

Friday Times

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Local

Nobel for poverty



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Three US citizens, including one woman, have won the Nobel Prize in Economics for their work on poverty; the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences stated last week that the award is given to achievements of individuals who are working for a very important issue, in this case, global poverty.

The three economists were rewarded for introducing a new approach to obtain reliable answers about the best way to reduce global poverty. The prize will be divided equally among the three researchers and the winners' research has improved their ability to fight global poverty, the academy said in a statement.

The Economics Prize, the latest of Nobel Prize, is officially known as the "Bank of Sweden Award for Economic Sciences in memory of Alfred Nobel", established in 1968 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Bank of Sweden. This year, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abe Ahmed, the architect of reconciliation with Eritrea and a pioneer of reforms in his country, also won the Nobel Peace Prize.

I believe that this year's award has been based on real achievements of the candidates and ones that the people are in desperate need. The Ethiopian Prime Minister seems energetic and eager to unite the African continent with peace, especially since many countries there have witnessed civil wars and political conflicts. Africa needs peace, it's about time and no one can bring peace to it better than its own people.

As for the issue of poverty, I believe that this issue has been ignored, whether intentionally or not, for many years by many governments in the world.

The World Bank publishes a report entitled "Solving the Poverty puzzle" that addresses poverty rates around the world and definitions of poverty. Currently, poverty is described as those who live on less than \$3.20 a day in middle-income countries. Extreme poverty is for people living on less than \$1.90 a day. According to October 2018 World Bank report, eradicating extreme poverty remains a huge challenge. The most prominent info of the report was that 83% of the world's poor people live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The United Nations in collaboration with the University of Oxford, has published an index of multidimensional poverty that measures poverty in terms of health, education and standard of living.

Sadly, the poorest of Arab countries are now Yemen and the news that Iraq came in the report is sad news because it is a rich country in natural and human resources and I really hope that the war in Yemen will end and Iraq will build a solid economy.

I think ending poverty in the world is a beautiful dream. But income inequality has worsened not improved in the last decade and for those living the nightmare of daily struggling to survive, nothing except a real and fair income is going to make a difference.

I believe that poverty is a real dilemma because natural resources are shrinking in exchange for population growth, a fact that does not need a world genius. It is good to see the Nobel Prize goes to those who speak and think about it as a puzzle that must be solved.

Kuwait embraces dogs as home pets, but there's a problem...



IN MY VIEW

By Ben Garcia

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My son wanted to have a pet dog but I refused while he was small. Then a year and a half ago, I finally caved and got one. I had deliberately delayed getting a dog because the haris (building guard) of my building where I lived warned me that dogs are not allowed in my building.

To satisfy my son's instinct caring for house pets, I ended up buying gold fish, then love birds later and a rabbit. There was no complaint from the haris. However, every time my son saw a dog being walked by its owner he would remind me of his desire to have a pet dog one day.

So, when we moved to Farwaniya (from Maidan Hawally) the haris told me that it is okay to keep a small breed of dogs in the building. I ended up surprising my two sons with a dog. I saw the joy in the eyes of my son; the animal is small and well trained and a real source of happiness for both of my kids.

A year later, another cute doggie, a Maltese breed, joined our family. The previous owner couldn't keep it because it was fighting with the owner's other dog, a Chihuahua. The previous owner also faced complaints from his neighbors of too much noise emanating from the flat due to the dogs' fighting and barking. So I ended up taking the Maltese.

The number of dogs as pets in homes and apartments in Kuwait has skyrocketed in the last decade. In the early 2000s, it was rare to see someone walking their dog on the seaside or at a park. Now there are pet cafes, numerous pet shops and even activities on the weekends for owners with pets.

Dogs make an amazing addition to a family. There is research to suggest that those with pets, including dogs, live longer. They are also typically very loyal, providing comfort and love for children and can serve as a great way to teach children how to love and respect other living things.

But in Kuwait there are many problems faced by pet owners, especially those who own dogs. Firstly, many apartments refuse to allow dogs as pets in their flats. Sometimes someone may get a dog without the landlord's permission or against the terms of their rental contract only to be told by the haris that the dog must go.

Rolly from the Philippines was very fond of his Labrador, but his building wasn't pet-friendly. "I got the dog when she was a puppy. She was playful, but became irritable and noisy during the mating season. This annoyed others, so people in my building began complaining about the noise to our haris, who told me to remove my pet from the building.

Hesitantly and very emotionally, I abided by the wishes of the residents and gave up my dog to a Filipino veterinarian," Rolly told Kuwait Times.

Another problem is that many people take puppies because they are cute and cuddly and easy to take care of but without any real understanding of the commitment. Dogs can live as much as 15 years or more and they essentially become a part of your family. So when they age out of puppyhood, what happens then? Or when families travel for summer?

The sudden explosion of dogs on the streets is a good indicator. They are visible in the mornings and late evenings scavenging for food. Since their numbers continue to rise, there have been reports of dogs attacking people in various areas of Kuwait. Some car accidents have also been blamed on dogs suddenly crossing the road without warning. There have also been complaints of dogs fighting and barking.

With the rise in the dog population, cases of animal cruelty and mistreatment have risen too. As a result, there has been a rise in rescue groups and there are now more than a dozen operating in Kuwait - though none with the support or help of the government.

An Indian woman named Sheila also shared how she has a very healthy and happy white Pomeranian. "I found Pluto after he was rescued by a close friend from an abusive house. I heard he was kept in the balcony of his owner's house, and when he barked, was beaten. I got the dog when he was only eight months old - but he looked older, maybe because he was stressed. When the family went on vacations, he was left with very little food and water to survive in the summer heat. The owner decided to give him away, and since my friend knew that I love animals, she immediately took the dog and gave it to me," she said.

"From the time I took the dog until now, I have been caring for him. It took him more than a year before he barked again. It was hard at first because he was abused, but all I gave was love and affection, so the treatment was quicker. Now the dog is healthy and happy," Sheila said. "Thanks to the compassion shown by my friend - if not for her, Pluto would've probably ended up on the road, just like so many dogs I see on the streets. The haris allowed me to give shelter to Pluto," Sheila added.

Until the Kuwaiti government accepts the fact that the country is being overwhelmed by stray dogs, their numbers will continue to rise. Also, killing dogs with poison or chemicals is not the answer. Maybe the government needs to set up a center or shelter to care for abandoned dogs and treat them compassionately. Owners can surrender their unwanted pets at the shelter and the government can decide whether to give them up for adoption or put them down humanely.

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Local



By Faten Omar

One of the oldest diwanias in Kuwait, Diwan Al Shamlan has been receiving guests since 1918. The historic diwaniya opens from 6am to 9am and is mostly visited by family and friends of Al Shamlan family. Located on the Gulf Road in Kuwait City, Al Shamlan diwaniya is one of the country's most beautiful examples of Kuwait's diwaniya culture.



Local



The Diwan was owned by Shamlan Bin Ali Bin Saif Al-Shamlan one of the best-known traders in Kuwait, the Gulf, India, and the region. The architecture is the modest, simple structures representative of the climate and time period yet still stands today as an example of Kuwaiti hospitality. Diwanias are an important part of cultural, political and social life for Kuwaiti men. Younger and older generations meet and mingle, sharing news and stories of the day while sipping tea or Arabic coffee.

Diwan Al-Shamlan consists of an upper room that has the Shamlan office, a corridor leading to the women's room, while the lower rooms include one for coffee and tea and a main foyer or entrance.

This diwan has the distinct characteristic of history. The family tree is displayed as photos to show a record of the history of Kuwait. The Diwan has not closed its doors since its inception, where the people of the neighborhood meet there to chat at the morning times then go to work.



One of Kuwait's oldest diwanias, Al Shamlan diwan harks back to the pre-oil days of Kuwait yet continues to serve its guests and hosts as an important focal point for local politics, business and social interaction. — Photos by Yasser Al Zayyat



Local

Kuwaiti women service in diplomatic corps acclaimed



KUWAIT: A group picture of participants at the seminar held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah headquarters (the UN House). — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

KUWAIT: A number of Kuwaiti diplomats yesterday commended the great and significant role played by Kuwaiti women serving in the diplomatic corps. The rhetoric of praise came during a seminar themed 'Role of the Kuwaiti women at the United Nations for security and peace,' held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah headquarters (the UN House).

Assistant Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, in his statement, affirmed Kuwait's particular concern for the women role development and co-leadership of the society. The Kuwaiti women have proven their ability in politics, economics and development, he said, also noting that they were the first, at the regional level, in attaining education and jobs, in addition to assum-

ing key and decision making posts. Kuwait Constitution stipulated the unwavering commitment to attaining gender equality and empowering the women (Article 29), which literally says that human beings are equal under the law in terms of duties and rights.

A large number of women has recently applied to be enrolled in the diplomatic corps, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad revealed, noting that the females' job seeker in the sector was larger than the proportion among men job seeker by 80 percent. He has affirmed desire of many young women in following the ranks of those who have occupied senior posts, namely the ambassador Nabila Al-Mulla and the assistants of the foreign minister, Amal Al-Hamad and Reem Al-Khaled. Kuwait develop-

ment strategy 'New Kuwait Vision 2035' is in harmony with the approach toward women empowerment, Sheikh Ahmad Nasser added.

Meanwhile, Director of Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh affirmed women's growing role in the diplomatic sphere. Ambassador Al-Mulla spoke in her statement about the UN efforts for establishing global peace, noting that the settlement of disputes is "a Kuwaiti culture that has been adopted by the people since a long time ago and portrayed in the country's foreign policy." Leila Bakr, the regional director for development coordination at Arab states, lauded the distinguished Kuwaiti pre-emptive diplomacy and the noticeable women role at this level. — KUNA



A general view of people in attendance.



Assistant Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah

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Local

GCC ministers discuss security cooperation, combating terrorism

Kuwait underlines quite complex regional conditions

MUSCAT: Interior ministers of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries took some decisions at the end of their 36th meeting aiming to bolster security cooperation. The resolutions seek to unify Gulf efforts to combat crimes and terrorist acts, GCC Secretary General Abdulatif Al-Zayani said in a press statement following the meeting which took place on Wednesday. He stressed that the ministers lauded strenuous and sincere efforts made by GCC security apparatuses. He also extolled the Gulf security centers like the Criminal Information Centre to Combat Drugs in Doha, the GCC Emergency Management Center in Kuwait and the Gulf police in Abu Dhabi.

The one-day meeting discussed GCC security cooperation to counter terrorism, cyber-crimes, common training of security apparatuses and the Gulf security network project. The gathering focused on establishing the Gulf Academy for Security and Strategic Studies, the recommendations on meetings of border and coast guards, airport security and others. In addition, the ministers dealt with recommendations of secretaries general of GCC security

training institutions, anti-drug bodies, traffic committees and others. Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah headed Kuwait's delegation to the meeting.

Complex conditions

In his keynote speech at the start of the meeting, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah said that the session was intended to examine means of boosting security cooperation among the member states amid very complex regional circumstances. He lauded his peers from the other GCC countries for "sensing these surrounding challenges for we share a joint destiny and goals," affirming Kuwait's unwavering stand alongside Saudi Arabia in confronting regional dangers and defending its potentials and installations. These critical regional conditions "have warranted utmost vigilance," he said, noting necessity to pursue the fight against terrorism.

Narcotics are not less dangerous than terrorism for they affect the youth in the GCC countries, he said, noting linkage among drugs, funding terrorist groups and arms trafficking. Al-

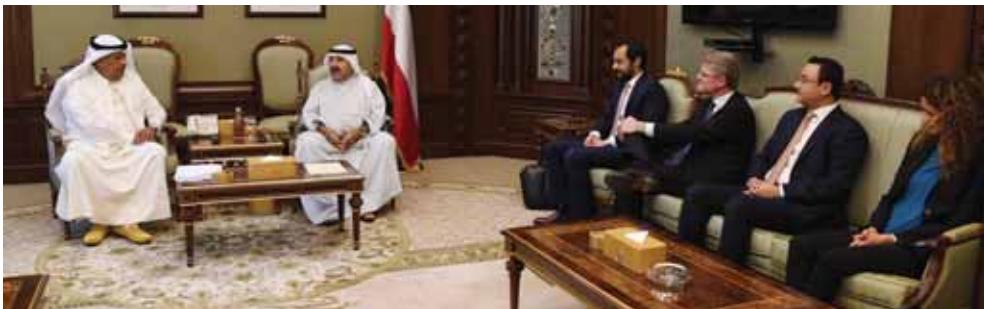


MUSCAT: Interior ministers of GCC countries pose for a group photo on the sidelines of their meeting in Muscat, Oman. — KUNA

though technological progress implies some positive outcomes, advanced technology has been misused by criminal and terrorist organizations for undermining security and spreading rumors,

he noted. The GCC was founded in the early 1980s to boost coordination, at various levels, among the member states: Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. —KUNA

Defense Minister meets govt development team



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the team members. — KUNA

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the international consultancy team to discuss and plan developing governmental administration. The meeting was attended by members of the General Secretariat

of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Fahad Al-Rashed and Sarah Akbar, as well as Director-General of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) Dr Adnan Shehab Al-Deen and Project Manager Ghadah Al-Khalaf. — KUNA

France, Kuwait ink accord for cooperation against corruption

PARIS: Kuwait and France inked yesterday a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in preventing and combating corruption. Riad Hmoud Al-Hajri, the deputy president of the Kuwaiti Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), which inked the deal, said in a statement to the press that Kuwait has always sought to cooperate with diverse authorities and bodies,

specialized in fighting corruption, promoting integrity and transparency. Hajri expressed hope that the deal, inked with the French Anti-Combating Agency, would pave way for constructive cooperation through swapping information, expertise, work methods and organizing training courses for cadres in the sector of facing personnel's irregular practices.— KUNA



Members of the Kuwaiti delegation attending the Budapest Water Summit 2019.

Kuwait to develop strategies protecting water resources

VIENNA: Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Khaled Al-Fadhel affirmed Kuwait's continuous efforts to save water resources and develop water-related strategies. In a statement on the sidelines of attending the Budapest Water Summit 2019 yesterday, Fadhel underlined the need to find solutions for water crisis and develop management in the field. He noted that the three-day conference sheds light on challenges in resolving the water crisis issue, and the impact of climate change on the quality and quantity of water. Furthermore, Fadhel said the ministry aims to resolve such issues by attempting to use renewable energy sources and use new technologies in water treatment.

Meanwhile, Fadhel affirmed the depth of the Kuwaiti-Hungarian relations dating back to 55

years ago. The minister made that statement after a meeting that grouped his delegation with Hungarian Minister of Commerce Peter Szijarto, on margins of the international Budapest Water Summit 2019, themed 'Preventing Water Crises,' hosted in the Hungarian capital. Minister Fadhel expressed aspiration to bolster relations between the two countries in various spheres, affirming Hungarian leaders' keenness on activating previously endorsed agreements. He also indicated at the mutual desire to establish cooperation in diverse fields, namely water and energy. The Kuwaiti official has also met with Hungarian Minister of Interior, who also handles the water portfolio, Sandor Pinter. The latter affirmed his country's keenness on bolstering mutual cooperation with Kuwait. — KUNA

KD 2,000 worth of fake coins confiscated at airport cargo

Power cut at 38 'bachelors' houses in Municipality crackdown



By Meshaal Al-Enezi and Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWIAT: In a bizarre case described as 'the first of its kind in Kuwait,' customs officers yesterday confiscated a shipment containing forged 100 fils valued at KD 2,000 in total before it made its way inside Kuwait. Customs officers became suspicious of a parcel weighing nearly 127 kilograms that arrived at Kuwait International Airport from an Asian country. They obtained a warrant to open and search the parcel, upon which they discovered the fake coins. Concerned authorities were informed about the smuggling attempt, and legal action is being taken.

Suicide attempt

A Kuwaiti citizen escaped death when he jumped from the third floor of a Jabriya building in a suicide attempt, which was prevented when he landed on a sign placed on the second floor. Paramedics took the man to the hospital to be treated for minor injuries he sustained.

Jabriya fire

Hawally and Salmiya fire brigades battled a blaze in a Jabriya apartment yesterday. The 15-storey building was evacuated before the fire was extinguished. No injuries were reported in the incident, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said in a statement. An

investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.

Crackdown against 'bachelors'

Kuwait Municipality carried out a campaign against 'bachelors residence' in Khaitan, Omariya, Farwaniya and Andalus yesterday, during which municipality inspectors cut power to 38 houses found in violation of the law that bans renting lodgings to single expatriate men in 'private residence areas' allocated for families' residence only. Inspectors also issued 22 warnings during the campaign, while eight houses were voluntarily evicted from bachelors, the municipality said in a statement.

Labor deal not on Premier's Egypt visit agenda

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The National Assembly received assurances that the visit of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Egypt, planned for October 20 - 22, is not scheduled to include signing treaties that may lead to increasing the number of Egyptian labor in Kuwait, parliamentary sources said, noting that MPs give 'extreme priority' to fixing the country's demographic structure imbalance. Kuwait's labor market is open to recruitment of laborers from all nationalities, which does not require signing a special agreement with Egypt or any other country on that regard, the sources explained.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the sources said that the visit is expected to see the signing of economic deals related to Kuwaiti investments in Egypt, especially increasing them in some service sectors, in addition to an agreement regarding Egypt's request to increase Kuwaiti oil supplies after showing readiness to make payments every six months instead of nine.

Annual leaves

In other news, MP Khalil Al-Saleh announced yesterday that a decision will soon be

issued to allow public sector employees to exchange their annual leaves with cash considerations, with a maximum of 180 days to be exchanged. The lawmaker said that he coordinated with the Finance Ministry and Civil Service Commission in this regard.

Meanwhile MP Mohammad Al-Dallal criticized the answer he received to a question he addressed to State Minister for Economic Affairs Maryam Al-Aqeel in regards to employing citizens in the private sector, describing it as 'general' and 'not precise enough,' besides lacking any implementation plans for employing large numbers of Kuwaitis in private companies.

Jahra Hospital

The first phase of the new Jahra Hospital will be operational on Sunday, Jahra Health Zone Director Dr Bader Al-Enezi announced yesterday. The first phase includes operating the maternity, gynecology, obstetrics and neonatal departments with a capacity of 220 beds, Enezi told reporters during a function held by the Jahra Health Zone to celebrate the return of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, economic funding professor and expert in managing pharmacies Dr Abdullah Muhanna said there are more than 500 private pharmacies in Kuwait, employing nearly 2,500 workers.

PACI maintenance

The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) announced suspending its services from 1:00 pm yesterday to Sunday in order to carry out regular maintenance.

MP Dallal says constitution allows political parties

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Islamist opposition MP Mohammad Al-Dallal yesterday criticized a memorandum by the Supreme Judicial Council for pointing out that allowing political parties in the country is not supported by the constitution.

Dallal told reporters in the National Assembly that the 1962 constitution and its explanatory note both clearly stipulate to allow legislators to debate and approve a law to form political parties. The lawmaker was commenting on the opinion of the Judicial Council on a draft law submitted by five lawmakers to initiate debate in the assembly to legalize the establishment of political parties.

The assembly's legal and legislative committee had sought the opinion of the Judicial Council before it reports back to the assembly on the draft law. Political parties are not allowed in Kuwait but several political groupings operate as de facto political parties in the country. These groups however are not regulated under the umbrella of the law and the country's parliamentary system is not greatly influenced by them.

Dallal said that the constitution and its explanatory note do not clearly state that political parties are not allowed nor they are banned but left it for lawmakers to debate and approve legislation to allow full political parties and consequently develop the country's parliamentary system. The lawmaker insisted that the existing political set up will not help stabilize or improve



The National Assembly.

the country's democracy without allowing political parties.

He referred to an article in the constitution requiring His Highness the Amir to consult with present speaker and former speakers of the assembly, current and former premiers and then heads of political associations or groups before appointing a new prime minister.

He said that this reference clearly supports the establishment of political parties which are so essential for the development of the political system. But in its opinion, the Judicial Council expressed fear that allowing political parties could trigger disputes among those parties for control of the assembly and government rather than focusing on serving the nation.



Saudi, Palestinians agree on joint business council

Qatar approves minimum wage law, scraps worker exit permits



MEDINA: A handout picture from the Saudi Red Crescent shows a pilgrims' bus in flames on the road near the town of Medina, 840 kms north-west of the Saudi capital Riyadh, late on October 16, 2019. Thirty-five foreigners were killed and four others injured when the bus collided with another heavy vehicle near the Muslim holy city of Medina. —AFP

35 foreigners die in Saudi bus crash

Amir sends condolences to Saudi King

RIYADH: Thirty-five foreigners were killed and four others injured when a bus collided with another heavy vehicle near the Muslim holy city of Madinah, Saudi state media said yesterday. The accident on Wednesday evening involved a collision between "a private chartered bus... with a heavy vehicle" near the western city, a spokesman for Madinah police said, according to the official Saudi Press Agency.

Those involved were Arab and Asian pilgrims travelling from Madinah to Makkah, according to local media, which carried pictures of the bus engulfed in flames and with its windows blown out. The injured have been transferred to Al-Hamna Hospital, SPA added. Authorities have launched an investigation. The Okaz newspaper said that the victims were expatriates who lived in the kingdom and who were performing the umrah - the lesser pilgrimage to the Muslim holy places, which can be undertaken year round.

This year some 2.5 million faithful travelled to Saudi Arabia from across the world in August to take part in the annual hajj pilgrimage - one of the five pillars of Islam. The hajj and the umrah centre on Makkah and its surrounding hills and valleys, in the west of the kingdom, but the itinerary also often takes in the other holy city of Madinah. Last year, a high-speed train line was opened linking Makkah and Madinah in just two and a half hours, halving the previous travel time.

Prince Faisal bin Salman, the governor of Madinah region, expressed his condolences to the families of the victims, SPA said. The nationalities of the victims was not known but Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also sent his condolences. "Anguished by the news of a bus crash near Makkah in Saudi Arabia. Condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. Praying for a quick recovery of the injured," he tweeted.

Transport challenge

Transporting worshippers around the holy sites, particularly during the hajj, is a huge challenge for Saudi Arabia. During the pilgrimage, the roads can be chaotic with thousands of buses creating interminable traffic jams at all hours. Four British pilgrims were killed and 12 others injured in April last year when their bus collided with a fuel tanker while they were on the way to Makkah.

And in January 2017, six Britons, including a two-month-old baby, were killed in a minibus on their way to Madinah after making a pilgrimage to Makkah. In September 2015, a stampede killed up to 2,300 worshippers - including hundreds of Iranians - in the worst disaster ever to strike the hajj. Earlier that month, 100 people were killed when a construction crane toppled into a courtyard of Makkah's Grand Mosque.

As part of efforts to diversify its oil-dependent economy, the

ultra-conservative kingdom wants to foster a year-round religious tourism sector that attracts millions of pilgrims. Up until last month, it only issued visas to Muslim pilgrims, foreign workers and recently to spectators at sporting or cultural events, but tourists are now allowed to visit as part of the drive to prepare the biggest Arab economy for a post-oil era.

Amir sends condolences

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to King Salman bin Abdulazeez Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia. His Highness the Amir expressed his utmost condolences and sincere sorrow for victims of the bus crash, which occurred earlier in the holy city of Madinah and led to death of several people and injury of others.

His Highness prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow his peace and mercy upon the deceased victims and grant a swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Saudi leadership, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem addressed a cable of condolences to Sheikh Dr Abdullah Al Alsheikh, Chairman of the Saudi Shura Council. —Agencies

International

Saudi plans bumper Aramco IPO, relying on easy loans, rich locals

IPO is central to crown prince's economic plans

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is setting the stage for a blockbuster listing of state oil giant Saudi Aramco in Riyadh, relying on easy credit for retail investors and pushing rich locals to invest with cash held abroad to achieve a \$2 trillion valuation target. The world's largest oil firm could announce plans next week to float a 1%-2% stake on the kingdom's Tadawul market before a possible international listing, launching an initiative that is central to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's economic diversification drive.

If the state raises more than \$25 billion, it would be the world's biggest initial public offering (IPO), topping Alibaba's 2014 debut. To capitalize on local interest, Aramco can take advantage of new market rules that allow issuers the flexibility to sell more shares to retail investors, likely exceeding the usual 10% seen in recent IPOs, two banking and one legal source said.

A government committee has met in the past few months with dozens of wealthy Saudi individuals to secure pre-sale agreements, two bankers and a potential investor said. One source said those discussions included encouraging investors to repatriate cash held overseas to avoid draining too much liquidity from the Saudi banking system. "The national interest requires bringing money from overseas," he said. Aramco declined to comment and the govern-

ment's media office did not respond to a request for comment.

"Listing first on the Riyadh exchange is a great opportunity for Aramco to access first the type of investors that might be most excited about the public offering," said Ellen R Wald, president of Transversal Consulting and author of the book *Saudi, Inc.* "Between the domestic Saudi enthusiasm for the company and government encouragement of investment in Aramco, Tadawul is bound to give Aramco the best opportunity for a high valuation."

Easy loans

Large Saudi banks are facilitating loans for local retail investors, three other banking sources said, amid strong liquidity in the banking system where deposits exceeded loans by 215 billion riyals (\$57 billion) in August. Bankers expect at least 6 million-7 million local investors to participate, more than took part in the \$6 billion 2014 IPO of National Commercial Bank, which was 23 times oversubscribed.

"The IPO will be a gift from the government to the Saudi people and they will want as many of them as possible to take part in it," said a Riyadh investment banker. Saudi investors see the IPO as a chance to own part of the kingdom's crown jewel and an opportunity to show patri-

otism after the attack on Aramco oil plants on Sept. 14 that temporarily knocked out more than half the country's output, which is now about 10 million barrels per day.

Potential investors told Reuters they had been preparing for months - saving money, selling land plots and exiting other stocks. Saudis flooded banks with phone calls asking how to participate after Aramco announced bank mandates last month. "I have seven boys and I wish I could invest in Aramco IPO for each of them," said retired civil servant Abu Abdullah. Online adverts promoting the IPO to locals have gone viral. "The Aramco IPO is a chance that comes once in a lifetime, and one must seize it," said a Saudi real estate investor.

Equal treatment

Some foreign funds fear the domestic focus may crowd them out. "It's quite a valuable asset we think is fairly well-run, but if all the cream is taken by locals it will be harder to attract foreign investors," said Marshall Stocker, portfolio manager at US-based investment firm Eaton Vance. "It's an important economic principle that investors are treated equally regardless of their nationality," he said.

A person familiar with the deal said the process was transparent for all institutional in-

vestors, including Qualified Foreign Investors registered with the Tadawul bourse, who can bid for the share allocation. Besides helping to hit the valuation target of \$2 trillion - a figure cited by the crown prince although bankers have suggested a lower number - a local listing will also aid Riyadh's efforts to promote Tadawul to investors abroad.

Bankers say Tadawul's membership in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index and FTSE Global Equity Index should boost demand for the IPO, but one source familiar with the transaction said the expected level of passive fund investment was uncertain. "We are studying the opportunity. If we participate, most likely it would be the international space where we think liquidity should be greater," said Peter Marber, chief investment officer at active asset manager Aperture Investors.

Foreign funds bought more Saudi stocks this year after Riyadh entered both indices, but the Saudi market is down 4% year-to-date, as local institutions sold shares to prepare for the Aramco deal, fund managers and analysts say. Tadawul should have enough liquidity for a 1%-2% Aramco float given daily trading worth 5 billion riyals in August, analysts say. Inflows from foreign passive funds helped lift trading from 3.2 billion riyals a year earlier. —Reuters

Iran-backed militias 'deployed snipers' in Iraq protests

BAGHDAD: Iran-backed militias deployed snipers on Baghdad rooftops during the Iraq's deadliest anti-government protests in years, two Iraqi security officials said. The deployment of militia fighters, which has not been previously reported, underscores the chaotic nature of Iraqi politics amid mass protests that led to more than 100 deaths and 6,000 injuries during the week starting Oct 1. Such militias have become a fixture here with Iran's rising influence. They sometimes operate in conjunction with Iraqi security forces but they retain their own command structures. The Iraqi security sources told Reuters that the leaders of Iran-aligned militias decided on their own to help put down the mass protests against the government of Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, whose one-year-old administration is backed by powerful Iran-backed armed groups and political factions. "We have confirmed evidence that the snipers were elements of militias reporting directly to their commander instead of the chief commander of the armed forces," said one of the Iraqi security sources. "They belong to a group that is very close to the Iranians."

