

Friday Times

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Local

Twitter is power



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Despite the multiple social media sites and apps available today, it seems to me that in Kuwait specifically, Twitter still occupies a strong position for heated debates and criticisms on important issues of concern to citizens here, especially those related to government administration and its institutions.

Is it because people can post any sharp or negative comments even when knowing that there is a law that could prolong their punishment? There's lots of good about Twitter, but there's an undeniably darker side to it too. What is the secret behind the power of Twitter in Kuwait?

I do not follow all social media daily, but I carefully follow the discussions and comments on Twitter about issues that concern Kuwaitis, especially hashtag campaigns. I believe that it is very important to know how people look at things and what they really feel. Twitter has changed the way people deal with the good and bad news in their lives. It has created organized opposition campaigns through hashtags. Official news is usually published everywhere, but Twitter reflects people's thoughts. The Twitter hashtag today is a powerful tool that greatly facilitates interaction and discussion on current topics.

Also, Twitter has been used to raise awareness of political topics, spread political messages and criticize political performance. This has often come through specific campaigns. One of the most recent examples is #canceldebts – people use the hashtag to campaign against the heavy debts of citizens. This I think created a new civil rights movement. But this also came with a price, because some people became targets of abuse by anonymous users.

The huge number of Twitter users has a powerful impact, because one person may write or say something, but the world can have an opinion on it. Twitter is an infinite space for freedom of expression. Twitter boasts 330 million monthly active users (as of Q1 2019). Countries with the most Twitter users in 2019 are the United States, Japan, United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia.

The thing that I noticed on Twitter in Kuwait is that those who are known as influencers on other social media sites do not exist on Twitter, because Twitter is often a sharp political platform and there is no room for advertising or marketing for products or restaurants. Twitter has become a major means of communication not only in Kuwait, but in other Gulf states too. Non-profit organizations can communicate with their customers, while government agencies can announce their latest services and decisions.

For instance, a decision by the Kuwaiti government to grant a loan to a country can lead to a heated debate, because people feel that they have needs too and want the government to listen to them and help them achieve. The blue bird platform is an easy window to vent their anger and express their opinions, whether positive or negative. I hope that officials do not only look at the news but also the important comments that accompany it. Twitter is the pulse of the people.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



An abandoned boat near Doha port. — Photo by Sudhish Somanath / KUNA

Step by step method of changing a car tyre in the middle of the road

IN MY VIEW

By Ben Garcia

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A friend of mine, an Egyptian taxi driver, died while he was changing his car's tyre by the roadside. He was hit by a car and died instantly last year. He was 35 years old and has two small children – a very sad way to die, in a freak accident. Changing a tyre by the roadside can be a dangerous thing to do in Kuwait. This is not the first time I have heard such stories, as people being hurt or killed when their car is stopped on the sides of the roads is an all too frequent occurrence.

Knowing how to change a tyre is a necessary skill for all drivers, both male and female. A driver must know the step by step process of changing tyres. Flat tyres can happen anywhere, and your smartphone is no substitute to knowing how to change a flat tyre. Stay safe!

Kuwait Times recommends driving until you reach a safe place before stopping. It doesn't matter if your tyre rim gets totally ruined – it's better than being hit by an inattentive driver.

Here are some tips on changing a flat tyre in the middle of the road:

1. Immediately find a safe place to stop away from the roadside. An empty parking lot would be an ideal place. You have to find level ground as it is a good place to prevent your vehicle from rolling. Also, straight stretches of road are better than curved because oncoming traffic is more likely to see you. If you can get off the highway completely, do so.

2. In case you are on the highway, switch on your flasher lights so that other drivers can see you.

3. While at a safe place, you may now check your car for

warning signs. The warning sign is a signboard required to be placed at the back of your car to warn other vehicles. Put the warning sign at least 50 meters away for early warning for passing cars.

4. Once stopped, always use the parking brake when preparing to replace a flat tyre. This will minimize the possibility of your vehicle rolling.

5. This time, you have either two decisions to make – call for help or do it yourself.

6. You may call for help from the nearest garage you know or family/friends.

7. If everything is safe, you can find the necessary tools/equipment needed to change your tyre in your car. Items you'll need to fix a flat tyre include a jack, lug wrench, fully inflated spare tyre and most importantly, the vehicle owner's manual.

8. Your car must be in a place where you can easily move from left to right freely. Place the car jack on a hard surface so that it can lift the weight of your car.

9. Wheel wedges go in front or behind the tyres to further ensure the vehicle doesn't roll while you fix the flat tyre. If you're changing a rear tyre, place these in front of the front tyres. If your flat tyre is at the front, put the wheel wedges behind the rear tyres.

10. Bricks or large stones will work just as well as "real" wheel wedges. Just be sure they're large enough to stop the car from rolling.

11. Remember this – it is always better to check the tyre daily. Inspect it before driving. Do regular tyre maintenance as possible. If the tyre is not inflated, visit the nearest garage to inflate your tyre.

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Local

In the grey zone

So called 'half-Kuwaitis' discuss the legal, social discrimination they face

By Faten Omar

Being a Kuwaiti citizen makes you feel like you belong to Kuwait, as nationality is a legal relationship between a person and a state. But what if you are a "halfie" and are finding it hard to answer the question "Where are you from?" Those whose fathers are Kuwaiti are automatically considered Kuwaitis but those whose moms are Kuwaiti and fathers are not, they are not granted the nationality, even if they are born here. They are considered 'half' Kuwaiti unlike those whose fathers are local.

Are these so called half-Kuwaitis - from the mother's side - okay with being a "halfie" or do they have problems in feeling a sense of belonging to Kuwait?

Despite having been born in Kuwait and living and studying here, children whose moms are Kuwaiti and fathers are not continue to suffer from laws that refuse to equate them with their fellow citizens. Kuwait Times spoke to the "Grey Area" team, a group focused on shedding light on the grey area where children of Kuwaiti women reside.

The team of 'Grey Area' asked to remain anonymous. One of them spoke about the idea behind the campaign. "My mother is Kuwaiti but my father is not. I realized most of the community is not aware of how half-Kuwaitis suffer to fit in. I'm in a grey area where I cannot feel that I belong to any of the two nationalities," she said.

#بس.أمي.كويتية

The campaign started a year ago, and its Instagram account has received many stories from half-Kuwaitis. "The reason for the campaign's name is that we are not fully Kuwaiti and not fully foreign. When you are under the age of 21, you will be treated as a Kuwaiti in education and are allowed to study in public schools, but after graduation, you're a foreigner in terms of the difficulty of getting a job and the difference in wages with those of Kuwaitis, etc.," she told Kuwait Times.

The four members explained the suffering faced by children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaiti husbands. "When we decided to work on the campaign, we wanted to attract young people of the same age group. We wanted to focus on the children themselves and give them the ability to express themselves. At first, we faced some negative comments such as 'women do not have the right to grant citizenship to their children' and 'since they chose to marry non-Kuwaitis, they



should bear the consequences of their actions', but our followers always defend us," they said.

The team is focusing on increasing awareness, and is ready to receive more messages from those who are happy that they have found their voices and someone who recognizes their existence. This is because they feel marginalized, as some consider their case unimportant. The team has also got attention from lawmakers, since they have no legal standing and cannot vote in elections. They have had six discussions in different places over the past period and meetings with campaigns that are trying to make a difference by cooperating to benefit from their previous experiences in raising awareness among people.

Often known as 'half-Kuwaiti' these youth only want to feel the sense of belonging to Kuwait and not feel threatened with deportation any minute or be treated like strangers. "Most of the stories we received are from those who only want to feel stable. They want a decent education and decent jobs. We do not want a kafeel to sponsor us. People want the right to own property. People think that we only want material benefits,

even if you make it clear that you do not want these advantages but merely want to solve other problems related to nationality, residence or jobs. So we are trying to focus on the current generation of young people because they may be able to make a change."

The founder of the campaign told Kuwait Times that being a half-Kuwaiti (from the mother's side) exposes you to bullying. "Especially in public schools, where it also depends on the nationality of the father. Some nationalities are bullied more than others. You also find excellent treatment by some foreigners because you are a Kuwaiti, but you do not belong to them too. The bullying is not from a particular nationality - you face bullying from both parties, making you feel you do not belong to any party! Some children of Kuwaiti women are afraid to reveal their status for fear of different treatment by people."

