 professional performers on stage. The group's goal remains to provide performance opportunities for the active professional singers and instrumentalists residing in Kuwait.

Driven to support social advancement among all communities, the Bank is invested in growing the musical identity of Kuwait through exposure to multi-

faceted global experts. Through such innovative platforms, emerging local artists can strengthen their existing capabilities as well as adopt new skills that will provide wider opportunities around the world. Last year, through Burgan Bank's sponsorship, the 65 year old Ahmadi Music Group held Kuwait's biggest orchestra comprising of 130 performers from all over the world, one of Mozart's most popular symphonies was played by leading calibers from The UK, Russia and Bulgaria.

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

## Lulu Hypermarket 'Back to School' promotion winners

**L**ulu Hypermarket, the leading hypermarket chain in the region, in collaboration with Byju's, The Learning App, held a prize-distribution ceremony to felicitate the winners of their joint 'Back to School' promotion. Top management of Lulu Hypermarket in Kuwait along with Biju Amal Kaitheri - Vice-President of Sales at Byju's The Learning App, presented the ten lucky prize winners with a draft for KD1,000 each, for an overall total prize money of KD10,000.

The 'Back to School' promotional offer, which was held between August 21 and September 10, provided shoppers with a coupon, for every KD10 worth of purchases made at any Lulu Hypermarket outlet, which entitled them to be included in the lucky draw. Ten lucky winners were then picked through a raffle draw held on September 16 at the Ministry of Commerce and in the presence of ministry supervisors.

Lulu Hypermarket's 'Back to School' promotion is part of the brand's efforts to consistently meet consumer demands for quality products at competitive prices, while also providing them with the opportunity to avail of fabulous prizes. The promotion also helps make shopping at Lulu Hypermarkets an exciting experience for the entire family.



## Redeemed Church of God holds 'Musical Explosion'

**T**he Redeemed Church of God (House of David) on Friday held a 'Musical Explosion' at the Church premises. The Christian musical extravaganza featured choir groups from other parishes and denominations. Speaking on the occasion, the host pastor Emmanuel B Cole urged Christians to be good ambassadors of Christ. He praised the Amir and Kuwait government for promoting religious tolerance and peace in the region. The program attracted lots of dignitaries and religious leaders.



Kuwaiti researcher in Al-Sabah Family Rulers Legacy, Abdullah Bowair recently met with the Ambassador of the Co-Operative Republic of Guyana in Kuwait, Prof Dr Shamir Ally in his office at the embassy. Both sides exchanged gifts as the ambassador gave Bowair a book about the history of Guyana and Bowair gave two paintings with photos of Kuwaiti martyrs names in both Arabic and English.

## Samarpan holds 'Cleanliness is Service' campaign

**S**amarpan, Gujarati Cultural Association, under the patronage of Indian Embassy organized "Swachhata Hi Seva" (Cleanliness is Service) campaign on October 4, 2019 to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary which was on October 2. The campaign was introduced as, both to commemorate his birth anniversary and also to bring awareness amongst the people to contribute in maintaining the cleanliness.

The cleanliness campaign was kicked off by opening remarks by Ramneek Singh, from Embassy of India and presenting a T-shirt with message "Swachhata hi Seva" printed on it. The members started with cleaning of Abuhalifa Park and collected more than

8 bags of garbage which included plastic & glass bottles, disposable plates & containers, empty cigarette packets and cigarette butts, plastic carry bags and plastic sheets, tissue papers, food stuff and other waste materials. They also cleaned few streets of Abuhalifa, Walking track and successfully conveyed the message to the residents of block 1, Abuhalifa.

Describing this campaign as an attempt to fulfill the dream envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi, Hitesh Patel - President of Samarpan thanked the Executive committee, all the participants and volunteers for their support to make it successful. He specially thanked Amita Desai for her suggestion and initiatives taken to conduct this campaign. Amita Desai believes that it's a "great way to pay tributes to Babu (Mahatma Gandhi)". Hitesh Patel also thanked the Indian Embassy for encouraging us organizing this campaign and providing all the support required for obtaining permission from the authorities of the state Kuwait. The campaign was concluded with light refreshments and a thank you note by President.



## Study in CANADA exhibition

**S**tudy in CANADA exhibition is being organized by the Embassy of Canada. The 14th annual Education Canada Middle East and North Africa

(MENA) Tour will be visiting Kuwait from October 23-24, 2019. Representatives of around 17 leading Canadian institutions will be available to meet students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors to present the advantages of studying in Canada. On Wednesday, October 23, 2019 at 6:00 pm the Study in Canada exhibition will be held at Symphony Style Hotel, Arabian Gulf St, Salmiya for potential students and their parents to attend.



## Health &amp; Science

# US 'medical tourists' seek cheap health care abroad

**TIJUANA:** When Veronica Merrill decided to undergo stomach surgery for weight loss, she found two options: pay \$12,000 at home in the United States, or have it done in Mexico for \$4,000. She packed her suitcase. Her insurance would only cover the operation if she was morbidly obese and suffering from diabetes and hypertension.

This was not the case for the 50-year-old, who weighs 210 pounds but aspires to slim down to 160 – precisely because she wants to avoid ending up with those medical conditions. "It's sad that I have to come to another country" for the procedure, said Merrill, who drives a school bus in rural Arizona and is highly critical of the US health system – the most expensive in the world. "We shouldn't have to do that. That's crazy. And we're the only ones (with this system), and that is depressing." After researching medical tourism options, she saved up the money and contacted a specialist agency to organize her trip over the border to Tijuana, where weight-loss operations and dental treatments are popular. Others travel to the Mexican city for treatment of cardiovascular conditions or cancer, orthopedic work and fertility care, as well as to buy medications. "If I only could have done it in the US... (but) I can't pay that much money," she told AFP. "I just want to be healthy."

#### No price regulation

Each year, an estimated 20 million "medical

tourists" seek treatment around the world, according to Patients Beyond Borders. About 1.9 million of those people are Americans. Mexico and Colombia – which many Americans associate more with drug trafficking than health care – are among the most popular destinations, along with Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

They all offer lower costs and high-quality infrastructure. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, two prominent Democratic candidates for the 2020 presidential election, have proposed universal health coverage – an idea that Merrill considers "logical." For now, Merrill turned to a company called Medical Tourism Corporation to organize every detail of her trip – including her flight from Phoenix to San Diego, the driver who took her across the border and a luxury hotel.

Altogether, the tickets, hotel and surgery – at the Oasis of Hope hospital, right by the border – cost her \$3,880. She paid in cash. "We do the coordination... (we) have a destination manager in those cities who would help a patient with the language, the local logistics and things like that," said Deepak Datta, who founded Medical Tourism Corporation 13 years ago. The company sends 60-70 people abroad each month to countries around the world, mainly Mexico. "I operate on two or more foreigners every day," said surgeon Luis Cazares, who removed 80 percent of Merrill's stomach. He said his greatest flow of patients is during the tax refund season

in the United States, after April. According to Gerald Kominski, a professor of health policy at UCLA in Los Angeles, the US does "little to regulate prices, in contrast to all other high-income nations." "Medical tourism from a high-income nation like the US is indicative of a problem with affordability, as opposed to quality," he added.

#### Universal coverage

But even if "Medicare for All" were introduced as Sanders and Warren have urged, Americans likely would not stop seeking cheaper care abroad, says Medical Tourism Association CEO Jonathan Edelheit. After President Barack Obama's health care reforms in 2010, which required all adults to have insurance plans whether through work or the government, medical tourism by Americans expanded, he said.

Some employers whose medical costs "almost doubled since Obamacare was in place" sent staff abroad, he said, citing a company that saved \$20 million in five years by sending employees for orthopedic and weight-loss operations outside the US. Under universal care proposals, the US would likely end up with a system where, like in Canada and Europe, non-urgent procedures such as stomach operations require years on a waiting list. "Wait times... will push people to go for medical tourism" to get treatment earlier, he predicted. Indeed, many of the foreign patients at Oasis of Hope hospital are Canadian. — AFP

## Philippines begins mass vaccinations after polio returns

**MANILA:** Parents lined up from sunrise holding sleeping infants as the Philippines launched a campaign yesterday to vaccinate millions of children against polio, which has re-emerged nearly two decades after the nation's last cases. Years of falling vaccination rates, made worse by the botched rollout of a dengue vaccine, culminated in an outbreak of the preventable disease in September.

"This is for the welfare of my child," Ruth Miranda told AFP after the vaccine was squirted into her child's mouth at the Manila slum they call home. Miranda's child is among scores who are unprotected in the capital of about 13 million people, where vaccination rates of young children plunged from 77 percent in 2016 to a mere 24 percent in June. The atmosphere at the event in Manila was festive with ice cream vendors and music but the stakes for the campaign are high. Polio, which can cause paralysis and can be fatal in rare cases, has no cure and can only be prevented with several doses of oral and injectable vaccines. Two cas-

es were detected in September, the first polio infections in the Philippines since 2001, adding to the woes of a country already hit by deadly measles and dengue epidemic. The risk of the disease spreading within the Philippines is high, according to World Health Organization, due to low immunization coverage partly blamed to a dengue vaccine scandal.

The Philippines was the first nation to use Dengvaxia in a mass program in 2016, but a botched rollout led to claims that children had died after being vaccinated. A dramatic drop in vaccine confidence followed, with trust plunging from 93 percent in 2015 to 32 percent in 2018, according to a study led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The Philippines polio outbreak has been traced back to the weakened form of the virus used in vaccines, which is excreted by people for a time after they receive it. According to the WHO, that form can mutate and spread in the surrounding community when immunization rates get too low. —AFP

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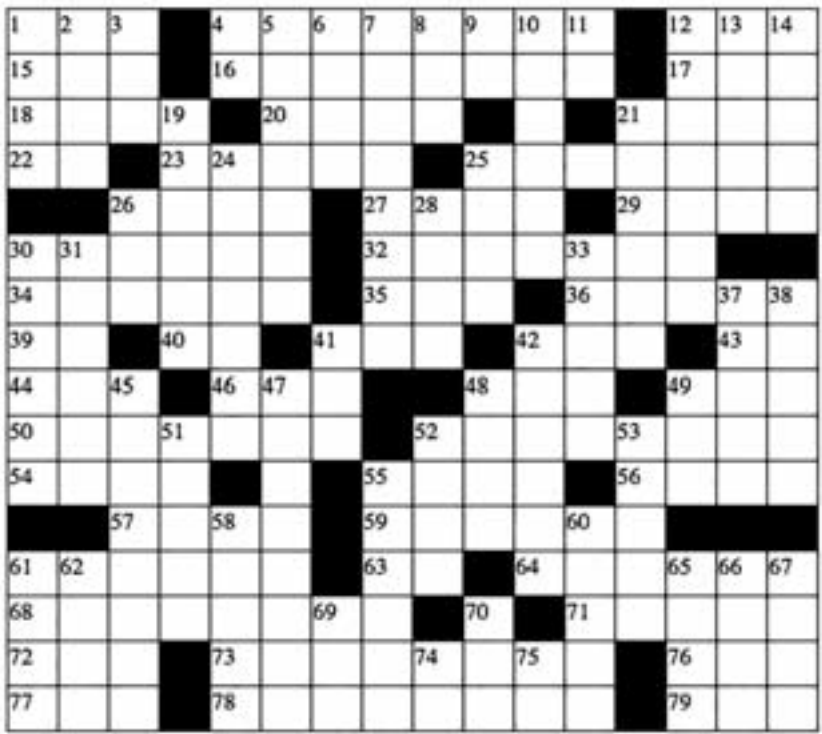
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CROSSWORD 2333



ACROSS

- 1. A light touch or stroke.
  - 4. An ancient branch of the Semitic languages.
  - 12. The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
  - 15. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
  - 16. A nonmagnetic housing for a ship's compass (usually in front of the helm).
  - 17. An erratic deflection from an intended course.
  - 18. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
  - 20. Period extending from Dec. 24 to Jan. 6.
  - 22. A public promotion of some product or service.
  - 23. A large number or amount.
  - 27. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
  - 29. A deposit of valuable ore occurring within definite boundaries separating it from surrounding rocks.
  - 30. Foul with waste matter.
  - 32. A farm building for housing poultry.
  - 34. Go on board.
  - 35. Noisy talk.
  - 36. The sacred city of Lamaism.
  - 39. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
  - 40. A state in north central United States.
  - 43. A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
  - 44. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
  - 46. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
  - 50. The Japanese art of folding paper into shapes representing objects (e.g., flowers or birds).
  - 54. A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
  - 56. A university in Connecticut.
  - 57. A Chinese breed of small short-legged dogs with a long silky coat and broad flat muzzle.
  - 59. Wear away.
  - 61. A vehicle resembling a bicycle but having skis instead of wheels.
  - 63. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
  - 64. A Japanese cheer of enthusiasm or triumph.
  - 68. Segmented worms.
  - 71. The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
  - 72. The basic unit of money in Romania.
  - 73. Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
  - 76. Neckwear consisting of a long narrow piece of material worn (mostly by men) under a collar and tied in knot at the front.
  - 77. The foot of a human being.
  - 78. A great raja.
  - 79. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
5. People descended from a common ancestor.
6. A tight cluster of people or things.
7. A mixture of methyl and ethyl chloride.
8. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
9. Being nine more than ninety.
10. Of or pertaining to or written in Altaic.
11. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
12. (Greek mythology) One of a race of giants having a single eye in the middle of their forehead.
13. Given or having a specified name.
14. A native or inhabitant of Sweden.
19. Noisy quarrel.
21. Aimlessly drifting.
24. Congenital absence of the heart (as in the development of some monsters).
25. A financial institution that accepts deposits and channels the money into lending activities.
26. An intricate network suggesting something that was formed by weaving or interweaving.
28. A form of energy that is transferred by a difference in temperature.
31. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
33. An informal word (abstracted from words with this ending) for some unidentified branch of knowledge.
37. A winder around which thread or tape or film or other flexible materials can be wound.
38. The address where a person lives.
41. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
42. I species.
45. Mostly deciduous monoecious trees or shrubs.
47. The animal order including amoebas.
48. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
49. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
51. Plot of land belonging to an English parish church or an ecclesiastical office.
52. A small cake leavened with yeast.
53. Doglike nocturnal mammal of Africa and southern Asia that feeds chiefly on carrion.
55. The dialect of Malay used as the national language of the Republic of Indonesia or of Malaysia.
58. A member of a formerly tribal people now living in south central India.
60. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
62. Hinge joint in the human leg connecting the tibia and fibula with the femur and protected in front by the patella.
65. Medium-sized tubular pasta in short pieces.
66. Lacking sufficient water or rainfall.
67. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
69. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
70. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
74. A soft yellowish-white trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
75. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