A second Iraqi security source, who attended daily government security briefings, said militia men clad in black shot protesters on the third day of unrest, when the death toll soared to more than 50 from about half a dozen. The fighters were directed by Abu Zainab Al-Lami, head of security for the Hashid, a grouping of mostly Shiite Muslim paramilitaries backed by Iran, the second source said. The Hashid leader was tasked with



TEHRAN: A handout picture provided by the office of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei shows Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) cadets marching during a graduation ceremony at Imam Hussein University in Tehran. —AFP

quashing the protests by a group of other senior militia commanders, the source said. The sources did not say how many snipers were deployed by militia groups. A spokesman for the Hashid, Ahmed Al-Assadi, denied the groups took part in the crackdown. "No members were present in the protest areas. None of the elements of the Hashid took part in confronting protesters," al-Assadi said in a statement to Reuters. Iraqi Interior Ministry spokesman Saad Maal said state security forces did not fire directly at protesters and blamed unnamed "vicious" shooters for the mass deaths and injuries. The government has opened an investigation to determine who shot the protesters and who ordered it, Maal said in a news conference on Oct 6. The assertion that security forces did not participate in the violence seemed to contradict an earlier statement on Oct 14 from the Iraqi government, which admitted state security forces had used excessive force and promised to hold individuals accountable for violence against civilians. —Reuters

Can Dubai go green with flying taxis and 'rooms on wheels'?

DUBAI: With a bus stop only five minutes from her Dubai home, it is normally convenient for Deborah Irechukwu to travel to the city centre by public transport - except in summer. The scorching temperatures - which can reach more than 40 degrees Celsius - make even that short walk excruciating, so when she has to run an errand the Nigerian native usually takes a taxi. "It's too hot outside. But today I didn't have much (cash) on me, so I had to take the bus," said Irechukwu, a teacher, wiping her face of sweat as she sat inside an air-conditioned bus shelter one afternoon.

"In Dubai it's better if you're driving." With more than one vehicle for every two people - according to the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) - Dubai has far more cars per person than other major cities like New York, Berlin and London. This contributes to the United Arab Emirates ranking among the 10 countries with the highest per capita carbon footprints, says World Bank data.

That is something authorities are trying to change, with ambitious plans that in a few years could theoretically see Irechukwu flying to the mall or being picked up by an electrically powered, self-driving "room on wheels". From Singapore to

Berlin, cities have been looking at new transport technologies to cut traffic and climate-warming emissions.

Having invested almost 100 billion dirhams on infrastructure including metro, tram and bus lines since 2005, Dubai is now experimenting with drone taxis and driverless transport pods that it hopes will entice people to leave their cars at home. The technological push might only partially curb Dubai's car dependency, but it has turned the city into a laboratory of future transportation, according to transport experts.

"You could easily brand what's happening in Dubai with those flashy trials as slightly gimmicky," said Philipp Rode, who runs LSE Cities, a research centre at the London School of Economics. "This is not really trying to rethink the city at a systemic scale. But then, if you look in a bit more detail, there are interesting innovations," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Among those innovations are autonomous pods that aim to combine the comfort of ride-hailing services like Uber with the efficiency and capacity of buses, said Rode. The cube-shaped vehicles built in Italy by California-based firm NEXT Future Transportation can carry up to 10 people each and dock together when in motion, allowing passengers to move from one unit to the other as they travel. The vehicles would pick up single users at home, then pool people going in the same direction inside one module, as other pods are released to collect more passengers. —Reuters

International

Diplomatic stalemate fuels a dangerous Saudi-Iran rivalry

Standoff played out in proxy wars and mystery strikes

ABU DHABI: The dangerous rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, played out in proxy wars and mystery strikes, is destined to fester as long as neither reaches across the gulf that divides them, observers say. At the Beirut Institute Summit in the United Arab Emirates this week, heated sessions dominated by the hostilities in the region warned of drawn-out disputes in the strategic region as Riyadh and Tehran vie for influence.

Former US ambassador Robert Blackwill lamented the fact that despite nearing a military confrontation in recent weeks, the two are “are not systematically talking to one another to reduce their differences”. “If there is no diplomacy, we will be in a war. And one thing about war is that once it begins, you can’t always see its outcome and that should worry us all.

“I see a minority here in wanting diplomacy with Iran,” Blackwill said, after influential Prince Turki al-Faisal defended Saudi Arabia’s shutting the door on talks with Iran, regarding it as an existential threat to the kingdom. “How can we hold discussions with a regime that openly declares it is our enemy?” asked Prince Turki, the former head of Saudi Arabia’s intelligence agency, who also served as ambassador to Washington.

Riyadh, the Sunni power which rules the birthplace of Islam, has been at odds with Tehran since the Islamic revolution of 1979 ushered in a Shiite theocracy and set the two on a collision

course. Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic relations following 2016 attacks by demonstrators on its missions in Iran after the kingdom executed revered Shiite cleric Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr. But their decades-long struggle for regional dominance has flared in recent months, with a series of attacks on oil infrastructure and tankers which have raised fears of an all-out war.

No-blame game

Despite the seriousness of the attacks, which have sent shockwaves through the energy markets as well as global shipping, the circumstances remain vague with the two countries tip-toeing around key issues including who is to blame. Riyadh accuses Tehran of being behind September 14 attacks on two vast oil facilities in the east of the kingdom that were claimed by Iran-backed Yemeni rebels.

But Saudi Arabia has not adopted the American version that claims the attacks were launched from Iranian territory, and says it awaits the conclusion of a probe being conducted in collaboration with the United Nations. Riyadh’s position seems to suggest that the Saudis are avoiding blaming Iran directly, so they are not obliged to mount a military response that could have catastrophic repercussions. Tehran meanwhile has been economical with details after the state firm which owns the Iranian tanker Sabiti said its hull was hit by two explosions last week off the Saudi port of Jed-



AT SEA: A handout picture shows the reported damage in the hull of the Iranian-flagged Sabiti tanker. Iran released pictures showing two gaping holes in the hull of an oil tanker it alleges was attacked off Saudi Arabia last week. — AFP

dah. Iran accused a foreign government of being behind the attack but did not point the finger at a specific one.

And the company denied reports the attack had originated from Saudi soil. In May, another Iranian vessel broke down at about the same

location and was repaired in Saudi Arabia, where it was held until its release in July. The incidents were the latest in a spate of unexplained attacks on shipping in and around the vital seaway to the Gulf involving Iran and Western powers. — AFP

5 years after war, Gaza’s little ‘Iron Man’ stands tall

AL-ZAWAIDA: It was the summer of 2014, when a deluge of steel fell on Gaza. His back burned, his body covered in bandages, Yamin screamed from his hospital bed. The boy had just lost 19 members of his extended family in a bombing. Bursts of shrapnel were trapped in his body and nurses spread ointment on his raw skin as he lay in the burns unit of Al-Shifa Hospital preparing for plastic surgery. It was during yet another war between Gaza militants - led by Hamas, the Islamist movement that rules the enclave, and Islamic Jihad - and the Israeli military.

Just after midnight on the Muslim celebration of Eid al-Fitr, an Israeli plane dropped a bomb on a building where Yamin’s family had gathered in the centre of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military maintained it housed a Hamas command centre with militants inside. In an instant, 19 people were killed, including six children. Yamin, just three at the time, and his sister Geina, only several months old, survived. But they are orphans.

Five years later, AFP found Yamin. The door at a home in central Gaza opened, and behind it appeared a boy with sparkling eyes and brown hair. His new parents appear. Yamin, with a mischievous smile, runs, plays, laughs and dances in the courtyard of the house with sand-colored walls. Yamin’s uncle, Adnan, has become his father and his aunt, Yasmine Abu Jabbar, who was his mother’s best friend, became his new mum. “All the neighbors witnessed it. Yamin

cried night after night,” said Yasmine, her brown eyes peering from behind her niqab. “For a year, Yamin asked me ‘where is my mother? How to get to her?’ The concept of death is already difficult to understand for an adult. Imagine for a three-year-old boy.”

‘Not alone’

Yasmine teaches at a primary school in Al-Nuseirat, where children dressed in worn jerseys kick up dust at sunset playing football. She said she tried everything possible to help Yamin find some form of normality. “The first step was to tell him, ‘Yamin, look around you. You are not alone. Many children have lost their parents and their families, but you still have a family. We are your family.’” Yamin now lives surrounded by his new parents and his five brothers and sisters. He attends the primary school where his adopted mother teaches. He likes Galaxy chocolate, Lionel Messi and PUBG, a combat video game rivalling Fortnite. He also likes school. But not too much.

His back is scarred, his skin still burns sometimes, and his left forearm remains deformed, which has occasionally led to mockery. “When he began pre-school, the children made fun of him,” Yasmine said. “One day he came to the house crying ‘I don’t want to wear t-shirts anymore.’ I ran to the pre-school and I asked the children: ‘Which one of you has super powers?’ “No one said a word. Then I said: ‘Yamin has them. He has an iron arm. He can fight a rocket with his bare hands.’ After that, Yamin began to believe that he was a superhero like Iron Man.” The 2014 war left 2,251 dead on the Palestinian side, the majority civilians, and 74 on the Israeli side, most of them soldiers. Five years later, broken asphalt and residential towers have been replaced in Gaza, but the story is not over for survivors. In his glossy offices overlooking the Mediterranean, Raji Sourani and his army of lawyers keep records of around 1,000 Palestinians killed. — AFP

Saudi, Palestinians agree on joint business council

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and the Palestinians agreed yesterday to establish a joint economic committee and a business council, as the Palestinian Authority faces a financing gap that could top \$1.8 billion. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas’s PA has been in deep financial crisis since February when Israel froze transfers of VAT and customs duties it collects on the Palestinians’ behalf.

His administration had to impose austerity measures, cutting almost half the salaries of its employees. Abbas, who arrived in Riyadh on Wednesday, met with King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, according to the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA). It added that the leaders reached “an agreement on the establishment of a joint economic committee and on a Saudi-Palestinian business council”. The report did not elaborate further.

The announcement came days after Saudi Arabia’s football team played Palestine in the occupied West Bank for the first time on Tuesday, with the Saudi side having previously refused to enter the territory as part of its boycott of Israel. Israel’s cuts have hit hard on the Palestinian territories, already suffering unemployment of around 26 percent in the second quarter of 2019, the World Bank said last month in a report. Israel collects around \$190 million a month in customs duties levied on goods destined for Palestinian markets that transit through its ports, and it is supposed to transfer the money to the PA. — AFP

International

Britain clinches Brexit deal, PM now faces a parliament hurdle

Ball now back in UK parliament court after deal in Brussels

BRUSSELS: Britain clinched an eleventh-hour Brexit deal with the EU yesterday, more than three years after Britons voted in a referendum to leave the bloc, but Prime Minister Boris Johnson still faces a knife-edge vote in parliament to get it approved. "Where there is a will there is a deal - we have one! It's a fair and balanced agreement for the EU and the UK and it is a testament to our commitment to find solutions," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said in a tweet a few hours before the start of an EU summit in Brussels.

He said he would recommend that leaders of the other 27 member states approve the deal. "I believe it is high time to complete the divorce process and move on, as swiftly as possible, to the negotiation on the European Union's future partnership with the United Kingdom," Juncker said in a letter. Johnson, who was due to meet the 27 at the summit later on, declared: "we have a great new Brexit deal".

He is hoping to get approval for the agreement in a vote at an extraordinary session of the British parliament tomorrow, to pave the way for an orderly departure on Oct 31. However, the Northern Irish party that Johnson needs to help ratify any agreement has refused to support the deal that was hammered out over weeks of negotiations. The head of the main opposition Labor Party, Jeremy Corbyn, said in Brussels he was "unhappy" with the deal and would vote against it. Lawmakers in his party said they had been told to vote for another referendum tomorrow.

Brexit: From shock vote to leave to draft divorce deal

PARIS: Milestones on Britain's road out of the European Union after Britain and the EU reached a draft Brexit deal yesterday to be put to the British parliament and EU leaders.

Vote to leave

In an advisory referendum on June 23, 2016, Britons choose to leave the 28-nation EU by 52 to 48 percent of votes. The shock outcome prompts Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, who had led the campaign to preserve Britain's four-decade membership of the bloc, to resign the next day.

May becomes PM

Theresa May, the interior minister who also backed remaining in the EU, becomes prime minister on July 13. On January 17, 2017 she sets out her Brexit strategy, saying Britain will leave Europe's single market and control EU immigration.

Exit process triggered

On March 29, 2017 the government starts a two-year timetable for withdrawal with a letter to the EU Council formally announcing Britain's intention to leave. The Brexit deadline is set for March 29, 2019.

'Backstop' gone

Negotiators worked frantically this week to agree a draft compromise on the question of the Irish border, the most difficult part of Brexit, haggling over everything from customs checks to the thorny issue of consent from the Northern Irish administration.

The conundrum was how to prevent the frontier becoming a backdoor into the EU's single market without erecting checkpoints that could undermine the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which ended decades of conflict in the province. The agreement reached will keep Northern Ireland in the UK customs area but tariffs will apply on goods crossing from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland if they are deemed to be headed further, to Ireland and the bloc's single market.

The agreement scraps the "backstop", a mechanism envisaged earlier that was designed to prevent a hard border being introduced on the island of Ireland, and would have bound Britain to some EU rules. The EU had long insisted that the backstop could not be removed. However, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which supports Johnson's government, said the new text was not acceptable - a step that could spur hardline Brexiters in his Conservative party also to oppose ratification absent additional changes.

"These proposals are not, in our view, beneficial to the economic wellbeing of Northern Ireland and they undermine the integrity of the

Lost majority

To strengthen her hand in Brexit negotiations, May calls a snap election for June 8, 2017. But the Conservatives lose their parliamentary majority and are forced to strike a deal for support from Northern Ireland's hardline Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

Draft deal agreed

On November 13, 2018 British and EU negotiators reach a draft divorce agreement. EU leaders approve the accord on November 25. But May faces an angry backlash from her own party over the deal's terms amid fears it leave Britain's interminably trapped in EU trade rules.

Rejected three times

In the first parliament vote on the deal on January 15, 2019, MPs vote 432 to 202 against—the biggest government defeat in British parliamentary history. The next day the government narrowly survives a vote of no confidence. The House of Commons rejects the deal again on March 12 by 391 to 242. On March 27, May promises to resign if her Brexit deal is adopted. Parliament votes against it for a third time on March 29 - by 344 to 286.

Deadline delays

The EU agrees to delay Brexit until May 22 and then—at an April 10–11 summit—until October 31, the current deadline. The delay means Britain is obliged to organise European Parliament elections on May 23, which are won by the Brexit Party of anti-EU populist Nigel Farage. —AFP



BRUSSELS: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (center) gestures as he salutes French President Emmanuel Macron (front right) after a round table meeting as part of a European Union summit at European Union Headquarters in Brussels yesterday. —AFP

union," the party said, warning that a parliamentary vote tomorrow was just the first stage in approving the deal. Johnson has no majority in the 650-seat parliament, and in practice needs at least 318 votes to get a deal ratified at what will be the first Saturday session since the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982. The DUP have 10 votes.

The British parliament defeated similar deals struck by Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, three times. "The ball again is in the British parliament's court ... I hope it goes through this time," Finnish Prime Minister Antti Rinne said in Brussels. "I hope we are now at the end of this process. But there are still many doubts - for instance, inside the British parliament." — Reuters

N Ireland's DUP: Hardline holdout on Brexit

LONDON: Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party is holding out in opposition to the Brexit deal struck yesterday between London and Brussels - a stance which has the potential to sink the agreement. The DUP, which supports Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government, holds major sway in whether a divorce agreement can get through parliament. In the desperate scramble for votes, DUP backing would have smoothed the path for hardline Conservatives to get behind yesterday's Brexit package.

Northern Ireland has proved the sticking point in the Brexit negotiations, so satisfying the DUP, the province's biggest party, has proved a key test on the road to an acceptable deal. The DUP is a hardline group whose tough negotiating tactics were forged in the sectarian conflict over British rule in Northern Ireland that left thousands dead over three decades. The party is known for its fiery rhetoric and steely determination in holding out, rather than its willingness to compromise.

"No" has been its classic watchword. Hours before London and Brussels announced they had

found an agreement, the DUP said it could not support what was on the table - notably on customs and consent issues, as well as sales tax arrangements. The party said it wants a deal that "protects the economic and constitutional integrity" of the United Kingdom. Following the news from Brussels, a DUP source told AFP that the earlier statement "remains our position".

The hard-bargaining party has only 10 MPs in the 650-seat British parliament in London. However, those votes could prove vital to the prime minister if he is to get any deal through the lower House of Commons. The DUP propped up the Conservative government after the 2017 general election, giving it a slim majority in the lower house. The alliance agreement with the government came at a price of £1 billion (\$1.3 billion, 1.15 billion euros) in extra funding for Northern Ireland. Since Johnson expelled rebel Conservatives in early September, the government is now well short of a majority - even with DUP votes.

Deeply socially and economically conservative, the DUP is firmly rooted in Northern Ireland's Protestant, pro-British community. It has softened its fiery anti-Catholicism since it was founded by the Protestant evangelical minister Ian Paisley in 1971. The party has been led for nearly four years by Arlene Foster, 49, who survived a school bus bombing as a teenager. The no-nonsense figure was Northern Ireland's first minister throughout 2016 before the province's power-sharing institutions collapsed in early 2017 over a lack of trust. —AFP

International

Trump warned Erdogan in letter: 'Don't be a tough guy' or 'a fool'

Kurds accuse Turkey of using banned incendiary weapons

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump warned Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in a letter about Turkey's incursion into Syria, "Don't be a tough guy" and "Don't be a fool!" The Oct 9 letter was released by the White House on Wednesday as Trump battled to control the political damage following his decision to pull US troops out of northern Syria, clearing the way for the Turkish incursion against America's Kurdish allies.

The letter tried to persuade Erdogan to reverse a decision to invade Syria that Erdogan told Trump about in an Oct 6 phone call. "Let's work out a good deal!" Trump said. "You don't want to be responsible for slaughtering thousands of people, and I don't want to be responsible for destroying the Turkish economy - and I will." Trump had the letter released to bolster his view that he did not give Turkey a green light to invade Syria. Many lawmakers have been sharply critical of his decision to remove American forces from the conflict zone.

"I have worked hard to solve some of your problems. Don't let the world down. You can make a great deal," said Trump in the letter. The president wrote that the commander of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, General Mazloum Kobani Abdi, was willing to negotiate and to make some concessions. He said he had confidentially enclosed to Erdogan a copy of a letter Mazloum had sent him. "History will look upon you favorably if you get this done the right and humane way. It will look

upon you forever as the devil if good things don't happen. Don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!" said Trump. He added: "I will call you later."

Kurds accuse Turkey

Meanwhile, the embattled Kurdish authorities in northeastern Syria yesterday accused Turkey of resorting to banned weapons such as napalm and white phosphorus munitions, a charge Ankara has denied. The use of such weapons since the start of the cross-border assault by Turkey and its Syrian proxies could not be confirmed independently. In a statement issued eight days into the deadly offensive, the Kurdish administration said Turkey had resorted to their use because of unexpectedly stiff resistance by Kurdish fighters in the key border town of Ras al-Ain. "The Turkish aggression is using all available weapons against Ras al-Ain," the Kurdish statement said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has so far ignored international pressure to halt the offensive, which has killed dozens of civilians and forced more than 300,000 people to flee their homes. "Faced with the obvious failure of his plan, Erdogan is resorting to weapons that are globally banned such as phosphorus and napalm," the statement added. Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar yesterday denied the charges. "It is a fact known by everyone that there are no chemical weapons in the inventory of the Turkish Armed



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (center left) and US Vice President Mike Pence (center right), joined by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (4th right) and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (3rd left) and senior aides, meet at the presidential complex in Ankara yesterday. Pence is seeking a ceasefire in Turkey's offensive against Syrian Kurdish fighters. —AFP

Forces," he told reporters. He accused Syria's Kurds of "using the chemical weapons (themselves) in a bid to blame us."

Call for international experts

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group with a wide network of sources on the ground, could not confirm

the use of napalm or white phosphorus. But Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said there had been a spike in burn wounds over the past two days, mostly casualties brought in from the Ras al-Ain area. Kurdish officials posted a video on social media showing children with burns one doctor in Hasakeh province argues are consistent with the use of banned weapons. —Agencies

From Pushkin to Kalashnikov: History of Russia-Africa links

MOSCOW: Russia was never a colonial power in Africa, but it has a long history of ties with the continent. As President Vladimir Putin prepares to host African leaders for the first Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi on October 23-24, here is a look at these connections, starting with beloved 19th-century poet Alexander Pushkin.

Pushkin, who lived from 1799 to 1837, was a rare mixed-race aristocrat in tsarist-era Saint Petersburg. Though schoolchildren in Russia focus on reciting his poems rather than learning about his ancestry, Pushkin was a great-grandson of Ibrahim Hannibal, who was born near Lake Chad but captured as a boy and taken to Moscow.

Hannibal was baptized and given the name Abraham and brought up in the Russian court, growing close to Tsar Peter the Great. He had a career in the military and was one of the first people to cultivate potatoes in Russia. Pushkin was curious about his African relative, who died in 1781 in his 80s, and dedicated a novel to him. Unfortunately the work, called "The Moor of Peter the Great" was never finished.

During the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th century—when European nations were occupying and dividing up the continent—Russia was interested in Ethiopia, or Abyssinia as it was then known, due to its proximity to the Red Sea and common Orthodox religion. Christianity took root in Ethiopia in the 4th century. Millions of Ethiopians adhered to the Tewahedo Church, part of the Coptic Orthodox Church, until the 1950s. —AFP

Catalan chief calls for independence vote amid violence

BARCELONA: Catalonia should hold a new vote on independence from Spain within two years, the head of the region's government said yesterday in a fresh challenge to Madrid following days of unrest by pro-separatist protesters. Nearly 100 people were injured across the northeastern region on Wednesday in a third day of violence after Spain's Supreme Court sentenced nine Catalan leaders to lengthy jail terms over their failed effort to secure independence, with a referendum Madrid ruled was illegal, in 2017.

Cars and rubbish bins were torched in the Catalan capital Barcelona overnight and Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said 97 protesters had been arrested since the outbreak of some of the worst violence seen in Spain in years. Grande-Marlaska said security reinforcements would be sent in with further protests planned for Friday, when unions have called a strike and protesters from around the region are due to converge on Barcelona, one of Europe's top tourist cities.

Addressing the Catalan parliament, pro-independence regional chief Quim Torra criticized the rioting, saying the separatist cause was a peaceful movement. But he also pushed the case for forging ahead with the stalled secessionist drive, saying Monday's sentences would not deter a new vote on independence. "We'll return to the ballot box again on self-determination," he said. "If all parties and groups make it possible, we have to be able to finish this legislative term by validating independence," he added.

The regional parliament's term expires in December 2021. The Constitutional Court warned Catalan officials on Wednesday of legal consequences if they broke the law by pursuing independence. A source close to Torra said any eventual vote could be a regional election that would be considered a plebiscite on independence - a move that could circumvent Madrid's refusal to sanction a referendum. Spain's main parties have consistently rejected calls for an independence referendum in Catalonia, although the ruling Socialists say they are open to dialogue on other issues.

Barcelona counts cost

Catalonia is a semi-autonomous region with some 7.5 million inhabitants, who have their own language, parliament and flag. It is Spain's wealthiest region. Independence is a highly divisive issue, with a poll in July showing backing for secession in the region at its lowest level in two years, with 48.3% of people against and 44% in favor.

Pro-independence leaders staged their banned referendum in 2017 and then declared they were breaking away from Spain. The Spanish government immediately seized control of the Catalan administration and the ringleaders were put on trial. The Supreme Court found nine politicians and activists guilty of sedition on Monday and sentenced them to up to 13 years in jail, sparking increasingly violent demonstrations.

Barcelona town hall said 400 garbage containers were set ablaze on Wednesday and estimated that the city had suffered damage totaling more than 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) in two days of unrest. Residents condemned the rioting. "This doesn't represent the majority of Catalans, whichever side they are on, be they pro-constitution or pro-independence," said Joan, a 50-year-old small-business owner who declined to give his family name. Catalan nationalists began protest marches across the region on Wednesday and have said they will converge on Barcelona on Friday to coincide with the general strike.

Carmaker Seat, a unit of Volkswagen, has halted production at its plant in Martorell, near Barcelona until tomorrow, as it expects planned marches to disrupt traffic in the area, a company spokeswoman said. In his address to parliament, Torra trod a careful line, acknowledging that he can only move if other parties backed his calls for a renewed secessionist drive. Torra's party, Junts per Catalunya (United for Catalonia), rules the region with its allies, the separatist Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) and far-left separatist party CUP. But the ERC appeared lukewarm about Torra's proposal.

"This is not the moment to lay down dates ... but rather to achieve consensus," said Esquerra spokesperson Sergi Sebra. The Catalan question has dominated domestic politics in recent years and was instrumental in triggering parliamentary elections in April. The Socialists have called a fresh national election next month, but a poll released yesterday suggested parliament would remain split, with neither the left or right set to secure a majority. —Reuters

International

Democrat Cummings, at center of Trump impeachment inquiry dies

'Our world is dimmer without him in it'

WASHINGTON: Senior Democratic Congressman Elijah Cummings, who was at the center of the Trump impeachment inquiry, died yesterday at the age of 68, his office said. The veteran Baltimore representative passed away at Johns Hopkins Hospital "due to complications concerning longstanding health challenges," a statement from his office said without giving the cause of death.

As the highly respected chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Cummings - a big man with a booming voice and gift for oratory - was at the center of the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump and had clashed with him repeatedly in recent months. That panel is one of three probing whether Trump pressured Ukraine to dig up dirt on Joe Biden and help the president win re-election next year.

Cummings had also supervised probes into issues including the Trump administration's treatment of migrants at the border with Mexico and its effort to include a question about citizenship in next year's census. In July, the president described Baltimore as a "rat and rodent infested mess" unfit for humans and blamed it on Cummings, an African-American Democrat who has represented much of the majority-black city in Congress since 1996. Trump suggested Cummings spend more time there.

Cummings wrote in response, "Mr President, I go home to my district daily. Each morning, I wake

up, and I go and fight for my neighbors. It is my constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the Executive Branch. But, it is my moral duty to fight for my constituents." Cummings, a son of sharecroppers, was one of the most powerful Democrats in Congress and a key ally of House speaker Nancy Pelosi. The Baltimore Sun said he was "known for his devotion to Baltimore and civil rights, and for blunt and passionate speechmaking."

It said he had particularly resented Trump's tweet that four congresswomen of color should "go back" to their countries. Since winning his seat in 1996, Cummings never faced a serious challenge for it. He was also an early supporter of Barack Obama's drive to become America's first black president. Cummings, one of seven children, was the son of South Carolina sharecroppers who moved north to improve their lot in life. He earned a degree in political science and later a law degree.

Tributes to Cummings quickly poured in from Congress. "We lost a giant today. Congressman Elijah Cummings was a fearless leader, a protector of democracy, and a fighter for the people of Maryland. Our world is dimmer without him in it," Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris wrote. "He was an amazing man," said Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer. "He had a combination of being strong when he had to be, and had to be quite often, but also being kind and decent and caring and humble," Schumer said. —AFP



WASHINGTON: Flags at the US Capitol are lowered to half staff to honor House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Elijah Cummings (D-MD) yesterday. — AFP

Classes canceled; Chicago teachers embark on strike

CHICAGO: Teachers in the Chicago Public Schools system, the third-largest school district in the US, went on strike on Thursday after protracted labor negotiations between the union and district leadership failed to produce a deal. The work stoppage canceled classes for 361,000 students, but school buildings stayed open for children who need a place to go during the strike, officials said. Schools will serve breakfast and lunch, but all after-school activities, including sports, tutoring and field trips, have been canceled.

Teachers planned to picket at more than 500 schools across the city beginning at 6:30 am before holding a downtown rally and march in the afternoon. The strike is the latest in a recent wave of work stoppages in school districts across the United States in which demands for school resources have superseded calls for higher salaries and benefits. In Chicago and elsewhere, teachers have emphasized the need to help underfunded schools, framing their demands as a call for social justice.

Thousands of Chicago teachers staged a one-day walkout in 2016 to protest the lack

of a contract and failures to stabilize the finances. In addition to wage increases, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) is demanding more funding to ease overcrowded classrooms and hire more support staff, such as nurses and social workers, two perennial issues plaguing the district. On Wednesday, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot said the district's bargaining team has offered 80 proposed changes to the current contract related to issues the union requested.

The proposal would provide teachers with a 16% raise over five years along with support for oversized classes, enforceable targets for reducing class sizes and adding more support staff across the district, she said. The mayor said the union's full list of demands would cost the district an additional \$2.5 billion annually. CPS finances "are still recovering from the brink of insolvency, and we do not have unlimited funds," the mayor said.

The district's credit ratings remain at the non-investment, or "junk" status, although they have improved in the wake of a revised statewide school funding formula that boosted revenue for CPS operations and pension payments. In addition to school buildings, district officials also encouraged students to go to public libraries and community organizations where educational programs and activities will be offered during the strike. District officials said students will be able to use mass transit for free during the strike. —Reuters

Satanic Temple has right to gather, US Naval Academy says

WASHINGTON: The Satanic Temple, recognized as a church in the United States, has the right to gather at the US Naval Academy on the condition it does not hold services, a spokeswoman said Wednesday. But the Temple said its Naval Academy members want to hold services and vowed to fight for that "right".