The team has many goals it aspires to achieve, most important of which is acceptance of society that they are different, provide support to children of Kuwaiti women, change some laws that concern Kuwaiti children and clarify their role in society. Statistics by the Public Authority for Civil Information

Local

grayarea_kw

35 Posts 2,689 Followers 0 Following

منطقة رمادية
Cause
حملة تسلط الضوء على المنطقة الرمادية التي يعيش بها أبناء الكويتية.
raising awareness on the state of inclusion & exclusion half-Kuwaitis exist in.
youtu.be/l-0ADbPDXYw
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بدون مساواة خذت كويتي!



show that the number of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis reached 19,383 as of mid-2018, and the total number of children of non-Kuwaiti husbands number around 62,000.

The citizenship law allows a Kuwaiti citizen married to a non-Kuwaiti woman to grant his children Kuwaiti nationality, but does not allow a Kuwaiti woman to pass on her nationality to her husband or children. The state treats children of a Kuwaiti woman until the age of 18 as Kuwaiti citizens who have the right to free study at all levels of education. But after that, they are required to obtain a work contract that allows them to stay in the country or are at risk of being deported to their fathers' countries for violating the residency law. In the event of the death of a Kuwaiti mother, the government prohibits her children from owning her property if it is granted by the state, unlike the children of Kuwaiti fathers.

Mosaad Al-Shehab, a Saudi national from a Kuwaiti mother, says there is no alternative to granting Kuwaiti citizenship to them. He studied law at Kuwait University but was unable to get a government job or obtain a license to work as a lawyer in a private firm due to the condition of having Kuwaiti nationality. "The Kuwaiti government's decision to recruit Kuwaiti

children married to Gulf nationals into the interior ministry to work for the police has saved me somewhat. This decision has changed the lives of many sons of Kuwaiti women. For the first time, they were able to serve their homeland and their mother's homeland and get good jobs in the police and army," he said.

"My brothers and I had great difficulties after the death of my mother," said Abu Omar, a Syrian national from a Kuwaiti mother. We were born, lived, studied and worked in Kuwait. We could have been deported because of the expiry of our Syrian passports and our inability to renew them because we are required to perform military conscription in Syria. We have only visited Syria twice - we were born, live, studied and work in Kuwait but are not allowed to stay here without a sponsor," he said.

"We had to search for jobs after our mother died. After the government seized our house that was granted to our mother, we had to rent an apartment. I do not want Kuwaiti nationality - I just want permanent residence and certain facilities for employment, etc, because my mother is Kuwaiti. How can a Kuwaiti man pass his nationality to his children while a Kuwaiti woman is not allowed to do so?" he asked.

المادة ٢٩ من الدستور الكويتي

الناس سواسية في الكرامة الإنسانية،
وهم متساوون لدى القانون في الحقوق
والواجبات العامة، لا تمييز بينهم في ذلك
بسبب الجنس أو الأصل أو اللغة أو الدين.



Condolences

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Offer their heartfelt condolences to

Ramesh Randamveetil

Reliability and Maintenance Department
On the sad demise of his

Mother

May her soul rest in peace and
God grant comfort and strength to the
bereaved family members during this time

Painters celebrate Amir's return



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti painters expressed their jubilation for the return of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the homeland with drawings and paintings that demonstrate Kuwaiti people's love of their leader. The artistic works showed the Kuwaiti artists' passion and allegiance to the Amir. HH the Amir recently returned to Kuwait after a visit to the United States where he underwent successful medical examinations. — KUNA

Privately-owned Hamada School was a pioneer

KUWAIT: Hamada School, one of the oldest private schools in Kuwait, offered distinguished services to its students including weeklong camping trips during spring break so they would resume school in a fresh mood. "Hamada School started with a small number of boys in Qibla area, then the school expanded to include more than 200 students before it was shut down in 1950," Mohammad Jamal, a historian, said yesterday.

Jamal, speaking to KUNA, said Hamada School was established at end of the 19th century at Hamada house, where Rashed and Jassem Hamada were teaching young boys the Holy Quran and Islamic principles. The teachers started receiving more students, forcing them to rent Ibrahim Al-Yaqout house, which was close to their own school, and the teachers began teaching Arabic language and mathematics.

More teachers joined the new school, said Jamal, including Ali Al-Duwaisan, Abdulaziz Jassem Hamada, Mulla Mohammad bin Ali, Yusuf Al-Saleh and Abdullah Al-Obaid. Abdulaziz

Hamada then took over the management of the school. The school, incapable of housing the growing number of students, rented the diwan of Sheikh Humoud Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and the school's name changed to "Guidance and Teaching School for Boys." The new school had seven classes and the number of students increased to 200.

Other renowned teachers joined the new school like Sheikh Attiya Al-Athari, Mohammad Saleh bin Al-Sheikh Ahmad Al-Farsi, Mulla Musaed Al-Najdi and Mohammad bin Lahyan. The school management started teaching English language and writing, taught by Abdulhameed Al-Tannak, Abdullatif Al-Othman and Mirza Shirazi. Classes were held in the mornings and afternoons, and school was off during evenings of Monday, Thursday and Friday.

Abdulaziz Hamada became a judge in 1930, leaving the management of the school to his brother Ali Hamada who was assisted by Ahmad Rashed Hamada. New teachers joined the school as well: Abdulaziz and Abdullah Al-Balool, and Rashed Al-Ghannam. Jamal said Hamada school brought chairs for students, who previously sat on the floor. Jamal said the school's income came from weekly small amount of tuition, in addition to donations by citizens. The number of students at Hamada School started to decline when the government opened the school in 1937, forcing its closure in 1950. — AFP

Kuwaiti film 'In Paradox' screened at Casablanca fest

CASABLANCA: The screening of the Kuwaiti film "In Paradox" by Hamad Al-Sarraf at the Casablanca Arab Film Festival has attracted a large audience and positive feedback from critics. The film was screened on Wednesday as a part of the festival's feature film competition along with 11 other films

from several Arab countries.

Speaking to KUNA after the screening, director Hamad Al-Sarraf was grateful to the Moroccan audience who positively received the film. "I have discovered that the Moroccan audience has a wide knowledge of Kuwaiti cinema," he said.

Sarraf expressed pleasure to represent Kuwait in the official competition of the festival. The film story is about a man who seeks to uncover a mystery and stop the unknown memories that are controlling him, only to learn the difference between reality and illusions. The film has humanitarian, historical and philosophical dimensions, he pointed out. — KUNA



The Kuwaiti delegation at the Casablanca festival. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait records notable improvement in Ease of Doing Business Index 2020

KUWAIT: Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) announced yesterday that Kuwait witnessed improvement by +4.80 points in its score in the Ease of Doing Business Index 2020 (EoDB2020). Released by the World Bank Group yesterday, the data shows Kuwait's improvement rose to 67.40 as compared to 62.60 (amended) in the Doing Business 2019 report (DB2019). Kuwait rank stood at 83 out of the 190 countries.

The report showed that based on this improvement, Kuwait entered, for the first time, the list of top 10 improvers in the EoDB2020, based on accounting a host of reforms that were carried out during the report period (May, 2018 to May, 2019), which contributed to make doing business easier for local enterprises to perform their commercial activities in Kuwait.

KDIPA clarified that these reforms extended to 7 out of 10 components comprising the Ease of Doing Business Index 2020, as follows:

1- Starting a business, recorded an increase of +7 points as compared to last year report as a result of merging procedures to obtain a commercial license and streamlining online company registration through e-link between Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Kuwait Business Centre) and the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), which reduced the number of procedures and the time needed to issue the commercial license.

2- Dealing with construction per-

mits, recorded an increase of +10.5 points compared to last year report as Kuwait Municipality made dealing with construction permits easier by streamlining its permitting process, integrating additional authorities to its electronic permitting platform, enhancing interagency communication, thus reducing the number of procedures and the time to obtain a construction permit.

3- Getting electricity, recorded an increase of +10.1 points compared to last year report as the Ministry of Electricity and Water made getting electricity easier by digitizing the application process, streamlining connection works and meter installations, and using a geographic information system (GIS) to review connection requests, which reduced the number of procedures for getting electricity.

4- Registering property, recorded an increase of +6.7 points compared to last year report as the Ministry of Justice and Kuwait Municipality coordinated to make property registration easier by streamlining the inspection and registration processes, which reduced the number of procedures and the time to register property, as well as improving the quality of the land administration index by publishing official service standards on property transfers on the MoJ website.