DOWN

- 1. An informal term for a father.
- 2. In bed.
- 3. The cry made by sheep.
- 4. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Co-workers may want to know more than you are willing to contribute. You may have a tendency to avoid sensitive subjects and take refuge in duties and responsibilities rather than face issues that are shallow. You enjoy the practical and the truthful. This is a good time to launch a public-relations campaign to advance your career—you can be a good politician. Certainly, a time of progress and stability has begun. It is also a good time to be more involved in education, as a student or teacher. Either way, you will be learning. Recalculating the budget brings good news! There are many rewards for being thrifty.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You could find yourself working overtime today—you have a lot of energy to pour into a work project. You may appear commanding and assertive—whatever the mood—this is the time to push ahead. Breakthroughs in your career could open up during this time—making it possible for you to solve problems and find new opportunities to move forward and upward in your career. This evening you will be moved to appreciate and discover the beauty in your life—perhaps a sunset, a baby animal or a child—and the beauty in those around you. At the same time, everything takes on added value. Be careful that you do not overspend or indulge too much just now.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The issue this day seems to be in how you will live in your body if you do not take better care of it. Conversations about diet, nutrition, etc., can be easily begun. You may strive to learn about nutrition and good health. Exercise is important—avoid over-exertion. Have fun as you work and as you play—you will encourage others in this game of life. This afternoon a shopping expedition shows off your excellent taste. You could be an expert in all matters of art and discrimination. You can always pick out the valuable and worthwhile. You appreciate all that is fine and beautiful. You will charm an older person this evening with your fascinating stories and theories. Later this evening there is a chance to have some special time with a loved one.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push toward new projects in all aspects of your life. Life may seem almost magical in the way situations work out in your favor. There is time to begin a plan to become better organized on the home front. Good fortune and plain old luck surround you today. It is easy for you to make correct decisions, find the right path and move forward where community concerns are in question. Politics would not be out of the question for you. There is a burning zeal for humanitarian goals, what is best for the many, in the community. With little patience for detail and superficialities, you insist on getting right to the heart of any question.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is an instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of your health at many levels. You may have tried a multitude of methods to get your body into the shape you desire. However, now it is time to settle on one method and stick to it. Many methods work—however, the secret to your success is consistency. Others value you for your ability to make practical decisions—now it is time to have faith in the decisions you make. This is a very nice day, perhaps filled with some renewed appreciation for all that is beautiful and fine. You might feel love or value for an older person. You have a sense of value and valuing that may find you lavishing affection on those near you. General good feeling and a sense of support makes this a happy time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A deliberate sense of responsibility comes across today. This sense of responsibility is central to your personality and the way you relate to other people. Everything is run through your checkpoint to see if it holds up and can pass the test—you can be a stickler for details. Try now to break up old habits and get out of ruts, etc. You may feel very passionate at this time, or you could feel that your feelings, emotions and basic life urges undergo change and possible transformation. You feel more personal and direct and find that you waste less time with hurt feelings than before. There is a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. You work well with others. Young people in your work group amuse you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Take a deep cleansing breath—this is going to be a day where you need to put extra effort into thinking things through to the long-term. You have a yearning to reach for what seems to be the impossible. There is a kind of spiritual wanderlust that takes center stage. Law, politics, education, travel and religion are some of the areas where an emotionally charged drama occurs. A bit of a rebellious urge within you presents an emotional challenge. You may have to resist attempts to divert your drive and energy in directions that will take you nowhere. You become more focused than ever! You can dispense now with all that is unsound and move in a most positive and determined direction. This evening is good for soothing music.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Deep and penetrating analysis, particularly with a group or in relation to your situation may be in order now. Others could seek you out for your understanding. You could be teaching a class in personal development. This could also be a time to make changes in your work environment. Others value you for your independence and unique qualities. You will not have difficulty in getting recognition for your efforts or accomplishments. You should, however, place your efforts into work or ventures that you really love doing. Career insights are possible. You might discover that unconventional solutions to life's problems are in order as well.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The main focus today is on the manner in which you handle responsibilities in the workplace. You are also likely to fall into a greater position of authority. You make progress in your profession—an increase in stability. Ideals and a sense of belonging become a greater focus in your life at this time. You attach a lot of importance to friendship and taking part in group activities that center on idealistic goals. Someone you care about—a child or lover, perhaps—may be a cause for concern. Self-control and setting limits are important in love and other games of chance; think long-term and be realistic in your approach to these things.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You could be the main attraction today, especially in relation to your work. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it entails. Independence, as well as anything unusual or different, is valued. You may enjoy getting away from routine and doing something completely different after work today. You could be entering a phase of changing or creating habits, which may be a good way to delve into something different. Good habits bring us everything we want but bad ones can turn our lives into a mess. You are wise to take the time to write down some of what you want to change in yourself, with regard to habits.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You find ways to broaden your horizons—both intellectually and spiritually. Education, publishing, broadcasting, legal and political interests as well as advertising offer wonderful opportunities just now. Making suggestions for solving problems can make a big difference in your professional status. You may not be the creator of an advertisement or a play, but you will give ideas to others that can benefit the business for which you work. Rewards are in the making. Assimilating information and experience, learning lessons and putting them into practice—these are the main focus this afternoon. It's a time for prudence and stewardship and tending to the details.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You can really communicate and express yourself to others right now. You have a lot of energy and come across as assertive and dominant. Conflict between time at home and time on the job may cause you to stop and rethink your purpose for working so hard. If the pay is not beneficial for the time away from loved ones, it is time to reassess. Encourage, praise and support your loved ones often. You will be pleasantly surprised at what happens in return. Check out the balance of your week and ask yourself if everything, including you, gets a fair share of your time. It could be time for some adjustments. Circumstances may conspire to limit and hinder your sense of independence. Loved ones are able to help with errands this evening—just ask.

Wordsearch Puzzle

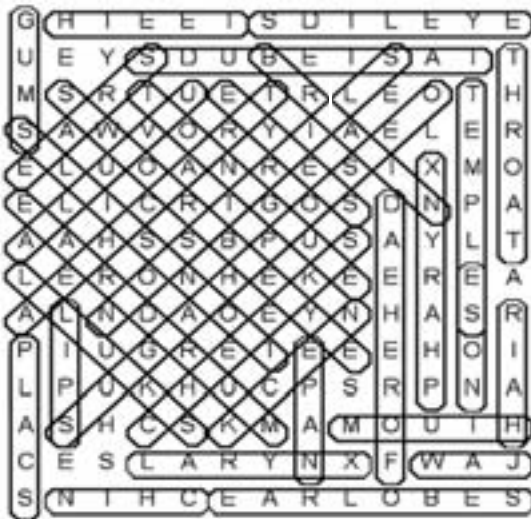
Hip-Hop Artists

Find and circle all of the Hip-Hop Artists that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of a Lauryn Hill song.



- |                |                   |                  |               |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| AFRIKA BAMBATA | FOXY BROWN        | MISSY ELLIOTT    | THE ALCHEMIST |
| BRAND NUBIAN   | GANG STARR        | HUGGS            | THE FAT BOYS  |
| BUSTA RHYMES   | GRANDMASTER FLASH | NATURE           | THE FUGEES    |
| COOLIO         | HEAVY D           | NOTORIOUS B.I.G. | THE PHARCYDE  |
| CORMEGA        | KANYE WEST        | ONFY             | THE ROOTS     |
| CRAIG MACK     | KILLARMY          | QUEEN LATIFAH    | TLC           |
| DE LA SOUL     | KURTIS BLOW       | REDMAN           | WILL SMITH    |
| DJ SHADOW      | LAURYN HILL       | SALT N PEPA      | WU-TANG CLAN  |
| ERICK SERMON   | LL COOL J         | SPOONIE GEE      | WYCLEF JEAN   |
| FAT JOE        | MASTER P          | STETSASONIC      |               |

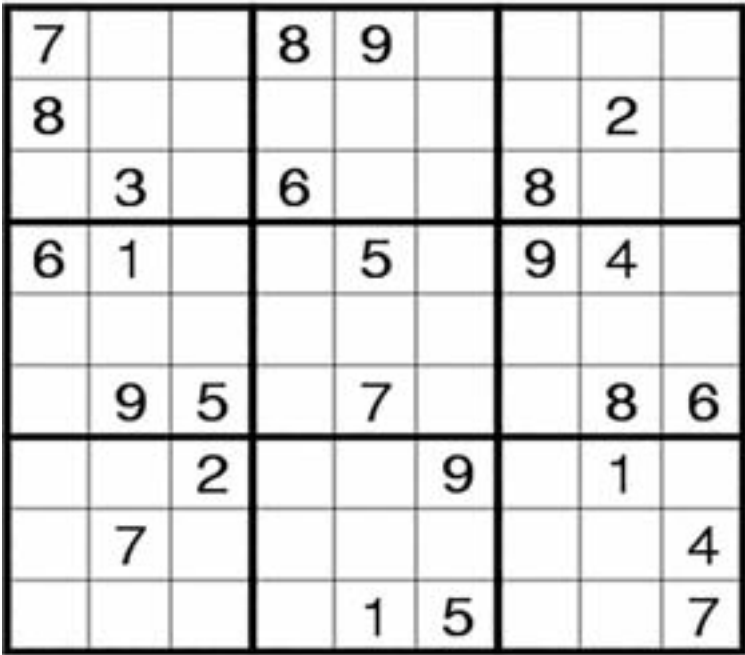
Head & Neck



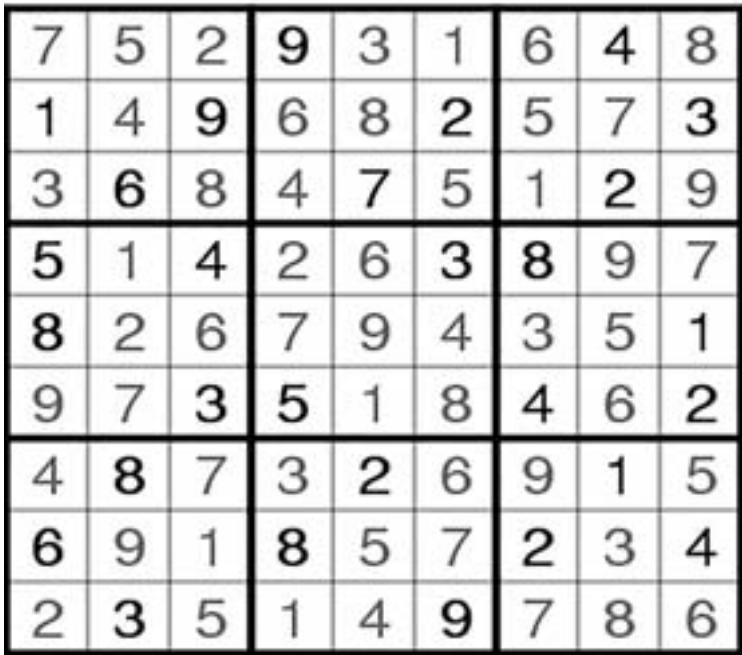
- |           |             |            |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| BRAIN     | HAIR        | SCALP      |
| CHEEKS    | JAW         | SKULL      |
| CHIN      | LARYNX      | TASTE BUDS |
| EAR LOBES | LIPS        | TEETH      |
| EARDRUM   | MOUTH       | TEMPLES    |
| EARS      | NAPE        | THROAT     |
| EYEBROWS  | NECK        | TONGUE     |
| EYELIDS   | NOSE        | TONSILS    |
| EYES      | NOSTRILS    | TRACHEA    |
| FOREHEAD  | OE SOPHAGUS | UVULA      |
| GUMS      | PHARYNX     |            |

The hidden word is: EYELASHES

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2019



US singer-songwriter Billie Eilish performs at the Austin City Limits (ACL) Music Festival at Zilker Park in Austin, Texas. — AFP

## Animated film ‘Abominable’ pulled in Vietnam over S China Sea map

Vietnam has pulled the animated film “Abominable” from theatres over a scene featuring a map of the South China Sea showing Beijing’s claims in the flashpoint waterway, state media reported yesterday. China has long used its so-called nine-dash line to justify its jurisdiction over most of the resource-rich sea, often to the displeasure of Hanoi which also claims parts of the waterway.

The U-shaped line appears on a map of the South China Sea in a scene in the film—released as “Everest: The Little Snowman” in Vietnam—which is about a Chinese teenager helping a yeti return to his home on Mount Everest. State media said the movie—a joint production from DreamWorks and China’s Pearl Studio—would no longer be shown in Vietnam, where it was released on October 4.

“I will claim responsibility” for the mistake, said Nguyen Thu Ha, the head of Vietnam’s Cinema Department, according to Thanh Nien newspaper. All films in the one-party state must be approved by communist censors who screen for gratuitous violence, suggestive sex scenes or politically-sensitive material. Ha said she would remind her department “to be very vigilant... to be more prudent” in the future.

Photos of the faux pas circulated on social media Monday, showing the scene featuring the nine-dash line

crossed out with a red “X” along with angry comments. “Please sack the person in charge of censorship for this movie,” said Facebook user Pham Tan Phong. Another said: “We cannot accept these blatant acts, especially regarding sensitive things like the current sea disputes”.

Vietnam’s censorship department refused to comment on the issue Yesterday, and DreamWorks did not respond to a request for comment. China claims the majority of the South China Sea, often invoking its so-called nine-dash line as a supposed historical justification to the waters, which are a key global shipping route. Though some films are barred from viewing in Vietnam where free speech is tightly controlled, others are approved for screening with significant edits.

The popular 2018 romantic comedy “Crazy Rich Asians” saw a few snips. One of the cut scenes featured a designer bag with a map of the world showing disputed South China Sea islands under Beijing’s control. This year’s hit “Joker”, starring Joaquin Phoenix, was also trimmed to exclude a scene of supporters rallying around the DC Comics villain—possibly to avoid any suggestion of a popular uprising or personality cult.—AFP



A boy looks at a poster for the animated movie ‘Everest Người Tuyết Bé Nhỏ’, also known as ‘Abominable’, at a movie theatre in Hanoi. — AFP

## Atwood, Rushdie vie for Britain’s 50th Booker Prize

Britain’s storied Booker Prize will pit literary giants Margaret Atwood and Salman Rushdie against four emerging stars when it unveils the winner on its 50th anniversary award. The title of best work of English-language fiction published in the United Kingdom and Ireland has launched careers and courted controversy since its creation in 1969. Past laureates have ranged from celebrated writers such as Ian McEwan and Julian Barnes to Kazuo Ishiguro and Roddy Doyle.