"Recently, a group of Midshipmen with beliefs aligned with those practiced by The Satanic Temple... requested a space where they could assemble to discuss and share their common beliefs," said Commander Alana Garas, a spokeswoman for the academy which trains future naval officers. "The request was for a 'study group' space, not for holding 'satanic services'," Garas said, calling the Temple "a non-theistic religious and politically active movement" which the Internal Revenue Service recognizes as a church.

"Midshipmen have the right to assemble to discuss their beliefs as they choose," Garas said, but she added that in accordance with Department of Defense policy, military members may not engage in partisan political activities. On its website, The

Satanic Temple distinguishes itself from another organization, the Church of Satan, calling itself "the primary religious Satanic organization in the world."

It says it has chapters around the world and has undertaken "a number of high-profile public campaigns designed to preserve and advance secularism and individual liberties." In a separate statement, the Temple said it wants "Satanic services" held at the Annapolis, Maryland-based Naval Academy, in accordance with equal treatment for religious denominations, and would take legal action if it is discriminated against.

Religious freedom is constitutionally protected in the United States. "If the Naval Academy wants to ban Midshipmen of a particular belief from holding services because their church speaks to social issues of political relevance, they will be obligated to deny the services of Catholics for their church's political lobbying against abortion, the services of LDS-affiliated Mormons for their political activism related to gay marriage, and most every Protestant denomination for both," said Lucien Greaves, spokesperson for The Satanic Temple.

The Temple says its mission "is to encourage benevolence and empathy among all people, reject tyrannical authority, advocate practical common sense and justice, and be directed by the human conscience to undertake noble pursuits guided by the individual will." —AFP

International

Despite Tunisia vote, enduring miseries driving youth exodus

'The boat is sinking' - Migrant's panicked call to parents

SFAX: It only took 10 minutes for Fakher Hmidi to slip out of his house, past the cafes where unemployed men spend their days, and reach the creek through the mud flats where a small boat would ferry him to the migrant ship heading from Tunisia to Italy. He left late at night, and the first his parents knew of it was the panicked, crying phone call from an Italian mobile number: "The boat is sinking. We're in danger. Ask Mum to forgive me."

Hmidi, 18, was one of several people from his Thina district of the eastern city of Sfax among the dozens still unaccounted for in this month's capsizing off the Italian island of Lampedusa, as ever more Tunisians join the migrant trail to Europe. His loss, and the continued desire among many young men in Thina to make the same dangerous journey, vividly demonstrate the economic frustration that also drove voters to reject Tunisia's political elite in recent elections.

In a parliamentary vote on Oct. 6, the day before Hmidi's boat sank just short of the Italian coast, no party won even a quarter of seats and many independents were elected instead. On Sunday, the political outsider Kais Saied was elected president. In the Hmidis' modest home, whose purchase was subsidized by the government and on which the family is struggling to meet the repayment schedule, his parents sit torn with grief. "Young people here are so frustrated. There are no jobs. They have nothing to do but sit in cafes and drink coffee or buy drugs," said Fakher's father, Mokhtar, 55.

Mokhtar lost his job as a driver two years ago and has not been able to find work since. Fakher's mother, Zakia, sells briki, a fried Tunisian egg snack, to bring in a little extra money. His two elder sisters, Sondes, 29, and Nahed, 24, work in a clothes shop. Much of the little they had went to Fakher, the family said, because they knew he was

tempted by the idea of going to Europe. At night the family would sit on their roof and see the smuggler boats setting off. The seashore was "like a bus station", they said.

Decline

At a cafe near the Hmidis' home, a few dozen mostly young men sat at tables, drinking strong coffee and smoking cigarettes. Mongi Krim, 27, said he would take the next boat to Europe if he could find enough money to pay for the trip even though, he said, he has lost friends at sea. A survey by the Arab Barometer, a research network, said a third of all Tunisians, and more than half of young people, were considering emigrating, up by 50% since the 2011 revolution. The aid agency Mercy Corps said last year that a new surge of migration from Tunisia began in 2017, a time when the economy was dipping.

Krim is unemployed but occasionally finds a day or week of work as a casual laborer. He points at the pot-holes on the road and says even town infrastructure has declined. For this and the lack of jobs, he blames the government. He did not vote in either the parliamentary or the presidential election. "Why would I? It is all the same. There is no change," he said. Unemployment is higher among young people than anyone else in Tunisia. In the first round of the presidential election on Sept. 15, and in the parliamentary election, in which voter turnout was low, they also abstained by the highest margin.

When an apparently anti-establishment candidate, Kais Saied, went through to the second round of the presidential election on Sunday, young people backed him overwhelmingly. But their support for a candidate touting a clear break from normal post-revolutionary politics only underscored their frustration at the direction Tunisia took under past leaders. At the table



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

next to Krim, Haddaj Fethi, 32, showed the inky finger that proved he had voted on Sunday. "I cannot imagine a young man who would not have voted for Saied," he said.

Frustration

On the bare patch of mud by the creek where Fakher Hmidi took the boat, some boys were playing. For them, the migration to Europe is - as it was for Hmidi - a constant background possibility in a country that offers them few other paths. At the time of Tunisia's 2011 revolution, they had great hope, Mokhtar Hmidi said. But economically, things got worse. Fakher found little hope in politics, he said.

Despite the apparent surge of young support for Saied as president, he has been careful to make no promises about what Tunisia's future holds, only to pledge his

personal probity and insist that he will rigidly uphold the law. The economy is in any case not the president's responsibility, but that of a government formed by parties in the parliament, whose fractured nature will make coalition building particularly difficult this year.

Any government that does emerge will face the same dilemmas as its predecessors - tackling high unemployment, high inflation, a lower dinar and the competing demands of powerful unions and foreign lenders. An improvement would come too late for the Hmidi family, still waiting nearly two weeks later for confirmation that their only son has drowned. "Fakher told me he wanted to go to France. 'This is my dream,' he said to me. 'There is no future here. You can't find a job. How can I?'" Mokhtar said, and his wife started to cry. — Reuters

Thai child trafficker sentenced to record 374 years in jail

BANGKOK: A Thai trafficker was sentenced to a record 374 years in jail for child trafficking in a ruling that lawyers say will send a deterrent to other criminals. Yuttana Kodsap, 31, was found guilty of child trafficking for the purpose of pornography after he lured children aged 7-12 to play computer games at his house where he filmed sexual acts with them and sold the videos on a chat app, police said.

A court in Thailand's southern province of Phang Nga sentenced him to 374 years in jail for

his crimes and ordered him to pay 800,000 Thai baht (\$26,000) in compensation to each of the five victims, according to court documents provided to the Thomson Reuters Foundation by the Court of Justice. The case was the second trafficking case in Thailand in which offenders were sentenced to more than 300 years in jail. Last year the criminal court sentenced three men to up to 309 years each for trafficking children for prostitution.

In both cases, courts capped the imprison-

ment period at 50 years in accordance with Thai law. Papop Siamhan, an independent lawyer with expertise in human trafficking, said child prostitution cases resulted in long prison sentences because they often involved several laws and many children. "Long prison sentences will act as a deterrent because people will be afraid to commit such crimes, and it will also result in authorities and judges being more careful when handling such cases," he said.

Earlier this year the United States praised Thailand for sentencing convicted traffickers and complicit officials to significant prison terms in its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. Thailand was ranked as a Tier 2 country in the report, meaning it is making significant efforts to combat the crime. Since January this year, courts

have handed down 170 prison sentences in trafficking cases of which 74 were sentences of more than 10 years, according to the Court of Justice.

Archana Kotecha, Asia region director and head of legal at anti-slavery charity Liberty Shared, said long sentences can be effective deterrents when they are addressed at kingpins in trafficking cases and not low level offenders. But she said this must be accompanied by seizure of assets which should be used to pay compensation to victims. "Deterrence aimed at the freedom and assets of offenders is likely more effective and holistic as it takes into account the need to compensate victims for what they have endured and removes the commercial gain made by the offender," she said. — Reuters

Right-wing extremist a threat rising in Australia: Spy agency

Extremist networks 'more cohesive and organized' than ever

SYDNEY: Right-wing terrorists pose a growing threat in Australia, the country's spy agency has warned, describing the extremist networks as "more cohesive and organized" than ever. The Australian Security and Intelligence Organization's (ASIO) annual report released Wednesday said extreme right-wing networks are not only better organized now, but "more sophisticated" than in the past. "The threat from the extreme right wing in Australia has increased in recent years," it said. "Extreme right-wing groups in Australia are more cohesive and organized than

they have been over previous years, and will remain an enduring threat."

The Christchurch mosque attacks that claimed the lives of 50 people "brought the right-wing extremist threat back into focus", ASIO said. Suspected white supremacist Brenton Tarrant, an Australian citizen, is accused of carrying out the rampage in neighboring New Zealand in March. The spy agency predicted that any future right-wing attack in Australia would likely be "low capability" and carried out by a lone wolf or small group, though it did not rule

out the possibility of a "sophisticated weapons attack".

Australia's strict gun laws have been widely credited with helping to avoid mass shootings such as the Christchurch massacre. ASIO said the overall terrorist threat in Australia "remains elevated" on the basis of intelligence that "indicates an intention and capability to conduct a terrorist attack in Australia". The collapse of the Islamic State caliphate has not significantly improved threat conditions, the report said, with Sunni Islamic extremism remaining the "princi-

pal source" of risk.

"The threat from home-grown terrorism, coupled with the anticipated attempts by some terrorist fighters to return to Australia, remains a matter of the gravest security concern," it said. Australia introduced controversial new counter-terrorism laws in July that ban citizens who fought for the Islamic State from returning home for up to two years. The government says 230 Australians travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight for the militant group, with 80 men and women still in active conflict zones.— AFP

Asia risks stumbling 'zombie-like' towards digital dystopia

PENANG: As Asian cities turn to technologies such as facial recognition and artificial intelligence to deliver social welfare and public services, urban experts yesterday urged authorities to address privacy concerns and protect the vulnerable. From India to Indonesia, governments across the region are backing hundreds of Smart Cities that use technology and data to improve waste management and energy conservation, tackle traffic congestion and mitigate risks linked to climate change.

"Frontier technologies such as AI hold promise to reimagine how the public sector can better serve sustainable development needs," UN Under-Secretary-General Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana said at an urban conference in Penang. "Fast-evolving technologies have the potential to transform the traditional way of doing things across all government functions and domains," she said, adding that public-private partnerships will be key.

Worldwide, the rise of cloud-computing and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have led to data-gathering streetlights in China, autonomous buses in Singapore and facial recognition systems in Indian airports. AI, which includes machine-learning, autonomous and data processing systems, is currently being used in crime prevention, trademark applications and to improve crop yields, according to a UN study released this week.

But the increased use of data, and of systems such as facial recognition software and closed-circuit television have also sparked concerns over bias, security, privacy and surveillance. With systems of social assistance increasingly being driven by data and technologies, there is "a grave risk of stumbling zombie-like into a digital welfare dystopia", said Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on poverty and

human rights.

This is "especially problematic when the private sector is taking a leading role in designing, constructing, and even operating significant parts of the digital welfare state", Alston warned in a report last week. Technology companies operate in an almost "human rights-free zone", he added. Governments can guard against this by putting in adequate safeguards, and ensuring that there is good planning and governance, said Lim Teng Leng, deputy director at the Singaporean government's Centre for Liveable Cities.

Technology-based solutions are no panacea for city problems, and can often cause just as many problems as they set out to address, he said. "Smart Cities cannot be a measure of how advanced the technologies are, but how these technologies are used to solve problems," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"People have to believe that all this data will improve their lives, make their cities better and safer. The government must build trust by being upfront about what data they are collecting, what it is for, and admit when there are mistakes." This is particularly relevant to poorer residents and those who are not tech-savvy and may be excluded, said Colin Fernandes at the Global Disaster Preparedness Center, a unit of the American Red Cross.

"Data collection often misses those in informal settlements, who are usually the most vulnerable to disasters and climate change risks, and most in need of welfare benefits and other assistance," he said. "There is a failure to collect data, or a reluctance on their part to give up data, because they don't know whether the data will be used to evict them or protect them. They need to be assured of what they are signing up for."—Reuters



NEW DELHI: Heavy air pollution is pictured around Rashtrapati Bhavan and government buildings in New Delhi. New Delhi banned the use of diesel generators on October 15 as pollution levels in the Indian capital exceeded safe limits by more than four times.—AFP

Tens of thousands to run in polluted India capital Delhi

NEW DELHI: Tens of thousands of runners have signed up for the Indian capital's half marathon and other races on Sunday, officials said, despite the air quality hitting dangerous levels in one of the most heavily polluted cities in the world. New Delhi's air quality index was around 300 yesterday, classified as very poor and meaning prolonged exposure can cause respiratory illness. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has described the city as a "gas chamber" in winter, has ordered emergency measures, including restricting the number of private vehicles on the roads under an "odd-even" scheme based on number plates.

Race organizers said pollution was a worry but they would take steps to reduce the impact on runners. Hours ahead of and throughout the race, the course will be sprayed with water. "The air quality is a concern and will remain a concern, there is no question about it," said Vivek Singh, joint managing director of Procam International that conducts the race sponsored by telecom operator Bharti Airtel. "The measures that we take

for those few hours to give our runners a good experience have worked in the past."

The race has been moved this year to avoid a sharp rise in pollutants during Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, when hundreds of thousands of firecrackers are lit. But farmers burning crop stubble in the states north of Delhi have turned the air over Delhi toxic. The forecast for the next few days and into Sunday is "very poor". A record 40,633 people have signed up for the 21-km, 10-km and a 5-km races. Last year there were 34,916 runners, many of whom wore masks.

A former Olympic gold medalist, Carmelita Jeter of the United States, is the international event ambassador. Doctors have advised citizens to restrict their outdoor activities and said runners must be made aware of the risks they are taking. "Just two weeks before the odd-even scheme comes into play, how have the civic authorities allowed more than 30,000 people to expose themselves to toxic air?" asked said Desh Deepak, senior chest physician at the city's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.— Reuters

International

Qatar approves minimum wage law, scraps worker exit permits

ILO describes the measures as 'a momentous step forward'

BEIRUT: Qatar's government said yesterday it adopted a new minimum wage law and will scrap mandatory exit visas for all workers, part of a broad labor reform program ahead of its hosting of the 2022 World Cup. The Gulf state, which relies on about 2 million migrant workers for the bulk of its labor force, is also planning to ease curbs on changing employers, Qatar's administrative development, labor and social affairs ministry said.

Qatar, along with other wealthy Gulf Arab states, has come under fire for what rights groups describe as poor labor conditions. Doha

is keen to show it is tackling allegations of worker exploitation as it prepares to host the 2022 soccer World Cup, which it hopes will boost its economy and development. The statement said the cabinet had adopted new legislation related to the draft law on a minimum wage, though it did not disclose what level the wage could be.

It added it passed another draft law which will lead to the scrapping of exit permits for all workers, adding work was also underway to enable employees to change employers more easily. Qatar last year eliminated exit visas for some

foreign migrant workers, but rights groups considered the reform incomplete as it did not apply to domestic workers and allowed companies to keep the visa requirement for up to 5% of staff.

The International Labor Organization described the measures as "a momentous step forward in upholding the rights of migrant workers" and said they were aimed at ending the "kafala" (sponsorship system). This system is common in Gulf states where large portions of the population is foreign. In Qatar it requires workers to obtain their employers' consent before changing jobs, which advocate groups say leaves them

open to abuse.

"These steps will greatly support the rights of migrant workers, while contributing to a more efficient and productive economy," the ILO said in a statement late on Wednesday. It said these new reforms were expected to come into force by January 2020. Many of the workers toiling on Qatar's building sites, sweeping its streets and cleaning private homes come from Asian countries like Nepal, India and the Philippines. Doha has responded to criticism by rights groups by enacting a broad reform program to guard worker rights and improve its image abroad. — Reuters

Duterte injured in motorcycle crash

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte hurt his hip and suffered scratches in a motorcycle accident, senior aides of the 74-year-old leader said yesterday. Duterte, whose health has been the subject of intense public speculation, suffered the mishap at the Malacanang presidential palace compound late Wednesday, according to spokesman Salvador Panelo.

The crash came 10 days after Duterte - the oldest person to be elected Philippine president - disclosed he is suffering from myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune disease that could potentially have serious complications. "The president was reaching for his shoe when he fell off his motorcycle that resulted in a minor injury, particularly light bruises and slight scratches, to his elbow and knee," Panelo said in a statement. Senator Christopher "Bong" Go, his former assistant and close aide, earlier told reporters Duterte had "crashed" and complained of hip pain after the accident, but was not hospitalized.

Panelo, citing Duterte's girlfriend Cielito "Honeylet" Avancena, said the president's injury will not require major treatment and "there is nothing to worry about". Duterte was trying to park the vehicle after driving around a courtyard Panelo said, adding the leader was now resting at the palace. Go later shared a video showing Duterte, wearing formal clothes - without a helmet or other protective gear - driving riding on a paved drive at night. The actual accident was not shown in the clip.

Panelo declined to explain why there were two versions of the accident, stressing: "Whatever the story is, what is important is he is in good hands - no major injury." Questions about his health have swirled since he took office in 2016, with Duterte at times skipping events and meetings or discussing his various ailments during long and rambling speeches. The Philippine constitution requires the handover of power to the vice president if the leader dies or is incapacitated, Duterte revealed in 2016 that he used to take fentanyl, a powerful painkiller, because of a spinal injury from motorcycle accidents.—AFP



DIGOS, Philippines: A resident walks past debris from a partially damaged building after a 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit the night before in the city of Digos, Davao del Sur province on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. —AFP

5 killed, dozens injured in Philippine earthquake

MANILA: Five people were killed and dozens were injured after a powerful earthquake hit the southern Philippines, authorities said yesterday. The 6.4-magnitude quake struck the Mindanao region on Wednesday night, reducing dozens of houses to rubble on the southern third of the Philippines. Yesterday afternoon, authorities said five people were killed and 53 injured, mainly in a cluster of small farming towns.

Three people were killed in landslides while another was crushed by the collapsed wall of a house. The fifth suffered a fatal heart attack, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said. No fatalities were reported in Mindanao's major cities. Local authorities had earlier told AFP three children

were among the dead. The Philippine seismology office has recorded more than 300 weaker aftershocks in the area since the big quake, but authorities said they do not expect the toll to rise significantly.

The disaster council's spokesman Mark Timbal told local television it had not received any reports of missing people from any of the quake-hit areas. "People have returned home... They are OK now, unlike last night when they were terrified and slept on roads beside their homes," Zaldy Ortiz, civil defence officer of Magsaysay town said. Local school and government holidays were announced in Magsaysay, where the landslides struck, to allow building inspectors to check structures for damage, Ortiz added.

Power was being restored in the bigger cities, but there was substantial damage to some hospitals, government buildings, schools, churches and houses in the small towns, the council said in a report. In General Santos City, firefighters yesterday finally put out a blaze that started at a shopping mall shortly after the quake. The Philippines is part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic activity that stretches from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin. —AFP

Lifestyle

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Models display creations from fashion brand TOKUKO 1er VOL by Japanese designer Tokuko Maeda for the 2020 Spring Summer collection at Tokyo Fashion Week in Tokyo. — AFP

Syria's heroic underground female medics hailed in 'The Cave'

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Syria's heroic underground female medics hailed in 'The Cave'

Oscar-nominated Syrian director Feras Fayyad has risked his life to chronicle the atrocities of the Assad regime, and suffered torture in prison because of his films. Despite having his nails pulled out and electric shocks administered to intimate parts of his body, Fayyad continues to document Syria's eight-year war, which exploded back onto the global stage last week with Turkey's invasion. But he remains in awe of a young female doctor who ran an underground hospital through a devastating, years-long siege—the subject of his new film “The Cave,” out in theaters this week.

“She saw so much. I don't think anyone alive—just the Holocaust survivors—has seen the same size of what she saw,” Fayyad told AFP. “The barbaric siege, the longest running siege in Syria's modern history in Eastern Ghouta ... Nobody can imagine this.” Amani Ballour, the young female pediatrician who is the film's subject, ran a subterranean network of tunnels and makeshift wards and operating rooms beneath the final rebel foothold at the gates of Damascus.

She and her team were the first to respond and the last hope for many civilians—including children—hit by relentless waves of

Russian and Syrian regime bombing, until a 2018 chemical attack finally forced them to evacuate. Despite her heroics, Fayyad said Amani took some convincing that the world would be interested in a film about her story.

Harrowing footage

“Why do you think they will respond when there's bigger issues happening around us?” Amani asked Fayyad, who admitted he did not have an answer. “I want to try—I want to trust that people could respond to this,” he recalled telling her. “I don't think people will (be able to) move their eyes from that, from what you do.” The result is a harrowing 102-minute documentary, shot by a local camera crew still living in Ghouta, showing life below and above ground as bombs rain and casualties are rushed in on stretchers and wheelbarrows.

The film—from National Geographic and Danish Documentary Films—was directed by Fayyad, in daily contact with the crew from rebel-held northern Syria. Fayyad, the first Syrian director nominated for an Oscar with 2017's “Last Men in Aleppo,” instructed them to depict everyday life in claustrophobic, cinema verite style—without voice-over

or direct-to-camera interviews.

Amongst the tears and tragedy there are vignettes of everyday life, from a young nurse's creative attempts to cook for 150 people with scant supplies, to a secret birthday party featuring surgical gloves for balloons. Footage of medics scrambling to deal with the chlorine gas attack's deadly aftermath is especially searing. In addition to her bravery, Fayyad chose Amani for another reason. She was an extremely rare—possibly the first—female hospital director in deeply patriarchal Syria. Early in the film she is berated by a desperate patient's husband, who blames the hospital's lack of medicine on its female director.

'I feel guilty'

Fayyad, who grew up in a female-dominated household with a Kurdish mother and seven sisters, said he is acutely aware of harassment and even violence against women who refuse to conform. “Along with the torture I've experienced, I heard the sounds of women who were tortured because of their gender,” he said. “And I was threatened that they will bring my mom and my sisters to the prison. “There were times when I heard the

sounds and I felt like it was my mother and my sister (being tortured).”

Amani was able to escape to northern Syria, and eventually Europe via Turkey—joining the refugee exodus which has sparked intense, polarized debate in the West. Fayyad himself was earlier smuggled to safety across the Jordan border, and now travels between his home in Copenhagen and work in northern Syria. Like many, he has been alarmed by recent events which saw US forces withdraw from Kurdish-held northern Syria, and Turkey launch an offensive across the border.

“I think what's happening now it's very, very scary because it's extending the time of the war in Syria, and there are more victims,” he said, predicting another wave of refugees will follow. “Because I'm not there, I feel guilty,” admitted Fayyad, who spoke to AFP in Los Angeles. “Like I'm sitting here away, and thinking every day about my family and my friends and colleagues who are suffering. “I feel like you have to do something... and bring these voices. I try to bring the hope for these people.” “The Cave” opens in select US theaters today.—AFP

Competitors look to free services to take on Netflix

Video streaming upstarts are looking to a different model to take on industry leader Netflix: free-to-viewer services that come with ads. While Disney, HBO, and Apple are launching competing services along the same subscription model as Netflix, others such as Tubi, Roku, Pluto and Rakuten are testing viewers tolerance for ads in video on demand services. California-based Tubi and Japan's Rakuten both announced plans to push into Europe this week at the MIPCOM in Cannes, France, the world's biggest television content market.

Tubi plans to launch a Tubi Kids service next week, which will become available in Britain in 2020, and include series like “Strawberry Shortcake”, “Paddington Bear” and “The Wiggles”. Tubi boasts that its main service in the United States with 15,000 films and television shows has a bigger library than Netflix and touts itself as a place for greater variety rather than exclusive content. “Only about one percent of shows make people sign up for a subscription... and we are not going to launch the next ‘Game of Thrones’,” Tubi's chief executive Farhad Massoudi told AFP.

“But we will have a library of wonderful series, films and documentaries that have won prizes at Cannes or Oscars, which you will want to watch on a Friday night,” he added. Nevertheless Rakuten TV has announced plans to augment its film catalogue with exclusive content such as a documentary

on FC Barcelona voiced by John Malkovich. “There isn't a strong free platform in Europe yet,” said Rakuten TV chief Jacinto Roca.

With most viewers having two or three subscription streaming services, “we consider AVOD to be a natural complement to SVOD and pay per view,” he said in reference to ad-supported and subscription video on demand services. The subscription video streaming market is quickly getting crowded. Next month Disney and Apple plan to launch subscription video-on-demand services Disney+ and AppleTV+.

The British platform Britbox, which has been put together by the country's traditional broadcasters the BBC and ITV, is expected to launch by the end of the year and WarnerMedia plans to launch its HBO Max service in the first few months of 2020. All are major owners of content that users could be expected to pay for. But another US giant, Viacom (Paramount, MTV, Nickelodeon), has also shown interest in the free-to-viewers model by buying Pluto TV in January for \$340 million. The service offers thematic channels with live TV shows as well as replay options, and in addition to the United States is available in Britain, Canada, Germany and Switzerland.

No ad fatigue

Across the world public and private TV chains are trying to keep viewers by offering innovative and exclusive programming. But they still face the problem that made Netflix such a breath of fresh air for viewers: showing enough ads to turn a profit but not so many that they turn viewers off. Ad-supported video streaming platforms will face the same problem. Those based in the US face the added challenge that Europeans are used to seeing less ads, often because of national regulations. “To introduce Pluto TV in Europe, we reduced the number of ads,” said Olivier Jollet, the platform's content director for Europe, during a roundtable discussion at MIPCOM.

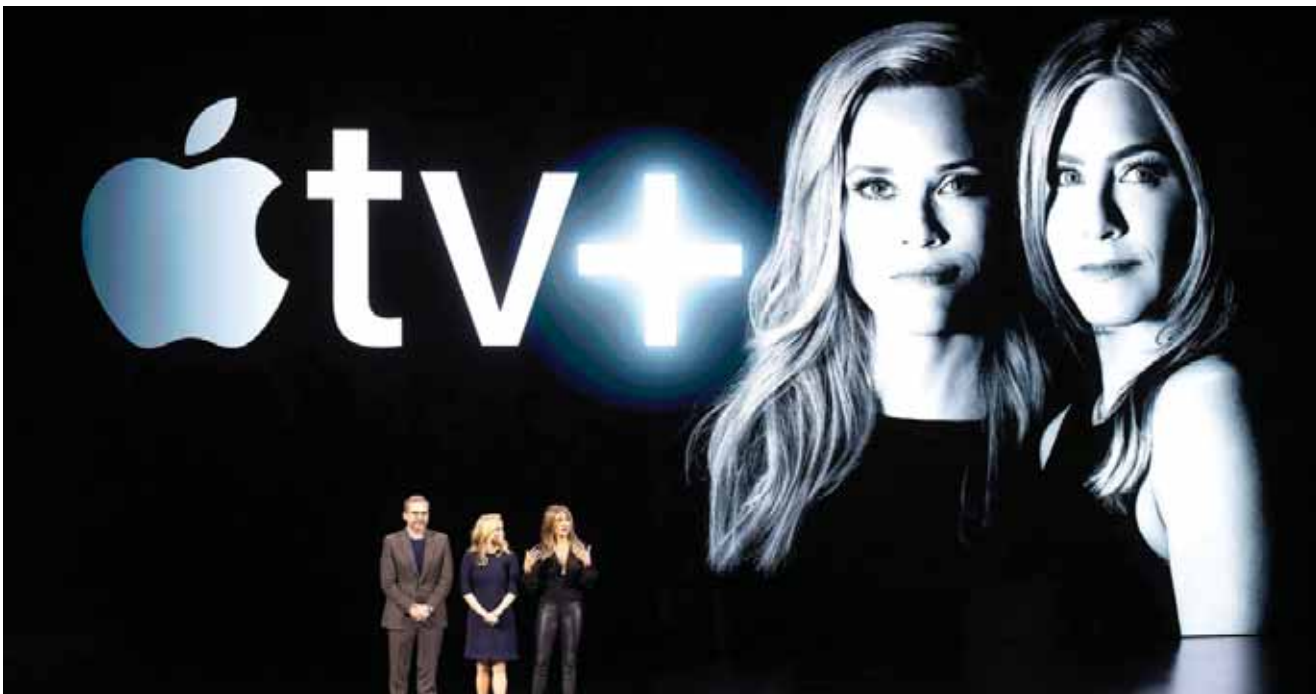
Tubi meanwhile plans on using an ad load of only a quarter of the US cable networks as it expands, or about four to five



minutes per hour. “If you are interrupted every two minutes with a commercial break you are not going to be happy,” he said. “We have no intention of making the entertainment experience miserable.” Rakuten plans to have about half the ads of broadcast television.