5- Getting credit, recorded an increase of +10 points compared to last year report as Credit Information Network Company (Cinet), in cooperation with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), improved access to credit information by



guaranteeing borrowers the legal right to inspect their credit data and offering credit scores as a value-added service to banks and financial institutions, in accordance with Law No. 9 of 2019 regulating exchange of credit information.

6- Protecting minority investors, recorded an increase of +2 points compared to last year report as the Capital Market Authority (CMA) in coordination with MOCI strengthened minority investor protections by amending Commercial Companies Law No. 1 of 2016 increasing the notice period from 15 days to 21-day notice for calls of the general assembly meetings.

7- Trading across borders, recorded an increase of +2.1 points compared to last year report as the Kuwait General Directorate for Customs (KGDC) made trading across borders easier by improving the customs risk management system, and by implementing a new electronic clearance system as per several Customs Circulars issued which resulted a reduction in the time

required for border compliance for exports and imports.

On this occasion, Head of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment and Enhancing Competitiveness in the State of Kuwait (PCK), announced that this notable improvement in Kuwait position in the EoDB2020 was a direct result of the continuous coordination amongst members of PCK to ensure timely execution of the National Agenda for Streamlining Business Environment in Kuwait on one side, and the experts at competent government entities, the private sector, and the civil society organizations on another side.

An outcome that would not have been achieved without the continued support and keen follow up of HH the Prime Minister, who placed improving Kuwait position in international indices, and rendering quality services to the citizens on top of the priorities of the government work program.

The Head of PCK emphasized that this improvement in various

components of the EoDB 2020 index is not merely confined to trigger better streamlining for business environment, but it more generally contributes to reach higher efficiency in performing government transactions and providing services to the citizens. This will duly trigger stronger productive economic cycle, as well as increasing the inflow of investments, to attain sustainable growth, economic diversification, and the country's developmental goals.

The Head of PCK concluded by reiterating that improving business climate is not the goal, but it serves as means to foster better government service delivery, which will require exerting more efforts by all concerned parties in the government, the private sector, and civil society institutions to attain the aspired wishes of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in light of Kuwait's 2035 vision. — KUNA

Roudhan: Kuwait's improvement reflects leadership's vision

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said yesterday Kuwait entering the list of top ten improvers in the Ease of Doing Business Index 2020 (EoDB2020) reflects the political leadership's wise vision. Roudhan, who doubles as Minister of State for Service Affairs, said in a statement that the World Bank's EoDB2020 report shows that the total points of EoDB2020 in Kuwait obviously improved in 2020, reaching the 82nd place.

He pointed out a hike in the score of doing-business components from 81.4 points in last year's report to 88.4 points in line with the ministry's indexes. The minister quoted the report as citing four reforms related to the ministry's starting business index.

The first reform is related to obtaining commercial licenses and paying charges online through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's Kuwait Business Centre. The second reform concerns streamlining online com-

pany registration without having to go to the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), a procedure that used to take between one to 15 days to finish.

The third reform is pertinent to e-link with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry by transferring the data of companies registered at the Kuwait Business Centre. The fourth reform has something to do with e-link with the Public Authority of Manpower. The minister of commerce and industry noted that several reform laws bearing on accountants, insurance, trade register and credit would be passed by parliament soon.

He made it clear that the ministry's business reform and development was going on according to a clear-cut plan. He spoke highly of Kuwait's rank improvement as a further step towards more legislative and regulatory business reforms in the country, aiming at improving and diversifying national economy. — KUNA

Kuwait among world's top 10 improvers in economy: World Bank

KUWAIT: Kuwait is one of the world's top 10 improvers amongst 190 economies in the World Bank Group's Doing Business 2020 study, the Bank said yesterday. The study said Kuwait's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business jumped from 97 in 2019 to 83 in 2020, attributing the success to a comprehensive reform program over the past year. These improvements were aligned with HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Vision 2035 and New Kuwait.

"With a strong acceleration in the country's reform agenda, we applaud Kuwait's efforts to improve its overall business climate," said Resident Representative of the World Bank Country Office in Kuwait Ghassan Alkhoja. "We look forward to Kuwait sustaining these efforts for the years to come, towards realizing the vision of becoming a financial and trading hub in the region," said Alkhoja.

In 2018-19, the country implemented seven reforms improving business regulatory framework, a historical record for Kuwait since the beginning

of the Doing Business project. More specifically, Doing Business found that Kuwait implemented substantive improvements in the local regulatory framework in some areas. Kuwait made starting a business easier by merging procedures to obtain a commercial license and streamlining online company registration, the Bank said. It also made dealing with construction permits easier by streamlining its permitting process, integrating additional authorities to its electronic permitting platform, enhancing inter-agency communication and reducing the time to obtain a construction permit.

This has allowed the country to cut the time needed to get a construction permit to 103 days from 194, almost 50 days fewer than the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) high-income economy average. Kuwait made getting electricity easier by digitizing the application process, streamlining connection works and meter installations and using a geographic information system to review connection requests. — KUNA

Kuwait reiterates its keenness to achieve world security, stability

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Diplomatic Attache Sarah Al-Zouman has reiterated her country's keenness to committing to UN charter's principles, in addition to backing and achieving security and stability worldwide. Zouman made her remarks at her speech to the Third Committee of UN General Assembly (UNGA) on human rights protection and reinforcement. She reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to activating international cooperation through participation in all international events and forums related to human rights, and partnerships with all UN bodies and NGOs relevant to improving human living conditions.

Furthermore, Zouman stressed the importance of international cooperation in making mechanisms that secure the fundamental rights for all human beings, maintain the essence of cultural and religious values of every nation without imposing disputed concepts with no link to the international human rights law. Kuwait affirms significance of UN's main pillars; peace, security, development, and human rights, Zouman noted, adding they complete one another and cannot be parted.

Securing respect of human rights contributes to decreasing injustices, attaining peace and security, and resolving radical causes of conflicts, said the Kuwaiti diplomat. Moreover, maintaining human right principles contributes to achieving permanent and comprehensive sustainable development, which, in return, forms a "protective shield" against conflicts, crises, and human right violations, she added.

"We agree with what the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed the committee about regarding current challenges facing human diversity in the world such as xenophobia, hate speech, and gender inequality, and their negative impacts on societies," said Zouman. The Kuwaiti diplomat stressed the importance of consoli-

dating efforts of the international community and its affiliated-partners, particularly the UN, and working together toward boosting human rights status on international level and achieve consensus in opinions in accordance with human right principles.

She also pointed out that Kuwait's keenness to bolster and protect human rights stems from keystone principles of its constitution and national laws that are in par with international human right standards

and agreements, adding it is also part of its strong faith in dignity, freedom, justice, and equality of all humans. The Kuwaiti government appreciates and values all efforts exerted by foreign residents and expatriates in the country, and considers them key partners in Kuwait's progress and prosperity, Zouman mentioned, affirming that her country spares no effort in making legal, legislative, and executive procedures to secure and protect their rights. — KUNA

Kuwait's diplomacy contributes to global peace, dialogue: UN

KUWAIT: Kuwait's diplomatic institutions play a major role in the UN Security Council (UNSC), contributing to a culture of peace and dialogue, a UN official said yesterday. "Kuwait adopted the UN Charter in its policy and strategy, and has presented its vision and diplomacy in a way that win respect of all Security Council members," Tarek Al-Sheikh, UN Secretary General Representative and Resident Coordinator to Kuwait, said in an interview with KUNA to mark the UN's 74th anniversary.

The UN believes Kuwait is among countries that are considered role models in the way they work to achieve peace, security, development and justice, as well as showing great respect

for the UN Charter, he added. Kuwait, said Sheikh, always sought to comply with recommendations of UN Human Rights Council and affiliate bodies. The country's policy and strategy "are fully compliant" with the UN Charter and its 2030 Sustainable Development Goals' Agenda, he noted.

Sheikh, who praised Kuwait's huge contributions despite its small size, commended the country's preventive diplomacy and dialogue approach which were aimed at addressing disputes. Kuwait, through its UNSC 2018-19 non-permanent membership, exerted efforts to achieve peace and security in Palestine, Syria and other troubled parts of the globe, in addition to tabling draft resolutions aimed at protection of children and women in war zones. — KUNA



Tarek Al-Sheikh

Expat arrested with bag full of drugs

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's PR and security media department announced arresting an African resident with 20 kilograms of methamphetamines and one kilo of marijuana after he collected a bag that had arrived at the air cargo department, said security sources. The sources explained that narcotics detectives had been tipped off concerning the suspect's activity in smuggling drugs into the country for trade. The suspect was arrested on collecting the parcel and confessed. He also led police to an associate who was arrested as well.