Paul Beatty became the first American winner when the Booker bowed to pressure and began including authors from outside the British commonwealth, Ireland and Zimbabwe in 2013. This year’s shortlist features six novelists—four of them women—born across four continents. It is also no longer called the Man Booker because of a sponsorship change. The five-judge panel includes the writer-broadcaster Afua Hirsch and the British-Chinese novelist and filmmaker Xiaolu Guo.

### 1,000-page sentence

Canadian author Atwood’s sixth Booker nomination comes for “The Testaments”, a best-selling sequel to her 1985 dystopian classic “The Handmaid’s Tale”. The Guardian said the book, which picks up the tale of three women 15 years on, presents “Atwood at her best”. “It’s a question of things escaping from a book to the real world and the author has zero control,” the 79-year-old said upon its release last month.

Nominated for the 1986 prize, “The Handmaid’s Tale” became an award-winning TV series in 2017, and sales of the English-language edition have topped eight million copies worldwide. Rushdie, whose contender is called “Quichotte”, won the Booker Prize in 1981 for “Midnight’s Children”. His tragicomedy this year, inspired by the classic “Don Quixote”, is the story of an ageing travelling salesman who falls in love with a TV star and sets off to drive across America on a quest to prove himself worthy of her hand.

Rushdie told HBO last month that he researched the book by “watching all this reality TV, which (the protagonist) loves. I began to understand that it could drive a person crazy”. Nigerian author Chigozie Obioma made the shortlist for “An Orchestra of Minorities”—his second novel after “The Fishermen”, which was shortlisted in 2015. Set



Canadian author Margaret Atwood poses with her book ‘The Testaments’ during the photo call for the authors shortlisted for the 2019 Booker Prize for Fiction at Southbank Centre in London. — AFP

in Nigeria—the author’s homeland—and Cyprus, it is a tragic love story with a strong sense of foreboding throughout.

Narrated by the main character’s chi spirit, it is richly poetic and deeply anchored in the mysticism of Nigeria’s Igbo people. Lucy Ellmann challenges readers with “Ducks, Newburyport”—a story made up almost entirely of one sentence that absorbs readers and is occasionally funny. It is a stream of thoughts from a woman making pies in her home in Ohio. The musings weave between her family, US politics, her dead parents and pets, pollution in rivers, and are interspersed with references to popular culture.

Anglo-Nigerian author Bernardine Evaristo is shortlisted for “Girl, Woman, Other”—about the lives of black British families with roots across the country, Africa and the Caribbean. It tells the tale of 12 women that “brims with vitality,” according to the Financial Times. Elif Shafak, the most widely read female author in Turkey, brings Istanbul’s underworld to life through the recollections of sex worker Tequila Leila in “10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World”. The entire work describes the last 10 minutes of conscious thought of a dying prostitute that The Times calls “surprisingly uplifting”.—AFP



50 years after internet conception, dark side stirs fear

On October 29, 1969, professor Leonard Kleinrock and a team at the University of California at Los Angeles got a computer to “talk” to a machine in what is now known as Silicon Valley. The event gave birth to a network that later became known as the internet-hailed at first as a boon to equality and enlightenment, but with a dark side that has emerged as well. As UCLA marks the anniversary, Kleinrock is opening a new lab devoted to all things related to the internet-particularly mitigating some of its unintended consequences on the internet which is now used by some four billion people world-wide.



Dr. Leonard Kleinrock poses in his new lab under construction at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in Los Angeles, California, one month ahead of celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of the internet. — AFP

“To some point it democratizes everyone,” Kleinrock told AFP. “But it is also a perfect formula for the dark side, as we have learned.” So much is shouted online that moderate voices are drowned out and extreme viewpoints are amplified, spewing hate, misinformation and abuse, he contended. “As engineers, we were not thinking in terms of nasty behavior,” said Kleinrock, 85. “I totally missed the social networking side. I was thinking about people talking to computers or computers talking to computers, not people talking to people.”

The new Connection Lab will welcome research on topics including machine learning, social networking, blockchain and the internet of things, with an eye toward thwarting online evils. Kleinrock expressed particular interest in using blockchain technology to attach reputations to people or things online to provide a gauge of who or what to trust.

For example, someone reading an online restaurant review would be able to see how reliable that author's posts have been. “It is a network of reputation that is constantly up to date,” Kleinrock

said. “The challenge is how to do that in an ethical and responsible fashion; anonymity is a two-edged sword, of course.”

Businesses being bad

He blamed many of the internet's ills on businesses hawking things that are outdated or unneeded, violating privacy to increase profit. Instead of clever lone hackers that vexed the internet in its early days, bad actors now include nation states, organized crime and powerful corporations “doing big, bad things,” Kleinrock lamented. “We were not the social scientists that we should have been,” Kleinrock said of the internet's early days.

He regretted a lack of foresight to build into the very foundation of the internet tools for better authenticating users and data files. “It wouldn't have avoided the dark side, but it would have ameliorated it,” he said. He remained optimistic about the internet's woes being solved with encryption, blockchain or other innovations.

“I do still worry. I think everyone is feeling the impact of this very dark side of the internet that has bubbled up,” Kleinrock said. “I still feel that the benefits are far more significant; I wouldn't turn off the internet if I could.”

What kind of beast?

In the early days, US telecom colossus AT&T ran the lines connecting the computers for ARPANET, a project backed with money from a research arm of the US military. A key to getting computers to exchange data was breaking digitized information into packets fired between machines with no wasting of time, according to Kleinrock. A grad student began typing “LOG” to log into the distant computer, which crashed after getting the “O.”

“So, the first message was ‘Lo’ as in ‘Lo and behold,’” Kleinrock recounted. “We couldn't have a better, more succinct first message.” Kleinrock's team logged in on the second try, sending digital data packets between computers on the ARPANET because funding came from the US Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) established in 1958. Credit for creating the internet is a topic of debate, since there are a series of key moments in its evolution including arrival of protocols for how data is routed, and creation of the World Wide Web system of online pages.—AFP



View toward midtown Manhattan inside the newly renovated 102nd floor observatory of the Empire State Building in New York City. — AFP photos

Empire State Building observatory reopens with new 360-degree view

The stunning view from the highest observatory at New York's Empire State Building just got even better. On Saturday, the viewing platform on the 102nd floor, known as the “top deck,” reopens with a new 360-degree perspective on the Big Apple following ten months of renovations. The work is the third in a four-step project, which started four and half years ago, to improve the experience at arguably the world's most famous building. The entire project is costing \$165 million.

The redevelopment of the observatory, which sits at 1,250 feet, began in January. Walls that were over 3.6 feet high and blocked part of the view have been replaced by glass. The elevator shaft is now also made of glass, allowing visitors to enjoy the view before the doors even open. The fact the elevator is see-through means people can enjoy a panoramic view of the city from wherever they stand in the observatory.

“This space had obstructions and the strategy behind the renovation of the 102nd floor was to remove as many of the obstructions to allow visitors to take in the view in a much earlier phase,” said Jean-Yves Ghazi, head of the observatory. “This is the spot to experience New York City from the heart of it all,” he added.

The first two phases of the development focused on reducing queues by creating separate entrances for visitors and staff and opening a new museum on the first floor. The final stage will see the opening of a new observatory on the 80th floor, to be finished by the end of the year. The 86th floor observatory, known as the “main deck” and featured in countless movies, lets visitors to venture outside.—AFP



New York's Museum of Modern Art set to reopen, bigger and better



New York's heralded Museum of Modern Art reopens this month after a multi-million-dollar makeover that will allow curators to display hundreds more works every year. The museum has been closed for four months but will open again on October 21 following the latest renovations which increase the venerated institution's capacity. MoMA, which moved to its current location in 1939, has undergone remodeling in 1950, 1962, 1980 and 2001 to cope with a growing collection and increased footfall.

Space was expanded by a third this time and director Glenn Lowry says the layout has been reinvented to reflect the philosophy of the museum's first director, Alfred Barr. “Barr imagined it as a laboratory to which the public was invited. The public would participate in

the experiment of looking at and thinking about modern art,” Lowry said.

“He understood that the museum was to be a work in progress, changing and evolving as modern and contemporary art changes and evolves,” Lowry told reporters at a preview. The museum took advantage of a real estate project by selling some land to a developer to build a luxury tower, in which MoMA would make use of the first three floors. By also making some tweaks to its existing buildings, MoMA has increased its capacity to 165,000 square feet.

The upgrade, which cost \$450 million, means the museum will be able to exhibit around 2,400 works a year, compared to an average of 1,500 previously, Lowry said. The most radical change is that for the first

time artworks will be presented by theme rather than by time period. The works will also have the benefit of more natural light. “What makes modern and contemporary art exciting is precisely the debates and arguments that are still taking place,” said Lowry.

“(We want to) make the public aware the questions are more interesting than the answers,” he added. Themes and artwork will change every six months or so but the major pieces, such as Claude Monet's “Water Lilies” and Pablo Picasso's “The Ladies of Avignon” will always be on show. “For people who come and want to see the icons, they'll be there,” said Lowry.—AFP



Members of media look at artwork during a press preview held for the expanded and re-imagined Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) ahead of the October 21 opening of its expanded campus. — AFP photos





This picture shows the waxwork of former Emperor Haile Selassie in Throne Hall at new 'Unity Park', former Emperor's palace compound which has been restored, before it opens to the public in Addis Ababa. — AFP photos



# Ethiopia turns former palace, torture site into tourist draw

A palace that once housed Ethiopia's emperors and also served as a torture site under the communist Derg regime is to open to the public in a controversial government tourism project. The palace compound in Addis Ababa, which Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government has rebranded "Unity Park", was formally launched Thursday and will be open from

Emirates, the project cost more than \$160 million, Ethiopian officials told reporters at a briefing earlier this week. Built in the late 1800s by Emperor Menelik II, who founded Addis Ababa, the palace was the residence of Ethiopia's rulers for more than a century. Abiy himself does not live there, and it has seen little activity in recent years.

Abiy's advisers say he has taken a keen interest in transforming the palace into a tourist attraction since coming to power in April 2018 — visiting the site every day in recent weeks to monitor progress. The government's "Home-Grown Economic Reform" agenda, unveiled last month, describes tourism as a primary engine of potential job creation. On Thursday, government officials and the diplomatic corps toured the expansive site before attending a banquet that was expected to draw five regional heads of state and other dignitaries.

The restored rooms feature items like Menelik's sword and a life-size wax replica of former Emperor Haile Selassie, who lived at the palace and was then detained there after the Derg overthrew him in 1974. The site also includes a sculpture garden with installations representing Ethiopia's nine regions, and a zoo is expected to open by the end of the year. Akilu Fikresilassie, an Ethiopian employee of the United Nations who attended the launch Thursday, said he was "really fascinated" to set foot inside a place that had been closed to the public his entire life.

"For us it's like a government house, so now when you enter that palace it tells you that we are getting somehow closer to our leaders," he said. But not everyone is convinced the palace will succeed in bringing Ethiopians together. In a country grappling with ethnic divisions, some worry that the palace could alienate ethnic Oromos



who contend that their ancestors were forced off their land when Addis Ababa was built.

Journalist and former political prisoner Eskinder Nega said the renovations were undertaken "without consultation from the public", which he called "a huge mistake." "This is all about heritage, about preserving heritage. The people should have had a say in it," he said. "Like everything else this was decided from the top and implemented only by the decision of the prime minister."—AFP



Friday. Abiy's office said on Twitter Thursday that the project "symbolizes our ability to come together".

But critics have dismissed it as vanity project for Abiy that could prove divisive. Backed by the United Arab



People sit in a part of new 'Unity Park', former Emperor's palace compound which has been restored, before it opens to the public in Addis Ababa.





# Afghan museum restores Buddhist history, one broken piece at a time

Restoring Afghanistan's Buddhist artifacts that were destroyed by the Taleban 18 years ago is like working on a 1,500-year-old jigsaw puzzle, say conservators working on the latest restoration project. The militant Islamic group in 2001 destroyed artifacts dating from the third century when many Afghans practiced Buddhism, including two towering Buddha statues in Bamiyan province and scores of smaller ones excavated from monasteries and preserved at the national museum in Kabul.

After the Taleban government fell that same year, the museum began restoring remnants of the country's Buddhist history. The latest U.S.-supported project aims to reassemble thousands of pieces into statues within the next three years. "It is very important (work) because it is actually restoration of our heritage, our identity, our past," said Mohammad Fahim Rahimi, director of the 100-year-old National Museum of Afghanistan.

"Buddhism was practiced here for more than 1,000 years. That's a very large part of our history," he added. Forty years of war, from the 1980s Soviet occupation to internal fighting and the war against the Taleban, have destroyed much of Afghanistan's art, artifacts and architecture. Warlords stole other pieces and sold them abroad. Conservator Sherazuddin Saifi, 62, was working in the museum under the Taleban in 2001.

"They wanted us to tell them the number of antiquities and we ignored their request, but some days later they came and started breaking the antiquities," said Saifi, who still works at the museum. "These antiquities are the national treasure and the history of our country and show who lived in this country," he added. In a classroom at the museum, Afghan conservators work alongside experts from the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. U.S. assistance is invaluable because Afghan conservators lack experience and the necessary chemicals and glues for restoration work, Rahimi said.

Sometimes they can work from archived photos that show the statues intact. In other cases, 3-D imaging and imagination are required to sort and reassemble stucco shards of Buddha faces, hands and torsos. A spokesman for the Taleban, which was until last month in peace talks with the United States, said the group has no plans to destroy antiquities. "All antique artifacts will be preserved in their place," spokesman Suhail Shaheen told Reuters.



KABUL: Pieces of statues damaged by the Taleban are laid out on a table for restoration at the National Museum in Kabul, Afghanistan. — Reuters

"They should be preserved for the history and culture education of the upcoming generations."

US President Donald Trump told a rally on Thursday American soldiers have been in Afghanistan long enough, but talks with the Taleban on withdrawing US troops, intended as a step toward peace, broke down in September. The prospect of reintegrating the Taleban in a power-sharing deal troubles Rahimi, who is looking at options for moving the artifacts if they are threatened again. "We cannot let that happen again to our heritage," he said.—Reuters

## The Joker: A social commentary

By Nasma Younes

**T**he worst part of having a mental illness is people expect you to behave as if you don't." Todd Phillips's long awaited "The Joker" finally hit theaters worldwide last weekend, and for the first time, in the longest time, massive number of people lined up, rushing to buy the tickets. This psychological thriller starring Joaquin Phoenix as the Joker, sets the clown prince in his pre-revelation days, before he became the universally known "The Joker", as we've seen him to be in earlier Batman flicks.