Free video on demand services should be attractive to advertisers as there are viewers watching the ads, and Rakuten's Roca said those who buy time on traditional televisions are in fact showing interest as such services allow better targeting of audiences and possibilities to innovate. Social networks haven't been idle in this space. Facebook's Watch platform announced this week partnerships with food and travel programming network Tastemade and French channel M6.

The world's biggest advertising-supported streaming site is Google's YouTube, which has been operating since 2005, although it has focused on shorter-length videos. While most content owners have been vigilant against their programs appearing on YouTube, some are now embracing it. Lagardere Studios in France has placed episodes from two popular series it owns on the site.—AFP



In this file photo actors Steve Carell, Reese Witherspoon and Jennifer Aniston speak during an event launching Apple tv+ at Apple headquarters in Cupertino, California. — AFP photos

Aniston, Apple explore 'messy' world of TV news after #MeToo

When Jennifer Aniston signed up to help launch Apple's new streaming TV service with a star-studded drama set in the colorful, cutthroat world of morning news, it seemed straightforward enough. Then #MeToo happened. Aniston, preparing for her first return to television since "Friends," watched along with the rest of America in 2017 as anchors from NBC's Matt Lauer to CBS's Charlie Rose lost their jobs after being accused by women of sexual misconduct.

over who will replace him—and prompts questions about how much the group of fiercely ambitious journalists and executives knew about his actions.

"I feel like what the heart of it is about, it's about how people lie to themselves," said showrunner and writer Kerry Ehrin ("Friday Night Lights"). "It's impossible to talk about morning news and not deal with #MeToo—it would be somewhat negligent," Ehrin added. She describes the show's characters as "in many ways, dark people, messed up."

Peddle soft news

Aniston's character—"a Diane Sawyer kind of archetype," she says—soon finds herself pitted against a feisty, obsessive young female reporter played by Witherspoon. Both actresses canvassed the advice of TV journalists, female and male, including Sawyer, Katie Couric, Gayle King, Robin Roberts and Meredith Vieira, who encouraged an alleged victim of her former co-host Lauer to come forward. "George Stephanopoulos was particularly helpful," said Witherspoon, before Aniston added: "And excited for this, not in fear of it at all."

The show is based on "Top of the Morning," a behind-the-scenes 2013 book by former New York Times media correspondent Brian Stelter, now at CNN, who is updating it to reflect #MeToo developments. "Clearly in 2012, 2013 when Matt Lauer was getting Ann Curry fired from 'The Today Show', there was a lot we didn't know that was going on behind the scenes," Stelter said. But creators insist the show is not based on specific real-life events. And—perhaps unsurprisingly, as a flagship Apple production—"The Morning Show" is happy to lampoon traditional TV networks more broadly.

One fictional executive in an early episode boldly predicts that the world of broadcast news "could just fall off a cliff" or, worse still, be bought out by big tech. In another, Witherspoon's character responds to news of the anchor's firing with the line: "One less idiot to peddle soft news to the masses." Michael Ellenberg, who is executive producer on three of Apple's upcoming programs including "The Morning Show," says the series "is looking at the broadcast era, while helping launch a new streaming service."—AFP



In this file photo US actress Hailee Steinfeld arrives for the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.

"Once #MeToo happened, obviously the conversation has drastically changed—and then we just incorporated it," said Aniston, who stars in "The Morning Show" along with Reese Witherspoon. Both actresses are also executive producers of the series, which will premiere on November 1 when Apple TV+ goes live. "We all really sat and thought about how the tone would be. And we wanted it to be raw and honest and vulnerable and messy and not black-and-white," Aniston told journalists at a Los Angeles press conference.

The result is an edgy, humorous and—at times—surprisingly dark look behind the scenes at a fictional New York-based morning news show. In events which uncannily mirror Lauer's real-life dismissal, the pilot sees Aniston's character announce on-air the dismissal of her male co-anchor, played by Steve Carell, following multiple, anonymous accusations. It sets the scene for a battle

Grime star Stormzy, Rockers the 1975 among Q Awards winners

Rockers the 1975 and grime star Stormzy triumphed at the Q Awards in London on Wednesday, winning Q Best Act in the World Today and Q Best Solo Artist, respectively, at the annual ceremony hosted by British music magazine Q. Eighteen awards, including some voted upon by readers, were handed out, including new accolades Q Song of the Decade which went to singer/songwriter Lana Del Rey's 2011 hit "Video Games" and Q Best Vocal Performance given to rapper and actor Little Simz.

Other winners included rock band Foals who scooped Q Best Album for "Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost (Part 1)," singer Lewis Capaldi who took Q Best Track for his song "Someone You Loved" and rapper Dizzee Rascal who won Q Innovation In Sound. "All of the fodder for the lyrics was to do with feeding off the current time," Foals singer and guitarist Yannis Philippakis told Reuters on the red carpet, referring to the band's album.

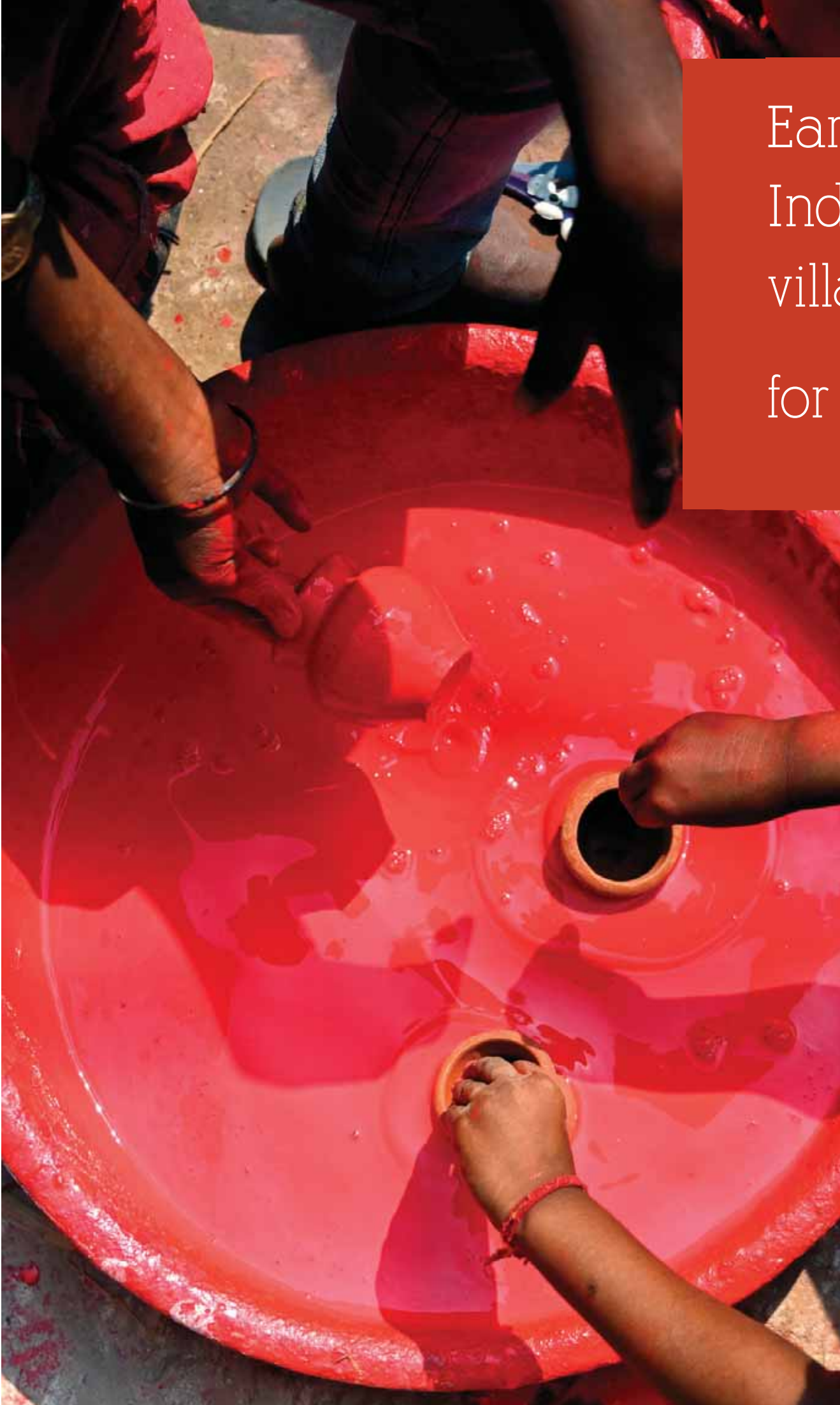
"So there's a message, I guess, of confusion ... because we live in confusing times ... like the environment, social disruption, isolation, technological threat ... That's the kind of landscape that the record exists in." Capaldi said of his hit song "Someone You Loved": "I knew that people who liked my music already would enjoy it. I never thought it would open up doors to anybody else."

British rapper and actor Kano was honoured with the Q Outstanding Contribution to Music award, ska band Madness took the Q Inspiration prize and Kevin Rowland of pop group Dexys Midnight Runners, now known as Dexys, was presented with Q Classic Songwriter. Q Icon went to French singer Christine and the Queens while Sonic Youth co-founder Kim Gordon took Q Hero at the awards, which were established in 1990. British indie pop band Pale Waves were named Q Best Breakthrough Act. — Reuters

Jolly hockey sticks! Malory Towers is coming to TV

Pack your jam sandwiches and your boaters. "Malory Towers", Enid Blyton's girls boarding school adventure books, are about to get the Hollywood treatment. With Harry Potter's Hogwarts credited with making British boarding school stories cool again with children, Canadian studio Wildbrain are shooting a "high-end cinematic" television version of the tales of high jinks in the dorms. The 13-part live action series is set on the Cornish coast in the 1940s and features midnight feasts, pranks and lots of lacrosse. Britain's BBC, who commissioned the series, said far from being a nostalgic throwback, Blyton's heroine, brave but impetuous Darrell Rivers, stands up still as a role model for girls. "She shone a bright light on the potential of all girls at a time when expectations were very limited," said Cheryl Taylor, head of content for BBC Children's. "The books have inspired generations of young readers and we can't wait for our audience to meet Darrell and her friends."

Blyton, who has sold more than half a billion books around the world, remains a favorite with children. Many of her books including "The Famous Five", "The Secret Seven" and "Noddy" series have been updated to remove snobbish, xenophobic and Little Englander references, and a new wave of books chronicling today's boarding school japes, "New Class at Malory Towers", has also been a hit. Promotional shots for the new TV series show it to be a lot more racially diverse than the original.—AFP



Earth and fire:
India pottery
village lights up
for *Diwali*

The narrow lanes of Kumhar Gram are buzzing with activity ahead of Diwali as generations of potters race to create clay decorations for customers across the country—and beyond. Known as the “Potter’s Village”, the settlement is home to around 500 families from India’s traditional pottery community, who moved to the area half a century ago. Their skills and artistry have made Kumhar Gram one of the most popular spots for earthenware in the nation but in the run up to Diwali—October and November depending on when it falls—the place transforms.

The streets throng with shoppers buying every type of clay decor from pots and lamps to flower vases and statues of Hindu gods and goddesses. Diwali, known as the “festival of lights”, is a Sanskrit word meaning rows of lighted lamps. The “diya” oil lamps have traditionally been made out of clay and placed around a home during celebrations. Potter Dinesh Kumar, like many others in the village, learnt about clay from his father and is now passing on the skills to his young children.

“I am teaching them the same way I learnt from my father, he learnt from his father and so on,” Kumar tells AFP as he sat at a wheel with many fresh clay pots behind him. “People come to us from across India and not just Delhi,” he added. In many households, entire families are involved in the steps to make the finished products.



Lifestyle | Feature



Jagmohan, who only goes by one name, shares the process with his brothers, their wives, his parents and their children.

The 48-year-old sits at the wheel churning different types of pots, lamps and flower vases throughout the day, particularly in weeks leading up to the famed Festival of Lights. One of his brothers carves designs on them, then the women of the family take the finished works to the roof, where they are left to dry under the sun. Once dry, they are placed in a rooftop wood oven to bake.

The finished products are loaded onto rickshaws dotted around the congested pathways to be taken to nearby markets and other buyers. The rickshaw drivers must carry their cargo while navigating the winding alleys filled with stacks of dry clay, finished or unfinished products, and people painting them. At a market in the village, Sushil Panwar is buying decorations for his home as he gears up for the festivals.

"I have been coming here for a decade now. We take all clay decoration items for our home, like flower pots and earthen lamps from here," Panwar tells AFP. Besides him, his wife Pratibha holds their purchases which have been carefully wrapped in worn newspapers. "People come here from all over India around festivals because the (clay) oil lamps here are special," market vendor Kumar Prajapati explains. He adds: "Whatever you need is available here... which you won't find anywhere else." — AFP

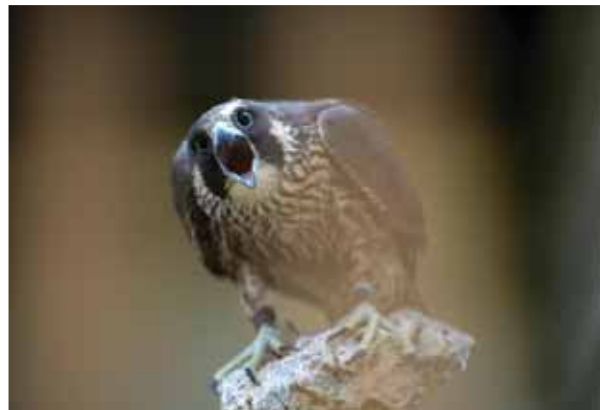




Spanish falcons

feed Arab passion
for raptor hunting

Falcons are pictured at the Nebli Falcon Center in Fuentespina. — AFP photos



For centuries, the art of falconry has been a prestigious tradition within Arab society. Today most of these formidable predators come from Spain, which has become the world's top exporter. In upper-class Gulf society, these swift-flighted hunters are worth a fortune, with buyers sometimes shelling out tens of thousands of euros per bird. "The feathers must be completely whole," says Juan Antonio Sanchez, proudly showing off one of his falcons which is about to be shipped to Qatar.

Every year, around 150 of them leave the breeding facility that he runs with his partner Beatriz Dominguez in Fuentespina in the arid Castilla region, some 150 kilometers north of Madrid. Most are headed for the Middle East where rich amateurs buy them for racing or hunting. A breeder for more than 15 years, Sanchez and others helped turn Spain into the world's number one exporter of falcons in 2018, according to figures from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Last year, Spain exported some 2,800 specimens, almost all of them to Gulf countries, easily passing the 2,500 sold by the United Kingdom.

'Like having a child'

With 52 falcons due to be flown out the next day, Sanchez and Dominguez are making last-minute preparations for their journey. With the help of two employees and their seven-year-old daughter, they take the birds out of the enclosures where they have been raised for the past three to five months, far from prying eyes. After securing the falcons' claws with leather straps, they cover their eyes, then place them on perches where they will stay for the night. The silence and their inability to see have a calming effect, reducing stress levels before the journey.

The next day they will be loaded onto a lorry then transported to Madrid airport where, after passing veterinary checks and other formalities, they will be put on a plane to Qatar. "I'm always



waiting for news, so I ring them up and ask: have they got there yet, are they OK? Give them something to eat and drink, things like that," smiles Sanchez, 49. "It's like having a child."

Peregrine as perfection

On the perches are a stunning array of hybrids, these particular ones produced by crossing the gyrfalcon, the biggest and most elegant species of falcon, with the peregrine, which is the fastest. With their long, tapered wings, falcons have exceptional flight capabilities. The peregrine is known as the world's fastest animal, with diving speeds of up to 300 kph (186 mph). "For me, a peregrine is perfection," Dominguez enthuses.

"There is not one part of their bodies that is not designed to be like a bullet," she whispers in the darkness of the corridors leading to the breeding enclosures. Each raptor is sold for a price which can range from 400 euros (\$440) to "thousands", says Sanchez. According to Manuel Diego Pareja-Obregon, who heads the Spanish Falconry Association (AECCA), buyers from the Gulf tend to pay about 2,000 euros per falcon.





But for specimens from a handful of breeding facilities known for supplying Gulf royalty and their families, the price tends to be in the tens of thousands, says Javier Ceballos, a Spanish falconry expert. Such birds are raised in customized air-conditioned facilities where their trainers come and select the best specimens. Julio Cesar Perez Guerra spent three years in Abu Dhabi looking after falcons that belonged to one of the brothers of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

"They don't allow even one falcon with a broken feather back in, and if it happens, there's a sharp reprimand for the falconer who is handling them." Species that live in the wild in Spain, which are smaller and have brown plumage, are largely overlooked, he says. "The few that were sold were for children!"



An ancient Spanish tradition

Spain counts around 400 breeders, many of whom started during the financial crisis by studying the art of breeding online in order to make a living off of their passion, explains Pareja-Obregon. Initially working with falcons in pest control at airports and public buildings, Sanchez ended up by raising his own raptors in a business which brings in about 60 percent of his income. Spain has an age-old tradition of falconry dating back to the Middle Ages when the Visigoths and the Arabs introduced it to the region.

Today, hunting with raptors, which has been recognized on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, is a sport practiced by just over 3,000 people in Spain, making it the European country where falconry is most deeply rooted. But for breeders, Spain has a key advantage: its hot, dry climate allows the gyrfalcons—which normally live in higher, colder latitudes—to become acclimatized to the hotter temperatures they will experience in the Gulf.

"When the falcons arrive in Qatar from Spain, they don't feel the change in climate quite so much," says Salim al-Humaidi, a Qatari national who buys falcons from across Europe every year. "That's why I prefer falcons from Spain." In the Middle East, authentic hunts which have been practiced for centuries by nomadic tribes have become increasingly rare. These days, the wild quarry the falcons would have hunted such as the houbara bustard—a rare desert bird whose meat is prized as an aphrodisiac—is now almost extinct.

Today such birds of prey are used more for racing—against the clock or in pursuit of a remote-controlled robot "prey"—drawing criticism from purists. Although possessing a falcon is an ostentatious sign of wealth, the owners often lose interest in an individual bird after about a year, heading back to the market in search of a new champion. And this has provided a lucrative source of income for Spanish breeders that is showing little sign of letting up. — AFP

Explorer who put Australia on the map to be reburied in UK

The remains of the first British explorer to circumnavigate Australia are to be reburied in his home village after being discovered near a busy London railway station. The grave of Captain Matthew Flinders, who popularized Australia's name, was discovered in January in a built-over former burial ground behind Euston terminus. The site was being excavated for the HS2 high speed rail project, which will eventually link London with Birmingham and Manchester.

Flinders died aged 40 on July 19, 1814 — the day after the publication of "A Voyage to Terra Australis", which described his 1802-1803 circumnavigation of Australia and proved that it was a continent. With an estimated 40,000 remains at the former Saint James's Church burial ground, archaeologists were not sure they were going to find Flinders, whose resting place had been subject to much speculation. However, the ornate lead nameplate on his coffin was well-preserved, enabling archaeologists to identify the grave.

Flinders will be reburied in the parish church of Saint Mary and The Holy Rood in Donington, his home village in Lincolnshire, eastern England. Flinders' relatives and the local community had asked for his remains to be reinterred where he grew up before joining the Royal Navy. "It is fitting that the last voyage of Captain Matthew Flinders will be back to the village of Donington," said Helen Wass, HS2's head of heritage.

"This local boy from Donington put Australia on the map due to his tenacity and expertise as a navigator and explorer. "The Flinders name is synonymous with exploration, science and discovery, and HS2, through its archaeology program, will



An undated handout picture shows the cleaned lead breast plate discovered in the grave of the 19th century Captain Matthew Flinders during the HS2 archaeological investigations at St James's Gardens in London.

ensure that we maximize the opportunities for further academic and scientific study." Archaeologists have studied his skeleton.

The Euston excavation was one of Britain's largest ever digs, going down as deep as eight meters, with the site protected from the elements under an 11,000 square-meter roof. Flinders is a hero for many Australians of European origin, with stations, streets, squares and towns across the country named after him. His remains will be transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln for safekeeping until the burial arrangements are made. — AFP



In this file photo, field archaeologists work on the excavation of a late 18th to mid 19th century cemetery under St James Gardens near Euston train station in London, as part of the HS2 high-speed rail project. — AFP photos



A visitor looks at a painting representing French queen Marie-Antoinette entitled 'Marie-Antoinette en grand habit' by Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun displayed at 'Marie-Antoinette, Metamorphoses of an image' exhibition at the Conciergerie Paris museum, on the eve of the first day of the exhibition.—AFP photos



A picture taken at the Conciergerie museum in Paris shows the shoe of French Queen Marie-Antoinette allegedly wore when she was guillotined.

Marie-Antoinette: From hated queen to pop icon

In 1793, the Conciergerie palace-turned-prison in Paris slammed the gate behind its most famous inmate, the hated queen Marie-Antoinette, as she was led to the guillotine. On Wednesday, 226 years to the day of her execution, the former revolutionary jail on the banks of the Seine river opened an exhibition dedicated to the same woman it once detained in ignominy. But instead of focusing on her controversial life and brutal end, the display pays tribute to Marie-Antoinette's legacy in popular culture, and her enduring ability to capture the imagination.

"Marie-Antoinette, Metamorphoses of an Image" attempts "not a rehabilitation but a renewal" of the portrayals of Louis XVI's Austrian-born wife, said Antoine de Baecque, a historian who curated the three-month exhibit boasting more than 200 items. The attractions range from modernist portraits and Japanese manga in her image to a Marie-Antoinette Barbie doll and a shoe the queen lost when she was decapitated in front of a screaming crowd on Revolution Square in Paris—now the Place de la Concorde.

"Of all the monuments with links to the memory of queen Marie-Antoinette, this one surely has the strongest: It is here that she was incarcerated and sentenced to death," Philippe Belaval, president of France's Centre of National Monuments, told AFP under the high stone arches of the Conciergerie. The building had served as a residence for French Kings until the 14th century, when it was abandoned in favor of the Louvre and Vincennes, transformed first into a court, then a prison. It is here that Marie-Antoinette had spent her last ten weeks, in a tiny cell in what was dubbed the "Corridor of Death".

Future queen

Marie-Antoinette arrived at Versailles as a teenager to be married to the future king. Unaccustomed to the royal court, she broke many rules and customs in her early years and soon became a standout figure noted for her extravagant, towering hairstyles. The young king and queen became synonymous with excess, splurging on expensive clothes, food and other luxuries at a time when

many French people were starving.

After the French Revolution broke out in 1789 and overthrew the monarchy, the couple were held in house arrest until they were put to death—Louis was beheaded first, followed nine months later by his widow on October 16, 1793. Marie-Antoinette's nightgown, the shoe she is believed to have lost on her way to the guillotine, and the last letter she wrote all form part of the exhibition in an area of the Conciergerie where her cell used to be.

Also on display: the order for her execution, browned with age. But the exhibit is less about the queen's life than about her aftermath—all aspects of it. Some portraits are caricatures and cartoonish, others deferential portrayals of sanctity or martyrdom. The show includes famous works, notably an official portrait from 1783 of the queen holding a rose by Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun. It also features a dedicated movie room where visitors can see samples from more than 100 films featuring the diva queen.

The oldest film dates from 1903, another from the 1950s features French leading lady Michele Morgan as Marie-Antoinette, and perhaps the best known, the 2006 version directed by American Sofia Coppola. With Kirsten Dunst in the lead role and its rock-heavy soundtrack, this is the film that "made it possible for young people to identify with Marie-Antoinette," according to Annie Duprat, an expert in historical iconography.

Fashion icon

A blue gown worn in the film is part of the display, next to a Christian Dior number inspired by the queen's extravagant manner of dress. "Fashion is so present in France because this industry was stimulated much more by Marie-Antoinette than by preceding queens," Duprat said. "Behind the foreign adoration of Marie-Antoinette is an appreciation for the French style of the 18th century. Also, she is a marketable figure because she is instantly recognizable: all you need is the face of a woman, a wig, and jewelry." To end off the experience, visitors are invited to browse through an array of Marie-Antoinette-inspired trinkets: coffee mugs, chocolate—and a Barbie.—AFP



A woman looks at a painting representing last French queen Marie-Antoinette 'Marie-Antoinette apos Vigee-Lebrun' by Colombian painter Fernando Botero, left, and a picture entitled 'Zahia' by Pierre et Gilles during an exhibition.



A picture at the Conciergerie Paris museum shows a dress by British fashion designer John Galliano for Dior dedicated to the French queen Marie-Antoinette.

Climate crisis spurs action at 'green' Frankfurt book fair

From children's books about reducing plastic to tips for zero-waste cooking, the climate crisis is dominating this year's Frankfurt book fair. Here's a look at how the world's biggest publishing event is galvanizing readers young and old into environmental action, on and off the page.

German Greta in spotlight

At the age of just 23, Luisa Neubauer is Germany's best-known climate activist after becoming a central figure in the Fridays for Future strikes started by Swedish teen Greta Thunberg. At the Frankfurt fair, the fast-talking university student famed for her no-nonsense attitude and meticulous research will go head-to-head with a local politician in a debate about coal mines, and present her own book about the climate emergency. "When you look at what's happening with our planetary system, of course that's scary. The question is what do you do about it," Neubauer said in a video recorded for the fair. "Maybe we do need some kind of rebellion or revolution."

Child's play

That teens around the world are ringing the alarm about global warming has not escaped the attention of younger children—or of publishers who have rushed to bring out a slew of environmental titles aimed at younger readers. Sales of climate-focused books for children almost doubled in the UK and India over the first nine months of 2019 compared with a year earlier, according to Nielsen Book Research, while in Germany too sales were "noticeably up", GfK Entertainment said. "Children have seen the images of starving polar bears and felt the effects of the recent summer heatwaves," Ralf Schweikart, a leading German critic of children's literature, told AFP. "Books can help them find answers to these emerging questions." For parents wary of scaring their offspring with bedtime stories about impending climate doom, Schweikart recommends choosing one of the many new titles that take a more local and hands-on approach, often with DIY activities to keep young minds engaged. In "Plastic? Try going without!" by Dela Kienle, ice-cream lovers are encouraged to opt for a cone instead of a cup, and to occasionally throw a party without balloons.

Zero waste Christmas

Adults too can reduce their carbon footprints with the help of a plethora of new non-fiction titles at the fair. On a table filled with vegan and no-waste cookbooks, "mindful" chefs are invited to toss broccoli stems into a salad, turn apple peel into crisps and cover leftovers with beeswax wraps instead of clingfilm. For those wanting to go further, the fair offers workshops on upcycling and even on how to achieve a zero-waste Christmas—complete with newspaper decorations and gifts wrapped in old jeans.