Fire prevention

Under the auspices and in the presence of KFSF deputy director for firefighting affairs Maj Gen Jamal Al-Belaihees, deputy director for prevention affairs Maj Gen Khaled Abdullah Fahd and a number of KFSF officials, the fire department yesterday organized a workshop to discuss international standards of prevention measures in various industrial facilities and installations.

MPs demand answers from MoI over new residency law

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources said members of the parliamentary human resources committee plan to ask the government for further explanations concerning the new charter of the residency law as they see it as contradicting with government plans to cut the number of expats in the country, replace them with citizens in the public sector and increase the number of citizens in the private sector.

The sources explained that the lawmakers called for a meeting with Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel to discuss the new charter, which they see as opening the door wide to the influx of more unnecessary marginal laborers. The sources said lawmakers plan to demand guarantees that visit visas will not be transferred to residency visas, unless the concerned expat is an expert in a field really needed in Kuwait. "Lawmakers will also demand real measures to stop the accelerated growth in the expat population as they are currently more than 3.5 million," the sources concluded.

Meanwhile, high-ranking security sources told Kuwait local daily Al-Anbaa that the interior ministry's assistant undersecretary for residency affairs Maj Gen Talal Maarafi invited various residency affairs managers to a meeting yesterday to discuss the new charter and answer their inquiries. "It is noteworthy that the new ministerial resolution has put an end to speculations concerning increasing the fees collected for residency and visit visas until further notice," the sources stressed, adding that fee increases require parliamentary approval and that increases had been earlier proposed in parliament but rejected by the interior ministry.

Municipality distributes 7,400 garbage containers



By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Municipality's PR department announced that Jahra municipality distributed 7,400 garbage containers of all sizes to various collection points. Jahra cleaning department manager Meshaal Al-Daihani explained that 2,500 containers were distributed in Qasr, Naseem, Taima and Oyoun, while 4,500 others were distributed in Saad Al-Abdullah, Sulaibiya and Qairawan. Meanwhile, 400 six-foot metal dumpsters were also distributed.

Verdict in fraud case

The court of cassation yesterday issued a final verdict in a case involving embezzlement at Sabah Al-Salem Co-op over 10 years ago, ordering the former chairman who was in charge then to pay back a sum of KD 510,000. The board chairman had been indicted for making contracts with a supply company he owned to supply the co-op with goods at prices higher than the market.

New digital studios

The information ministry is due to open new digitalized studios in two weeks, said informed sources, noting that the ministry had recently received two new outside broadcast vehicles. The sources also said that as part of its modernization plans led by Minister Mohammed Al-Jabri, the information ministry will soon launch a new digital library and several other new projects.

Local

Kuwaiti activist among BBC's top 100 influential women for 2019

LONDON: The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has chosen Kuwaiti political activist Dr Al-Anoud Al-Sharikh as one of the top 100 influential women around the world for 2019. Sharikh was among 17 Arab women in the list, chosen in recognition of their efforts and achievements in sports, business, art, medicine, architecture and other fields, the BBC said yesterday.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated Sharikh in a cable yesterday on being recognized by the BBC as one of the top 100 influential women around the world for 2019. In the cable, the Amir com-

mended Sharikh on this achievement, which highlighted the efforts of Kuwaiti women both regionally and internationally. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent similar cables.

Sharikh was chosen in appreciation of her work with international organizations to promote gender equality, as well as being the first Kuwaiti woman to receive the French National Order of Merit for defending women rights. In a statement to KUNA, Sharikh expressed her joy

over being chosen in the list, noting that she is the first Kuwaiti to be among the 100 influential women. She added that she executed programs on changing society's view on working women in the Arab and Muslim World, in cooperation with international organizations.

Kuwaiti women had overcome many challenges in the past decades by their strong will and determination, said Sharikh, noting that enabling women to become leaders is part of the Kuwait's 2035 vision. Sharikh received her bachelor's degree from King's College London, while her master's and PhD degrees came from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). — KUNA



Al-Anoud Al-Sharikh

Canadian universities woo Kuwait students

KUWAIT: The 14th annual Edu-Canada Middle East and North Africa (MENA) tour, composed of approximately 17 leading Canadian institutions and colleges, visited Kuwait from Oct 23-24, 2019. Representatives from the institutions met students, parents and other members of the education community and provided information about study opportunities in Canada. The tour included school visits and a Study in Canada fair at Symphony Style Hotel, Salmiya.

Quality education is available throughout Canada, and each of the 10 provinces has something exciting to offer. Canadian higher education offers superior academic curricula, cutting-edge research, state-of-the-art campuses, and professional and personal experience to last a lifetime.

"Education is a priority for both Canada and Kuwait, where citizens as well as residents of Kuwait from a multitude of countries recognize that the Canadian education experience offers world-class academic learning in a welcoming and secure environment," Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Louis-Pierre Emond said in the lead-up to the event.

"The government of Canada recognizes that international education is at the very heart of Canada's current and future prosperity. For this reason, Canada is committed to attracting the best and brightest student from around the world, for outstanding international students and researchers not only enrich our campuses but make Canada more competitive by creating opportunities to share learning experiences," he said.

"In recent years, Canada has had the pleasure of welcoming a growing number of international students. Many students from all over the world chose to pursue their education in Canada, of



Representatives of Canadian institutions meet prospective students at the Edu-Canada fair. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

which over 450 are Kuwaiti, with most of them studying in the medical field sector; in addition to many more expatriates living in Kuwait.

"For those choosing to study in Canada, you are granting yourself access to one of the world's best education systems. Moreover, you are choosing to experience one of the safest, most welcoming and multicultural societies in the world with both world-class cities and exceptionally beautiful natural scenery.

"We are proud to note that the majority of Canadian universities are publicly funded and, as such, are held to the highest governmental standards of education. In addition, the cost of post-secondary education in Canada is very competitive. Not only is tuition less expensive compared to institutions in other parts of the world, but the quality of education delivered by Canada's publicly-funded universities is consistently excellent, as recognized in major education ranking systems worldwide," Emond added.

Zain official and main sponsor of NUKS UK 55th annual conference



الاتحاد الوطني لطلبة الكويت
فرع المملكة المتحدة
National Union of Kuwaiti Students
United Kingdom Branch



KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its official and main sponsorship of the 55th annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United Kingdom (NUKS UK), to be held from October 25-27 in Park Plaza Westminster Bridge London. The event is set to attract distinguished presence from students and national figures alike in the British capital London.

Zain expressed its pride in being the main supporter of this national event once again, as it is considered one of the oldest and largest gatherings of Kuwaiti students abroad. The company's support comes in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards supporting the youth and education sectors, as well as its belief in the importance of connecting with the country's youth abroad.

Zain will be adding a special contribution to the event by supporting its many cultural, sporting, and artistic programs, including academic seminars, recreational competitions, entertainment shows, sport activities, economic and political panels, poetry sessions, and more. The conference will also include the Zain Competitions session featuring Kuwaiti actor Dawood Hussain, a theatrical play featuring Kuwaiti actor Hassan Al Ballam, as well as a Quran recital competition.

Zain's presence in this event conveys its enthusiasm to interact with the future generations of Kuwaiti youth, especially those who pursue their education abroad. The NUKS UK annual conference is one of the oldest and largest gatherings of Kuwaiti students outside of Kuwait, and it appeals to students on both intellectual and social levels, serving as an open forum for them to exchange opinions and views regarding important domestic issues with the presence of distinguished national figures from the Kuwaiti society. Participating in this event affirms Zain's role as a leading national company that takes the development of young people on a serious note, with the ultimate intention to induce positive change within the Kuwaiti society.



39 bodies found in truck are Chinese

16 sentenced to death for burning Bangladeshi alive

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RIYADH: A Saudi woman receives her newly-issued passport at the Immigration and Passports Centre in the capital Riyadh. Saudi Arabia has eased travel restrictions on women, allowing those aged over 21 to obtain passports without seeking the approval of their 'guardians' - fathers, husbands or other male relatives. — AFP

Young Saudi prince named FM

Riyadh seeks to boost its global image, contain arch-rival Iran

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia appointed a prince with diplomatic experience in Western capitals as foreign minister on Wednesday in a partial cabinet reshuffle as the kingdom tries to mend its international image and prepares to take over the Group of 20 presidency. Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud had served for the last several months as ambassador to Germany and earlier as political adviser at the Washington embassy.