Although it is centered on a character from the superhero universe, this film is far from being a superhero movie. We are being introduced to "Arthur Fleck", a young, troubled and mentally-ill man, suffering from a disorder that causes him to laugh at inappropriate times. Set in Gotham City, in 1981, Arthur is tormented daily by the harshness of society around him, living with his mom in a tiny apartment that barely fits the two and working as a badly-paid party clown.

When he gets fired from his job and loses the only source to his medication, we witness Arthur's slow decent into madness, until finally seeing his transition into The Joker, a transition we've already seen a long time ago in Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver, easy to say that Arthur Fleck and Travis Bickle definitely share the same DNA. As Taxi Driver can serve as a certain social commentary on society in the 70s, The Joker can definitely mirror the dangers of our modern society, showing us how people's ignorance of the unfortunate can and will create a character resembling the Joker.

Despite its roots in the superhero genre, this film is far more concerned with how evil is manifested in the real world rather than in the comic book universe, offering a convincing portrayal of not only the product of society, but equally the urban decay of the society itself. Showing us how we create the world we live in and how the world we live in also creates us, and that is the universality of this very movie, it will not only speak to superhero fans, but its entire audience.



These pictures show traditional dancers performing during the Gandrung Sewu festival on Boom beach in Banyuwangi, East Java. — AFP photos



PHOTO FEATURE



# Classifieds

Tuesday, October 15, 2019



| 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, **HUSSEIN TAWAWALA**, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3199912 presently residing in Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **ABBAS** and Surname: **TAWAWALA**. (C 5460) **15-10-2019**

It is to be informed to the public at large by this public notice that the original name on my Passport (No. Z1907249), Civil ID No. 272050803003, is to be corrected as **ZUBAIR MUSTAFA KHAN**. (C 5457)

I, **Joseph Shibu George** (Eruthuckal House, Keekozhoor P.O, Ranny, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, Pin 689672) holder of Indian Passport No. S2349462 issued at Kuwait on 07/12/2017 presently residing at Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Joseph Shibu** and Surname: **George**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5459)

I, **Asha George** (Thekkeveedu, Pathanapuram P.O, Kollam, Kerala, Pin 689695) holder of Indian Passport No. K7040391 issued at Kuwait on 29/07/2012 presently residing at Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Asha** and Surname: **George**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5459)

I, **Roy Mathew** (Chirackal house, Karikolam P.O. Pathanamthitta, Kerala) holder of Indian Passport No. J4437810 issued at Kuwait on 21/12/2010 presently residing at Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Roy** and Surname: **Mathew**. Objections if and may be for-

warded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5456)

I, **Mariamamma John** (Chirackal house, Karikolam P.O. Pathanamthitta, Kerala, Pin 689682) holder of Indian Passport No. P7118425 issued at Kuwait on 10/01/2017 presently residing at Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Mariamamma** and Surname: **John**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5456)

I, **Roy Mathew**, Father of Ron Roy Mathew, holder of Indian Passport No. S4696329 issued at Kuwait on 21/05/2018, permanent address of Chirackal house, Karikolam P.O, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India and presently residing at Kuwait do hereby change my son given name as: **Ron Roy** and Surname: **Mathew**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5456)

I, **Roy Mathew**, Father of Riya Mariyam Roy, holder of Indian Passport No. N9722418 issued at Kuwait on 15/05/2016, permanent address of Chirackal house, Karikulam P.O, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, pin 689682, India and presently residing at Kuwait do hereby change my daughter given name as: **Riya Mariyam** and Surname: **Roy**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5456)

I, **Binu** Puthozhathil Sam, (Puthozhathil House, Mekozhoor P.O Pathanamthitta, Kerala Pin 689678) holder of Indian Passport No. P0724746 issued at Kuwait on 24/07/2016 presently residing at Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth

my name will be read as given name: **Binu Puthozhathil** and surname: **Sam**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5458)

I, **Sherly** Kunjukunju (Puthozhathil House, Mekozhoor P.O Pthanamthitta, Kerala pin 689678) holder of Indian Passport No. T2410628 issued at Kuwait on 10/02/2019 presently residing at Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Sherly** and Surname: **Kunjukunju**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5458)

I, **Binu** Puthozhathil Sam, Father of Jenil Binu Sam, holder of Indian Passport No. S7937650 issued at Kuwait on 30/07/2018, permanent address of Puthozhathil House, Mekozhoor P.O Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India and presently residing at Kuwait do hereby change my son given name as: **Jenil Binu** and Surname: **Sam**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5458)

I, **Binu** Puthozhathil Sam, Father of Joshin Binu Sam, holder of Indian Passport No. R8270345 issued at Kuwait on 09/08/2017, permanent address of Puthozhathil House, Mekozhoor P.O Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India and presently residing at Kuwait do hereby change my son given name as: **Joshin Binu** and Surname: **Sam**. Objections if and may be forwarded to embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf St, Kuwait City 13015. (C 5458) **14-10-2019**

I, **ABDUL YUSUF ABDUL KARIM** (Old name) holder of Indian Passport No. L6661740 and Civil ID no. 279010502291 presently

residing in Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **SHAIKH YUSUF SHAIKH KARIM** and Surname: **QURESHI**. (C 5599)

I, **KUTTIKATTIL RAMDAS** holder of Indian Passport No. L3857702 having permanent address Kerala, India 679105 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **RAMDAS** and Surname: **KUTTIKATTIL**. (C 5455) **11-10-2019**

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**

## 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**

**EMERGENCY**

**112**

**For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSALHOTLINE 128**

**Required**

**Human Resources Manager**

- At least 3 years progressively responsible human resources management experiences, in educational environment required; Master's degree in human resources management, business or related field.
- Ability to read, write and speak English required; additional Arabic language skills strongly preferred.
- Demonstrated skills in organizational development, recruitment (both direct and program management), management, coaching, policy development, contract negotiation, and legal research and compliance, with benefit design and negotiation and payroll expertise.
- Demonstrated expertise in advising and consulting with every employee level including senior administration, with appropriate balance between employee and management perspective.
- Demonstrated ability to improve processes through enhanced use of technology.

Interested applicants please send Cover Letter, Resume and photograph To: recruitment@aic.edu.kw

| Airlines           |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Kuwait Airways     | 171          |
| Jazeera Airways    | 177          |
| Wataniya Airways   | 22 066 536   |
| Turkish Airlines   | 1884918      |
| American Airlines  | 22087425     |
| Jet Airways        | 22924455     |
| FlyDubai           | 22414400     |
| Qatar Airways      | 22423888     |
| KLM                | 22425747     |
| Royal Jordanian    | 22418064/5/6 |
| British Airways    | 22425635     |
| Air France         | 22430224     |
| Emirates           | 22921555     |
| Air India          | 22456700     |
| Air India EXPRESS  | 22438185/4   |
| Sri Lanka Airlines | 22424444     |
| Egypt Air          | 22421578     |
| Swiss Air          | 22421516     |

| Arrival Flights on Tuesday 15/10/2019 |      |             |       | Departure Tuesday 15/10/2019 |      |            |       |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------------|-------|------------------------------|------|------------|-------|
| Airlines                              | Flt  | Route       | Time  | Airlines                     | Flt  | Route      | Time  |
| FEG                                   | 243  | Alexandria  | 00:05 | JZR                          | 611  | Tbilisi    | 12:10 |
| IGO                                   | 1757 | Kochi       | 00:10 | JZR                          | 123  | Dubai      | 12:20 |
| THY                                   | 772  | Istanbul    | 00:20 | JZR                          | 115  | Dubai      | 13:10 |
| JZR                                   | 254  | Amman       | 00:20 | SAW                          | 702  | Doha       | 13:25 |
| DLH                                   | 625  | Dammam      | 00:50 | KAC                          | 541  | Damascus   | 13:30 |
| KAC                                   | 102  | London      | 00:50 | MSR                          | 611  | Cairo      | 13:45 |
| JZR                                   | 734  | Cairo       | 01:00 | THY                          | 767  | Istanbul   | 14:00 |
| JZR                                   | 722  | Alexandria  | 01:00 | SYR                          | 342  | Damascus   | 14:00 |
| RJA                                   | 642  | Amman       | 01:20 | AXB                          | 394  | Kozhikode  | 14:10 |
| UAE                                   | 853  | Dubai       | 01:40 | UAE                          | 872  | Dubai      | 14:15 |
| KLM                                   | 446  | Bahrain     | 01:45 | JZR                          | 141  | Al Najaf   | 14:45 |
| KKK                                   | 1268 | Istanbul    | 01:55 | KAC                          | 673  | Dubai      | 15:00 |
| ETH                                   | 620  | Addis Ababa | 02:15 | KNE                          | 382  | Taif       | 15:00 |
| KAC                                   | 156  | Istanbul    | 02:25 | GFA                          | 222  | Bahrain    | 15:00 |
| QTR                                   | 1086 | Doha        | 02:40 | FDB                          | 060  | Dubai      | 15:05 |
| PGT                                   | 860  | Istanbul    | 02:50 | JZR                          | 103  | Bahrain    | 15:05 |
| GFA                                   | 211  | Bahrain     | 02:50 | QTR                          | 1079 | Doha       | 15:30 |
| ETD                                   | 305  | Abu Dhabi   | 03:05 | KAC                          | 775  | Riyadh     | 15:45 |
| OMA                                   | 643  | Muscat      | 03:05 | AMSTERDAM                    | 501  | Jeddah     | 15:45 |
| JZR                                   | 406  | Kochi       | 03:05 | KNE                          | 530  | Jeddah     | 15:55 |
| NIA                                   | 1601 | Luxor       | 03:10 | KAC                          | 563  | Amman      | 16:00 |
| MSR                                   | 612  | Cairo       | 03:15 | KAC                          | 743  | Dammam     | 16:05 |
| KAC                                   | 418  | Manila      | 03:20 | KAC                          | 615  | Bahrain    | 16:10 |
| QTR                                   | 1076 | Doha        | 03:30 | ABY                          | 128  | Sharjah    | 16:15 |
| OHY                                   | 352  | Istanbul    | 04:00 | ETD                          | 304  | Abu Dhabi  | 16:20 |
| LMU                                   | 5510 | Cairo       | 04:00 | OMA                          | 646  | Muscat     | 16:20 |
| KAC                                   | 382  | Delhi       | 04:05 | KAC                          | 785  | Jeddah     | 16:20 |
| IGO                                   | 1751 | Chennai     | 04:10 | KAC                          | 619  | Doha       | 16:25 |
| KAC                                   | 346  | Ahmedabad   | 04:15 | FEG                          | 442  | Asyut      | 16:55 |
| KAC                                   | 784  | Jeddah      | 04:25 | FDB                          | 052  | Dubai      | 17:10 |
| THY                                   | 1414 | Trabzon     | 05:05 | QTR                          | 1073 | Doha       | 17:25 |
| FDB                                   | 069  | Dubai       | 05:05 | KAC                          | 283  | Dhaka      | 17:40 |
| DHX                                   | 170  | Bahrain     | 05:05 | UAE                          | 858  | Dubai      | 17:40 |
| THY                                   | 770  | Istanbul    | 05:20 | KAC                          | 155  | Istanbul   | 17:50 |
| JZR                                   | 402  | Mumbai      | 05:25 | KAC                          | 343  | Chennai    | 17:50 |
| KAC                                   | 552  | Cairo       | 05:50 | KAC                          | 381  | Delhi      | 17:55 |
| JZR                                   | 112  | Doha        | 05:50 | SVA                          | 511  | Riyadh     | 18:10 |
| KAC                                   | 362  | Colombo     | 06:05 | JZR                          | 721  | Alexandria | 18:15 |
| BAW                                   | 157  | London      | 06:10 | JZR                          | 127  | Dubai      | 18:20 |
| JZR                                   | 702  | Asyut       | 06:10 | GFA                          | 216  | Bahrain    | 18:20 |
| KAC                                   | 284  | Dhaka       | 06:15 | JZR                          | 403  | Hyderabad  | 18:25 |
| JZR                                   | 714  | Sohag       | 06:20 | JZR                          | 733  | Cairo      | 18:35 |
| THY                                   | 6376 | Istanbul    | 06:30 | JZR                          | 501  | Lahore     | 18:35 |
| KAC                                   | 678  | Dubai       | 06:40 | JZR                          | 253  | Amman      | 19:10 |
| KAC                                   | 106  | London      | 06:40 | QTR                          | 1081 | Doha       | 19:20 |
| KAC                                   | 204  | Lahore      | 06:45 | MSR                          | 621  | Cairo      | 19:30 |
| RBG                                   | 559  | Alexandria  | 06:50 | GFA                          | 218  | Bahrain    | 19:50 |
| JZR                                   | 408  | Ahmedabad   | 07:05 | KAC                          | 331  | Trivandrum | 19:55 |
| KAC                                   | 302  | Mumbai      | 07:05 | ABY                          | 124  | Sharjah    | 20:00 |
| IGO                                   | 1766 | Mumbai      | 07:10 | RJA                          | 641  | Amman      | 20:05 |
| KAC                                   | 358  | Kochi       | 07:25 | KAC                          | 357  | Kochi      | 20:05 |
| FDB                                   | 053  | Dubai       | 07:50 | RBG                          | 556  | Alexandria | 20:20 |
| QTR                                   | 1084 | Doha        | 08:00 | NIA                          | 0162 | Cairo      | 20:30 |
| KAC                                   | 354  | Bengaluru   | 08:00 | FDB                          | 058  | Dubai      | 20:30 |
| KAC                                   | 332  | Trivandrum  | 08:05 | JZR                          | 401  | Mumbai     | 20:30 |
| KAC                                   | 384  | Delhi       | 08:10 | UAE                          | 876  | Dubai      | 20:35 |
| UAE                                   | 855  | Dubai       | 08:25 | KAC                          | 353  | Bengaluru  | 20:50 |
| JZR                                   | 708  | Luxor       | 08:45 | KNE                          | 232  | Riyadh     | 20:50 |
| ETD                                   | 301  | Abu Dhabi   | 08:50 | DLH                          | 624  | Dammam     | 20:55 |
| OMA                                   | 641  | Muscat      | 09:00 | OMA                          | 648  | Muscat     | 21:05 |
| ABY                                   | 125  | Sharjah     | 09:00 | NIA                          | 1603 | Luxor      | 21:10 |
| GFA                                   | 209  | Bahrain     | 09:05 | RBG                          | 214  | Sohag      | 21:10 |
| QTR                                   | 1070 | Doha        | 09:20 | MEGA                         | 403  | Beirut     | 21:15 |
| IRA                                   | 675  | Lar         | 09:20 | KAC                          | 301  | Mumbai     | 21:25 |
| GOW                                   | 061  | CNN         | 09:30 | QTR                          | 1089 | Doha       | 21:50 |
| IGO                                   | 1753 | Ahmedabad   | 09:40 | DHX                          | 171  | Bahrain    | 21:50 |
| FDB                                   | 055  | Dubai       | 09:40 | KAC                          | 205  | Islamabad  | 21:55 |
| SVA                                   | 512  | Riyadh      | 10:00 | KLM                          | 445  | Bahrain    | 22:10 |
| JZR                                   | 404D | Hyderabad   | 10:30 | ETD                          | 308  | Abu Dhabi  | 22:15 |
| GFA                                   | 213  | Bahrain     | 10:40 | ALK                          | 230  | Colombo    | 22:20 |
| MEA                                   | 404  | Beirut      | 10:55 | KAC                          | 383  | Delhi      | 22:35 |
| KAC                                   | 624  | Doha        | 10:55 | UAE                          | 860  | Dubai      | 22:35 |
| QTR                                   | 1074 | Doha        | 11:00 | GFA                          | 220  | Bahrain    | 22:50 |
| JZR                                   | 122  | Dubai       | 11:45 | KAC                          | 795  | Madinah    | 22:55 |
| THY                                   | 766  | Istanbul    | 12:30 | KAC                          | 783  | Jeddah     | 22:55 |
| SAW                                   | 701  | Damascus    | 12:30 | ICV                          | 6752 | Hong Kong  | 22:55 |
| KAC                                   | 614  | Bahrain     | 12:30 | KAC                          | 411  | Bangkok    | 23:00 |
| UAE                                   | 871  | Dubai       | 12:45 | KAC                          | 551  | Cairo      | 23:00 |
|                                       |      |             |       | QTR                          | 1083 | Doha       | 23:20 |