Edible straws

Not to be outdone, organizers of the world's largest publishing event say they too have taken steps to bolster the fair's eco credentials. The sprawling convention centre in central Frankfurt that houses the fair and will host some 280,000 book lovers this week already partly runs on renewable energy. But from next year, it will switch over entirely to green energy, saving 19,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year. The stalls assembled for the more than 7,500 exhibitors are now reused year after year, and book fair director Juergen Boos told local media that organizers were encouraging waste reduction and even "offering edible straws".—AFP



Scottish author John Burnside



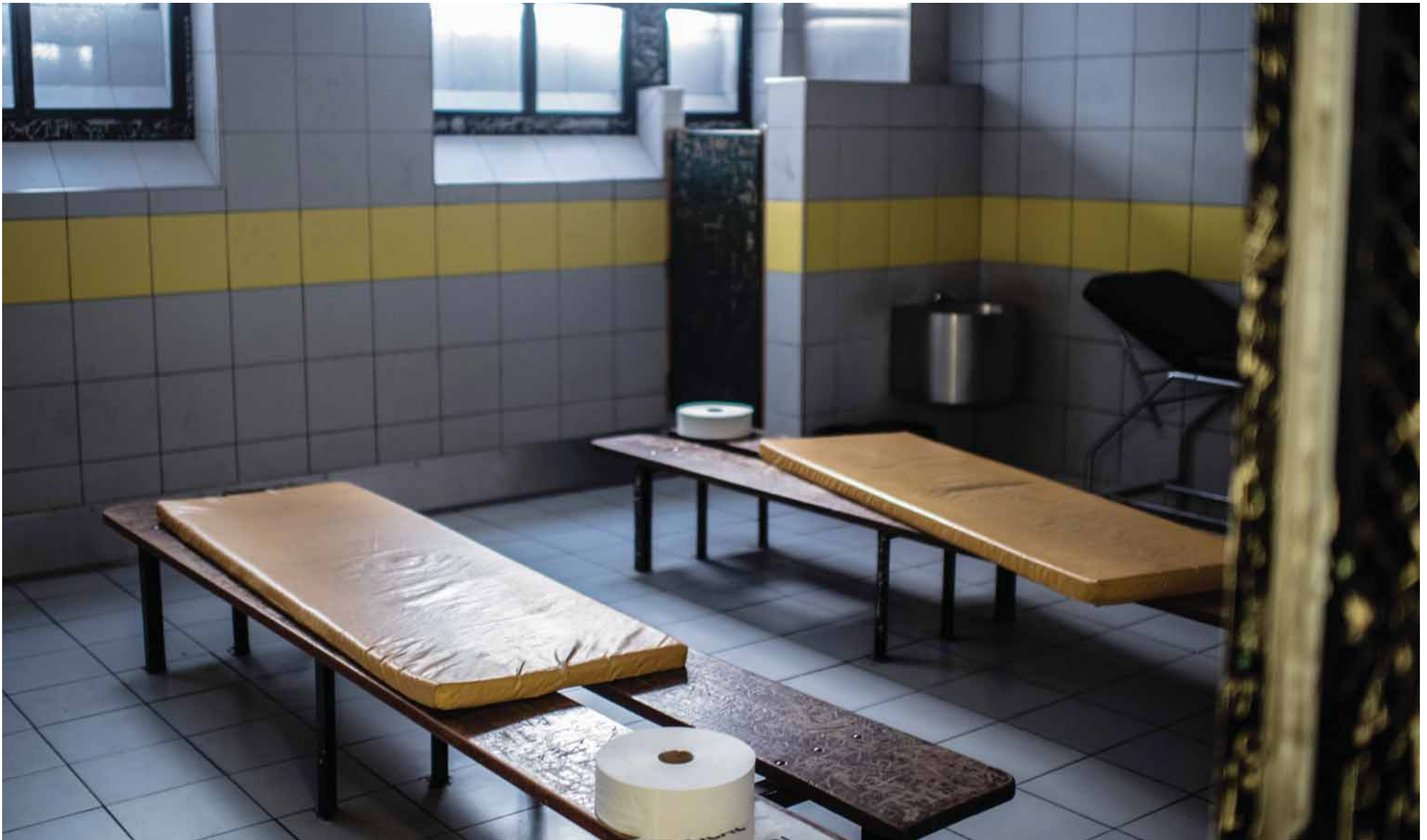
German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yucel



An Asterix sculpture is pictured at the Frankfurt book fair 2019 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.—AFP photos



An advertising for a children's book inspired by climate activist Greta Thunberg titled 'Greta and the Grown ups' of publisher 'Are Edition' is pictured.



These pictures show former police judicial headquarters known as the '36 quai des orfevres' in Paris.—AFP photos

The ghosts of abandoned Paris police HQ, Quai des Orfevres

A chair sits in the middle of the interrogation room, as if waiting for the next suspect and the doors of the cells swing wide open. The former Paris headquarters of the judicial police (PJ), France's top criminal investigators, looks like it is ready for another day of work.

But these days the only permanent residents of the storied building at 36, Quai des Orfevres in the heart of Paris are the ghosts of its former employees—and of the sometimes notorious criminals who passed through its doors over the course of a century.

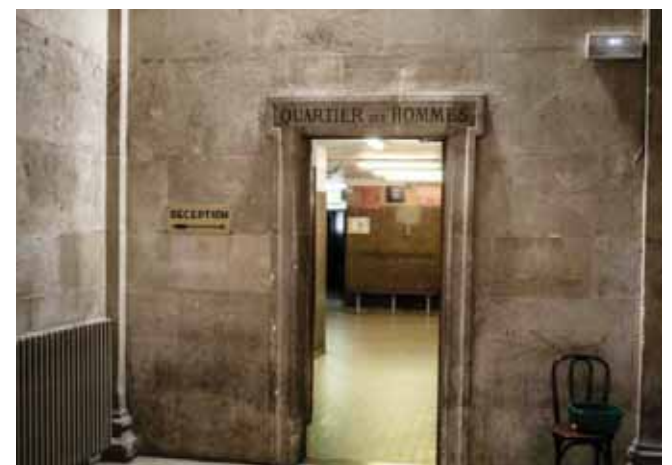
In 2017, the PJ was moved along with other legal institutions out of central Paris to a shiny modern complex on the

northwest of the city. The new offices' only resemblance with its predecessor is its address: 36, rue du Bastion.

Maigret novels

The ominous-looking 19th-century building on Quai des Orfevres inspired a host of films and novels, most famously the Maigret books by the Belgian writer Georges Simenon whose hero is a senior detective at the PJ. The great French filmmaker Henri-Georges Clouzot called his 1947 detective movie simply "Quai des Orfevres". The address alone was enough to evoke a sense of menace.

The building also lent its name to a prestigious prize set





up for detective novelists in 1946: the Quai des Orfevres Prize. Films inspired by the building starred some of France's greatest screen icons, such as Jean Gabin, Lino Ventura and Alain Delon.

Film noir

Even devoid of its former occupants, the building retains a creepy atmosphere worthy of a film noir. Posters of wanted criminals still hang on the walls and filing cabinets remain in place.

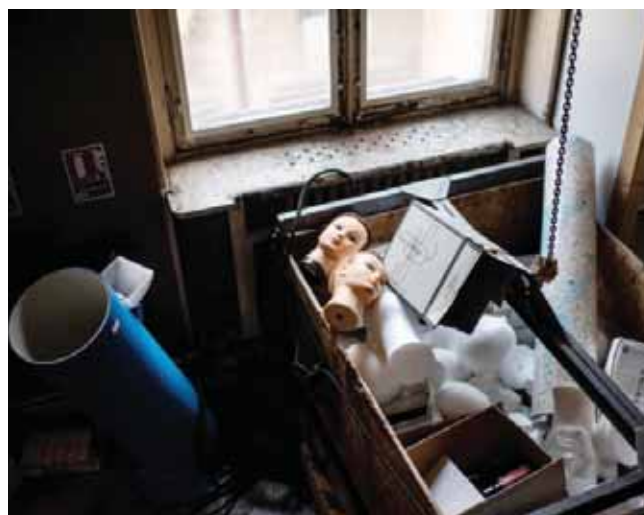
"Brothers never rat out, you need to be men," one prisoner has carved into doorway. The "36" as it is known among police has the spooky atmosphere of a place that has been left in a hurry. Its future use remains uncertain.

A small flight of stairs leads up to the roof where Paris police chiefs used to invite special guests for unrivalled views of the roofs of Paris. Bars on the office windows on upper floors recall the security measures taken in the wake of the suicide in 2002 of prisoner Richard Durn who hurled himself from four floors up after confessing to eight murders.

Police crimes

Another notorious criminal to pass through its doors was Marcel Petiot, a doctor arrested in World War II just after the liberation of Paris from Nazi occupation. He had 27 corpses stored in his home. The police too have their own dark past here. A French court in February 2019 sentenced two police officers to seven years in prison for the rape of a Canadian tourist they had invited to visit their workplace in April 2014.

The "36" made headlines a second time in 2014 after 50 kilograms of seized cocaine, with an estimated street value of two million euros, vanished from a secure room in the building. Two officers were later jailed over the theft.—AFP





Visitors pose for a photograph in an installation at The Bubble Tea Factory experience created by the El Masnou collective during a preview in Singapore.—AFP photos

Frolic in a bubble tea ball pit at Singapore exhibit

Bubble tea fans can frolic in a pool of 100,000 plastic purple pearls, take photos on a bubble tea IV drip, and swing on a giant wrecking ball at a new exhibit in Singapore.

The pop-up aims to be a “one-stop happy place” for visitors who love the tea-based beverage loaded with milk, sugar and tapioca pearls. Originally from Taiwan, it is now popular across Asia—including in Singapore, which is home to over 37 bubble tea chains, according to the Straits Times newspaper.

Exhibit organizer Tan Weiting said people get “really passionate” about the drink. “When I was in the office, people sitting behind me, they’re always discussing about bubble tea, what’s their favorite flavor, which store has the best pearls... they even start fighting over which one’s the best one,” said Tan. The exhibit opens to the public on Saturday. It will run for about two months, and Tan is planning a tour around Asia.

Music is played in the pastel-colored

rooms and Tan partnered with a “scent vendor” to create fragrances throughout the exhibit. Visitors can get a whiff of pine while walking through an enchanted forest of illuminated straws, experience tea-scented trees, and sniff at a wall of flavors labeled “luscious”, “malty”, or “fresh”. The entry price of around Sg\$24 (\$17.50) includes a bubble tea and experimental tea-flavored snacks.—AFP



Comic

Word Search

Insects

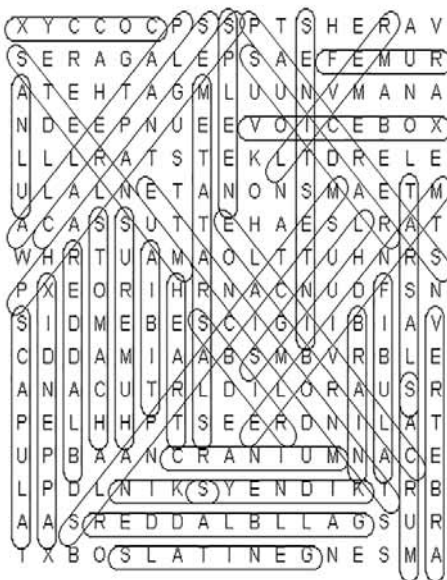
Find and circle all of the insects that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional insect.

A L G U B D E B M A Y F L Y
 E S O E E B E L B M U B A G
 L K Y C G U B Y D A L C N A
 F C L I U R P S E F S A T P
 M I F L A S E L I I H T S H
 O T N Y A I T R L C E E I I
 S E O W L E E V A I T R L D
 Q K G F E F E O L C I P K T
 U C A B L R R I M A M I W E
 I I R Y F K V E O D R L O N
 T R D I C E S S T A E L R R
 O C S O E P I R H T T A M O
 H H C W G I W R A E U R S H
 O P L A C E W I N G P B E R

- | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|
| ANTS | EARWIG | MOSQUITO |
| APHID | FIREFLY | MOTH |
| BEDBUG | FLEA | SILKWORM |
| BEETLE | FLIES | SILVERFISH |
| BUMBLEBEE | HORNET | TERMITE |
| BUTTERFLY | LACEWING | THRIP |
| CATERPILLAR | LADYBUG | TICKS |
| CICADA | LOCUST | WASP |
| COCKROACH | MAYFLY | WEEVIL |
| CRICKET | | WORMS |
| DRAGONFLY | | |

Yesterday's Solution

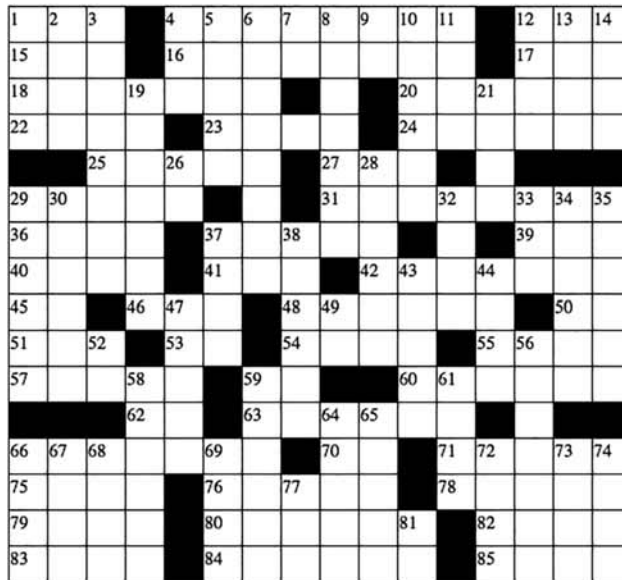
Human Skeleton & Organs



- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Skeleton: | Organs: | |
| - CARPALS | - PATELLA | - LIVER |
| - CLAVICLE | - PHALANGES | - LUNGS |
| - COCCYX | - RADIUS | - PANCREAS |
| - CRANIUM | - RIBS | - GALLBLADDER |
| - FEMUR | - SACRUM | - GENITALS |
| - FIBULA | - SCAPULA | - HEART |
| - HUMERUS | - STERNUM | - INTESTINES |
| - INNOMINATE | - TARSALS | - KIDNEYS |
| - MANDIBLE | - TIBIA | |
| - METACARPALS | - ULNA | |
| - METATARSALS | - VERTEBRA | |

Hidden sentence: THE AVERAGE HUMAN ADULT SKELETON HAS TWO HUNDRED AND SIX BONES

Crossword 2336



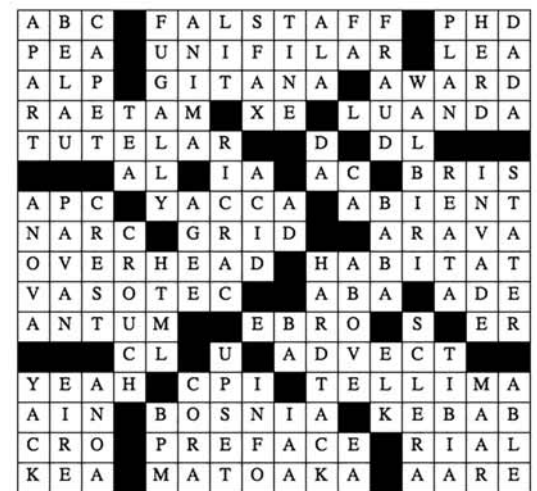
ACROSS

- Being four more than fifty.
- A fibrous amphibole.
- Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
- Fiddler crabs.
- The largest city in India and one of the largest cities in the world.
- Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- The basic unit of luminous intensity adopted under the System International d'Unites.
- United States physicist (born in Hungary) who worked on the first atom bombs and the first hydrogen bomb (born in 1908).
- A Hindu theistic philosophy.
- Interface consisting of a standard port between a computer and its peripherals that is used in some computers.
- (used of arms and legs) Bent outward with the joint away from the body.
- A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
- Common black-and-gray Eurasian bird noted for thievery.
- A public square with room for pedestrians.
- Wife of Siva and a benevolent aspect of Devi.
- A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
- Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
- Remove with or as if with a ladle.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- Covered with paving material.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
- Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- God of the earth.
- Unknown god.
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- Any plant of the genus Erica.
- Small voraciously carnivorous freshwater fishes of South America that attack and destroy living animals.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- A Bantu language spoken by the Chaga people in northern Tanzania.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Having great (or a certain) extent from one side to the other.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- An edible seaweed with a mild flavor.
- Informal terms for a mother.
- A vertical spar for supporting sails.
- A professional killer who uses a gun.
- In bed.
- A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
- Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
- (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.

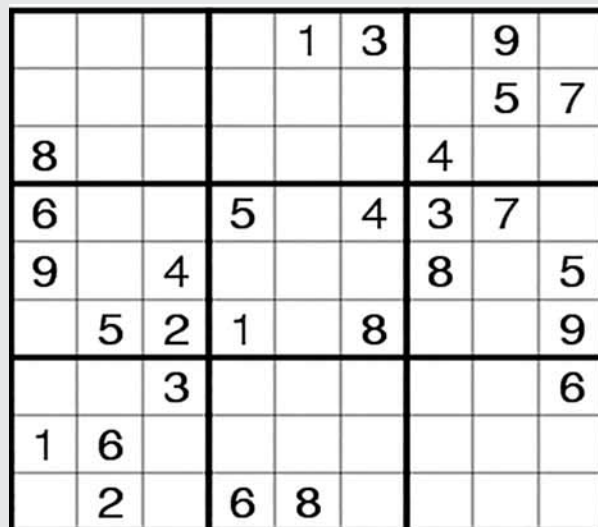
DOWN

- Incomplete skeleton of female found in eastern Ethiopia in 1974.
- The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
- The leading units moving at the head of an army.
- (informal) Of the highest quality.
- Spicy sauce of tomatoes and onions and chili peppers to accompany Mexican foods.
- Raspberry native to eastern North America having black thimble-shaped fruit.
- An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
- Gannets and boobies.
- (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.
- A member of the Algonquian people of southern Ontario.
- A branch of the Tai languages.
- Not agitated.
- (pathology) An elevation of the skin filled with serous fluid.
- Large edible mackerel of temperate United States coastal Atlantic waters.
- Having vision overcome temporarily by or as if by intense light.
- The function or position properly or customarily occupied or served by another.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- Lacking vigor or energy.
- (South African) A camp defended by a circular formation of wagons.
- A linear unit (1/6 inch) used in printing.
- A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- A B vitamin essential for the normal function of the nervous system and the gastrointestinal tract.
- A large fleet.
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- Italian brandy made from residue of grapes after pressing.
- (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Jordan's port.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
- Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
- A member of the Taracahitian people of central Mexico.
- (Greek mythology) Son of Daedalus.
- A ballistic missile that is capable of traveling from one continent to another.
- A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
- A formal expression of praise.
- A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- The lean flesh of a cod-like fish of North Atlantic waters.
- Mentally or physically infirm with age.
- Taking place over public roads.
- A primeval personification of air and breath.
- An informal term for a father.
- (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.

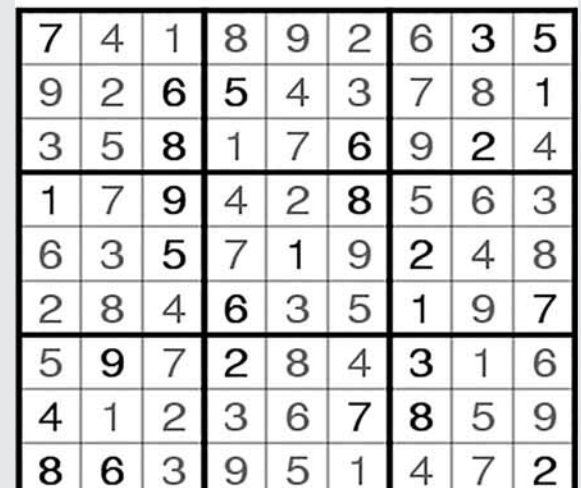
Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



TV Listings



00:30 Saw III
02:25 Female Fight Squad
04:00 The Chronicles Of Riddick
06:00 A Deadly View
07:40 The Wrath Of Vajra
09:40 The Chronicles Of Riddick
11:40 Security
13:25 A Knight's Tale
15:50 Power Rangers
18:05 211
19:45 Captain America: The First Avenger
22:00 Romeo Is Bleeding
23:55 Saw IV



00:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
01:40 Catching Monsters
02:35 Bad Dog
03:25 Lone Star Law
04:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
05:02 Wildest Europe
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Dark Days In Monkey City
07:00 Dark Days In Monkey City
07:25 Wildest Islands
12:50 Bad Dog
13:45 The Vet Life
14:40 Animal Cribs
15:35 Catching Monsters
16:30 Flying Wild Alaska
17:25 Animal Cops Houston
18:20 Bad Dog
19:15 The Vet Life
20:10 Vet Gone Wild
21:05 Wildest Europe
22:00 Catching Monsters
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 The Vet Life



00:15 EastEnders
00:45 The Woman In White
01:40 Holby City
02:35 Hold The Sunset
03:00 Bad Move
03:25 Agatha Raisin
04:10 Father Brown
05:00 Doctors
05:30 Doctors
06:00 Doctors
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Holby City
07:55 Father Brown
08:40 Death In Paradise
09:35 Casualty
10:25 Hold The Sunset
10:50 Bad Move
11:15 Holby City
12:10 Father Brown
12:55 Death In Paradise
13:50 Hold The Sunset
14:15 Bad Move
14:40 Casualty
15:30 Doctors
18:30 The Coroner
19:20 The Coroner
20:10 The Woman In White
21:05 Line Of Duty
22:00 The Good Karma Hospital
22:45 The Good Karma Hospital
23:35 Doctors



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Secrets Of The Morgue
01:55 I Married My Killer
02:50 It Takes A Killer
03:20 It Takes A Killer
03:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
04:10 Live PD: Police Patrol
04:30 The First 48
05:15 Homicide Hunter
06:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
07:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
07:20 The First 48
08:05 The First 48
08:50 Homicide Hunter
09:35 Homicide Hunter
10:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill
11:25 What The Killer Did Next
12:20 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:15 Live PD: Police Patrol

13:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
14:10 It Takes A Killer
14:40 It Takes A Killer
15:05 Homicide Hunter
16:00 The First 48
17:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 The First 48
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 It Takes A Killer
21:30 It Takes A Killer
22:00 60 Days In: Narcoland
23:00 Hero Ink
23:30 Hero Ink



00:25 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
00:50 Impractical Jokers
01:15 Broad City
01:40 Friends
02:03 Friends
02:25 South Park
02:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand
03:15 Broad City
03:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
04:10 South Park
04:35 Impractical Jokers
05:00 Friends
07:10 Impractical Jokers VII Special - Practically Live!
08:00 Takeshis Castle Thailand
10:15 Friends
12:20 Ridiculousness
14:30 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team
15:25 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team
16:15 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team
17:10 Friends
19:30 Ridiculousness
21:30 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:30 Trevor Moore: The Story Of Our Times
23:30 Most Ridiculous



00:30 Bizarre Foods With Andrew Zimmern
01:20 America's Cutest Pets
02:10 My Cat From Hell
03:00 Dirty Jobs
03:50 Cliptastic
04:15 Cliptastic
04:40 Tanked
05:30 America's Cutest Pets
06:15 My Cat From Hell
07:00 Dirty Jobs
07:50 Cliptastic
08:15 Cliptastic
08:40 Weather Gone Viral
09:30 Secret Space Escapes
10:20 Mighty Cruise Ships
11:10 Tanked
12:00 Salvage Hunters
12:50 Unchained Reaction
13:40 Powering The Future
14:30 UFOs: The Lost Evidence
15:20 Dirty Jobs
16:10 Tanked
17:00 America's Cutest Pets
17:50 My Cat From Hell
18:40 Dirty Jobs
19:30 Chopped Junior
20:20 Dirty Tricks
21:10 Breaking Magic
21:35 Breaking Magic
22:00 Sci-Jinks
22:25 Sci-Jinks
22:50 Keeping Up With The Kruger
23:40 Tanked



00:00 True Nightmares
01:00 The Real Story With Maria Elena Salinas
02:00 Ted Bundy: Mind Of A Monster
03:45 True Nightmares
04:30 Murder Chose Me
05:20 Murder Comes To Town
06:10 Deadline: Crime With Tam-

ron Hall
07:00 Evil Online
07:55 Evil Online
08:50 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
09:45 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
10:40 Murder Comes To Town
11:35 Murder Chose Me
12:30 Murder Chose Me
13:25 Deadline: Crime With Tam-ron Hall
14:20 Nightmare Next Door
15:15 Nightmare Next Door
16:10 Southern Fried Homicide
17:05 The Perfect Murder
18:00 The Perfect Murder
19:00 Disappeared
20:00 Disappeared
21:00 Love Kills
22:00 Forbidden: Dying For Love
23:00 The Shadows Of Death



00:00 Alex & Co.
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:40 Alex & Co.
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Evermoor Chronicles
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:35 Violetta
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Rolling With The Ronks
06:00 Shake It Up
06:25 Raven's Home S3
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Sydney To The Max
07:20 Penny On M.A.R.S
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bizaardvark
08:35 Jessie
09:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:15 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Bunk'd
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:00 Disney Cookabout
14:25 Shake It Up
14:50 A.N.T. Farm
15:15 A.N.T. Farm
15:40 Penny On M.A.R.S
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:10 Bizaardvark
16:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
17:00 Raven's Home S3
17:25 Descendants 3
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:30 Shake It Up
20:20 Liv And Maddie
21:10 Jessie
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
22:50 Lolirock
23:10 Evermoor Chronicles
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Sofia The First
00:25 Disney Junior Music Nursery Rhymes
00:30 Gigantosaurus
01:00 PJ Masks
01:25 PJ Masks
01:50 Paprika
02:00 Zou
02:15 Zou
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 Paprika
03:30 Paprika
03:40 Zou
04:25 Paprika
04:35 Paprika
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:10 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 Paprika
05:45 PJ Masks
06:30 Gigantosaurus
06:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
07:00 The Lion Guard
07:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
08:00 PJ Masks
08:30 Vampirina
09:00 Sofia The First

09:30 Elena Of Avalor
10:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
10:30 PJ Masks
11:00 Vampirina
11:30 Vampirina
12:00 Doc McStuffins
12:30 Gigantosaurus
13:00 Puppy Dog Pals
13:30 Puppy Dog Pals
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 T.O.T.S.
15:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
15:30 Vampirina
16:00 Elena Of Avalor
16:30 Sofia The First
16:55 PJ Masks
17:00 PJ Masks
17:30 T.O.T.S.
17:45 T.O.T.S.
18:00 Puppy Dog Pals
18:15 Puppy Dog Pals
18:30 Vampirina
19:00 PJ Masks
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Sofia The First
20:25 PJ Masks
20:30 Elena Of Avalor
21:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
21:30 T.O.T.S.
21:45 T.O.T.S.
22:00 Puppy Dog Pals
22:15 Puppy Dog Pals
22:30 Vampirina
23:00 PJ Masks
23:30 The Lion Guard



00:15 Dual Survival
01:05 Masters Of Disaster
01:50 Mythbusters
02:35 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers
03:20 American Chopper
04:05 American Chopper
04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:15 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Property Wars
06:00 Storage Hunters UK
06:20 Property Wars
06:45 Dual Survival
07:35 Deadliest Catch
08:20 Gold Rush
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
09:55 Salvage Hunters
10:45 How Do They Do It?
11:10 How Do They Do It?
11:30 American Chopper
12:20 American Chopper
13:05 Storage Hunters UK
13:30 Property Wars
13:55 Salvage Hunters
14:40 Ed Stafford: Man Woman Child Wild
15:30 The Great Build
16:15 Aaron Needs A Job
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
17:50 Gold Rush
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 How Do They Do It?
19:25 American Chopper
20:15 American Chopper
21:00 Speed Is The New Black
21:50 Aaron Needs A Job
22:40 Twin Turbos
23:30 Deadliest Catch



00:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
00:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
01:00 Boyster
01:20 Boyster
01:45 Counterfeit Cat
02:10 Counterfeit Cat
02:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
02:55 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:20 Boyster
03:40 Boyster
04:05 Counterfeit Cat
04:30 Counterfeit Cat
04:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
05:15 Supa Strikas
05:35 Supa Strikas
06:00 Lab Rats

06:25 Lab Rats
06:50 Phineas And Ferb
07:15 Phineas And Ferb
07:40 Gravity Falls
08:05 Gravity Falls
08:30 Phineas And Ferb
08:55 Phineas And Ferb
09:20 Big City Greens
09:40 Big City Greens
10:05 Phineas And Ferb
10:25 Phineas And Ferb
10:50 Lab Rats
11:10 Lab Rats
11:35 Phineas And Ferb
11:55 Phineas And Ferb
12:20 Gravity Falls
12:45 Gravity Falls
13:10 Big Chibi 6: The Series
13:15 Phineas And Ferb
13:40 Phineas And Ferb
14:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:30 Phineas And Ferb
14:55 Phineas And Ferb
15:20 Big City Greens
15:45 Big City Greens
16:10 Supa Strikas
16:35 Supa Strikas
17:00 Phineas & Ferb: Across The Second Dimension
18:15 Phineas And Ferb
18:40 Supa Strikas
19:05 Lab Rats Elite Force
19:30 Lab Rats Elite Force
19:55 Big Chibi 6: The Series
20:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
20:25 Big Hero 6 The Series
20:50 Phineas And Ferb
21:15 Phineas And Ferb
21:40 DuckTales
22:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:55 Big Chibi 6: The Series
23:00 Furiki Wheels
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost
23:50 Dude That's My Ghost



00:00 Very Cavallari
01:00 Very Cavallari
02:00 E! News
03:00 WAGs Miami
04:00 WAGs LA
05:00 WAGs LA
06:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
07:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
09:50 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:45 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:40 E! News
12:35 Very Cavallari
13:30 Very Cavallari
14:25 Very Cavallari
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
17:10 Botched
18:05 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Very Cavallari
21:00 Very Cavallari
22:00 Very Cavallari
23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:15 Clash Of Warriors
01:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...
01:45 Cities Of The Underworld
02:30 Evolve
03:15 The Universe
04:00 Ancient Aliens
04:45 Deep Sea Salvage
05:30 UFO Hunters
06:15 Ancient Impossible
07:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...
07:45 Cities Of The Underworld
08:30 Evolve
09:15 The Universe
10:00 Ancient Aliens
10:45 Deep Sea Salvage
11:30 UFO Hunters
12:15 Ancient Impossible
13:00 Cities Of The Underworld
13:45 Evolve

14:30 The Universe
15:15 Schindler
16:00 Deep Sea Salvage
16:45 UFO Hunters
17:30 Ancient Impossible
18:15 10 Things You Don't Know About...
19:00 Cities Of The Underworld
19:45 Evolve
20:30 The Universe
21:15 Ancient Aliens
22:00 MysteryQuest
22:45 UFO Hunters
23:30 Ancient Impossible