His previous business career in the defense industry included chairmanship of a joint venture with planemaker Boeing, Saudi Arabia, a key US ally in confronting Iran, has faced intense Western criticism over its human rights record, including over last year's murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and its involvement in the devastating war in Yemen.

Prince Faisal joins a new cadre of top Saudi diplomats in their 40s, including the ambassadors to the United States and Britain, who are siblings. "Look at the team being put together in DC, London, and now with the new foreign minister... Consolidation deepens and a pro-Western crew is in place," said Neil Quilliam, senior research fellow at Britain's Chatham House think-tank. "It is a move to outsmart Iran in all the capitals and at the UN. This is a new form of pushback."

Saudi Arabia is trying to build consensus to contain the missile program of its regional foe after the Trump administration withdrew from a deal that put limits on Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for easing sanctions. Washington and Riyadh blame Iran for a series of recent attacks, including a Sept 14 strike on key Saudi oil sites. Iran denies responsibility. Saudi Arabia's

young diplomats are part of a new generation of royals, including several other ministers and deputy governors, who have risen to power under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, 34.

The de facto ruler of the world's top oil exporter has the support of many Saudi youth as he pushes to diversify the economy and open the ultra-conservative society up to the world. But his reforms have been accompanied by a crackdown on dissent including the arrest of scores of critics. As part of Wednesday's reshuffle an-



Saudi Arabia's new bankruptcy law faces key test

nounced in state media, Saleh Al-Jasser, director general of Saudi Arabian Airlines, replaced Nabil Al-Amoudi as transport minister.

It was unclear if Amoudi would remain in government. He was appointed last month to the board of Saudi Aramco as part of top management changes in the kingdom's energy sector as the state oil giant prepares for a partial share flotation as early as this year. Outgoing foreign minister Ibrahim al-Assaf, who had earlier served as finance minister for years, remains a minister of state. He was appointed less than a year ago to restructure the ministry.

New bankruptcy law

The merit of Saudi Arabia's new bankruptcy law, part of efforts to help the kingdom attract investors, should become clearer in about a year after courts handle initial cases, a World Bank representative and senior government official said. A lack of modern bankruptcy regulations had created difficulties for struggling companies seeking to restructure debt with creditors since the 2009 global financial crisis and the more recent dip in oil prices. Legislation introduced in 2018 is part of broader efforts to overhaul the economy of the world's top oil exporter to entice foreign investment, create jobs for young Saudis and diversify into non-oil industries. "They have started on insolvency," said Simeon Djankov, World Bank senior research director and founder of the Doing Business report, which ranked Saudi Arabia's business climate the most improved over the previous year. "The law has been passed, secondary legislation was already passed. Now we need to see whether the courts actually understand how to implement it."

Djankov said only three cases had been settled and around a dozen others are currently in the courts. Several dozen more, expected to be resolved over the next year, should provide enough evidence to evaluate the law's success, he added. The two main open cases involve conglomerates Saad Group, owned by indebted billionaire Maan al-Sanea, and Ahmad Hamad Algosaihi and Brothers (AHAB), which defaulted on about \$22 billion in combined debt in 2009.

Resolving insolvency was an area of improvement for Saudi Arabia, climbing 30 places to



Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud

62nd in the World Bank report which showed sharp improvement in other Gulf countries and a lag in Latin America. Eiman Al-Mutairi, who heads Saudi Arabia's National Competitiveness Center, said she expects further advances next year as the bankruptcy law and other reforms come fully on line, including a building code law and planned amendments to licensing regimes.

"Are we there yet? No. Do we want to do more? Absolutely," said Mutairi, who is one of the highest-ranking women in the Saudi government. "Hopefully this is only the beginning." She attributed the jump in Saudi Arabia's standing to authorities' efforts to cater their reforms to the private sector's concerns. "Maybe we've worked with investors many years ago but sometimes we just don't listen to them," she said. "Let's face it: we did not listen to the investor." — Agencies

International

Drug lord delivers blunt Lebanon protest support

Lebanese President Aoun breaks his silence

BAALBEK: A week into daily demonstrations that have gone on into the early hours, the Lebanese may be in need of a pick me up - and the country's most famous drug dealer offered just that yesterday. Nohu Zaiter, a hashish dealer on the run from Lebanese authorities, delivered a blunt message in support of anti-corruption protests that have crippled the country. The self-styled Lebanese Robin Hood released a video on a local news site calling on protesters in the eastern Baalbek region to demonstrate.

"I hope that everyone who goes to the protests brings a Lebanese flag with them," he said, in an address laced with anger. "I hope that every oppressed and deprived person goes to the square," he said, wearing a baseball cap backwards, a hoodie and a chain around his neck. Protests sparked on October 17 by a proposed tax on calls made through messaging apps like Whatsapp have morphed into unprecedented cross-sectarian street demonstrations. Demonstrators are demanding corruption be weeded out, as well as the overthrow of the entire political class. In downtown Beirut, where tens of thousands have gathered daily, graffiti reading "Nohu Zaiter for president" has been scrawled in at least one location. Baalbek, a poor and somewhat lawless area close to the Syrian border, is affiliated with the Shiite militant group Hezbollah.

It is known as the drug capital of Lebanon, with hashish grown relatively openly. Zaiter,

who courts media attention, did not say if he would attend the protest but is wanted on 4,000 charges, according to an AFP correspondent in Baalbek. In February Lebanese security forces seized 20 truckloads of Zaiter's hash from a farm in Bekaa, local media reported. In 2014 a bullet grazed his shoulder during a shootout with the Lebanese army, a local newspaper reported.

Aoun broke his silence

Meanwhile, Lebanese President Michel Aoun broke his silence after a week of unprecedented protests Thursday, expressing willingness to meet demonstrators. "I am ready to meet your representatives... to hear your demands," he said in a short televised speech, his first since daily street protests began on October 17. The speech was met with derision at demonstrations in Beirut and other cities.

The protesters have been venting their frustration at daily woes from lack of healthcare to power cuts, and calling for the replacement of a political system they say is corrupt and broken. Prime Minister Saad Hariri on Monday presented a package of reforms, including cutting ministerial salaries, but the peaceful rallies have continued, crippling Beirut and other major cities. "The reform paper that was approved will be the first step to save Lebanon and remove the spectre of financial and economic collapse," Aoun said.

"It was your first achievement because you

insurance or bonuses.

Libya has been split between rival governments and parliaments based in Tripoli and the east from 2014. For the past six months forces led by military commander Khalifa Haftar and aligned with the eastern government have been waging a campaign to take control of the capital. The fighting has drained resources on both sides. Much of Libya's population of 6.5 million depends on state salaries, which account for more than half of all public spending - a legacy of corruption and political patronage before and after 2011.

Funded by oil revenues, salaries are paid by the Tripoli central bank to citizens across the country. Some fraudulent or duplicate salaries have been eliminated, but many collect wages without working. The education sector is especially bloated. Officials in Tripoli said nearly 240,000 teachers and other staff were on its books in western and southern regions, including 60,000-70,000 replacement teachers. The head of the teachers' union in Benghazi said another 190,000 teachers were registered under the government in the east.

The eastern parliament approved a decree last year to increase teachers' salaries, but it has not been implemented. In Benghazi, where Haftar fought for more than three years before establishing control in 2017, teachers have been staging sit-ins downtown and outside the education ministry building since last month. More than 200 schools have been shut by the protest, said Mustafa al-Darsi, Benghazi's education superintendent. Families that can afford to have been moving their children to private schools. —Reuters



ZOUK MOSBEH: Lebanese people take cover from the rain under umbrellas as they watch a televised speech by President Michel Aoun, during a demonstration on the eighth day of protest against tax increases and official corruption yesterday. —AFP

helped remove obstacles in front of it and it was adopted in record speed," the president told protesters. In Lebanon, the president does not control government policy, though Aoun's political party, the majority-Christian Free Patriotic Movement, is a key part of Hariri's governing coalition. The president also echoed calls on the street to stamp out graft. "Every person who stole public money should be held accountable but it is important their sect doesn't defend him blindly," he said.