# Russia-backed Syrian army sweeps in after US announces abrupt exit

**BEIRUT:** Russia-backed Syrian forces wasted no time in taking advantage of an abrupt US retreat from Syria yesterday, deploying deep inside Kurdish-held territory south of the Turkish frontier less than 24 hours after Washington announced a full withdrawal. Washington's Kurdish former allies said they invited in the government troops as an emergency step to help fend off an assault by Turkey, launched last week after President Donald Trump moved his troops aside in what the Kurds call a betrayal.

Washington's decision to abandon a policy it had pursued for five years gives Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Russia's Vladimir Putin free hands to shape the battlefield of the world's deadliest ongoing war. In particular, the Syrian army deployment is a victory for President Bashar Al-Assad and his most powerful ally Russia, giving them a foothold in the biggest remaining swathe of the country that had been beyond their grasp.

They will now face Turkish armed

forces along a new front line hundreds of miles long. Syrian state media reported that troops had already entered Tel Tamer, a town on the strategically important M4 highway that runs east-west around 30 km south of the frontier with Turkey. State television later showed residents welcoming Syrian forces into the town of Ain Issa, which lies on another part of the highway, hundreds of miles away.

Ain Issa commands the northern approaches to Raqqa, former capital of the Islamic State "caliphate", which Kurdish fighters recaptured from the militants two years ago in one of the biggest victories of a US-led campaign. Much of the M4 skirts the southern fringe of territory where Turkey aims to set up a "safe zone" inside Syria. Turkey said it had seized part of the highway. An official of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said clashes were ongoing.

The swift Syrian government deployments underscored how suddenly the strategy the United States had

pursued in Syria for the past five years had dissolved overnight. Washington announced on Sunday it was pulling out its entire force of 1,000 troops which had provided air support, ground assistance and training for Syrian Kurds against Islamic State since 2014. A US official said yesterday a diplomatic team working to help stabilize territory captured from Islamic State had already pulled out. US troops were still on the ground but early phases of their withdrawal had started, the official said.

Two other US officials have told Reuters the bulk of the US pullout could be completed within days. Sunday's announcement of the US retreat came just a week after Trump gave what the Kurds consider the go-ahead for Turkey to attack, by shifting US troops out of the way. Thousands of fighters from a Kurdish-led force have died since 2014 battling Islamic State in partnership with the United States, a strategy the Trump administration had continued after inheriting it from his predecessor Barack Obama. — Reuters



**MANBIJ:** Turkish soldiers and Turkey-backed Syrian fighters gather on the northern outskirts of the Syrian city of Manbij near the Turkish border yesterday as Turkey and its allies continue their assault on Kurdish-held border towns in northeastern Syria. — AFP

## Trio wins economics Nobel for fighting...

Continued from Page 1

in areas such as education and healthcare, making problems easier to solve.

It said the results of their studies and field experiments had ranged from helping millions of Indian school-children with remedial tutoring to encouraging governments around the world to increase funding for preventative medicine. "It starts from the idea that the poor are often reduced to caricatures and even the people that try to help them do not actually understand what are the deep roots of (their) problems," Duflo, speaking by telephone, told a news conference in Stockholm.

"What we try to do in our approach is to say, 'look, let's try to unpack the problems one-by-one and address them as rigorously and scientifically as possible'," she added. For example, their field experiments that found that while providing more textbooks and free school meals had only small effects, targeted help for weak students made a significant difference to overall educational levels.

Another study gathered evidence on how an often overlooked measure such as deworming children could help their education. Yet another found that making the renewal of teacher contracts dependent on pupil grades

produced better scores, while reducing the pupil-teacher ratio had little impact. Citing Banerjee's methods as having transformed classroom teaching in state schools in New Delhi, the Indian capital's chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Twitter that it was a "big day for every Indian".

The team have notably been associated with the "Teaching at the right level" (Tarl) program which has helped 60 million children in India and Africa and focuses on maths and reading skills for primary school pupils. Duflo said the importance of the two most commonly cited approaches to tackling poverty - foreign aid and freeing up trade with poor countries - had often been "overstated".

While the United Nations estimates that global poverty has been cut by more than half since 2000, it says one in ten people in developing regions still live on less than \$1.90 a day. In sub-Saharan Africa, that proportion rises to 42 percent. Asked whether Duflo's award was an attempt to redress the gender imbalance in the prize's history, Peter Fredriksson, chairman of the Nobel Committee for Economic Sciences, said it showed that women were now more present in economics.

Duflo remarked that it came at an "extremely important and opportune time" for women in a sector that has traditionally been very male-dominated. "We are at a time when we are starting to realise in the profession that the way that we (treat) each other privately and publicly is not conducive all the time for a very good environment for women," she said. — Reuters

match-up has nothing to do with politics.

"For the Saudis and the Palestinians, the goal of the match is to qualify for the World Cup," said 30-year-old Hazzaa, who sported a trimmed beard and a traditional red and white keffiyeh headdress. Abu Abdallah, a Saudi businessman, said he believed it was an honor for his country's team to play the Palestinians amongst their people. "This is something rare to happen, and the kingdom would not take any step unless it was in the interest of the Palestinian people or Saudi Arabia," he said.

#### 'Balancing act'

Palestinian football association chief Jibril Rajoub said on Thursday that the game, to be played at the Al-Ram Stadium which is recognized by FIFA, would not breach the boycott. Still, the Palestinian-led boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement said that while the match is not technically a breach, it came "in the context of dangerous official normalization." The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine also said it "rejected normalization through sport".

Ofer Zalzberg, senior analyst with the International Crisis Group, said Saudi Arabia was attempting a "balancing act" of quietly moving closer to Israel while also seeking to keep the Palestinians satisfied. "The Saudis are yielding to Ramallah's request of playing in the West Bank in order to offset a sense that they are normalizing with Israel while ignoring Palestinian needs," he told AFP, adding that official recognition of the Jewish state was unlikely.

Majed, dressed in traditional white thobe robes and an NBA cap at the cafe screening the match, said he absolutely rejected normalization of ties with Israel. "The occupied Palestinian territories must be returned to its people," he said. "I do hope that sports will bring peace to the region," he added, right before jumping up to celebrate Saudi Arabia's first goal. — Agencies

Emirates. In meetings with Saudi leaders, the Russian president will discuss the OPEC+ pact, which has seen production cut by 1.2 million barrels per day since January.

The two sides are expected to sign more than \$2 billion of deals, including a joint investment by state oil giant Saudi Aramco and Russia's RDIF sovereign wealth fund. RDIF head Kirill Dmitriev said a number of Russian investors were interested in a planned initial public offering of Aramco. The oil major could sell 1-2% through a local listing its chairman said would be announced "very, very soon", ahead of a potential international offering.

Energy Minister Alexander Novak said Russia's Gazprom is interested in cooperating with Saudi firms on natural gas. Moscow, the world's largest wheat exporter, made some progress in accessing the Saudi and Middle Eastern markets when the kingdom agreed in August to relax specifications for wheat imports, opening the door to Black Sea imports. RDIF and Saudi Arabia's SALIC plan to sign an agreement to jointly search for investment projects in Russia's agricultural sector, a source said. — Reuters

## Baby found buried alive highlights India's battle to protect girls

**NEW DELHI:** A baby girl found buried alive in India was a suspected case of female infanticide, police said yesterday, the latest to highlight the preference for sons in a country where the number of girls has been declining. A couple, who went to bury their newborn at a grave after she died in hospital, discovered the youngster inside an earthen pot buried several feet deep, said a police officer in Bareilly city in northern Uttar Pradesh state.

"Their spade hit the pot and they heard a baby's cries coming from it," the officer told the Thomson Reuters Foundation on the condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media. "They immediately called the cemetery guard, who said that he saw the parents there earlier. It seems to be a case of female infanticide," he said, adding that the baby was about five days old.

The baby was rushed to a nearby hospital, where she is recovering, he said. Police are looking for the parents. India has seen a dwindling number of girls,

according to a government survey released in July, suggesting that illegal abortions of female fetuses continue despite a ban and government efforts to save girl children.

It showed that India's gender ratio, or the number of females per 1,000 males, was 896 in the period of 2015-17, down from 898 in 2014-16 and 900 in 2013-15. The number was 943 in the last census of 2011. Indian laws ban doctors and health workers from sharing an unborn child's sex with the parents, or carrying out tests to determine the child's gender. Only registered medical practitioners are allowed to perform abortions.

Yet female feticide is common in parts of India. Daughters are often seen as a burden, with families having to pay dowries when they marry, while sons are prized as breadwinners who can inherit property and continue the family name. In 2017, police found nearly 20 aborted fetuses dumped in plastic bags in the western state of Maharashtra. — Reuters

## Japan searches for survivors; Hagibis...

Continued from Page 1

updating its information. "Even now, many people are still unaccounted for in the disaster-hit area," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told an emergency disaster meeting yesterday.

"Units are trying their best to search for and rescue them, working day and night," Abe said. Later in the day, he pledged to "do whatever the country can" for victims and survivors, ordering the defense ministry to call up to 1,000 reserve troops to join 31,000 active forces in search operations. But rescue work that was continuing into the night risked being hampered by additional rain falling in central and eastern Japan that officials warned could cause fresh flooding and landslides.

"I would like to ask people to stay fully vigilant and continue watching for landslides and river flooding," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference. In Nagano, one of the worst-hit regions, officials said they were working cautiously. "We are concerned about the impact of the latest rain on rescue and recovery efforts," local official Hiroki Yamaguchi said. "We will continue operations while watching out for secondary disasters due to the current rain."

#### 56 dead, 15 missing: NHK

The death toll continued to rise into yesterday evening, with bodies pulled from flooded cars and homes, swollen rivers and landslides. The casualties included a municipal worker whose car was overcome by floodwaters and at least seven crew from a cargo ship that sank in Tokyo Bay on Saturday night, a coast guard spokesman said.

Four others, from China, Myanmar and Vietnam,

## EPA rebukes fears over dangerous...

Continued from Page 1

The message stated that everyone may begin to experience health effects when AQI values are between 151 and 200.

However, accurate doesn't necessarily equal dangerous, the official notes. "In fact there is a difference between the danger limit of the PM2.5 between Kuwait and the United States or Europe. The US standard measures were based on a research conducted in the States, thus the sources there differ from the ones in Kuwait due to the completely different environment.

Here, over 54 percent of the PM are from natural sources coming from the desert [as in dust, sand, etc.] While there, it's all from artificial pollution which means higher risk of containing carcinogenic atoms that will cause health risks if inhaled," the official explained.

A local environmental protection group warned that air quality could pose a danger, even potentially carcinogenic in nature. "These measures are unhealthy but not dangerous as announced by some unofficial envi-

were rescued when the boat sank and the coast guard was still searching for a last crew member. Hagibis packed wind gusts of up to 216 kilometers per hour, but it was the heavy rains that caused the most damage. A total of 176 rivers flooded - mainly in eastern and northern Japan - with their banks collapsing in two dozen places, local media said.

In central Nagano, a levee breach sent water from the Chikuma river gushing into residential neighborhoods, flooding homes up to the second floor. Television footage from the area showed patients being transferred by ambulance from a Nagano hospital where some 200 people had been cut off by flooding. Elsewhere, rescuers used helicopters to winch survivors from roofs and balconies, or steered boats through muddy waters to reach those trapped.

#### Japan's rugby victory

Yesterday afternoon, some 75,900 households remained without power, with water cut off to 135,000 homes. The disaster left tens of thousands of people in shelters, with many unsure when they would be able to return home. "Everything from my house was washed away before my eyes. I wasn't sure if it was a dream or real," a woman in Nagano told NHK. "I feel lucky I'm still alive."

The storm brought travel chaos over the holiday weekend, grounding flights and halting commuter and bullet train services. Most subway trains had resumed service, along with many bullet train lines, and flights had also restarted. The storm also brought havoc to the sporting world, forcing the delay of Japanese Grand Prix qualifiers and the cancellation of three Rugby World Cup matches.

But a crucial decider pitting Japan against Scotland went ahead, with the hosts dedicating their stunning 28-21 win to the victims of the disaster. "To everyone that's suffering from the typhoon, this game was for you guys," said Japan captain Michael Leitch. — AFP

## Putin in Saudi, deepening...

Continued from Page 1

the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, calling that a "foolish" move that would only benefit competitors Russia and China.

Asked about concerns Riyadh was cozying up to Moscow, Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir said he saw no contradiction. "We don't believe that having close ties with Russia has any negative impact on our relationship with the United States," he told reporters on Sunday. "We believe that we can have strategic and strong ties with the United States while we develop our ties with Russia."