00:20 Lost Gold Of World War II
01:05 Storage Wars
01:25 Storage Wars
01:50 American Pickers
02:35 Pawn Stars
03:00 Pawn Stars
03:25 The Lost Evidence
04:15 The Zodiac Killer: Case Closed?
05:05 Forged In Fire
06:00 Truck Night In America
06:45 Lost Gold Of World War II
07:30 Storage Wars
07:50 Storage Wars
08:15 American Pickers
09:00 Pawn Stars
09:20 Pawn Stars
09:45 The Lost Evidence
10:30 Forged In Fire
11:15 WW2 Treasure Hunters
12:00 American Pickers
15:00 Big Easy Motors
17:15 Fifth Gear
18:00 Fifth Gear
18:45 Mountain Men
21:00 The Curse Of Civil War Gold
21:50 The Curse Of Civil War Gold
22:40 American Pickers
23:30 American Pickers



00:00 Fish Tank Kings
01:00 48 Hrs Destination
01:30 48 Hrs Destination
02:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
02:55 Log Cabin Fever
03:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
04:15 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
04:45 Confucius Was A Foodie
05:40 Access 360 World Heritage
06:35 Places We Go
07:00 United Plates Of America
07:30 Confucius Was A Foodie
08:25 Cruise Ship Diaries
09:20 Fish Of The Day
09:45 Fish Of The Day
10:15 Fearless Chef
11:10 Access 360 World Heritage
12:05 Places We Go
12:30 United Plates Of America
13:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
13:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
14:50 Fish Of The Day
15:15 Fish Of The Day
15:45 Fearless Chef
16:40 Access 360 World Heritage
17:35 Chef On The Road
18:30 Confucius Was A Foodie
19:25 Sara's Australia Unveiled
19:50 Sara's Australia Unveiled
20:20 Fish Of The Day
20:45 Fish Of The Day
21:15 Fearless Chef
22:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
22:35 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
23:05 Access 360 World Heritage



00:00 Buried Secrets Of WWII
00:50 Primal Survivor
01:40 Border Wars
02:30 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
02:55 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
03:20 Route Awakening
03:45 Route Awakening
04:10 Buried Secrets Of WWII
05:00 Primal Survivor
06:00 Border Wars
07:00 The Big Picture With Kal

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You might like to ignore responsibilities and do some socializing, but realities demand that you tend to business for the moment. Your superiors value your ability to make practical decisions. Others may seek you out for advice concerning business matters. You could be put in charge to make decisions that affect conditions in the workplace. You are most persuasive and you will find others most cooperative. You possess a powerful, persistent drive and are a hard, steady worker. You have a sense of mission and mystery. You are willing to do the work that others would not go near. A young person is monitoring your activities today. Whether you realize it or not, you are being an important mentor. Enjoy dinner out-of-doors this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Intense focus on your career can find you mercilessly cutting back and getting down to the essentials regarding your professional direction. You will have a sense of being almost driven to pursue your course and succeed. Perhaps you will want to take a class or have someone guide you with a new skill or technique. This could be a time when what you think you need for inner growth and change may not agree with your progress in the business world. You may not appreciate all of the intensely personal stuff that is boiling up now. It is best to get your lessons learned now—it will help to decrease frustrations later. Deal with situations as they appear and ask questions if someone is not easily understood. Relax with your loved one this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Philosophizing, or expressing your theories, is an inborn talent and you are in love with grand gestures and long thoughts. Someone may bring up a subject of interest today and you may want to explore. You enjoy fair, just, frank and broadminded persons as well as long conversations with your friends touching on a variety of subjects this afternoon. You dare to dream big. You are very tolerant and accepting of differences and may find yourself promoting your own ideas much of this day. Your sense of inner direction is good and should lead to some ideas for future monetary opportunities. Later today you will be able to make a great deal of headway on your personal projects. You will find a way around almost any obstacle.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Obtaining and exchanging information takes on an emotional significance for you. Learning the experience of others will help you in your own decision making. The power of organization on a social scale regarding business, politics, etc., seems to take on an important aspect. This may mean that you are a concert pianist and have social obligations to play before a charity or perhaps some performance before an educational group. Professionally speaking, it is very important to exhibit superior social skills, particularly if you travel and perform out of the country. Most certainly, this is a wonderful time to discipline your mind through study, education or writing. You will have many experiences to write about and the outcome will be intriguing and positive.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Respect, status and achievement are central goals you have been wanting and today may prove to gain you insights along that line. You are good when you work with teammates but to lead a team calls for a whole different bag of tricks. Your mental energies, ideas and thoughts, may undergo some transformation. There is a natural sense of growth and development present. You are a productive thinker and you like to respond in positive ways to the needs of your friends and family. You are a good example for others to follow. A family discussion this evening may call for your administrative abilities. You will help to make the right decision, particularly when you remove emotions from the process. Others are inspired by your positive attitude.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Communications could be strained this morning. There could be a misunderstanding that needs clearing up—ask questions and remain respectful. By the afternoon all will be at ease. Everything will transform and begin to work together. You may discover communication is more expressive. Something lost is found by another person. A difficult project can be finished by you. A lost customer will find the right aisle or item, thanks to you. All is working together to make things work out right, particular when the participating parties are patient and have taken care of any physical problems. Your occupation will eventually bring about some incredible results. This evening is a good time to work in the garage or in a garden.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You can put your ideas into words and describe or analyze situations for yourself and others quite well. This could involve teaching and lecturing, etc. Chances are you work in one of the many service occupations, taking care of and looking after people. A bout of philosophy or even a little religion could have an enormous effect on your career during this time. Lasting values—whatever you find to be true and lasting—can guide you now as you open up avenues that have remained blocked. Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push forward in projects and in all aspects of your life. Things may seem almost magical in the way they work out at this time. You will successfully organize and accomplish your projects this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Obtaining and exchanging information is an important aspect today. You may be very forceful in what you say and think just now. With all of this emotional energy, you could speak or communicate very well—you have a great mental drive. Your positivism lets you get right to the point and you have little patience with those who do not tend to business. You have plenty of enthusiasm and warm up to things and people quickly. You have an inner self-confidence that burns with its own light. Figuring things out and looking for the best solution to problems are just where you love to spend your energies. You have a heightened interest in health and diet, as well as an urge to get your personal things organized into a rational system.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A supervisor or some senior worker steps in to create some sort of change in direction today. This is a go-with-the-flow sort of day and gives you plenty of opportunities for success in problem solving. Later today, you may consider restructuring your finances. You want a better sense of personal security for the future. Just as important is the way you are using all your resources. Your financial obligations may or may not increase just now, but your way of handling these obligations will change—for the better. However, because of some inside information, it looks as though your finances will show significant improvements—soon. Take time to review your goals and perhaps some of the methods by which you reach those goals.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your willingness to give credit to others that deserve recognition is commendable and higher-ups have noticed. You may also go beyond the assigned and expected tasks asked of you. Help may be needed and you just jump in and lend a hand. Your eagerness to take the risk and make a decision—above and beyond your job identity—will bring you recognition. Today is a self-expression day. You will find others listening to your particular ideas. A good conversation with those you love is possible this evening. Teach others to share their experiences by listening—you enjoy your family. Seek advice and support from your family and encourage your family to seek your advice and support as well. Family members enjoy a strong bond.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Taking care of the necessary parts of life—health, work and such—is the greater preoccupation just now. Sorting things out and getting them organized to utmost efficiency keeps you busy. When there is an opportunity to move forward in your business or in your work, do not hesitate to take on the new. These additional activities will not distract you from keeping a good balance in your life. You have all the drive and energy you could want—it should be easy to focus this energy. The path is open and clear. Marriage and other close relationships give rise to great expectations particularly now, as a new cycle gets underway in your life. Enjoy and appreciate your ties to others; seek and promote harmony in the interaction between people. Be good to you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a period of great mental activity and heightened communication with others. Your own growth and success may be linked to questions of security—home and family, in particular. Faith, family, friends, mental and physical fitness, volunteer services and finances are the subjects you will want to keep your mind keyed into while you are learning to balance your energies. These are the things that are needed for good balance. This may be a time during which you can get ahead by finding your limits and establishing a home base from which to move forward. Don't be afraid to project your image. Group cooperation, perhaps teaching or lecturing, could further your career now. Prepare yourself for a good tomorrow by doing the best you can today.

Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina Faso	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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Friday, October 18, 2019

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DR KHALED ALMERRI
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- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
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- ◆ Single Port Surgery
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- ◆ Surgical treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ SIAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Pilonidal sinus)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernia Surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

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- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
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Plastic Surgery Consultant



Dr. Ahmed Al Borjy
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Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

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

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

Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

- Bariatric surgeries.
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- Anal surgeries.

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Friday, October 18, 2019

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shaikh Yasmin Faisal Mohamed holder of Indian Passport No. J4434237 issued at Kuwait on 28/11/2010 having permanent address Pathan Chawal Bldg, 2nd floor, Gunpowder road, Mazgaon, Mumbai 400010 MS and presently residing in Kuwait, do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: Yasmin Faisal Mohamed and Surname: Shaikh. Objections if and may be forwarded to Indian Embassy, Diplomatic Enclave, Safat, Arabian Gulf Street, Kuwait City Pin code 13015. (C 5462) 18-10-2019

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

I, Mariamma 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: Mariamma 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, Sherry 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: Sherry 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

MATRIMONIAL

Goan wellknown Catholic family for a girl 38 yrs. 5.3 slim, God fearing, convent educated Bachelor of Pharmacist, she has got her own medical shop in Goa. Seek alliance from well educated & settled Catholic Bachelor below 42 yrs. Good looking clean habit teetotaler from Kuwait/India. Interested send details CV with photograph to email: technoarch43@gmail.com (C 5461) 18-10-2019

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

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

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DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain later on.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 17/10/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	37 °C	26 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	39 °C	19 °C		
ABDALY	40 °C	19 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	40 °C	24 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	35 °C	29 °C		
AHMADI	35 °C	28 °C		
NUWAISIB	39 °C	22 °C		
WAFRA	41 °C	21 °C		
SALMY	39 °C	22 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	10/18	Hot with a chance for scattered light rain	40 °C	23 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Saturday	10/19	Hot and some high clouds will appear	40 °C	22 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Sunday	10/20	Hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	39 °C	23 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Monday	10/21	Hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	37 °C	22 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:31
Sunrise	05:51
Zuhr	11:33
Asr	14:49
Sunset	17:16
Isha	18:33

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	38 °C
MIN. Temp.	23 °C
MAX. RH	71 %
MIN. RH	18 %
MAX. Wind	S 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm



Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171	Air India	22456700
Jazeera Airways	177	Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536	Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Turkish Airlines	1884918	Egypt Air	22421578
American Airlines	22087425	Swiss Air	22421516
	22087426	Saudia	22426306
Jet Airways	22924455	Middle East Airlines`	22423073
FlyDubai	22414400	Lufthansa	22422493
Qatar Airways	22423888	PIA	22421044
KLM	22425747	Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6	Indian Airlines	22456700
British Airways	22425635	Oman Air	22958787
Air France	22430224	Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Emirates	22921555	Aeroflot	22404838/9

Business

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2019

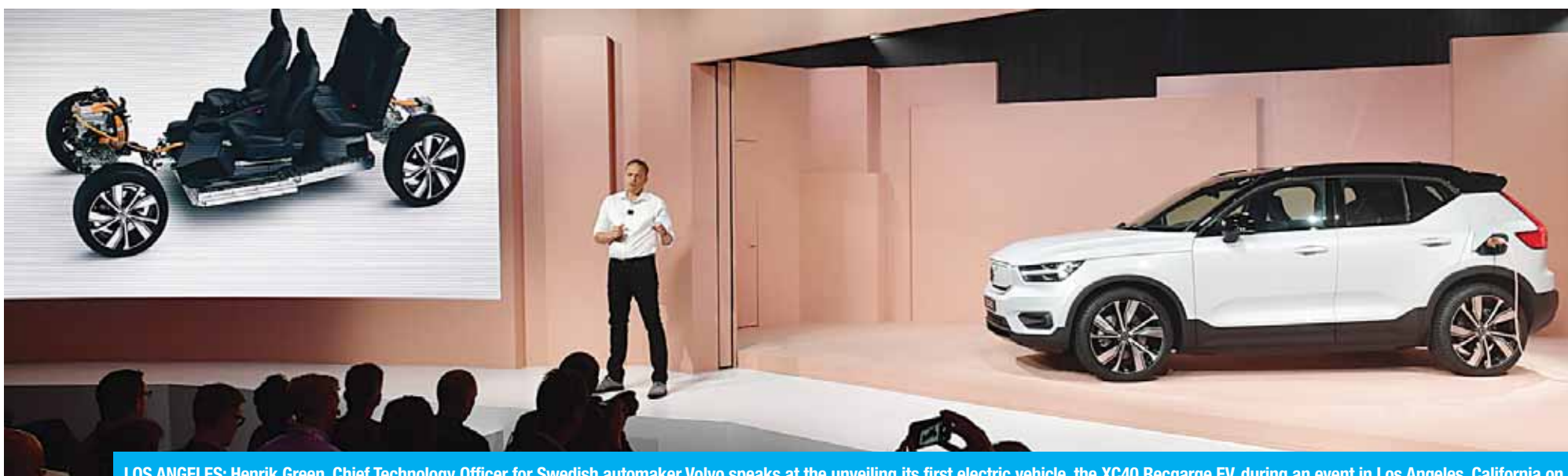
39 UK retail sales growth softens as department stores disappoint



40 Virgin Galactic unveils commercial space suits for private astronauts



41 US firms say near-term outlook dimming amid slow growth: Fed



LOS ANGELES: Henrik Green, Chief Technology Officer for Swedish automaker Volvo speaks at the unveiling its first electric vehicle, the XC40 Recharge EV, during an event in Los Angeles, California on Wednesday. —AFP

US housing starts fall; factory activity slows

Weekly jobless claims increase 4,000 to 214,000

WASHINGTON: US homebuilding tumbled from a more than a 12-year high in September, but single-family home construction rose for a fourth straight month, suggesting the housing market remains supported by lower mortgage rates even as the economy is slowing. Other data yesterday showed a deceleration in factory activity in the mid-Atlantic region in October. A 15-month trade war between the United States and China has dented business sentiment, leading to a drop in capital expenditure and a downturn in manufacturing. Ironically, manufacturing has borne the brunt of the trade tariffs, which the White House says are necessary to protect industries from what it says is unfair foreign competition.

Housing starts declined 9.4 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.256 million units last month as construction in the volatile multi-family housing segment dropped, the Commerce Department said. Data for August was revised higher to show homebuilding accelerating to a pace of 1.386 million units, which was the highest level since June 2007, instead of marching to a rate of 1.364 million units as previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast housing starts decreasing to a pace of 1.320 million units in September. Housing starts rose 1.6 percent on a year-on-year basis in September. Building permits fell 2.7 percent to a rate of 1.387 million in September. Permits jumped to a rate of 1.425 million units in August, the highest level since May 2007.

The housing market, the most sensitive sector to interest rates, has perked up in recent months, finally benefiting from the Federal Reserve's monetary policy easing, which has pushed down mortgage rates from last year's multi-year highs. But the sector, which accounts for about 3.1 percent of the economy, continues to be constrained by land and labor shortages. A survey on Wednesday showed confidence among homebuilders jumped to a more than 1-1/2-year high in October. Builders, however, said they "continue to remain cautious due to ongoing supply side constraints and concerns about a slowing economy." The 30-year fixed mortgage rate has dropped more than 135 basis points to an average of 3.57 percent, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac.

Further declines are likely with the Fed expected to cut interest rates for the third time later this month to limit the drag on the economy from the trade war, which has weighed on business spending and manufacturing. The US central bank cut rates in September after reducing borrowing costs in July for the first time since 2008. Economists expect a mild rebound in residential investment in the third quarter after it contracted for six straight quarters, the longest such stretch since the 2007-2009 recession.

Single-family homebuilding, which accounts for the largest share of the housing market, rose 0.3 percent to a rate of 918,000 units in September, the highest level since January. Single-family housing

starts fell in the Northeast, West and Midwest, but rose in the populous South. Permits to build single-family homes rose 0.8 percent to a rate of 882,000 units last month, the highest level since February 2018. Starts for the volatile multi-family housing segment plunged 28.2 percent to a rate of 338,000 units in September. Permits for the construction of multi-family homes dropped 8.2 percent to a rate of 505,000 units last month. US financial markets were little moved by the data.

Layoff low

In a separate report yesterday, the Philadelphia Fed said its business conditions index fell to a reading of 5.6 in October from 12.0 in September. The survey's measures of new orders and employment rose. The region covers eastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware. A survey from the New York Fed on Monday showed a measure of business activity in New York state edged up, though the outlook over the next six months remained subdued. The Philadelphia Fed survey's measure of prices received by manufacturers in the mid-Atlantic region fell in October, as did a gauge of prices paid by factories. The survey's six-month business conditions index rose to a reading of 33.8 this month from 20.8 in September. Its six-month capital expenditures index increased to 36.4 from a reading of 25.9 in the prior month.

US manufacturing activity tumbled to a more than

10-year low in September. Though President Donald Trump announced a temporary truce in the trade war last Friday, which delayed additional tariffs that were due this month, economists saw little change in fortunes at factories without all import duties being rolled back. The fading stimulus from last year's \$1.5 trillion tax cut package is also contributing to manufacturing's woes.

Manufacturing, which makes up about 11 percent of the economy, has also been hurt by an inventory glut, especially in the automobile sector, and design troubles at Boeing. The troubles in manufacturing have contributed to a slowing economy and demand for labor. Still, layoffs remain low amid a shortage of workers. In a third report on Thursday, the Labor Department said initial claims for state unemployment benefits increased 4,000 to a seasonally adjusted 214,000 for the week ended Oct. 12. Economists had forecast claims rising to 215,000 in the latest week. The four-week moving average of initial claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, rose 1,000 to 214,750 last week. Last week's claims data covered the survey period for the nonfarm payrolls component of October's employment report. The four-week average of claims rose 2,000 between the September and October survey period, suggesting little change in the moderate pace of job growth. —Reuters

Business

Germany blames trade wars and Brexit for falling growth outlook

Berlin says domestic growth remains intact

BERLIN: Germany yesterday slashed its growth outlook for next year, saying it expects trade conflicts, Brexit and other sources of uncertainty abroad to continue weighing on an economy that remains buttressed by domestic strength. Europe's largest economy should expand by 1.0 percent in 2020, the economy ministry said, down from a 1.5 percent forecast it made earlier this year.

Nevertheless, "even if prospects are currently muted, there is no threat of an economic crisis," Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said in a statement. "Export-oriented industries" are suffering, but "domestic growth remains intact" with "rising employment and incomes", he added.

For the full year 2019, government economists stuck to their projection of 0.5 percent growth this year. That is a fraction of the 1.4 percent achieved in 2018 or 2.2 percent the year before. Germany is already believed to be in a technical recession-defined as two successive quarters of negative growth.

Economic output fell by 0.1 percent in April-June, and July-September figures slated for release next month are expected by the Bundesbank (central bank) to show another contraction. The first recession in nine years marks the end of a post-2008 golden decade for Europe's largest economy, which has enjoyed steady growth buoyed by both exports and domestic demand. But the country's massive trade surplus—a source of national pride for many media outlets—has turned into a weakness since President Donald Trump launched his US-China trade war.

Other risks to international commerce, like

Brexit uncertainty, have also weighed on Germany. Increasing numbers of large firms are announcing layoffs or slashing workers' hours, job creation is slowing and economic indicators point toward slowdown. Germany is now the "problem child" of Europe, daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung judged yesterday, with no other industrialized country apart from Italy slated to grow so slowly next year.

Target 'black zero'

With economic headwinds mounting, calls have grown at home and abroad for Germany to loosen the straps of its self-imposed fiscal straitjacket. Economists, politicians and commentators are discussing whether it might be time to abandon Berlin's longstanding "black zero" policy of no new debt, allowing government to spend and stimulate growth. International institutions like the IMF have long called on Germany to fork out more, repeating its appeal Tuesday for Berlin to deploy its financial firepower.

More such calls can be expected from a G20 finance ministers' gathering in Washington yesterday, which will likely highlight the potential benefits for Germany's partners. "If the current economic slowdown in Germany leads to a rethink of the role of expansionary fiscal policies and reinterpreting the 'Black Zero', both the German and the eurozone economy would benefit," said ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski. "When, if not now, is the perfect time for investing in digital and traditional infrastructure projects given negative interest rates and high investment needs?" he asked.

So far, Chancellor Angela Merkel's govern-



TOULOUSE: French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire (center) listens to German Finance Minister and Vice-Chancellor Olaf Scholz (left) past German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier (right) before posing for a family picture during a meeting, one day before a key EU summit that may approve a divorce deal with Britain, in Toulouse, southwestern France. — AFP

ment has resisted such calls, even if the finance ministry has said "Germany has the firepower for a real crisis" with stimulus and structural reform plans at the ready if needed. For now, the government is still taking a cautious stance, highlighting that a shallow "technical" recession doesn't justify the high levels of government intervention seen during a deeper downturn.

What's more, opponents of simply throwing more money at Germany's problems note

that even massive government budget surpluses raked in during the good years have not been used up.

"Please, take the money!" finance minister Olaf Scholz told municipalities, federal states and investors last month. Scholz pointed to 15 billion euros (\$16.5 billion) available in green and infrastructure funds and subsidies he said had often been held up by slow or overly complex bureaucratic processes. — AFP

Southwest Airlines again pushes back MAX return date

NEW YORK: Southwest Airlines yesterday again pushed back its target date for returning the Boeing 737 MAX to service because of uncertainty over when regulators will re-certify the plane.

The domestic-oriented US carrier will keep the plane out of service through February 8, 2020, about a month later than the prior timeframe, the company said yesterday on its website. The planes have been grounded globally since mid-March following two crashes that killed 346 people. Boeing has said it expects to receive regulatory approval to resume flights in the fourth quarter of 2019. "Southwest Airlines continues to monitor information from Boeing and the Federal Aviation Administration on the impending 737 MAX software enhancements and training requirements," the company said.

"We remain confident that, once certified by the FAA, the enhancements will support the safe operation of the MAX." The move comes as rival US carriers American Airlines and United Airlines in recent days also pushed their target dates for the MAX back to 2020 as the FAA process has dragged on. Southwest said "proactively" removing the plane from service would "reduce last-minute flight cancellations and unexpected disruptions to our customers' travel plans." Boeing last week stripped Dennis Muilenburg of his position as chairman at Boeing, although he remains chief executive. The move came hours after a report by international regulators criticized Boeing and the FAA over its certification of the MAX. — AFP

Africa could see 'huge advantages' from free trade pact: Malpass

WASHINGTON: Countries in Africa stand to reap big economic benefits from a continental free trade agreement but policymakers will have to be pragmatic about the steps needed to implement it, World Bank President David Malpass said Wednesday. All but one of the 55 African nations have signed onto the AfCFTA pact which is due to take effect July 1, 2020 to reduce tariffs and other trade barriers in the region. So far 27 countries have ratified it, while only Eritrea failed to join the pact. "In order to make it work, I think pragmatism is going to be important for the countries to find ways to implement the parts of the agreement that facilitate trade," Malpass told reporters. He stressed that facilitating the nuts and bolts of trade across borders is as important as any trade agreement.

"This means harmonization of tariffs, and it means customs and border processes that are efficient enough to allow goods to transfer across borders. So I think those are key parts of making the African trade agreement work well," he said. "I'm optimistic that there are huge advantages from trade." The International Monetary Fund has



WASHINGTON, DC: World Bank President David Malpass speaks at a news conference during the IMF/World Bank 2019 Annual Fall Meetings, in Washington, DC, yesterday. — AFP

highlighted the potential benefits of the trade deal, which would cover an estimated combined current GDP of \$2.5 trillion, and a population of more than one billion, 60 percent of whom are below the age of 25. Reda Cherif of the IMF's African Department said the region can get a lot of benefit from changes that do not require the massive investments that roads and ports would call for.

IMF research shows that "improved logistics would actually go a long way," having a big effect on trade, making this "low-hanging fruit" for countries, Cherif said at a seminar on the sidelines of the IMF and World Bank annual meetings. And he noted that potential to see a big increase in trade on the continent in manufactured goods. The trade pact also "has the potential to raise Africa's low productivity and promote higher investment, thereby helping to increase income levels and reducing poverty," the IMF said in a report published in May. — AFP

Business

UK retail sales growth softens as department stores disappoint

Spending rising at weakest pace since Q2 2016

LONDON: British shoppers grew more cautious about their spending in the three months to September despite rising wages, official figures showed yesterday, raising concerns about the health of the economy in the run-up to Brexit.

Consumer spending has been the biggest driver of British economic growth since June 2016's referendum to leave the European Union, but there have been increasing signs that this is starting to soften. Looking at the third quarter as a whole, which strips out monthly volatility, quarterly sales growth held steady at 0.6 percent while the annual pace of expansion dropped to 3.1 percent from 3.6 percent in the second quarter, the weakest since the late 2018. Stripping out inflation adjustments, growth in retail spending was the weakest in more than three years.

Sterling showed little reaction to the data, with markets focused on whether Prime Minister Boris Johnson can broker a Brexit deal that is acceptable both to Brussels and Britain's parliament before the country is due to leave on Oct. 31. "September's retail sales figures were perhaps a bit of a relief given the intense Brexit uncertainty, but were hardly a picture of strength," economist Ruth Gregory of consultancy Capital Economics said.

Monthly retail sales volumes were flat in September and annual sales growth picked up to 3.1 percent from a weak 2.6 percent in August, the Office for National Statistics said - slightly less of a recovery than economists had forecast in a Reuters poll. "Food shops bounced back after a weak few months, but there was yet more bad

news for department stores, with sales continuing to fall in September," ONS statistician Rhian Murphy said. Some retailers said unusually rainy weather had hurt demand too, the ONS added.

Department stores down

Sales in the 'non-specialized stores' category - which includes department stores - dropped by an annual 2.0 percent in the third quarter, the biggest decline since the first three months of 2009 when Britain was mired in recession. At the start of this month, major retailer John Lewis Partnership said it would cut a third of senior managers and merge its supermarket and department store divisions to better tackle challenges from online stores.

The lackluster ONS figures are less bleak than a British Retail Consortium survey that showed the biggest fall in retail spending of any September since at least the mid-1990s. In recent months, surveys by the BRC and Confederation of British Industry have painted a weaker picture of the retail sector than subsequent official data - in part due to the former focusing more on large high-street chains.

The ONS data has a broader sample that includes more online and small retailers, and its measure of retail spending showed annual growth slowing to 3.5 percent in the third quarter from 4.1 percent in the second quarter, the weakest since the second quarter of 2016. Until recently consumers appeared to have largely taken Brexit in their stride, helped by weaker in-

been terrific, relative to expectations," said Paul Nolte, portfolio manager at Kingsview Asset Management in Chicago. Also supporting sentiment was the Chinese Commerce Ministry saying it hoped to reach a phased agreement in a protracted trade dispute with the United States and cancel tariffs as soon as possible. Rising uncertainties around the US-China trade war, increasing geopolitical risks and weak domestic economic indicators have recently hit sentiment, with investors now focusing on third-quarter earnings for clarity on these factors impacting Corporate America. Analysts are expecting S&P 500 third-quarter earnings to fall by 3 percent, which would mark the first year-on-year contraction since the earnings recession that ended in 2016. However, of the 43 S&P 500 companies to have posted quarterly results so far, 86 percent have beaten expectations. At 8:34 am ET, Dow e-minis were up 64 points, or 0.24 percent. S&P 500 e-minis were up 8.25 points, or 0.28 percent and Nasdaq 100 e-minis were up 30.5 points, or 0.38 percent.

Among other stocks, International Business Machines Corp slipped 6 percent after it missed quarterly revenue estimates due to weakness in its global technology services unit. Investors also targeted industrial earnings, which have been a mixed bag so far. CSX Corp shares rose 2.5 percent after the railroad operator beat quarterly profit expectations, while peer Union Pacific Corp fell 2.8 percent on missing earnings estimates. Honeywell International Inc cut its full-year sales forecast, as its customers limited spending amid a slowing global economy. Shares of the diversified manufacturer inched 0.3 percent higher. —Reuters



LONDON: British shoppers grew more cautious about their spending in the three months to September despite rising wages, official figures showed yesterday. —Reuters

flation and stronger growth in wages which are rising at the fastest pace in more than a decade.

That has aided the world's fifth-biggest economy at a time when many companies have been cutting back on investment because of uncertainty about Brexit. A separate Bank of England survey yesterday showed British lenders expect business loans will dry up in the next few months at the fastest rate since the financial crisis, boding poorly for investment as Brexit nears.