Dozens of protesters listening to the speech on loudspeakers outside parliament booed it and resumed their calls for fundamental reform, an AFP correspondent reported. Among them, Rabah Shahrour said he was fed up with hearing the same speeches for years. "We were looking for a little hope from him," he said of the president's speech. "But sadly the president today spoke in generalities. We've been hearing these generalities for three years, and they haven't led to anything." —Agencies

Libyan schools shut as teachers demand better wages

BENGHAZI: Strikes are keeping classrooms shut at the start of the school year in Libya as teachers seek better pay from a budget under strain from a massive public salary bill and renewed conflict. State-run schools were meant to open on Oct 13, but teachers angered by falling living conditions and stagnant wages have been staging sit-ins in Benghazi, Libya's second city, and Tripoli, the capital. Chemistry teacher Ramadan Mohamed, a 47-year-old father of six among those on strike in Benghazi, said he had been forced to take up work as a taxi driver to provide for his family. "There are times I miss classes when I have financial obligations," he said. "If I had an excellent salary that covered the needs of my home, I wouldn't do another job, I'd devote all my time to students and teaching." Living standards in oil-rich Libya, once one of the wealthiest countries in the region, have been sliding downwards amid stop-start warfare and political turmoil.

Monthly salaries range from 500 to 850 Libyan dinars in state-run schools (\$360-\$610 at the official exchange rate, much less on the parallel market), and have not risen significantly since before the uprising that overthrew former leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Schools are run down, and teachers do not receive health

Jordan's 25-year peace with Israel 'cold and getting colder'

AMMAN: Twenty-five years after the signing of a landmark peace treaty, ties between Jordan and Israel mirror the ebbs and flows of a turbulent region, while many Jordanians still regard the Jewish state as an "enemy". The Wadi Araba Treaty, inked on 26 October 1994, formally ended decades of war between the two neighbors but the accord faces continual challenges, analysts say. "Israel remains our number one enemy," Yazid Khleifat, a 38-year-old civil servant said.

"Israel has displaced millions of our Palestinian brothers and killed thousands of Arabs," he added. More than half of Jordan's 9.5 million population is of Palestinian descent. The largely desert Hashemite kingdom borders Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories where a decades-long conflict has defined the political tremors of the Middle

East. Jordan - the only Arab country with Egypt to have a peace treaty with Israel - administered the West Bank, including mostly Arab east Jerusalem, until the 1967 Six-Day War.

It remains the custodian of Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. "Despite the peace plan, Israel shows no respect for Jordan's custodianship over the holy sites... and its attempts to Judaize Jerusalem are in full swing," said Khleifat. "The issue of custodianship is sensitive for the Hashemites because it touches upon their religious legitimacy," said Amman-based political analyst Labib Kamhawi. Members of the Hashemite dynasty to which King Abdullah II belongs are direct descendants of the Prophet Mohammed.

King Abdullah II has repeatedly characterized the peace with Israel as "cold and getting colder" and warned that Jerusalem was a "red line". The status of Jerusalem is one of the thorniest issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel annexed the city after the 1967 war in a move never recognized by the international community. In 2017, US President Donald Trump formally recognized the city as the capital of Israel, a move that angered the Palestinians who see the eastern sector of Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. —AFP

International

Turkey heading in wrong 'direction' over Syria: US

Kurdish forces start Syria-Turkey border pullback

BRUSSELS: Turkey is "heading in the wrong direction" with its incursion into Syria and its deal with Russia to jointly patrol a "safe zone" there, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper warned yesterday. "Turkey put us all in a very terrible situation" by sweeping into northern Syria this month to fight Kurdish militia allied with the US in the fight against the Islamic State group, Esper told a conference in Brussels ahead of a NATO defense ministers' meeting.

"I think the incursion's unwarranted," Esper said. The onus was on Turkey's NATO allies to now "work together to strengthen our partnership with them, and get them on the trend back to being the strong reliable ally of the past," he said. The issue of Turkey's military offensive in Syria is set to dominate the two-day NATO meeting, with diplomats in the organization saying "frank" discussions with Ankara's representatives have already taken place.

A subsequent arrangement with Russia to clear Kurdish militia that Turkey regards as "terrorists" linked to the outlawed PKK group on its soil has also raised hackles. Yet, while isolated in NATO, Turkey's strategic position between Europe and the Middle East is seen as too important to jeopardize, so the other alliance members have limited themselves to criticism only. Esper defended the US decision to pull US forces out of northern Syria, effectively opening the path to the Turkish operation.

"The US decision to withdraw less than 50

soldiers from the zone of attack was made after it was made very clear to us that President (Recep Tayyip) Erdogan made the decision to come across the border," he said. He added that "I was not about to put less than 50 US soldiers in between a 15,000-man-plus Turkish army preceded by Turkish militia and jeopardize the lives of those servicemen". Nor was he "about to start a fight with a NATO ally," he said.

Esper acknowledged "there has been some criticism" about the US withdrawal "but nobody's yet offered a better alternative to what the United States did. We are trying to keep a very strategic perspective." In his speech and question-and-answer session at the event hosted by the German Marshall Fund think tank, Esper highlighted threats he said were posed by Iran, Russia and, especially and above all, China.

"NATO allies should be looking east," to China, he said, stating that Beijing's "heavy hand" was being seen politically, militarily and economically not only in Asia but further abroad, including into Europe with its "belt-and-road" project. Adoption by NATO allies of China's Huawei company to build 5G telecoms networks would be a threat to intel-sharing within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, he said. "I'll counsel our allies-if Huawei becomes your provider of choice, this will affect our ability to share intelligence. We can't trust those networks," he said, adding: "We need to address those threats with eyes wide open."

the Kurdish commander in the country, Mazloum Abdi, had just told him he was "extremely thankful."

Ankara ordered a cross-border operation into Syria on October 9 because it said it wanted to create a security cordon free of Kurdish armed groups that it considers to be terrorists, linked to Kurdish rebels inside Turkey. The long-planned operation started after Trump announced the exit of the small, but politically significant US military force which had until then been closely allied with the Kurds. Trump said he didn't want the US troops caught in the middle of a Turkish-Kurdish war.

Accused both by Republicans and Democrats of abandoning the Kurds, Trump imposed sanctions on Turkey on October 14 and sent a delegation to persuade Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to order a brief ceasefire. In a tweet from a spokesman on Wednesday, Abdi thanked Trump "for his tireless efforts that stopped the brutal Turkish attack and jihadist groups on our people." A group of US senators called in a Wednesday letter for US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to expedite a visa for Abdi so the government could "hear directly... about the situation on the ground and the fight" against IS.

Russians move in

As US soldiers and the Kurds exited areas near Turkey's border, Turkish troops and Russian troops, who have propped up Syrian President Bashar al-Assad through his coun-



TAL ABYAD: Turkey-backed Syrian fighters take over areas on the road between Tal Abyad and Kobane yesterday as Kurdish forces in northeastern Syria left several positions along the long border with Turkey, complying with a deal that sees Damascus, Ankara and Moscow carve up their now-defunct autonomous region. — AFP

Border pullback

Meanwhile, Kurdish forces in northeastern Syria left several positions along the long border with Turkey yesterday, complying with a deal that sees Damascus, Ankara and Moscow carve up their now-defunct au-

tonomous region. Russian forces have started patrols along the flashpoint border, filling the vacuum left by a US troop withdrawal that effectively handed back a third of the country to the Moscow-backed regime of President Bashar al-Assad. — Agencies

US lifts Turkey sanctions, quits 'blood-stained' Syria

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump ended sanctions against Turkey, drawing a line under American involvement in "blood-stained" Syria, as Turkish and Russian troops seized territory previously held by US troops and their beleaguered Kurdish allies. "Let someone else fight over this long blood-stained sand," Trump said in a White House speech that formalized the ceding of power in northern Syria to Ankara and increasingly influential Moscow.

Trump said he was lifting the sanctions because a ceasefire was holding in the area, which Turkey invaded to drive Kurdish military groups from their strongholds. Trump called the ceasefire, which allowed the Turkish takeover to proceed largely unopposed, a "major breakthrough." Rejecting accusations that he betrayed the Syrian Kurds - who suffered thousands of casualties fighting alongside US troops against the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group - Trump said they were happy. The president said

ty's multi-sided civil war, moved in. The first Russian patrol in northern Syria got underway on Wednesday, the defense ministry in Moscow announced. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu talked with Abdi and reassured him that civilians would not have to leave their homes, a spokesman said — apparently addressing allegations that Turkey will seek ethnic cleansing in the region.