Russian and Saudi flags lined Riyadh streets ahead of Putin's one-day visit, which includes an evening performance by Russia's Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra. Putin then travels to the United Arab

ronmental institutions in Kuwait," the EPA official told the Kuwait Times yesterday. The Environment Public Authority (EPA) is the official institution in charge of measuring pollution in Kuwait.

Measuring air quality in Kuwait is based on two methods; one has a longer procedure by taking samples from the machine that includes different filters and examining the taken samples in a laboratory. "This procedure takes a whole day to get the results. Then we also have monitors with immediate readings such as the one at the US embassy," noted the official.

There are other European measuring machines that are available in three institutions in Kuwait in which the measures of AirVisual.com based its ranking of Kuwait on the World AQI ranking. "This machine is placed indoors as it would melt outside in Kuwait's heat. Also the high values on air quality are outdoor and not indoor, while it shows the indoor values around 50 which is clean. And due to the hot weather conditions, people here don't spend much time outdoors and even don't open windows much, so they are not really exposed to the high values of air pollution," he explained.

EPA has 15 stations in different areas of Kuwait. "We are monitoring the air quality all the time, so if there was a serious danger to people's health, we would definitely inform them to take precautions or to stay at home and so on," concluded the official.



# Wales wary of fit French ahead of Rugby World Cup quarter-final

## France have lost four players to injury since the start of the World Cup

**BEPPU:** Wales will be up against an increasingly fit France in Sunday's World Cup quarter-final in Oita according to their conditioning expert Paul Stridgeon. The physically gruelling and heavyweight Top 14 has often been held to blame for leaving France's players underprepared for the more dynamic nature of modern Test rugby.

But Wales physical performance manager Stridgeon, whose CV includes several years in France with a star-studded Toulon side featuring Jonny Wilkinson and Matt Giteau, said that perception was out of date.

"I think it has changed in the last three, four, five years definitely," Stridgeon told reporters at Wales's hotel in Beppu yesterday. "There's a lot of foreign conditioners gone into the French game and the French conditioners have changed their approach about how they train people to play rugby."

Stridgeon, who was drafted into the Welsh set-up for the 2015 World Cup, said the particular grinding nature of French club rugby had to be taken into consideration as well. "It's not as much of a running based game, there's a lot more scrum and maul, so the players have to be fit for a different kind of game," he said.

"People sometimes forget they need big scrum-maging props, big props who couldn't run around as much as some smaller props in other unions but they are great for the French game."

**FRENCH 'IN GOOD SHAPE'**  
Stridgeon's counterpart in the French set-up is

someone he knows well. Thibault Giroud played rugby and American football to a high level and also went to the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002 as a part of the French bobsleigh team.

He then became a strength and conditioning coach, starting at Saracens in England before heading to Pau, Biarritz and Glasgow Warriors. The 45-year-old is now on Stridgeon's old beat at Toulon. "I've got a lot of respect for Thibault," said Stridgeon.

"I think the French team are in good shape. He's obviously had a big effect." France, who have lost four players to injury since the start of the World Cup, will go into the quarter-final on the back of an unexpectedly long break after their final pool game against England was cancelled because of Typhoon Hagibis.

Wales, by contrast, have won all four of their pool games at a World Cup for the first time since the inaugural 1987 edition, when they achieved their best placing of third, with Stridgeon adamant that was a "massive achievement" for Warren Gatland's men.

"You can look at it both ways," added Stridgeon, who made his international coaching reputation with his native England and on three tours with the British and Irish Lions. "They (France) have had a rest and is that a good thing for them?"

"But they have missed a game as well. Are you game fit, are you ready to go?" Wales won this season's Six Nations Championship with a Grand Slam but only after coming from 16-0 down at half-time to beat France 24-19 in their opening match in Paris.

Stridgeon reckoned it was too simplistic to put



OITA: France's fly-half Camille Lopez takes part in an indoor training session in Oita yesterday, ahead of their Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup quarter-final match against Wales. —AFP

Wales's Stade de France revival down to superior fitness alone. "People always think that if you have won in the last 20 minutes it means you are fitter than them.

"We work on repeatability and being able to do things at maximum intensity and hopefully in the last 20 minutes of games that pays off," he added. — AFP

## PAS prepares strategy to host more events

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Director General of Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Dr Saqer Al-Mulla said the authority spares no effort in backing Kuwait's organization of various regional and international championships, including the 25th Asian Bowling Championship this month.

Al-Mulla said he is sure the bowling club is able to successfully organize the tournament in a way that is suitable to Kuwait's status.

He said PAS prepared a strategy to enable federations and clubs to host championships and events that contribute to enhancing the levels of Kuwaiti athletes and strengthen the experience factor.

Al-Mulla lauded the organization of the Asian bowling tournament for the first time in Kuwait, describing it as a pride for our country. He wished the bowling club all success in this event which will last 10 days.



Saqer Al-Mulla

## England's Youngs wary of Wallabies

**TOKYO:** England scrum-half Ben Youngs believes the team will have to rely on more than their recent record against Australia if they are to avoid a defeat by the Wallabies that will end their World Cup campaign.

The familiar foes meet in a quarter-final in Oita on Saturday, in a rematch of last-eight clashes at the 1995 and 2007 World Cups — both won by England. Meanwhile England coach Eddie Jones heads into this weekend's clash eyeing a seventh straight win over his native Australia since taking over as Red Rose boss.

But Jones, also a former Japan coach, only got his present job after Australia knocked hosts England out of the 2015 World Cup in pool play with a convincing 33-13 success at Twickenham.

Now there are concerns that England may lack match sharpness after their final pool match in Japan against France was cancelled because of Typhoon Hagibis. But Youngs, a survivor from that chastening loss to Australia four years ago, was adamant England were not "undercooked" ahead of their latest clash

with an unpredictable Australia side.

"That game in 2015 was one where they came up with a play we had never seen before — Bernard Foley comes around and plays it back inside to Kurtley Beale," Youngs said. "You think they are going to do one thing and they do something completely different."

"I like the way they play with their attacking mindset — and off the back of that you always get chances," Youngs added England had yet to deploy their full array of attacking moves because they hadn't needed to "show our hand" against the likes of Tonga, the USA and Argentina.

But turning to the Australia match, he said: "We will make sure we are right and ready to go and have things we haven't had to use yet." Youngs is just one of four players in England's 31-man squad to have played in a World Cup quarter-final — the 19-12 defeat by France eight years ago.

"I was thinking the other day about when we played France in the 2011 quarter-finals," said Youngs. "At that stage they were deemed to be in turmoil. 'My experience is that you can't read into what happens in the past, it's just about that 80 minutes."

"Don't believe your own hype as a side. We cannot rely on what has happened before, thinking that will be enough, because it won't be." —AFP

## Forget past defeats against Ireland, say All Blacks

**TOKYO:** Past matches between Ireland and New Zealand will be irrelevant when the two teams take the pitch in the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals on Saturday, according to All Black coach Steve Hansen.

In one of the greatest results in their history, Ireland beat the All Blacks on neutral territory in Chicago in 2016, as well as recording their first ever home win against New Zealand last year. But coach Steve Hansen said past form would count for nothing in Tokyo on Saturday.

"A lot of people are getting caught up in the past. It's about what's happening on Saturday that's going to matter. Anything that's happened prior to that is irrelevant," Hansen told reporters yesterday.

He said the match in Dublin was a "titanic struggle" and acknowledged that most teams raise their game "10 percent" when they play the All Blacks — the Irish being no different in this respect. "Big difference here is it's a do-or-die game for both teams," noted Hansen, whose All Blacks will be huge favourites going into the match against an Ireland side that has failed to impress since their opening 27-3 win against Scotland.

"Both teams are in good nick, fresh, and excited. We're looking forward to the challenge," said the coach, who will be facing countryman Joe Schmidt in the opposing camp. All Black flanker Sam Cane said previous encounters between the two sides had been "massive arm-wrestles" and "hugely physical" but was also only looking ahead to Saturday's clash. "This is a Rugby World Cup play-off game, the past doesn't really count for anything," said Cane.

Hansen dismissed fears the All Blacks could be "undercooked" coming into the game, nearly a month after their last serious test — a 23-13 win over Rugby Championship rivals South Africa.

"Having a week off is not a bad thing. We're quite excited by that fact," said Hansen, who added the All Blacks had trained at close to the intensity of a Test match on Friday.

"We don't feel we've lost any opportunity to get ourselves where we need to be," he said. Hansen said he did not expect Ireland to change their way of playing, based around a solid kicking game from their fly-half Johnny Sexton, the reigning World Player of the Year, and scrum-half Conor Murray.

"They're pretty set on how they play, just like we are. They play to their strengths. Conor Murray does a lot of kicking. They use Sexton to drive them around the park and their big forwards to carry."

"Why would they want to change? It's been pretty successful for them," noted Hansen.

But he cautioned that while Sexton was an important cog in the Ireland machine, "they are more than a one-man team".

"I think they brought out the best in us for a long, long time," added Hansen, looking ahead to what promises to be a thriller in Tokyo Stadium. "That hasn't changed just because they've beaten us a couple of times." — AFP

## Boks block out Brighton as they prepare for Japan

**TOKYO:** South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus said his team had "erased" their shocking loss to Japan in the 2015 Rugby World Cup's 'miracle of Brighton' as they prepare to face the hosts in the quarter-finals.

Erasmus said a pre-tournament warm-up win over Japan, when they swept aside the Brave Blossoms 41-7 just days before the tournament, had exorcised the ghosts of 2015. "In all honesty, the reason for that Japan warm-up game was to erase the Brighton game," Erasmus told reporters in Tokyo.

"It's 1-1 now and now we're going to be in for a really tough game. One-one. And that game is in the past now and hopefully we won't get asked about it," he laughed. Erasmus revealed that the South Africa management team had watched Japan beat Scotland 28-21 together but apart from the players.

"They are such a well-balanced team that it's difficult to single out one particular guy. As a unit, they are a really formidable team," said the Springbok coach. Erasmus said he had already selected his starting XV for the quarter-final match and was "99 percent" sure that star winger Cheslin Kolbe would have recovered from an

ankle injury to face Japan.

The coach said his gameplan largely based around kicking that worked well in the warm-up match would not be enough to get the job done this time — as his opposite number Jamie Joseph was "too sharp" for that.

He said he had been impressed at how Japan had varied their game depending on the opposition — noting that the Brave Blossoms had kicked only eight times against Scotland but 32 times against Samoa. "We'll have to come up with a totally new plan. Something to match their pace and speed," he said. Erasmus joked that it was "really difficult not to like Japanese people" but would have to gee up his players to spoil the party for the hosts. "We're playing for our country and we want to try to win the World Cup. For the next week, unfortunately Japan is the enemy for one week."

"We love the country, we love the people but we have to try to beat them," he said. Prop Tendai Mtawarira, known as the "Beast" said the most important thing for the Springboks was to focus on their own performance.

"Most important thing is for us to stick to our game-plan. The challenge is not to get sucked into playing their game. We play our game," said Mtawarira. He also said that the "Miracle of Brighton" match would play no part in the Springbok preparations for the clash on Sunday.

"As the coach said, that game is in the past now. This is an entirely new challenge. I'm looking forward to it. It's a big one. They have been playing well. They are unbeaten so far. It's a massive, massive game." — AFP



YOKOHAMA: Japan's players celebrate winning the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool A match between Japan and Scotland at the International Stadium Yokohama in Yokohama on Sunday. —AFP

## ‘Battle-hardened’ Ireland ready for NZ challenge

**OITA:** Beating New Zealand twice in their past three duels has given Ireland a sense of confidence going into their Rugby World Cup quarter-final next weekend. The Irish are also heartened by their 47-5 win over Samoa in Fukuoka on Saturday, while the All Blacks had to sit out the weekend after their match against Italy in Toyota City was cancelled because of Typhoon Hagibis.

"New Zealand will be fresh, we'll be battle-hardened," declared Andrew Conway, who went on as a replacement against Samoa and scored their final try. Japan's 28-21 win over Scotland on Sunday ensured they finish top of Pool A and earned a quarter-final against South Africa, while runners-up Ireland will play the three-time defending champions.

After 111 years without success against the All Blacks, Ireland broke through three years ago with a 40-29 victory in Chicago, wiping out the New Zealanders' aura of invincibility and backing up with a 16-9 win in Dublin last year.

The All Blacks head into their first knockout match on a quest to win a third consecutive World Cup, while Ireland want to get past the quarter-finals for the first time in nine attempts. A negative for the All Blacks' preparation is that since beating the Springboks at the start of the tournament, they will have gone 28 days without stern opposition having had easy runs against minnows Canada and Namibia before their Italy game was called off.

Ireland, who beat Scotland and Russia but lost to Japan, had the benefit of fine-tuning their game in Saturday's seven-try romp against Samoa. Coach Joe Schmidt said it wasn't a complete performance but it showed his side was building nicely.

"You've got to be at your very best to have a chance," said the New Zealander, adding that the recovery of his forwards would be key. "It was enough work that we got through that will stand for us hopefully," he said. "The forwards particularly really muscled up well and had to work really hard. That's a little bit attritional but it's something they enjoy doing anyway. For us it will be really important to recover well." — AFP



Sports

# Cricket South Africa urges supporters to be patient after two heavy defeats

## Young SA team would reward their supporters with improved performances

**JOHANNESBURG:** South African cricket officials yesterday urged the country's supporters to be patient with their struggling Test side after two heavy defeats in India.

The Proteas, rebuilding after the retirement of several senior players, were outplayed in every aspect of both Tests so far.

India clinched the three-match series when they won the second Test in Pune by an innings and 137 runs on Sunday. It followed an equally punishing 203-run win in the first Test in Visakhapatnam.

"It was always going to be a difficult challenge taking on the top team in the world — certainly under their own conditions — at a time when we have introduced a new team structure," said Cricket South Africa chief executive Thabang Moroe.

CSA fired previous coach Ottis Gibson and the selection panel following a poor World Cup campaign earlier this year and introduced a new structure, to be headed by a team director who would be responsible for all team matters who would report to a director of cricket.

Enoch Nkwe, a former player with a modest first-class career and a single, successful season as a franchise coach, was appointed to the team director role in an interim capacity, while former international player Corrie van Zyl was appointed acting director of cricket and interim convener of selectors.

Moroe also pointed to the number of top players who played a big role in making South Africa one of the top sides in the world.

"In the past two years we have had to bid farewell to some of the great names of international cricket such as AB de Villiers, Hashim Amla, Morne Morkel and Dale

Steyn who between them played nearly 450 Test matches for the Proteas," said Moroe.