There have also been signs that consumers are turning more cautious as Britain's political crisis drags on. Several British retailers, including supermarkets Asda and Morrisons and home improvement group Kingfisher, have highlighted the drag of Brexit uncertainty on bigger purchases. But clothing retailer Next attributed a disappointing start to autumn trading to unusually warm weather in parts of Britain, rather than shoppers holding back on buying new items because of Brexit. —Reuters

Wall St cheers Brexit deal

NEW YORK: US stocks were on pace to open higher yesterday, after Britain struck a preliminary last-minute deal with the European Union easing some geopolitical jitters, while upbeat earnings from Netflix and Morgan Stanley affirmed a strong start to the reporting season.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said "we have a great new Brexit deal," lifting the mood across global equities, while he is yet to receive approval for the agreement in a vote at a session of the British parliament tomorrow. "Although, the agreement reached between the UK and EU needs to be approved by the British parliament, the headline news coupled with US earnings should boost market sentiment," said Peter Cardillo, chief market economist at Spartan Capital Securities in a client note. Netflix Inc shares jumped 8 percent in premarket trading, after the video streaming service provider added slightly more paying subscribers than Wall Street expected in the third quarter. Morgan Stanley gained 3.6 percent after the big lender beat analysts' expectations for quarterly profit, buoyed by higher revenue from bond trading and M&A advisory fees. This followed upbeat results earlier in the week from major US banks JPMorgan Chase & Co, Citigroup Inc, Bank of America and healthcare giants Johnson & Johnson and United-Health Group Inc.

"So far so good. Definitely the bank earnings have

Samsung to deploy software patch after Galaxy S10 fingerprint flaw found

SEOUL: A flaw with Samsung's top-end Galaxy S10 fingerprint system that allows the smartphone to be opened by a third party will soon be fixed, the tech giant said yesterday.

A user in the UK told the Sun newspaper earlier this week her Samsung device could be unlocked by someone else simply by putting on a screen protector and applying an unregistered fingerprint. "This means that if anyone got hold of my phone they can access it and within moments could be into the financial apps and be transferring funds," she was quoted as saying by the British paper.

Samsung's spokesperson in Seoul said the company will soon roll out a fix, but did not say what caused the recognition problem. "We are investigating this issue and will be deploying a software patch soon,"

she told AFP. The world's biggest smartphone maker has touted the phone's in-display fingerprint sensor as "revolutionary".

"When you place your thumb on the screen, it sends ultrasonic pulses to detect the 3D ridges and valleys of your unique fingerprint to quickly and accurately recognize you," the firm has said about the specific technology.

Kakaobank, South Korea's internet-only bank, has told its customers to use passwords and pattern locks when using its mobile banking services until the problem is fixed.

Samsung is the flagship subsidiary of the giant Samsung Group, by far the biggest of the family-controlled conglomerates that dominate business in the world's 11th-largest economy, and crucial to South Korea's economic health. But it has a history of humiliating setbacks with major products, most notably a worldwide recall of its Galaxy Note 7 devices in 2016 over exploding batteries, which hammered its reputation. Its first foldable smartphone, the Galaxy Fold, was launched last month months after faulty screens forced an embarrassing delay of its release. —AFP

Business

Virgin Galactic unveils commercial space suits for private astronauts

Company to offer flights at \$250,000 a ticket for first customers

YONKERS: The date for the world's first commercial space flight is not even confirmed yet, but future passengers' Star Trek-like outfits are ready and waiting. Virgin Galactic founder Richard Branson on Wednesday introduced the custom suits that will be worn by the first private astronauts.

US sportswear designer Under Armour "worked day and night for about two years on this project" said Branson, who himself served as a model at the presentation at a skydiving simulator near New York.

The 69-year-old British billionaire donned the personalized royal blue suit that he plans to wear during his company's inaugural flight-sometime in 2020. "Spacesuits are a part of the iconography of the first space age. Our visual impressions of human spaceflight and what astronauts wear are inextricably linked," Branson explained. "I love the way the spacewear looks and I love the way it feels." "I also love the fact that the next time I put it on, I will be on my way to space."

Under Armour president Kevin Plank said the suits' creators approached the design the same way they would think about clothing for extreme sports. "They approached it just like one of our typical uniform deals," Plank said. "They started with... understanding the sport, understanding the needs of the athlete, understanding the extreme conditions they go through." The material

for the suits, undergarments and boots were chosen for their ability to aid in the body's temperature and moisture regulation. A transparent interior pocket was added so space-exploring customers can keep pictures of their loved ones "literally... close to the heart," according to a statement from Virgin Galactic.

And they are designed so wearers can fit perfectly into the spacecraft's seats. Every space tourist will get their own custom suit that they can take home with them back on Earth, complete with a label of their name and their country's flag. "To be able to touch the suit is equivalent to touching the spacecraft for the first time," said British Trevor Beattie, one of some 600 clients already signed up for Virgin Galactic's first flights. "It's tangible."

"It's a new stage that we're involved in and we're closer still," he said. "But we're still patient, we can wait." Virgin Galactic, which was founded in 2004, has spent years developing its space program, and after a fatal accident in 2014, has twice crossed the barrier into the final frontier. But the company has still not yet piloted a space flight with clients on board.

The company plans to offer weightless flights to six passengers at a time, at \$250,000 (225,750 euros) a ticket for the first customers. The client-astronauts will be able to float around the ship's cabin and look out of portholes to see



NEW YORK: (Left to right) Virgin Galactic Founder Sir Richard Branson, Under Armour CEO Kevin Plank and Commercial director of Virgin Galactic Stephen Attenborough watch a presentation at an event on Wednesday in New York. — AFP

the curvature of the Earth, all while surrounded by the blackness of space.

The Virgin Galactic suits were unveiled in the

wake of NASA's presentation of new uniform prototypes for "real" American astronauts, who are set to return to the Moon in 2024. — AFP

Kenya president refuses to sign the budget over rate cap

NAIROBI: Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has demanded that lawmakers remove a cap on commercial lending rates, refusing to approve the 2019/20 (July-June) budget unless the limit is lifted, a document sent to parliament from the presidency showed yesterday.

The move was the latest in a running dispute over the rates cap, which the government and banking officials say is debilitating to the economy because it stalls lending. In 2016, the government limited rates banks can charge customers to four percentage points above the central bank's benchmark - currently 9 percent - saying they were concerned about high rates.

Last month, lawmakers rejected a June request by the Treasury to remove the cap, saying lenders had not proven they could be trusted to lower rates without pressure.

The move was the second attempt by the government to repeal the cap after a similar try last year was blocked by lawmakers. "The capping of interest rates has not addressed the intended objective particularly in expanding credit access," Kenyatta said in the note

to parliament. Kenyan bank shares surged on the Nairobi bourse after the news.

The cap has cut private sector credit growth as commercial banks cut off millions of low-income customers deemed too risky to lend to, government officials and bank executives say. It has also had a knock-on effect on the real economy as credit-starved businesses lay off workers and real estate developers find it hard to sell homes to a credit-short market. "Investors will react positively to this news, in light of the harmful effects of the loan rate cap on Kenya's growth prospects, and the unnecessary complication that it creates for policy," said Razia Khan, head of research for Africa at Standard Chartered in London.

The central bank, which found in a study last year that the cap had probably cut 0.4 percent from 2017's economic growth, has complained that the cap has also made it hard to transmit its monetary policy signals. It takes an average of 3-5 months longer for policy decisions to be transmitted under the capping regime compared with a free interest rate regime, Kenyatta said, citing research by the central bank.

Loansharks and other unregulated lenders have seized advantage of the gap created by the cap, charging desperate borrowers exorbitant rates, he said.

Lawmakers have the option of removing the cap from the bill or overruling the president if two thirds of the 349 members vote to override his position, said Aden Duale, parliament's majority leader. — Reuters

Sterling weakens amid mixed Brexit signals from Brussels

LONDON: The pound weakened yesterday after Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party said it could not support a Brexit deal proposed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the European Union, though it traded close to a five-month high. DUP leaders said in a statement that "as things stand, we could not support what is being suggested on customs and consent issues and there is a lack of clarity on VAT."

On top of that, French junior foreign affairs minister Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne said a Brexit deal was within "arm's reach" but still not guaranteed. Talks between Britain and the EU were continuing in Brussels as a two-day EU Summit began, with only two days left until Oct. 19, a deadline imposed by the British parliament on Johnson to reach a Brexit deal.

A deal was still possible, but that goal has not yet been reached, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said. If a deal is not reached by then, Johnson would have to ask the EU for another Brexit extension, according to a law known as the Benn Act. Market participants were expecting a Brexit deal to be announced on Wednesday before the summit began, given that Michel Barnier, EU's chief Brexit negotiator, had said on Tuesday that he needed a legal text agreed by the end of the day to recommend at the summit.

A senior EU official said yesterday there would be no Brexit negotiations with Johnson at the summit, adding that "maybe we will have a deal, maybe not." The official also said: "We are

still patient, but we still did not receive text of Brexit agreement." Sterling was down 0.2 percent at \$1.2804, not far from the five-month high of \$1.2877 reached the day before. It strengthened slightly after Bloomberg reported Barnier saying Northern's consent was not an obstacle to a deal and that a deal was almost completed.

Against the euro, the pound was down 0.3 percent at 86.63 pence, after rising on Wednesday by the same extent as against the dollar. In less than a week, sterling had managed to gain more than 6 percent in value against the dollar as hopes of a Brexit deal by the end of Oct. 31 have risen.

Analysts revised up their expectations of a Brexit deal by the end of the October deadline and traders cut back their short positions on the British currency.

Sterling shorts were already low, the latest data from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission showed. In the week to Oct. 8, positions fell to \$5.58 billion, the lowest in three months.

"It's difficult to see a return of a no-deal Brexit risk," said Lee Hardman, a currency analyst at MUFG. The bank now attached a 60 percent probability to a deal, and has lowered the probability of a no-deal Brexit to 30 percent. If a deal is reached, MUFG sees sterling/dollar rising back to between \$1.30 and \$1.35, it said. In case of a no-deal, the pound would fall sharply back towards \$1.20 and beyond, the bank added. — Reuters

Business

US firms say near-term outlook dimming amid slow growth: Fed

Fed expected to cut rates again this month

WASHINGTON: Less than stellar US growth in recent weeks has caused many businesses to lower their outlooks and they now expect the economy to weaken, the Federal Reserve said Wednesday. The Fed later this month is widely expected to cut interest rates for the third time this year as policymakers work to provide support for an economy that has begun to sag—even though for the moment it continues to outshine the rest of the industrialized world.

“The US economy expanded at a slight to modest pace... as business activity varied across the country,” the central bank said in its beige book report on the economy. “Business contacts mostly expect the economic expansion to continue; however many lowered their outlooks for growth in the coming six to 12 months.” Most economists do not expect a recession in the next year but forecasting models still show the risk is increasing.

The hardships that manufacturing and agriculture face, according to the report, have not eased. And elsewhere the picture has been uneven, though household spending has remained “solid,” according to the Fed’s report, which gathers anecdotal accounts from around the country. The mood was generally better in the southern and western regions of the country, while the Midwest and Great Plains—regions key to President Donald Trump’s election upset in 2016 — were gloomier, according to the Fed.

Hard to find workers

Oxford Economics said in a client note that the report was “lackluster” and pointed to more rate cuts from the central bank. “We still expect two more rate cuts this year, in October and December,” the firm said. While US economic expansion is in a record 11th year and unemployment remains at 50-year lows, Fed members at their most recent meeting said they had become “more concerned” by mounting risks.

As the world economy begins to sputter, policymakers in recent weeks have said a clearer picture has emerged of the threat from President Donald Trump’s trade wars: Skittish companies, unsure of markets and prices, have held back on investment and could soon reduce hiring, which could then eat into consumer spending and growth. But according to the beige book, for many employers the main barrier to more steady hiring remains the lack of available and qualified workers. A major New York employment firm said “almost all job candidates are merely jumping from other jobs,” the report said, while pressure to fill open positions in the Philadelphia region remained “acute.”

But among manufacturers, the labor shortage had a different effect. Rather than lay off employees who could be hard to replace, some firms reduced worker hours instead. In the Boston region, “signs of slowing have become more widespread,” while growth in the New York area



NEW YORK: A customer counts his cash at the register while purchasing an item at a Best Buy store in Flushing, New York. — Reuters

“slowed to a subdued pace.” Conditions improved in the Chicago and St Louis regions. The early fallout from a month-long nationwide strike by UAW workers at General Motors plants “was

limited,” the Fed said. Wall Street was largely unmoved by the report, finishing slightly lower after Commerce Department data showed weakening consumer demand in September. — AFP

Ericsson sales rise but earnings hit by graft provision

STOCKHOLM: Ericsson yesterday reported rising sales, but the bottom line of the Swedish maker of telecommunications network equipment was hit as it set aside 1.1 billion euros to settle a US corruption probe. The company, which is competing against China’s Huawei and Finland’s Nokia in supplying operators with the backbone of the latest generation mobile telephone networks, said sales of 5G equipment helped drive the 6 percent increase in overall sales in July through September from the same period last year. “We continue to see strong momentum in our business, based on the strategy to increase our investments for technology leadership, including 5G,” chief executive Borje Ekholm said in a statement.

“We saw organic sales growth of 3 percent in the quarter, driven by the early adopters of 5G, in North America and North East Asia,” he added.

Organic sales restates figures to eliminate changes in exchange rates to help firms compare their performance between periods. But the company reported a net loss of 6.2 billion kronor (\$636 million, 575 million euros), compared to a profit of 2.7 billion kronor in the same period the previous year.

A 12 billion kronor provision that the company announced last month to cover the penalty Ericsson expects to receive in a US corruption investigation was responsible for the loss.

Ericsson has been cooperating since 2013 with an investigation by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and, since 2015, with an investigation by the US Department of Justice.

The investigation covers a period up to the first quarter of 2017, and involves operations in six countries: China, Djibouti, Indonesia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam. The company has acknowledged there had been several breaches of its code of business ethics. Ericsson noted that its underlying profitability is improving, pointing to an increase in its gross margin—what’s left after deducting production costs and sales—had risen to 37.8 percent from 36.9 percent, once restructuring charges were excluded. — AFP

S Africa endures second day of power cuts

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa was hit by power cuts for a second day yesterday as state utility Eskom said a number of generating units were still out of service and some would not be back up and running for a few days. On Wednesday Eskom was forced to impose first power cuts for the first time in around seven months, highlighting the challenge facing President Cyril Ramaphosa in rescuing the state company, which has been beset by financial and technical problems, and putting further pressure on the economy.

“Contingency measures have been put in place to manually feed coal to Medupi (power plant) whilst we look into a permanent solution to the coal conveyor belt failure at the station,” Eskom said.

“We have started receiving additional diesel supplies from the major oil service providers and as such we are comfortable that we can build the necessary diesel and water reserves to acceptable levels over the weekend.” Late on Wednesday Eskom said some generating units have already returned to service and it expects more units to return to service over the next few days.

South Africa’s rand currency fell as much as 1 percent against the dollar on Wednesday after Eskom announced the cuts. The power cuts also affected supplies to Zimbabwe, where Eskom exports up to 400 MW daily, the country’s electricity utility ZESA Hold-

ings said in a notice yesterday. Power cuts are a daily occurrence in Zimbabwe but Eskom’s supply problems were compounding the situation. In South Africa, the resumption of power cuts pose another risk to the already weak economy. Eskom produces more than 90 percent of South Africa’s electricity but has been hobbled by technical faults at its fleet of mainly coal-fired power stations.

It is also grappling with a debt pile which stood at around 440 billion rand (\$31 billion) as of March.

Ramaphosa has pledged 59 billion rand of support for Eskom over the next two years, on top of 230 billion rand in bailouts spread over the next 10 years. Officials say its operational losses mean Eskom will also have to take other measures to make it financially sustainable.

Natasha Mazzone, South African shadow minister of public enterprises at official opposition Democratic Alliance, yesterday said the government’s “mismanagement” of Eskom was to blame for the power cuts. South Africa yesterday approved the promulgation of its long-delayed plan for electricity generation until 2030, a cabinet statement said ahead of being publicly gazetted.

The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP 2019) will replace a previous blueprint not updated for almost a decade, and deals with electricity generation and energy mix South Africa will rely on in the immediate future. “The plan proposes nine interventions to ensure the country responds to the energy needs for the next decade,” said cabinet without elaborating.

The interventions consider energy demand and supply as well as international obligations for South Africa to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions, cabinet added. The government will disclose more details at a media briefing on Friday. — Reuters

Sports

Avalanche take 1st loss as Penguins win in OT

PITTSBURGH: Brandon Tanev scored a short-handed goal with 1:03 left in overtime Wednesday to give the host Pittsburgh Penguins a 3-2 win and hand the Colorado Avalanche their first loss of the season. Tanev's shot from the bottom of the left circle was inadvertently knocked across the goal line by Colorado's Gabriel Landeskog near the far post. Sidney Crosby had a goal and an assist, Jake Guentzel scored and Matt Murray made 26 saves for Pittsburgh, which won its fourth straight. Matt Calvert and Nathan MacKinnon scored for the Avalanche, who entered the game 5-0-0, the last remaining NHL team without a loss. Philipp Grubauer made 30 saves for Colorado.

Sharks 5, Hurricanes 2

Evander Kane scored a hat trick in the first period, and Martin Jones made it stand up with 36 saves as host San Jose picked up its third consecutive win with a victory over Carolina. Kane became the first San Jose player to complete a hat trick in an opening period. He also became the ninth Sharks player to score three-plus goals in a single period, the first since Patrick Marleau had four goals in the third period at Colorado on Jan. 23, 2017. His only other hat trick was a four-goal game for the Sharks at Calgary on March 16, 2018. Kane also had an assist Wednesday. Barclay Goodrow and Tomas Hertl also scored goals, and Brent Burns and Hertl each had two assists for San Jose.

Oilers 6, Flyers 3

Connor McDavid scored once in a five-point game, and Leon Draisaitl scored twice and added an assist as host Edmonton made quick

work of Philadelphia with their sixth win in seven games this season. McDavid has 17 points through seven games this season, a feat equaled by in franchise history only by Wayne Gretzky. Mikko Koskinen stopped 49 shots for the Oilers, who have won six of their seven contests. Ryan Nugent-Hopkins had a goal and an assist for Edmonton, which also got goals from Ethan Bear and Brandon Manning.

Ducks 5, Sabres 2

Rickard Rakell, Ryan Getzlaf and Adam Henrique scored second-period goals as host Anaheim rallied to hand Buffalo its first regulation defeat of the season. The Ducks, returning from a 2-2-0 road trip, won at home for the third time in three tries. The Sabres had their three-game winning streak snapped. Victor Olofsson scored his sixth goal of the season on the man advantage in the second period for Buffalo, extending his own record by becoming the first player in NHL history to score the first eight goals of his career all on the power play.

Capitals 4, Maple Leafs 3

John Carlson finished with one goal and two assists and host Washington used a three-goal burst over 78 seconds in the second period to top Toronto and pick up its first home win in four tries this season. Carlson now has three goals and 11 assists to rank among the NHL scoring leaders. The defenseman assisted on Washington's first two goals and scored the fourth one, while Nicklas Backstrom added a goal and an assist, and Jakub Vrana and Evgeny Kuznetsov also scored for the Capitals. Toronto got first-period goals from Kasper Kapanen and Ilya



WASHINGTON DC: Morgan Rielly #44 of the Toronto Maple Leafs handles the puck in front of Radko Gudas #33 of the Washington Capitals during the third period at Capital One Arena. — AFP

Mikheyev, seemingly taking charge with a 2-0 lead. But rookie Ilya Samsonov, starting in goal for Washington, recovered to make 29 saves. Michael Hutchinson made 28 saves for Toronto.

Blue Jackets 3, Stars 2

Zach Werenski and Alexander Wennberg each had first-period goals, and host Columbus added to Dallas' early-season misery. Sonny Milano added a highlight-reel, third-period goal,

and Joonas Korpisalo stopped 30 shots as the Blue Jackets posted back-to-back wins for the first time on the young season. Columbus also extended its winning streak over Dallas to eight games. The Stars fell to 1-6-1 and continue to struggle on offense. Miro Heiskanen scored near the end of the first period, and Joe Pavelski finally got his first goal with Dallas, which has totaled just 15 goals and is a paltry 1-for-24 on the power play. — Reuters

Angels hire Joe Maddon as manager

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Angels and Joe Maddon agreed to terms on a contract to make him the team's next manager. In making the official announcement on Wednesday, the Angels did not release contract specifics. The Los Angeles Times and Orange County Register, however, both reported it was a three-year deal, with ESPN reporting the value at between \$12 million and \$15 million.

For the 65-year-old Maddon, it's a return to the organization with which he spent 31 seasons before becoming the manager of the Rays in 2006. Maddon, who mutually parted ways with the Chicago Cubs after the 2019 regular season, was with the Angels' organization in various capacities — including as a player, scout, coach and interim manager — from 1975 to 2005. Maddon spent nine seasons in Tampa Bay and five more as manager in Chicago, including winning a World Series title with the Cubs in 2016. He has a career managerial record of 1,252-1,068.

After Game 4 of the American League Championship Series was rained out on Wednesday, the Houston Astros and the host New York Yankees announced their starters for the next contest. Houston's Zack Greinke will oppose New York's Masahiro Tanaka on Thursday. The right-handers previously were due to pitch Game 5, which has now moved back to Friday. Both teams were planning to have "bullpen games" in Game 4 prior to the postponement. The Astros lead the best-of-seven series 2-1. — Reuters

Shanahan focused on winning, not revenge, vs Redskins

SAN FRANCISCO: The San Francisco 49ers are one of two remaining unbeaten teams in the NFL, but Kyle Shanahan hasn't forgotten the four turmoil-filled seasons he spent in Washington. Shanahan returns to the nation's capital as a head coach for the second time when the 49ers visit the Redskins on Sunday, and he took a not-so-thinly-veiled shot at his old organization on Wednesday. Shanahan served as offensive coordinator under his father Mike from 2010-13 when Washington went 24-40. The Shanahans were fired after a 3-13 campaign in 2013, and neither is fond of Redskins owner Daniel Snyder. Asked by reporters this week about the best part of working in Washington, Shanahan had a quick answer: "Being able to work with my dad and be around some other good coaches." The follow-up question was, "What's the worst part?" "Everything else," Shanahan said.

In other words, Shanahan is highly motivated to make sure the 49ers (5-0) put on a strong performance against the Redskins (1-5), who picked up their lone victory last Sunday against the Miami Dolphins. Shanahan is also working to make sure he doesn't get sidetracked by personal grievances. Along those same lines is not allowing the strong start — the New England Patriots are the only other unbeaten squad — to cause his team to rest on its laurels.

"It's been definitely more fun this year than the last two years," said Shanahan, referring to the 49ers' combined 10-22 mark over his first two seasons. "I've also been in this long enough (that) I'm

not celebrating anything yet. We're 5-0, it's very early ... 5-0 doesn't guarantee anything. We've got a tough division, got a tough schedule ahead of us." Washington isn't one of the hardest foes on the slate, but the Redskins are feeling a little life after the 17-16 win over the Dolphins in interim coach Bill Callahan's first game at the helm.

Jay Gruden was fired after a 0-5 start that included four consecutive double-digit losses. Callahan immediately made the running game more of a priority, and that was just fine with veteran running back Adrian Peterson. Peterson rushed for a season-best 118 yards on 23 carries against Miami for his 55th career 100-yard rushing effort. The 34-year-old entered the contest with just 108 yards on 40 carries. "It felt good to get into a groove and pick up first downs to keep the chains moving as an offense and to be a big part of that in the running game," Peterson told reporters. "The guys up front, they did an incredible job. ... I think we all needed this."

It remains to be seen if Peterson can be as effective against San Francisco, which ranks sixth in the NFL in rushing defense at 87.2 yards per game. The 49ers also rank second in total defense (237.4 yards per game) and scoring defense (12.8 points per game) and lead the league in passing defense (150.2 yards per game). Callahan, whose team ranks 30th in scoring offense (15.0 points per game) and 28th in total offense (286.5 yards per game), is aware moving the ball will be a challenge.

"At the end of the day, it's getting on the board and it is winning by any means necessary," Callahan said. "We'll do whatever we need to do. Of course we want to establish the run and we want to keep that identity just like everybody else around the league, but they're good, they're a really good challenge for our football team." The San Francisco offense has been clicking all season and ranks third in scoring offense (29.4 points per game) and fourth in total offense (408.0 yards per game). — Reuters

Kohli hot on Smith's heels as India eye clean sweep

RANCHI: On-song Virat Kohli is looking to top-ple Aussie run machine Steve Smith in the international batting rankings as India push for a whitewash over South Africa in the third Test starting tomorrow. Kohli's career-best 254 not out in India's second successive win in the three-match series moved him to within one point of Smith in the International Cricket Council Test chart.

Smith replaced Kohli at number one last month following his blazing Ashes series against England and after the Indian star made a golden duck against the West Indies. The Australian, who only returned to Tests in August after a year-long ban for ball-tampering, is out of action in the five-day format until November 21 when Australia host Pakistan.

Kohli regained lost ground against the struggling South Africans in the current series as he scored his seventh Test double century, joining England great Wally Hammond and Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene. He also went past Don Bradman's tally of 6,996 runs in 52 Tests. With the Pune win last Sunday, India registered a record 11th straight Test series triumph at home. Australia had two streaks of 10 home series wins. "I'm just happy to be where I am. Putting the team in a commanding position is the only thing I strive for," said Kohli, who tops the ODI batting chart.

'Solid object'

South Africa suffered a fresh blow on Thursday as opening batsman Aiden Markram was ruled out of the final Test after hurting his wrist when he "lashed out at a solid object". Cricket South Africa said. The incident happened "in frustration" after Markram was out for his second duck of the second Test in Pune last Sunday as India won the match by an innings and 137 runs, and with it the series.

Markram called his actions "unacceptable" and said that "to let the team down is what hurts me the most". No replacement has been called up, opening the way for Zubayr Hamza to make his second Test appearance. Skipper Faf du Plessis will meanwhile be hoping to give his team more of a chance from the get-go in Ranchi after losing the toss in the first two Tests. It allowed India to amass a mammoth first-innings total of 502 in Visakhapatnam as South Africa's bowlers toiled, and then 601 in Pune.

This prompted former England captain Michael Vaughan to call Indian Test pitches "boring". Dean Elgar's 160 has been the visitors' only standout show in the series so far. Pacer Kagiso Rabada said the up-and-coming team — following the retirements of Hashim Amla and Dale Steyn — need to up their performance and their mindset.



PUNE: Indian captain Virat Kohli (R) plays a shot during the second day of the second Test cricket match between India and South Africa, at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium. — AFP

"Our team is fresh and young, so the best thing we can do is look at where we can improve and remember our strengths and build on them," he said. He added: "From a physical point of

view, we need to execute our skills and from a mental point of view, we need to believe we can do it in certain situations. It's a balance we're working on." — AFP

Historic marathon adds to Ineos' sporting portfolio

PARIS: When Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge became the first man to run a marathon in under two hours in Vienna this month, his performance had been meticulously planned by one of sport's major new players, the petrochemicals giant Ineos. Founded and 60-percent owned by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe, Ineos is using its vast profits to roll out a series of cutting-edge sporting projects in top-level cycling, football, athletics and sailing.

"We make six or seven billion dollars a year in profit, so what's wrong with investing a bit of that in sport?" Ratcliffe said recently. A highly driven amateur sportsman himself, the self-made businessman was on hand to personally congratulate Kipchoge as he crossed the finish line. With Kipchoge and his pacemakers decked out in Ineos-branded vests as he triumphantly stopped the clock at 1hr 59min 40sec, the brand was broadcast to the four corners of the earth.

The feat has propelled marathon running into a new era, even though the world athletics body IAAF do not recognize it as a world record due to the conditions in which it was conducted. A group of 35 pacemakers worked in shifts to form a V-shaped aerodynamic drag position using expertise that Ineos gained from cycling's peloton, decreasing the impact of the air on Kipchoge's body by 50-70 percent whether there was wind or not.

Research into carbohydrate intake, which is key to enhancing performance in cycling, was also used during Kipchoge's exploit. Under the slogan "No human is limited", Ineos's efforts, or sports marketing activities, have themselves few limits. When the 21-year-old Colombian cycling prodigy Egan Bernal won the Tour de France in July he did so under the Ineos banner after Ratcliffe stepped in to sponsor cycling's most successful outfit, formerly known as Team Sky. "Sky was the reference in terms of sports performance promoting the name of the sponsor," Vincent

Chaudel, founder of France's Observatoire du Sport Business, told AFP of the setup that won five Tour de France titles in six years in the colors of the media company.