Critics of Trump say he has caved in to Turkey and been outplayed by Russia. "It is unthinkable that Turkey would not suffer consequences for malevolent behavior which was contrary to the interests of the United States and our friends," tweeted Republican Senator Mitt Romney. But Trump insisted that the power shift is a win for Washington, because he is fulfilling a campaign promise to step away from "ancient sectarian and tribal conflicts."

Islamic State escapees

Trump said there was no risk that the turmoil in the area could lead to a reconstitution of the Islamic State, which has lost its once sizeable territories and has thousands of members and their relatives kept in camps controlled by the Kurds. With concerns that the Kurds may no longer be able to monitor Islamic State prisoners, Trump said he expects Turkey to "abide by its commitment" to act as a "back-up to the Kurds." "Should something happen, Turkey is there to grab them," he said.

He was speaking shortly after a US State

Department official, James Jeffrey, testified in Congress that "over 100" Islamic State prisoners had escaped so far and "we do not know where they are." Trump said that a "small number" of US soldiers would remain nearby, but purely to guard oil facilities. His central message was clear: that the United States has no business in Syria and that there was never any question of trying to stop NATO member Turkey from carrying out its invasion. "We have spent \$8 trillion on wars in the Middle East, never really wanting to win those wars," Trump said.

However, the isolationist policy grates on many Republicans, whom he is depending upon to save him from a Democratic push to impeach and remove him from office over allegations that he abused his office. Immediately after the speech, powerful Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said the United States had to stay engaged. The US air power must "continue to control the skies over Syria" he said, adding that the military should "have a small - but capable - military partnership" with the Kurds to prevent Islamic State from reemerging.

The Turkish-occupied area was calm, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based war monitor, said on Wednesday. However, explosions hit various parts of Syria's northeast, including the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli and the town of Suluk in the Tal Abyad region near Turkey's border. The car bomb in Qamishli did not cause casualties, according to the Observatory. — AFP

Behind closed doors, Spain exhumes Franco's remains

Dictator's bones taken from tomb in Valley of the Fallen

MADRID: Cries of "long live Franco!" accompanied the coffin of Francisco Franco yesterday as Spain removed the remains of its former dictator from the state mausoleum where he was buried in 1975. His exhumation and reburial is the most significant move in years by Spanish authorities to lay the ghost of the general whose legacy still divides the country he dominated for nearly four decades. The ruling Socialist Party, which faces a national election next month, has long sought to move Franco's remains from the huge monument, built on his orders and containing the remains of combatants from both sides of the 1936-39 civil war. As crowds of media and on-lookers gathered outside, Franco's coffin was extracted from its tomb in the Valley of the Fallen in a ceremony witnessed only by relatives and a small group of officials.

The coffin was carried to a waiting hearse and then transferred to a helicopter for the short flight to a private family vault in the Mingorrubio cemetery north of Madrid, where Franco will be reburied next to his wife. Members of his family had sought a court order to try to prevent the exhumation. The reburial "should make us reflect on what it means for our country's own image and for democracy," said acting Deputy Prime Minister Carmen Calvo.

"Young people should understand that we can never again be without democracy." Around 500,000 people were killed in the war between Franco's nationalist rebels, backed by Hitler and Mussolini, and left-wing Republicans. Franco

then ruled Spain as an autocrat until his death. The exhumation is "intensely symbolic for Spain", said political scientist Pablo Simon, "because the (Franco) monument has always been connected to those who miss the old regime".

Media blackout

Seeking to play down its repercussions, the government had enforced a media blackout and forbidden Franco's family from draping his coffin in the Spanish flag. But in a gesture of solidarity with his ancestor, his eldest grandson and namesake Francisco Franco carried a Franco-era nationalist flag into the valley mausoleum, Reuters TV footage showed, for a ceremony that highlighted deep political and social divisions. A poll in newspaper El Mundo this month showed 43% of Spaniards favored the transfer of Franco's remains while 32.5% opposed it. In a Reuters interview on Wednesday, Francisco Franco had accused the government of engineering the exhumation "as propaganda and political publicity to win a handful of votes before an election".

Albert Rivera, whose centre-right Ciudadanos party abstained in the parliamentary vote to ratify the coffin's transfer, said yesterday that almost two-thirds of Spaniards had not lived or suffered under Franco. "The bones of a dictator who died 44 years ago should not be a government's priority in my opinion. The only silver lining is that (acting Socialist Prime Minister) Pedro Sanchez will stop talking about Franco's bones," he said.

ing the diversion of 37 flights, most of them in Palma on the holiday island of Mallorca, regional transport authorities said.

And nearly 25,000 homes across the region were left without power due to the high winds and heavy rain, although by mid-afternoon that number had fallen to 10,000, officials said. As rescuers in Catalonia continued the search for those reported missing inland from the coastal city of Tarragona, the stormy weather shifted towards the Cantabria region on Spain's northern coast, forecasters said.

The heavy rainfall also battered southern France, where roads were flooded, train services interrupted, and people evacuated from their homes. In the southwestern Beziers region, two meters of water fell in less than six hours — the equivalent of two-and-a-half months worth of rain, Meteo France said, warning that gale-force winds raised the possibility of high waves swamping parts of the coastline.

The bad weather also shut down the rail lines from Montpellier and Toulouse in southern France and from Montpellier across the border into Spain, until at least November 4, French rail operator SNCF announced. Passengers who have bought tickets for journeys no longer available will be reimbursed within 60 days, SNCF added. In September, seven people died in storms and flooding following days of record rainfall in southeastern Spain. Last year, intense rain in Mallorca caused the deaths of 13 people as rivers burst their banks, flooding streets and sweeping away cars. —AFP



SAN LORENZO DE EL ESCORIAL: Family members carry the coffin of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco out of the basilica of the Valle de los Caidos (Valley of the Fallen) mausoleum in San Lorenzo del Escorial yesterday. —AFP

But the dictator's burial alongside his victims has long raised critical questions among historians and campaigners, including 93-year-old Nicolas Sanchez-Albornoz. "It was time (to move him). It was overdue," said Sanchez-Albornoz, who as a prisoner of Franco's Fascist regime was forced to

help build the Valley of the Fallen. "We've waited many decades for (him) to disappear from this monument, which ... was the shame of Spain. All the dictators of Franco's ilk have vanished from Europe—Hitler, Mussolini—and were not honored with such tombs," he said. —Reuters

One dead, 5 missing as northeast Spain hit by flash floods

BARCELONA: One man died and another five people were missing Wednesday after a night of torrential rain triggered flash flooding in northeastern Spain, cutting off roads and disrupting air travel, officials said. Police said they found a man's body late on Tuesday on the beach in Caldes d'Estrac, some 40 kilometers north of Barcelona, while further south, rescuers were engaged in the hunt for five other people, all of whom disappeared in a badly-hit area inland from the coastal city of Tarragona.

Aerial footage from the affected zone, which lies about 30 kilometers north of Tarragona, showed villages swamped by floodwaters and mud, with trees and even bridges swept away by the force of the water. During the evening, regional police confirmed they were looking for a Belgian lorry driver whose empty vehicle had been found in the Francoli river, after earlier saying they were also hunting for two people, reportedly a woman and her adult son whose prefab home was swept away by floodwaters in Vilaverd.

They were also looking for another two people whose empty car was found near l'Espluga de Francoli in the same area. Flooding and landslides forced the closure of nearly 50 roads and halted train services in the region, as well as forc-

Can Africa end 'curse of sleeping sickness'?

BOUAKE: Once the bane of sub-Saharan Africa, sleeping sickness is agonizingly close to being wiped out, but only if countries—and donors—keep up their guard, say scientists. The disease, transmitted to humans by the tsetse fly, was once a curse in 30 countries. But a coordinated global fight to eradicate it has borne fruit, leading to a 95-percent fall in cases over the past 15 years, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Last year, the agency recorded only 977 cases, compared to a peak of some 300,000 in the 1990s. Its hope is that sleeping sickness will enter the history books by 2030. Sleeping sickness—human African trypanosomiasis—is caused by the trypanosoma parasite, which is transmitted to humans by the tsetse when it takes a blood meal.

The disease is fatal unless diagnosed and treated rapidly. Early symptoms are severe headaches and muscle aches and fever. Sufferers feel lethargic and sleepy by day then awake and exhausted at night. Neuropsychiatric and sensory disorders follow, then a coma before death ensues within months or sometimes even years later. "Sleeping sickness is scary—when someone has it, it makes them mad," said Emile Gouribitali, 56, a

villager in central Ivory Coast whose mother and younger brother both fell ill.