"You don't replace that kind of experience overnight and we need to give a new generation time to settle."

**'EXCITING TIMES'**

Moroe said he was confident that a young South African team would reward their supporters with improved performances during a home series against England in December and January.

"These are exciting times for South African cricket with new names and faces coming to the fore.

"Our talent pipeline has produced the likes of Aiden Markram, Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi and Zubayr Hamza over the last few years and our development systems are clearly in good shape," he said.

Van Zyl said supporters needed to appreciate the quality of an Indian team which has won 11 consecutive home series.

"This is an Indian team that has been together for some time now and is well accustomed to playing in their home conditions," said Van Zyl.

"I strongly believe we have the players to win games and the youngsters will come right."

Former Test batsman and current Cape Cobras franchise coach Ashwell Prince responded to widespread criticism of the team on Twitter by pointing out the difficulties of coping with conditions away from home.

"I know we didn't play well and it seems all doom and gloom," Prince said on Twitter.

"However, I do feel that people don't really appreciate how tough it is to win away series especially in conditions that's foreign to your own.

"India for example, despite touring SA with bat-



PUNE: File photo shows South Africa team captain Faf du Plessis (L) interacts with teammates during the first day of the second Test cricket match between India and South Africa at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on October 10, 2019. — AFP

ting line-ups that included the likes of (Virender)Sehwag, (Rahul) Dravid, (Sachin)Tendulkar, (VVS) Laxman, (Sourav) Ganguly, (MS) Dhoni, have never won a series in SA."

But Prince added cryptically that there were "seri-

ous issues" in South African cricket that needed to be resolved.

"Get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats on da bus," tweeted Prince. — AFP

## Ex-India skipper Ganguly poised to become cricket board chief

**MUMBAI:** Former India captain Sourav Ganguly is poised to take over as the president of the country's cricket board as nominations closed yesterday for elections to the sport's wealthiest and most powerful body.

Ganguly, 47, was the only candidate to file his nomination for the top post after being unanimously chosen as the presidential candidate at a meeting of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) members in Mumbai on Sunday.

One of the most successful national captains in the sport, Ganguly is set to be elected unopposed when BCCI elections are held on October 23. Yesterday was the last day for filing nominations. The left-handed

opener retired from Test cricket in 2008 having accumulated 7,212 runs.

Last month, he was re-elected president of the Cricket Association of Bengal. Brijesh Patel, a former India batsman and experienced administrator, is set to become chairman of the Indian Premier League, the board's lucrative Twenty20 competition.

Jay Shah, son of India's home minister Amit Shah, is tipped for the secretary's post. Cricket's massive popularity in India has helped the BCCI become the wealthiest of all of the sport's national boards, raking in large sums of money from sponsorship and TV deals.

But it has also been embroiled in legal battles and a series of scandals, including accusations of corruption and match-fixing in the IPL. Ganguly said his priority as president would be to polish BCCI's image.

"I'm happy... as it's a very important time in Indian cricket administration because of what has happened in the last three years," Ganguly told reporters after filing his nomination. "To be in a position where I can make a difference is extremely satisfying... We have a lot of things to do, hope we can put the house in order."

India, the world's top-ranked Test team, is currently playing a home Test series against South Africa. — AFP

## 'Superman' Saha silences doubters with superior glovework

**MUMBAI:** Wriddhiman Saha's return to the Indian Test side after a long injury-forced absence raised more than a few eyebrows but the wicketkeeper has silenced the doubters with his superlative glovework in the ongoing home series against South Africa.

A wicketkeeper rarely earns kudos purely for his glovework but Saha enjoyed that rare acclaim during the second test against South Africa at Pune. While India captain Virat Kohli received the man-of-the-match award for his career-best knock of 254, and fast bowler Umesh Yadav and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin picked up six wickets apiece, Saha did not even get a chance to bat.

He had only five dismissals to his name during the test but his impact was hailed by his team mates and drew instant praise from Twitter users, who dubbed him "Superman Saha". "It's a no-brainer to say that Saha is one of the best going around, and I've hardly seen him miss anything," Ashwin told reporters after the third day's play on Saturday.

Saha cemented his place in the longest format of the game in early 2015 after serving as the incumbent to India captain and wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni. However, India's first-choice glovesman suffered a hamstring injury during a Cape Town test in January last year and subsequently found himself out of the side for 18 months after going through shoulder and finger problems.

He was included in India's test squad for their two-match series against West Indies recently but struggled to find a way to displace young stumper-batsman Rishabh Pant. After stepping in to fill the gap left by Saha, the 22-year-old Pant scored centuries in England and Australia, prompting calls for India to invest in him given his age and better returns with the bat.

But Saha's experience and superior glovework while keeping on spin-friendly wickets at home finally worked in his favour as he got the nod ahead of Pant for the three tests against the visiting Proteas. — Reuters

## Fawzia Sultan Healthcare to hold ninth edition of RunKuwait charity race



**KUWAIT:** Fawzia Sultan Healthcare Network (FSHN), a non-profit multidisciplinary healthcare provider, is pleased to announce the return of its annual charity sporting event, RunKuwait, in its ninth edition.

The event, which will be held on November 23rd, invites interested participants and RunKuwait returnee friends to register for the race and contribute to improving the lives of children with special needs.

RunKuwait is a charitable initiative aiming to raise awareness and funds towards the rehabilitative treatment of vulnerable children with special needs. Since 2013, all registration proceeds are channeled directly towards the non-profit Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center (CERC), founded by FSHN. Last year's event with more than 2,900 registrations successfully contributed towards offering a total of 1000 treatment sessions to children with special needs.

RunKuwait is a community based fun sporting event for all

family members who can join a 5KM or 10KM run or walk. The event's race village will host different warm-up exercises, activities for children and exciting activities for family members and friends who will join the event to cheer for the participants.

RunKuwait is supported by generous contributions from the following sponsors: Agility as a Founding Partner, INTERSPORT and ASAR Legal as Gold sponsors, and EQUATE as Silver sponsor. The media sponsors for the RunKuwait initiative this year are Alanba newspaper, Alrai newspaper, Alseyassah newspaper, Arab Times newspaper, Kuwait Times newspaper, bazaar magazine, The talk magazine, Alhadaf magazine, M2R company and 248am as a social media sponsor.

Interested participants, athletes, and continuous supporters of RunKuwait can find more information about the race, and can register through the RunKuwait official social media channels, @RunKuwait on Instagram and Facebook.





## Sports

# Poland, Russia reach Euro 2020 as Germany, Netherlands close in

## Bale on target as Wales' Euro hopes on knife-edge

**PARIS:** Poland and Russia secured their places at Euro 2020 on Sunday with victories over North Macedonia and Cyprus respectively, while Germany and the Netherlands boosted their hopes of reaching the finals.

Russia eased to a 5-0 thrashing of 10-man Cyprus, with Poland joining them, Belgium and Italy in qualifying this week by seeing off North Macedonia 2-0. Stanislav Cherchesov's Russia, who reached the World Cup quarter-finals on home soil last year, only had to avoid defeat in Nicosia to follow Belgium in qualifying from Group I.

Valencia winger Denis Cheryshev fired in a ninth-minute opener for the visitors, before Magomed Ozdоеv, who scored a fabulous long-range strike on Thursday against Scotland, made it two midway through the first half.

Any thoughts of a Cyprus comeback were ended in just the 28th minute when Kostas Laifis was dismissed for a nasty lunge on Russian full-back Sergei Petrov.

Striker Artem Dzyuba scored his third goal in two games in the 79th minute, before Aleksandr Golovin and Cheryshev's second completed the rout late on. Russia will attempt to overtake Belgium, who beat Kazakhstan 2-0 earlier on Sunday, at the summit when they host the world's number one side on November 16.

The European Championship finals, which start on June 12 next year, are being held at 12 different venues across the continent, including Saint Petersburg in Russia. Poland went into their game against North Macedonia knowing victory would punch their ticket for the Euros.

They were forced to be patient by the visitors, who could qualify through the playoffs after winning their Nations League group if they fail to do so automatically. But Przemyslaw Frankowski prodded home less than 60 seconds after coming on as a substitute in the 74th minute, before Arkadiusz Milik made the points safe.

Poland remain three points clear of Austria, who won

1-0 in Slovenia, at the top of Group G, with North Macedonia and Slovenia five points further adrift.

### DUTCH SEE OFF BELARUS

Ronald Koeman's Netherlands remained at the top of Group C ahead of Germany on head-to-head record with a nervy 2-1 win over Belarus in Minsk.

The Dutch lead third-placed Northern Ireland by three points after beating Michael O'Neill's side 3-1 on Thursday.

Georginio Wijnaldum headed the away team in front in the 32nd minute, shortly after Denis Laptev had spurned a golden chance to give Belarus a shock lead.

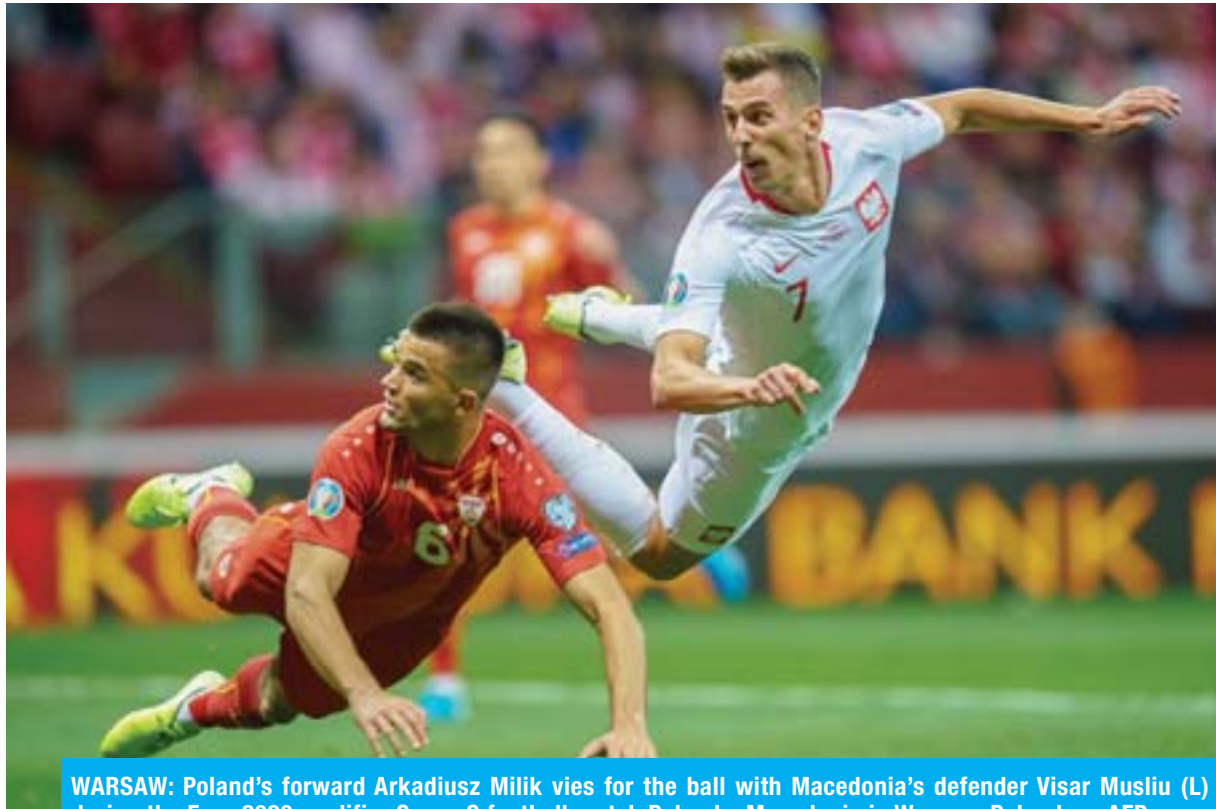
The Liverpool midfielder doubled the advantage before the break with a wonderful 25-yard strike into the top corner, and although Stanislav Dragun gave Belarus hope early in the second half, the Netherlands held on with relative comfort.

"We have to do better than we did in the second half, although in the end we had things under control," Dutch captain Virgil van Dijk told television channel NOS. "We are now very close to qualifying for the finals, and ultimately that's what counts."

Victory in Belfast over the Northern Irish next month would secure the Oranje a first appearance at a major tournament since finishing third at the 2014 World Cup. Germany eased to a 3-0 victory in Estonia despite seeing Emre Can sent off in the 14th minute.

### WALES HOLD UP CROATIA

Ilkay Gundogan, who along with Can before kickoff 'unliked' a controversial Instagram post by Turkey forward Cenk Tosun, scored twice, with Timo Werner also finding the net. Joachim Loew's side host Northern Ireland in their final game, which could decide second place. "We had to regroup after the red card, the team did well after the break, we did not concede and scored three goals," said Loew.



**WARSAW:** Poland's forward Arkadiusz Milik vies for the ball with Macedonia's defender Visar Musliu (L) during the Euro 2020 qualifier Group G football match Poland v Macedonia in Warsaw, Poland. — AFP

Croatia were made to wait to qualify, as Gareth Bale's strike in first-half injury time proved enough to grab a 1-1 draw for Wales in Cardiff. Nikola Vlasic fired a low ninth-minute shot in off the post to put Croatia on course for qualification, before Bale's fine goal secured Wales a point in a bad-tempered affair.

Last year's World Cup runners-up Croatia will quali-

fy if they avoid defeat against Slovakia in their final match on November 16, while Euro 2016 semi-finalists Wales could join them with two closing wins, as long as Slovakia do not beat the Croats.

"We've got to win both games and rely on others. But we're in it. I wanted to be in it after these games," Wales manager Ryan Giggs told Sky Sports. — AFP

## AFC backs single India national league in 2024-25 to end club turmoil

**MUMBAI:** India should merge two domestic soccer leagues into one top-tier national championship in the 2024/25 season, the Asian Football Confederation said yesterday in a bid to end years of turmoil in club football. The All India Football Federation's (AIFF) plan to merge the franchise-based Indian Super League (ISL) with the I-League has faced major obstacles, leaving fans and stakeholders confused about the future of club football.

In July, the AIFF openly backed the ISL as India's elite competition for the first time, saying it would recommend the AFC awarded its champions a slot in the continent's elite club competition.

In response six I-League clubs wrote to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and FIFA requesting intervention as well as an inquiry into the running of the AIFF. Yesterday, the AFC recommended that the ISL champions get a playoff slot in the AFC Champions League while the I-League winners would take a place in the AFC Cup starting next season.