'Red Bull-type strategy'

Football is also part of the Ineos sports business plan and Ratcliffe, a lifelong Manchester United fan, has been mentioned as a possible future owner of Chelsea, if Russian tycoon Roman Abramovich ever sells the Premier League club. Its Stamford Bridge stadium is close to Ineos's Knightsbridge headquarters.

Having previously bought and so far failed to revive the fortunes of Swiss club Lausanne Sport, Ineos bought French top-flight club Nice in the close season with a view to helping them into the Champions League. "Lausanne was an investment to be close to the major sports bodies," Chaudel said, noting that the International Olympic Committee are based in the city and UEFA's headquarters are in Nyon, 40 kilometres away. "The Nice investment came with a new stadium that is already built. And the Riviera has marketing potential."

Ineos has also provided Britain's Olympic medal-winning sailor Ben Ainslee with a 110-million-euro (\$121.6-million) yacht in a bid to bring the America's Cup back to Britain in 2021. "The strategy is similar to Red Bull where they are not just sponsors but owners. Look at the marathon, they organised it down to the last detail, mastering every aspect of the operation," Virgile Caillet, the general delegate of Union Sport & Cycle, a body representing 1,400 sports businesses. "Ineos is a big international group working in a sector which is not the most virtuous sound sports."

Ratcliffe, 66, had modest beginnings in a Manchester council estate before attending Birmingham University and the London Business School. He founded Ineos in 1998 and the company now has 18,000 employees and a turnover of 60 billion euros a year. The company is organized into 20 stand-alone businesses spanning oil refineries, car production and chemicals. It had controversial fracking ambitions in Britain but is now believed to have set its sights on the US shale gas industry after Ratcliffe complained of the British government's "unworkable" rules to prevent earth tremors. — AFP

UAE captain Naveed charged with corruption

DUBAI: United Arab Emirates captain Mohammed Naveed was on Wednesday charged with corruption ahead of the World Twenty 20 qualifiers and admitted: "I have let everybody down". Naveed was one of three UAE cricketers charged by the International Cricket Council (ICC). Batsman Shaiman Anwar and right-arm pace bowler Qadeer Ahmed have also been charged by the ICC, the three players facing a total of 12 counts of breaching the governing body's anti-corruption rules.

All three have been provisionally suspended with immediate effect and axed from the UAE squad for the 2020 World T20 qualifying event which starts in Dubai and Abu Dhabi on Friday. "My family is let down, my friends are let down. Everybody is let down. This was my mistake," 32-year-old Naveed told The National newspaper. "I am very sincere about my game, I am very sincere about my career. I have been successful for the UAE around the world, in leagues, for franchises. That is because I am very sincere about my game."

"Now this has happened, I feel guilty. Why did I not talk to the board, why did I not talk to the ICC? It is my mistake, and I feel guilty." Naveed told The National he had blundered in failing to report an approach made to him by "a fixer" who had pretended to be an official representing a franchise in the T10 League also slated for the UAE in November. He said he ended the conversation as soon as he realized he had been misled, but admitted he did not report the approach to the ICC.

A fourth individual, Mehardeep Chhayakar, was also charged for refusing to cooperate with the ICC. "Three UAE players and a participant in cricket from Ajman have been charged with 13 counts of breaching cricket's anti-corruption rules and the players have been provisionally suspended with immediate effect," the ICC said in its statement. The UAE selectors offered no explanation earlier this week when Naveed was left out of the squad for the T20 qualifiers, replaced as skipper by spinner Ahmed Raza. — AFP

Sports

Springboks lean on local league knowledge as they face Japan

TOKYO: When South Africa takes on Japan in the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals, the Springboks will be well aware of their pacy game thanks to several players having had stints in the Japanese Top League. Established in 2003, the Top League comprises 16 teams mostly owned by large corporations. Well funded and able to entice marquee players, it has successfully attracted a host of stars notably from Super Rugby, giving it a wider profile in a country where professional football and baseball dominate.

"The club teams do everything at 100mph: training, fitness, the guys don't rest. It's a fantastic work ethic on and off the field, a fantastic culture," said Springbok No 8 Duane Vermeulen. Vermeulen is on the books of Kubota Spears, with the Top League this year also featuring the likes of ex-All Black great Dan Carter (Kobe Kobelco Steelers) and Australian star Matt Giteau (Suntory Sungoliath).

"I really enjoyed it," current Bok full-back Willie Le Roux said of his two seasons with the Canon Eagles, having signed from English Premiership team Wasps for Toyota Verblitz post-World Cup. "It's very open. If I had to describe it, it's like sevens in a 15-man game. It's very quick, you run from everywhere. "Sometimes there's not much structure, so everyone just plays what they see. It was quite fun, enjoyable."

On the coaching side, assistant Springbok coach Matt Proudfoot described his time at

Kobe as a "great learning experience". "I got to coach different types of players and understand their mind-set," he said. Lock Franco Mostert currently plays for Gloucester after turning out for the Ricoh Black Rams. "If you look at the Top League, it's not that much different from South Africa, probably not so physical but a bit quicker," Mostert said. "They have worked very hard for what they want."

'Earning respect'

The number of Springbok players to have appeared for teams in Japan is staggering, offering a wealth of inside information on a nation on the rise. Japan were the surprise inclusion in the quarter-finals, having topped Pool A with four wins from four, including victories over Six Nations giants Ireland and Scotland.

They racked up a shock victory over the Boks in pool play in the 2015 World Cup, but Vermeulen said that now counted for nothing. "What's better than playing the host country in the quarter-final? That's definitely something you have to embrace and I'm looking forward to it," said the former Bulls and Toulon forward.

"I play my club rugby here and in a way, I really kind of enjoy it. I love the country, the food, the culture." Japan, Vermeulen added, brought a "different style of play, it's not something you're used to". Vermeulen said the Boks, particularly those who play or have played in Japan, knew what was coming but "you've still



TOKYO: South Africa's flanker Kwagga Smith (C) tackles a dummy during a team training session at the Fuchu Asahi Football Park in Tokyo yesterday, during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup. — AFP

got to pitch up on the day." Three South African-born players made the Japan squad for the World Cup: Lappies Labuschagne and Wimpie van der Walt, who have both been based in Japan long enough to have earned citizenship, and star winger Kotaro Matsushima,

born in Pretoria to a Zimbabwean mother and Japanese father. "I've played against some of them in Super Rugby and with and against them in the Japanese Top League," Vermeulen said. "Lappies is in the top four tacklers at World Cup so far. — AFP

Aussie To'omua takes pot shots at England ahead of showdown

OITA: Australian playmaker Matt To'omua has sledged England's players for their poor snooker skills and a reluctance to buy a round of drinks before this weekend's Rugby World Cup quarter-final clash. To'omua spent three years with the Leicester Tigers between 2016-2019 and yesterday gleefully revealed a few trade secrets about several of the players the Wallabies will lock horns with in Oita on Saturday.

"I've been very fortunate to play with a lot of them there," said the veteran fly-half. "I know all of their weaknesses luckily — I can list them now for you if you want," added To'omua with a smile, before going on to savage former Tigers team mates Manu Tuilagi, George Ford, Ben Youngs, Jonny May and Dan Cole. "Manu is a terrible snooker player, George Ford never pays for a beer, Ben Youngs isn't even the best rugby player in his family. "The chicken, Jonny May — very weird ... and Dan Cole doesn't have a personality, so I've just been telling everyone about that." On a more serious note, To'omua admit-

ted that England had "no glaring weaknesses", picking inside centre Tuilagi as possibly England's biggest threat. "Obviously I had a very good relationship with a lot of the fellas there and one thing I do know is they're all quality players," he said. "We were fortunate in the last couple of years, when Manu came back from injury, just watching him grow in stature. He probably grows the bigger the game as well — he probably plays his best rugby in Tests, which is the sign of a true champion."

Unpaid bar tabs

Unable to resist one last dig at the English, To'omua concluded: "There's no glaring weakness — besides the fact George never pays for a beer." England go into the blockbuster quarter-final as favorites after compiling a six-game winning streak against their bitter rivals. But Australia coach Michael Cheika appeared relaxed ahead of what could be his final Test match in charge.

"He just asked me how much we expect to win by," he joked after a question from a Japanese reporter. "I probably shouldn't have told you guys — actually that would have been better," going on to predict the outcome would be decided by "who wants to attack more." A defiant Cheika warned: "The fear inside us is dead. We're not afraid to go there and get it." The Aussie coach, who it has been suggested could start an argument in an empty room, also indulged in a little gentle ribbing of his old rival, the England coach Eddie Jones. — AFP

Crotty out, Sonny Bill on bench for All Blacks

TOKYO: Cross-code star Sonny Bill Williams was benched and fellow centre Ryan Crotty missed out altogether as New Zealand named their team for tomorrow Rugby World Cup quarter-final against Ireland. In-form Anton Lienert-Brown and Jack Goodhue got the nod for the defending champions in midfield, coach Steve Hansen saying it had been a tough proposition to sort out his centre combination.

"We've got 31 people available for selection. Every team you pick you look at the opposition, what you're after and the midfield was no different," Hansen said yesterday. "You come down to having more people good enough to start than you have to leave out." In this case Ryan's missed out. That doesn't mean to say that if we're fortunate enough to go further in the tournament that he won't make the next team. "But just for this game, we thought the combination of Jack, LB and Sonny was the one for us."

Hansen added that Lienert-Brown had been in "really good form". "It was a no-brainer to pick him," he said. Two-time World Rugby player of the year Beauden Barrett starts at full-back, with relatively inexperienced wingers George Bridge and Sevu Reece completing the back three. Richie Mo'unga is named at fly-half alongside regular scrum-half Aaron Smith. Kieran Read captains from number eight, where he lines

up with Sam Cane and Ardie Savea. Brodie Retallick and Sam Whitelock pack down in the boiler house, with Joe Moody and Nepo Laulala propping up Codie Taylor.

'No guarantees'

"There's a lot of energy and excitement in the team which is normal for this stage of the tournament where the winner takes all. It will add extra pressure to both sides," said Hansen. "We feel we've selected a great mixture of talent in our 23, who are in great form, and the squad includes many players who have a lot of Rugby World Cup knockout match experience." The All Blacks have won 28 and drawn one of their 31 previous encounters against Ireland, but have lost two of the last three games.

"One of us will be going home but that's just the cold, hard facts of the World Cup," Hansen said of Saturday's last-eight game in Tokyo. "We've experienced it ourselves in 2007 and there are no guarantees we won't experience it again." Hansen added: "Ireland are in a situation where they haven't gone past the quarter-final. They know what it's like to go home so they'll try their darndest not to and we'll be the same."

"You just hope that it becomes a good game of rugby that excites the tournament and is not affected by cards and at the end of it no one's got any excuses. "And then you have to take your fate on the chin." Offloading king Williams, who will be sure to have a role later in the game against tiring legs, said New Zealand were prepared to "expect the unexpected". "This weekend, winner stays, loser goes home. With that comes a lot of pressure, but with that comes a lot of excitement. — AFP

Sports

Friday, October 18, 2019

Zain proud of World Champion Jet Ski racer Yousef Al Abdulrazzaq

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its pride in the latest achievement attained by world first-ranked Jet Ski racer Yousef Al Abdulrazzaq, who recently achieved the first-place title in the third round of the Runabout GP1 title race during the UIM-ABP Aqua bike Haier Grand Prix of Qingdao, China as part of the UIM-ABP Aqua bike Class Pro World Championship.

Zain expressed its excitement in Al Abdulrazzaq's latest achievement, as the company sponsors his professional career for the past 11 years. The attainment adds to Al Abdulrazzaq's long list of accolades and international successes achieved throughout the past years, where the Kuwaiti champion faced the best pro racers from around the world. Yousef Al Abdulrazzaq, who is ranked first in the world, recently attained the first-place title in the third round of the Runabout GP1 title race during the UIM-ABP Aqua bike Haier Grand Prix of Qingdao, China as part of the UIM-ABP Aqua bike Class Pro World Championship.

The contest is considered the biggest championship for this sport in the world, and is organized by the Union Internationale Motonautique (UIM), the world's governing body of powerboating. Al Abdulrazzaq topped



the world championship's overall points rank, and have also achieved the first-place title in the second round in Italy, which both strengthened his world rank, certified by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Zain's support to the Kuwaiti Champion during the past 11 years comes in line with the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards supporting Kuwaiti sports and athletes. Al Abdulrazzaq continues to raise the Kuwaiti flag high by achieving many internationally renowned titles year after year. Zain's role not only concentrates on economic and business activities, but also extends to contribute significantly in various areas within the Kuwaiti society, including sports. The com-



pany has endless confidence in the competencies of Kuwaiti athletes and their capabilities in

excelling in different fields, on both regional and international levels.

Kuwait, Qatar sign MoU to establish Olympic academy

DOHA: Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) signed with Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) and Aspire Academy yesterday a memorandum of understanding to create a multi-games Olympic sports academy in Kuwait. The agreement was signed from the Kuwaiti side by KOC President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, and from the Qatari side by QOC President Sheikh Jo'aa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, and President of Aspire Academy Hilal Kuwari.

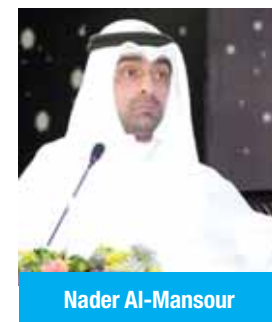
The MoU stipulates establishing an Olympic center for sports medicine in Kuwait, including sports medicine specialties, and also sciences and researches in the field, especially diagnosis, critical surgeries and physical rehabilitation. The memorandum also includes a provision enabling the Kuwaiti clubs of benefiting from the developed sports infra structure in Qatar through carrying out training campaigns during the year to enhance the level of Kuwait's sports. It also aims at developing programs of juniors' sports, studying development of sports institutions and athletes' skills. — KUNA



25th Asian Ten Pin Bowling Tournament starts this Sunday

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The 25th Asian Ten Pin Bowling Tournament is scheduled to start Sunday at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Farwaniya, in the presence of Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, representing tournament patron His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Bowling club board member, head of the men and women teams, Nader Al-Mansour said the club will spare no effort to have the tournament come out at its best. He said the challenge was double fold as the modern bowling new building needed renovations.



Nader Al-Mansour

Al-Mansour said the Asian tournament is a true test for the bowling club, which will host international tournaments in 2020 and 2021 for individuals and teams, that in addition the Arab Youth Championship next year. Al-Mansour hoped Kuwait efforts will be successfully bring all Gulf brothers together during the Gulf championship, which

stopped for the past two years. Al-Mansour said the goal behind the women's participation in the Asian tournament is to have more exposure, as the teams was formed recently which means they are not pressured to get any major achievements. He said the plan for the women team is long term as girls aged 13 to 22 were selected for their skills in order to prepare them all long the upcoming four years. Al-Mansour asked Kuwait fans to back up the players during the tournament to encourage them.

Sports

Solskjaer '100 percent sure' Man Utd have right structure

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is "100 percent sure" that the club has the right structure in place and says money is available to strengthen his struggling squad. United are 12th in the Premier League table, just two points above the relegation zone and 15 adrift of league leaders Liverpool ahead of Sunday's clash with their fierce rivals at Old Trafford.

The club's hierarchy and recruitment under executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward has come in for severe criticism but Solskjaer has described that as "an insult" as he looks to the future. "I've got a three-year contract now so of course (we are) planning long-term," Solskjaer told Sky Sports. "If you lose a game or two you don't wait for a call to be given assurances but we have started out a plan and a recruitment plan is in place. "I am 100 percent sure from my time here that the structure is right because it's always the manager who has the final say.

"I know people have said stuff about our recruitment but it's almost like an insult to the recruitment office, the scouts and us as professionals — me and (assistant manager) Mick (Phelan), the staff. We make decisions on the players that we want to have and who's available and then it's the negotiations." United

spent £145 million (\$185 million) in the summer on Harry Maguire, Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Daniel James, but Solskjaer said more funds were available for the right "ready-made" players.

"The money is there and I've been looking at players," Solskjaer added. "We were close to a couple of players but they weren't right. "The money is there to strengthen in January, in the summer, and we are planning, we are looking, we are finding our targets, but just before the transfer window ended no, they weren't there, the ready-made players." The United boss admitted that misfiring forward Marcus Rashford, who has scored just three goals for the team this season, needed a break but injuries to other players had prevented that.

"Marcus's movement is great, but maybe we just need to give him a game or two of rest because he's played a lot," said the Norwegian. "Sometimes, because he's a young boy with lots of expectations on his shoulders, he's played four or five seasons now, and yet he's still not even 22 yet." And he admitted United faced a daunting task in trying to slow Liverpool's charge towards their first top-flight title since 1990.

"There's a lot of pieces in that puzzle that have to be in place," he said. "We've got to be



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

ready and I think the players are mentally prepared for this one. Of course, the fans will always be behind our backs." I can't see Liverpool

coming to park the bus — that's just not in their mentality," he added. "So I can see it being an open game, which will suit us." —AFP

Arsenal's Ozil recalls terrifying car-jacking ordeal

LONDON: Mesut Ozil has opened up about being at the centre of an attempted car-jacking, saying he feared for his wife's safety during the terrifying ordeal in London. The Arsenal midfielder, his wife Amine and team-mate Sead Kolasinac were all caught up in the incident on July 25, two weeks before the start of the Premier League season. Footage on social media showed Bosnian defender Kolasinac chasing off two moped attackers who were wearing helmets and dark clothing.

A man earlier this month admitted in a London court to trying to rob Ozil and Kolasinac and will be sentenced in November. "Sead's reaction was really, really brave because he attacked one of the attackers," Ozil, 31, said in an interview with The Athletic. "The second one was in front of my car on his moped so I couldn't drive." "We were newly wed and I was scared about my wife. I was scared about Sead. I wasn't thinking about myself. I was worried they were going to open my wife's door and they tried, so I reached across her to keep it closed."

Ozil, currently out of favor at Arsenal, said although nobody was harmed physically, the incident shook up his wife. "My

wife wanted to get away immediately," said the former Germany international. "She didn't feel safe. Even if I let our dogs into the garden and went out with them she would say, 'Come in, come in, stay in the house.' She was very concerned." But he said the incident did not make him want to leave London permanently and he planned to stay at Arsenal until the end of his contract in 2021.

The World Cup winner has played just two matches this season, fuelling speculation over his long-term future. "When I signed the new deal (in 2018) I thought about it very carefully and said it was one of the most important decisions of my footballing career," he said. "I didn't want to stay for just one or two more years, I wanted to commit my future to Arsenal and the club wanted me to do the same. "You can go through difficult times, like this, but that is no reason to run away and I'm not going to. I'm here until at least 2021."

Ozil spoke of his disappointment that he was often singled out for blame when Unai Emery's team were under-performing. "If we don't do well in a 'big' game, it's always my fault," said the midfielder, who joined Arsenal from Real Madrid in 2013. "If that's true, how do you explain our results in the 'big' games when I wasn't involved? There's no real difference. I know people expect me to offer more, dictate play and make the difference — I do, too — but it's not that straightforward." —AFP

Bulgaria teen indicted over England match racist abuse

SOFIA: A Bulgarian teenager was indicted for "grave hooliganism" while four others were fined and received stadium bans over racist abuse at a Euro 2020 qualifier against England, officials said yesterday. Monkey chants and apparent Nazi salutes during Monday's match in Sofia sparked a storm of protest that overshadowed England's 6-0 win and led to the resignation of Bulgaria's football chief and.

Thanks to CCTV footage from the national stadium, Sofia police have so far identified nine suspects in the stands, part of a group of black-clad fans, who directed the abuse at England's players. Six of them were detained on Wednesday. "One 18-year-old was indicted late Wednesday for grave hooliganism and ordered detained in custody for 72 more hours," Sofia regional prosecution spokeswoman Nevena Zartova said.

According to the indictment, the man used obscene hand gestures and Nazi salutes and turned his back to the field and pulled down his trousers twice. If found guilty, he could face up to five years in jail. "Out of the other five, four were handed 1,000-leva (511 euro, \$568) fines and two-year bans from sports events. Procedures against the fifth, who is underage, are still ongoing," Sofia police directorate spokeswoman Svetoslava Kostadinova said. —AFP

Man City held by Atletico as French sides enjoy goal glut

PARIS: Manchester City's hopes of reaching the UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-finals were left on a knife-edge on Wednesday when they were held to a 1-1 draw by Atletico Madrid in the first leg of their last 16 clash. City were 1-0 up through Canadian international Janine Beckie after 13 minutes but the Spanish visitors hit back nine minutes from the final whistle through Charlyn Corral. Atletico, who knocked City out of last year's tournament, boasted England's Toni Duggan in their line-up.

Duggan had an early chance against her former

team but blasted the ball over the crossbar. Arsenal are well-placed to make the last eight after coming back from Slavia Prague with a 5-2 win. Dutch international Vivianne Miedema scored four of the north Londoners' goals with three coming in a 15-minute period in the first half. Lyon, champions in the last four seasons, also virtually made sure of their place in the quarter-finals with a 4-0 rout of Fortuna Hjørring in Denmark.

Norwegian star Ada Hegerberg opened the scoring after 17 minutes from the penalty spot. It was her 50th goal in her 49th match in the Champions League. Her 51st arrived in the second half, sandwiching a double strike from Eugénie Le Sommer. Fellow French side PSG eased past Breidablik of Iceland 4-0. Karina Saevik, Brazilian star Formiga and Marie-Antoinette Katoto were all on target in the first half-hour. Poland's Paulina Dudek added the fourth in stoppage time. —AFP

Sports

Surreal North v South Korea football match was 'like war'

INCHEON: South Korea's footballers had no idea their surreal World Cup qualifier in Pyongyang would be played in an empty stadium — a match Tottenham Hotspur star Son Heung-min described as "very aggressive" and one official likened to warfare. The contest against North Korea ended 0-0 on Tuesday, with FIFA president Gianni Infantino one of just a handful of spectators at a match almost completely blocked off from the outside world.

It was the first ever competitive encounter between the men's sides hosted by the North — a historic face-off between two countries still technically at war — but took place with no live broadcast and no foreign media in attendance. The debacle raises doubts over the prospects for further North-South sporting co-operation, once a driver of nuclear diplomacy. Until the very last minute, the South's team had no idea that even North Korean spectators would be absent.

"We expected 50,000 people to come pouring in once the door opened but they didn't come," said Korea Football Association vice-president Choi Young-il as the team arrived back at Incheon airport early yesterday. "The gates never opened. I was really surprised. The players and coach were surprised too." Choi said he had asked a North Korean official about the absence of local fans, who retorted: "Maybe they didn't want to see it." Tottenham's Son, who captained

the South Korean team, was taken aback by the Northerners' rough tactics. "The match was very aggressive to a degree that I think it's a huge achievement just to return safely without being injured," Son said. "There was a lot of severe swearing." Choi added he had never seen such aggression on the pitch before: "It was like war."

Nuclear tensions, Olympic doubts

Tuesday's match came in the wake of a series of North Korean missile tests that raised tensions in the region, and after the breakdown of talks with the US over Pyongyang's weapons programs. Since the collapse of the Hanoi summit between North Korea leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump in February, Pyongyang has regularly excoriated Seoul, ruling out prospects of inter-Korean dialogue.

It is a far cry from the cross-border warmth of last year, when South Korean President Moon Jae-in seized on the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics to broker the Pyongyang-Washington discussion process. At the time, Moon and Kim discussed and agreed on further sports exchanges including a joint bid to host the 2032 Olympics.

But the North's official Korean Central News Agency issued only a two-line dispatch on Tuesday's match, saying: "The game of attacks and counterattacks ended in a draw." In a



INCHEON: South Korean footballer Son Heung-min speaks to the media upon his arrival at Incheon airport in Incheon early yesterday after the World Cup 2022 Qualifying Asian zone Group H football match between South Korea and North Korea which held at Kim Il Sung Stadium in Pyongyang. — AFP

commentary yesterday the South's JoongAng Daily said: "We may just have to thank North Korea for sending our football team back home safely." — AFP

Watford saved me, says rock legend Elton John

LONDON: British rock legend Elton John says Watford football club were his unlikely savior as he experienced the "worst period of my life" in the 1980's. The 72-year-old Englishman — known for his zany outfits when performing on stage and hits such as 'Rocket Man' and 'Goodbye Yellowbrick Road' — has been chairman of 'The Hornets' twice.

He says in his new autobiography 'Me' Watford "might have saved my life" in his first spell as chairman (1976-1990) when they enjoyed huge success under the late Graham Taylor rising from bottom of the old fourth division to the heights of being runners-up to Liverpool in the 1982/83 title race and beaten by Everton in the 1984 FA Cup final.

"I was chairman throughout the worst period of my life: years of addiction and unhappiness, failed relationships, bad business deals, court cases, unending turmoil," he writes. "Through all of

Nigeria need record victory to avoid CHAN humiliation

JOHANNESBURG: Nigeria coach Imama Amapakabo has urged his squad to forget a 4-1 first leg drubbing in Togo and create African Nations Championship (CHAN) history by overcoming the deficit. The countries clash Saturday in Lagos and the hosts must scored at least three goals to have a chance of winning the final round qualifier and reaching the tournament a fourth consecutive time.

Sunusi Ibrahim gave Nigeria an early first leg lead in Lome last month before his team were overpowered by opponents seeking a first appearance at a competition restricted to home-based

that, Watford were a constant source of happiness to me." For obvious reasons, there are chunks of the eighties I have no recollection of — but every Watford game I saw is permanently etched on my memory."

John, who had a strip torn off him by Taylor when he turned up for a match after a "mammoth coke bender" and helped himself to several large whiskeys in the boardroom, said one game which was pivotal and made people aware of his team was a giant killing act when they were a third tier side. "The night we knocked Manchester United out of the League Cup at Old Trafford, when we were still a third Division side, the newspapers that never normally bothered about writing about Watford were calling them Elton John's Rocket Men the next morning," he purrs proudly.

However, he admits his devotion to Watford earned him ridicule from both fellow rock stars — Rod Stewart queried his knowledge of football at joining such an unglamorous club's board — and royalty. Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth II, was typically blunt when he saw John — who at the time he first became chairman lived close to Windsor Castle — driving his Aston Martin painted in the Watford colors. "Ridiculous. Makes you look like a bloody fool. Get rid of it," said Prince Philip. — AFP

stars. Richard Nane was the tormentor-in-chief for the underdogs, bagging a brace, while Tchakai Marouf and Agoro Achraf also scored. But Amapakabo refuses to abandon hope, believing clinical finishing can rescue a tie 2018 runners-up Nigeria were expected to win comfortably.

"I have been drumming into the ears of my players that we cannot afford to fail," he said ahead of the standout fixture among 15 to be played between Friday and Sunday. "Togo won 4-1 on their ground so who is to say that we cannot do better on our home ground? We cannot afford not to be at the African Nations Championship." We have to be focused and determined. Crucially, we must create scoring chances and put them away." Explaining the first leg thrashing, Amapakabo said: "Our team was composed mainly of young players and they could not match the more experienced and technically gifted Togolese." In previous Nations Championship qualifying competitions, Namibia came closest to overcoming a three-goal first leg loss, winning the second leg by the same score only to lose on penalties. — AFP

AC Milan suffer record 146 million euro losses

MILAN: Troubled former Italian footballing giants AC Milan have suffered record losses, according to reports in Italy on Wednesday. Gazzetta Dello Sport claimed that in the year to June 30, 2019, losses rose by 16 percent to 146 million (\$162 million) euros compared to 126 million euros for the same period the previous year. Gazzetta said the figures were far worse than the predicted loss of 90 million euros.

US hedge fund Elliott took over the debt-ridden seven-time European champions from Chinese businessman Li Yonghong in July 2018. The club's absence from European football has had an impact on merchandising and sponsors, with income from sponsors slipping by 6.7 million euros and ticket sales down by 1.2 million euros. However, revenues from TV rights rose from 109.3 million to 113.8 million.

Milan finished fifth in Serie A last season but surrendered their Europa League berth after breaching UEFA's financial fair play rules. Revenues from the sale of players in particular dropped from 42 million euros to 25.5 million euros. To keep the club afloat, Elliott have injected 325 million euros in total up until this September, Sky Sport Italia reported. On the pitch the 18-time Serie A champions are also in turmoil with Marco Giampaolo sacked as coach after just seven games and Stefano Pioli coming in as the club's eighth coach in five years.

Milan won their last Serie A title in 2011, and have not played in the Champions League since the 2013-2014 season. The club are 13th place in Serie A, following a run of four defeats in seven games. Italian media mogul and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who oversaw Milan's glory years during his 31-year ownership, sold the club to Li in 2017 with Elliott assuming control after the Chinese businessman defaulted on a loan payment. — AFP



PUNE: India's captain Virat Kohli plays a shot on the second day of the second Test cricket match between India and South Africa at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium.— AFP

Kohli hot on Smith's heels

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