"Everyone has to put the good of Indian football at the forefront and take the best decisions to develop Indian club football," AFC general secretary Windsor John said in a statement.

"The AFC will be very much involved to ensure the growth of the game to the next level with the pathway to a single league," he added. The winners of the traditional I-League were previously awarded the slot in the continent's elite club competition, AFC Champions



**KOLKATTA:** India's national football team captain Sunil Chhetri (C) along with teammates takes part in a training session with teammates ahead of their World Cup 2022 and 2023 AFC Asian Cup qualifying football match against Bangladesh, at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata yesterday. — AFP

League, while the champions of the upstart ISL gained entry to the secondary AFC Cup competition.

The ISL, promoted by billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries and Rupert Murdoch's Star India TV, has grown more popular since its launch in 2014, while interest in the I-League has stagnated.

The I-League was formed in 2007 as a rebrand of the National Football League, India's first professional league when it was launched in 1996. Under the AFC plan, no club will be promoted or relegated in the ISL for the next three years, and the winner of the I-League

will be promoted to the ISL from the 2022/23 season.

The AFC proposed one main league, with promotion and relegation, and one knock-out Cup tournament starting in the 2024/25 season. "Every point of this package - and it is a package - has been thought-out extremely carefully and it is aimed simply at providing the best chance to develop Indian club football," John said, adding the plan would be presented to the AFC and AIFF executive committees. "We have informed the AIFF that 10-12 teams are not enough for the top league - it must be bigger," he said. — Reuters

## Hamilton in no hurry to win Formula One title in Mexico

**SUZUKA:** Lewis Hamilton said he was in no hurry to win a sixth world championship after the title battle was reduced to a two-horse Mercedes race at the Japanese Grand Prix. The Formula One circus moves on to Mexico in two weeks' time where Hamilton, enjoying a 64-point lead over Valtteri Bottas, can wrap up a third consecutive drivers' crown if he outscores his teammate by 14 points or more.

More likely is that the battle will be concluded at the subsequent race at the Grand Prix of the Americas in Austin, Texas. Bottas's victory at Suzuka and Hamilton's third place clinched a sixth consecutive constructors' championship for Mercedes and left the Finn as the only driver who can catch Hamilton over the final four races of the campaign.

"I think for me it's never been a case of always wanting to rush things," Hamilton told reporters Sunday adding that he expected a tough battle from his teammate over the final few races.

"Valtteri's driven well all year long, he's done a great job today and he will most likely do a very, very solid job these next races, so we still have a battle, the fight continues," he added.

Hamilton is not expecting an easy

time in the rarefied high-altitude air of Mexico which should suit Ferrari, who hold an obvious advantage in straight-line speed.

"I think Mexico is generally our worst race of the year because of the way our car is set up and it's going to be a tough one for us," said a downbeat Hamilton, who was quicker on fresher tyres than second-placed Sebastian Vettel in the closing stages at Suzuka but was unable to barge past. "The last few (races) have been pretty shocking, even though we've won the title," he said, after resurgent Ferrari won in three races out of four up to Japan and outqualified Mercedes comfortably at Suzuka.

"I'm hoping for a better weekend but I think it's going to be very hard to beat the Ferraris with those long straights. "We have no hope of getting by on those straights, that's for sure but even if you look at the others, the McLarens are picking up some serious speeds on the straights, so are the Red Bulls so I think it will be a tricky one. "I don't anticipate (the title win) will be Mexico. I think we will be battling for a good few races." Bottas jumped from third to first with an electric start to win in Japan ahead of Vettel and Hamilton.—AFP

## Ex-England star Gazza on trial for sexual assault

**LONDON:** Former England footballer Paul Gascoigne planted a "sloppy", drunken kiss on a fellow train passenger, a court heard yesterday as he went on trial charged with sexual assault.

The 52-year-old ex-Newcastle United, Spurs and Lazio midfielder told police he kissed the woman to boost her confidence, Teesside Crown Court in northeast England heard. Prosecutor William Mousley told jurors the case concerned "a brief but unpleasant assault with sexual overtones on a train by a drunken male stranger in his 50s".

After moving away from her seat in front of Gascoigne due to his drunken behaviour, and after he tried to sit on her, Gascoigne then "put his hands on her cheeks and kissed her forcibly and sloppily on the lips," said Mousley.

She called the police after getting off the York to Newcastle train, and officers called Gascoigne that night. Gascoigne, widely regarded as one of the most talented players of his generation, told police he knew what the claim was about, saying he had "kissed a fat lass", Mousley said.

The prosecutor said the woman had found the incident "shocking, upsetting". Gascoigne broke onto the global stage with his dazzling performances during the



**Paul Gascoigne**

1990 World Cup in Italy, capturing the nation's heart when he burst into tears after getting booked in the semi-final defeat against West Germany, which would have ruled him out of a potential final.

He has since struggled with alcoholism since retiring from top-flight football. Gascoigne — known as "Gazza" — made his name with home-town club Newcastle before going on to play for Tottenham, Italian giants Lazio and several other teams including Glasgow Rangers. He denies a single charge of sexual assault. — AFP

## Dramatic Africa Cup of Nations victories for Gambia, Chad

**JOHANNESBURG:** Gambia and Chad took dramatic routes Sunday to the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying group phase, squeezing past Djibouti and Liberia respectively after penalty shootouts.

In Bakau, Gambia and Djibouti drew 1-1 for the second time in five days, leaving the countries deadlocked at 2-2 on aggregate. Gambia goalkeeper Modou Jobe was the star of the shootout, saving two Djibouti spot-kicks to give his side a 3-2 victory on penalties.

In N'Djamena, Chad beat 10-man Liberia 1-0, the same score by which they lost the first leg in a round that involved eight of the 10 lowest ranked African teams with Eritrea and Somalia not entering. Chad then proved more accurate from the spot to win 5-4 on penalties and give French coach Emmanuel Tregoa his first win at the fourth attempt in a second spell with the nation.

The other two preliminary round second legs were less nerve jangling with South Sudan winning away to the Seychelles and Sao Tome e Principe at home against Mauritius to book group places.

Djibouti, who are rapidly ditching under French coach Julien Mette a reputation for being whipping boys, shocked Gambia by taking an early lead when Mahdi Mahabeh converted a penalty.

Giving one of their best performances in recent years, the hosts levelled in first half stoppage time through Abbie Jallow.

There were no further goals in regulation time, leaving Jobe from Saudi Arabian club Jeddah to take his country into Group D with Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon.

Liberia suffered a major blow just after half-time when captain Sam Johnson was sent off for a second yellow card and Indonesia-based Ezechiel N'Doussel put Chad ahead soon after.

Elimination was a major setback for new Liberia coach Peter Butler as the Englishman had promised officials he would take the Lone Stars to the 2021 Cup of Nations in Cameroon.

Chad, who have never competed at the biennial elite African tournament, go into Group A with Mali, Guinea and Namibia. South Sudan came from behind in the first leg to build a tenuous 2-1 aggregate advantage over the Seychelles and won the return match in Victoria via a Joseph Nyuar goal on 71 minutes.

The South Sudanese, who were forced to play the first leg in Sudan because the national stadium in Juba is being renovated, will face Burkina Faso, Uganda and Mali in Group B.

Sao Tome followed up a shock 3-1 away victory over Mauritius by winning 2-1 at home in the tiny twin island nation off the coast of Gabon.

Argentina-based Luis Leal scored again after bagging first-leg brace, and the reward for the Saotomeans is a place in Group C with three former champions, Ghana, South Africa and Sudan.

The first two rounds of group matches are scheduled for November 11-19 and then there is a long break until two more matchdays between August 31-September 8 next year. — AFP



**25** Wales wary of fit French ahead of Rugby World Cup quarter-final



**26** Ex-India skipper Ganguly poised to become cricket board chief



**27** Ex-England star Gazza on trial for sexual assault



## Niners stop Rams to stay unbeaten

Panthers pounce for a 37-26 victory over Buccaneers



LOS ANGELES: Tevin Coleman #26 of the San Francisco 49ers is tackled by Eric Weddle #32 of the Los Angeles Rams in the third quarter at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

**LOS ANGELES:** The San Francisco 49ers remained unbeaten behind a stifling defensive display on Sunday, shutting down their California rival Los Angeles Rams with a convincing 20-7 victory in Los Angeles. Running back Tevin Coleman and quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo scored touchdowns, and Robbie Gould booted a pair of field goals as the 49ers scored the game's final 20 points to improve to 5-0 on the NFL season. It is their first time they have won five straight to start the season since 1990.

"I had a feeling that if we just don't turn it over, we'll win this game," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. "I haven't had that feeling very much in my career, and the defense definitely gave it to me the whole game."

Robert Woods ran for the lone Los Angeles touchdown in the first quarter as the Rams lost their third straight game and dropped to 3-3 overall. The Rams offence mustered just 165 total yards in front of a crowd of 76,700 at Memorial Coliseum.

After the Rams had scored on their opening possession, the 49ers answered with a two-yard score by Coleman late in the first quarter.

Garoppolo scored on a one yard plunge early in the third for a 14-7 lead. Garoppolo also passed for 243 yards. Gould's field goals were from 25 yards and 34 yards in the fourth for the margin of victory.

Elsewhere, the Houston Texans spoiled Tyreek Hill's return for Kansas City, rallying with 20 unanswered points to hand the Chiefs their second straight NFL defeat, 31-24 at Arrowhead Stadium.

Texans quarterback Deshaun Watson threw for two more yards and a touchdown and ran for 280 yards, getting the better of opposite number Patrick Mahomes in a clash of the league's top young quarterbacks.

Star receiver Hill returned for the Chiefs after being sidelined with a shoulder injury since the season-opener and made a quick impact with a spectacular touchdown catch in the first quarter. He finished with five catches for 80 yards and two TDs, but it wasn't enough to keep the Texans at bay. Houston's Carlos Hyde rushed for 116 yards and a touchdown against his former team and DeAndre Hopkins' nine catches for 55 yards included one within the last two minutes that let the Texans hang onto the ball and run out the clock.

Mahomes finished with 273 passing yards and three touchdowns, but also threw his first interception of the season. In Baltimore, Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson finished with almost 400 yards of total offense in a 23-17 victory over the winless Cincinnati Bengals.

Jackson connected on 21 of 33 passes for 236 yards and rushed for a career-high 152 yards — fourth-most by a quarterback in NFL history — as the Ravens improved to 4-2. "It's cool, I guess," Jackson said when he learned that he was the first player in the Super Bowl era to produce more than 200 yards passing and 150 yards rushing in a regular-season game.

### PANTHERS PONCE

The Carolina Panthers pounced for a 37-26 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to get the day started in London. Christian McCaffrey scored two touchdowns and the Panthers parlayed five interceptions from Bucs quarterback Jameis Winston into 17 points on the way to a fourth straight victory. The Panthers have bounced back from back-to-back defeats to open the season.

Kyle Allen has since stepped in for injured quarterback Cam Newton, but

McCaffrey said it was the support of the "unbelievable" Panthers defense that made the difference at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. "I felt like every single time they were on offense our defense had a chance to get a turnover or a sack," he said.

It was an emotional day for Panthers defensive end Efe Obada, who was born in Nigeria but arrived as a 10-year-old in England where he ended up fending for himself on the streets of London.

He was made an honorary captain for the

game. "I had family in the stands which I loved," Obada said. "Most of them don't even understand what I'm doing, but they believe in me and have supported me for years. "For me to be in London and just showing them, it was really special."

Elsewhere, the Seattle Seahawks rallied for a 32-28 victory over the Browns in Cleveland to improve to 5-1 for the first time since 2013. Seattle quarterback Russell Wilson threw three touchdown passes and ran for a score as the Seahawks roared

back after surrendering touchdowns on Cleveland's first three possessions.

In Minneapolis, Kirk Cousins connected on four touchdown passes — three to Stefon Diggs — as the Vikings soared past the Eagles 38-20. In New Jersey, Sam Darnold threw two touchdown passes in his return from mononucleosis, and New York held on to beat the Dallas Cowboys 24-22 for the Jets' first win of the season. In a battle of bottom-dwellers, Washington edged Miami 17-16. —AFP

## Astros outlast Yankees with Correa's homer

**LOS ANGELES:** Carlos Correa blasted a walk off home run in the 11th inning on Sunday to lift the Houston Astros to a 3-2 marathon victory over the New York Yankees in game two of the ALCS. The Astros shortstop hit a towering 394-foot opposite field homer off Yankees relief pitcher J.A. Happ to level the best-of-seven playoff series at one game each.

Correa, who was batting in the leadoff spot in the Astros side of the 11th, capped the almost five-hour contest which saw Houston bounce back from a one-sided 7-0 loss in game one. "It was a great game. Two of the best teams out there," said Correa. "It is all worth it for moments like this."

Correa also hit an RBI double and made a clutch defensive play earlier in the game. Game three is Tuesday at Yankee Stadium. Correa watched the first pitch of the bottom of the 11th sail out the ballpark then cupped his hand to his ear as the crowd of 43,300 at Minute

Maid Park went into a frenzy.

Correa said he was happy he got the pitch he was looking for from Happ, who was New York's ninth pitcher of the game. "I played against him before and I have been successful going the other way," he said. "I was looking for something down the middle that I could drive the other way and he threw the perfect pitch for me to do it."

This is the second time in three years the two powerhouse franchises have grappled in the Major League Baseball postseason. In the 2017 ALCS each team won all their home games with the Astros moving on the World Series where they claimed their first title.

Astros starter Justin Verlander once again stepped up against the Yankees. Verlander threw 6 2/3 solid innings, striking out seven and allowing five hits. In seven career playoff starts against the Yankees, Verlander is 4-0. His first career playoff start came against New York in

2006 during his rookie season.

"I knew it was going to be a low scoring affair," said Verlander, who was the MVP of the 2017 ALCS. "I was able to lock it down and make pitches when I had to. I was pleased to keep our boys in the ball game." Yankees left-hander James Paxton lasted just 2 1/3 innings surrendering four hits and one run and walking two.

Houston's bats came alive in game two after going silent in the opener when the Yankees clubbed three home runs. Correa started the scoring in game two, hitting a double to left field in the second which plated Alex Bregman.

The Yankees scored two runs in the top of the fourth before George Springer hit a solo homer in the fifth inning off Yankees reliever Adam Ottavino to tie it 2-2. Gerrit Cole will start for the Astros today against Luis Severino. Cole led the league in strikeouts this season and has 18 wins in no losses in 24 starts. —AFP