But scientists say this dreaded disease is on the ropes. "After a century of fighting it, sleeping sickness is on the verge of being eradicated," said Dr Dramane Kaba, an entomologist and director of the Pierre Richet Institute (IPR) at Bouake in central Ivory Coast. "Sleeping sickness has almost stopped being a public health problem in Africa," he said. "But we have to maintain our efforts." The institute, founded in 1970, specializes in insect-transmitted diseases including malaria, dengue, zika and chikungunya.

Despite the progress, "pockets of resistance" remain, says Kaba. They include the Democratic Republic of Congo—home to 80 percent of cases—and Guinea, where health programs have been ravaged by the Ebola crisis. It is also difficult to gain an accurate assessment in areas of armed conflict. If the overall outlook is relatively favorable, there must be no let-up towards eradication, Kaba insists.

He points to the fact that, after a campaign against the illness from the 1920s through to the 1960s "vigilance then dropped off and the illness returned". Combating the spread of the disease requires meticulous work to break the chain of transmission and kill the parasite, said Vincent Jammoneau at France's Research Institute for Development (IRD). —AFP

International

Thirty-nine victims found dead in truck near London were Chinese

Three addresses in Northern Ireland raided

LONDON: The 39 people found dead in the back of a truck near London are believed to be Chinese nationals, police said yesterday, as they questioned the driver detained on suspicion of murder. Paramedics and police found the 31 men and eight women's bodies on Wednesday in a truck container on an industrial estate at Grays, about 20 miles east of the British capital.

For years, illegal immigrants have attempted to reach Britain stowed away in trucks, often from the European mainland. In the biggest tragedy, 58 Chinese were found dead in a tomato truck in 2000 at the port of Dover. "We read with heavy heart the reports about the death of 39 people in Essex, England," the Chinese embassy said in a statement, adding further clarification was being sought with police. Essex police said their priority was ensuring dignity for the victims during their inquiry.

"Each of the 39 people must undergo a full coroner's process to establish a cause of death before we move on to attempting to identify each individual within the trailer," police added in a statement, saying that would be a time-consuming operation. "We might not have all the answers straight away." Police have identified the truck driver as a 25-year-old man from Northern Ireland and have searched three properties there as part of the investigation. A source familiar with the investigation identified the man as Mo Robinson from the Portadown area of the British province.

The trailer part of the truck arrived at Purfleet docks in Essex, southern England, having come from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge - as did the vehicle involved in 2000. Its red cab unit, which had "Ireland" emblazoned on the windscreen along with the message "The Ultimate Dream, entered Britain via Holyhead in north Wales, having started its journey in Dublin, police said.

'Appalling crime'

The discovery of the bodies was made at 1.40 am just over an hour after the container arrived in Purfleet, not far from the industrial estate in Grays. The vehicle has now been moved to a secure site at nearby Tilbury Docks where forensic work can take place. The National Crime Agency, which targets serious and organized crime, said it was helping the investigation and working urgently to identify any gangs potentially involved.

Shaun Sawyer, national spokesman for British police on human trafficking, said thousands of people were seeking to come to the United Kingdom illegally. While they were able to rescue many of those smuggled in, Britain was perceived by organized crime as a potentially easy target for traffickers. "You can't turn the United Kingdom into a fortress. We have to accept that we have permeable borders," he told BBC radio.

The head of the Road Haulage Association said traffickers were "upping their game" and closer co-



GRAYS: Police officers drive away a lorry in which was discovered 39 dead bodies, at Waterglade Industrial Park in Grays, east of London. —AFP

operation with fellow European nations was needed, albeit that may be complicated by Britain's potential exit from the European Union. "There is

simply not enough being done in terms of security, in terms of the protection of vehicles across Europe," Richard Burnett told BBC TV. - Reuters

Two dead in protests against Ethiopian PM

ADDIS ABABA: At least two people have been killed and dozens injured in violent protests in Ethiopia against Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, state media reported yesterday. Tensions remained high in parts of the country after supporters of a high-profile activist took to the streets Wednesday following rumors of his mistreatment by state forces.

Jawar Mohammed, a member of the Oromo ethnic group, who has been a public critic of Abiy, had accused security forces of trying to orchestrate an attack against him. Police denied reports that Jawar's security detail was being removed to leave the popular and outspoken figure vulnerable to attack. But his supporters in Addis Ababa, the capital, and towns mainly across Oromia, blocked roads, burned tyres and chanted slogans denouncing Abiy, who they claim was behind the alleged threat to Jawar. The clashes had resulted in deaths and injuries in Oromia, one of nine regions in the ethnically diverse country, the state-run Ethiopian News Agency reported yesterday. "Unrest in Adama city on Wednesday has left two people dead, injured 50 others and caused extensive property damage," Dejene Muleta, the chief police commander for Adama, a town in Oromia, told ENA. He did not elaborate on how the deaths occurred. Shimeles Abdisa, vice president of the Oromia region, also acknowledged some deaths in an interview with regional media Wednesday night. "I feel very sorry for the lives that have been lost today," he said. "I want to express my sympathy on behalf of Oromia regional state. We could replace the property which was destroyed but sadly we can't get back people who lost their lives." Witnesses said the atmosphere was tense in Adama yesterday, with protests and road closures for a second day. —AFP

Deaths, bad outcomes elude scrutiny at indigenous clinics

TORONTO: Ina Matawapit was barely conscious - intoxicated and suffering from a blow to the head - when police drove her to the North Caribou Lake clinic in Ontario, Canada, one summer evening in 2012. The nurse at the federal government-run clinic, the only source of emergency care in this remote indigenous community, told the officers the 37-year-old could sober up in jail, according to testimony at a 2018 inquest. Minutes after leaving the clinic, the police sped back. Matawapit had no pulse and could not be revived.

At the inquest, the nurse testified that in sending Matawapit on to jail, she had been following a standard protocol for intoxicated patients in the northern reserves. Government officials testified there was no such thing. The coroner found that in the nearly six years between the death and the inquest, there was no evidence of any formal review of the case "or any learning from the events of that evening" akin to typical procedures in hospitals or emergency rooms. Matawapit's death, attributed to heart disease, likely would have passed under the radar but for the fact that she died in police custody, which made the inquest mandatory.

Over at least nine years, the Canadian federal government has not consistently tracked, let alone investigated, poor outcomes at clinics on indigenous reserves, according to a Reuters analysis of documents, including internal reports and meeting notes obtained through public records requests. Record-keeping on deaths and other critical incidents at the clinics, which provide basic and emergency care to about 115,000 people, has been erratic and fragmented, Reuters found. The incidents often are detailed in separate provincial computer systems, when they are tracked or reported at all.

As a result, there is no way for the federal government to know how often patients die or suffer injury at the clinics or how that compares to the rest of the Canadian health system. The federal government's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB), which funds 79 clinics and manages 50 of them, is hampered in identifying potentially harmful patterns and preventing future mistakes, documents and interviews with medical experts indicate.

Whether turning away apparently intoxicated patients in the northern reserves - described in the coroner's verdict as the "northern protocol" - has

been a widespread practice is difficult to say. Reuters was able to find one other similar death, detailed in Manitoba police records, that occurred five months after Matawapit's. The federal government enacted a policy saying it was "not appropriate" to hold intoxicated patients in - but only after last year's inquest brought the issue to light.

Reuters' findings come as the country is in the midst of a public reckoning with the legacy of settler colonization, a hotter issue today than in nations such as the United States and Australia where European settlers also displaced local peoples. With an indigenous population that is growing and gaining political clout, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau came to power in 2015 promising "reconciliation" with aboriginal people. Reduced to a minority government in this week's election, he needs the support of other parties to govern and will face pressure from the left to address poverty, poor housing and health problems that are especially acute on remote reserves.

It will not be an easy task. Even reviewing critical health care incidents could be a challenge because of the multiple jurisdictions and providers involved, said Michael Green, a professor at Queen's University who was once chief of staff at a small northern hospital that often received patients from clinics in indigenous communities. But "without review, there's no opportunity to learn and make the system safer for everybody," he said. Staff at FNIHB, part of Indigenous Services Canada, say they strive to provide the best possible care and have been working on a replacement reporting system, slated to roll out next year. The effort, which documents show began in 2014, has been planned behind closed doors and has not previously been reported, although pilot programs are running in Manitoba and Alberta. Documents reviewed by Reuters indicate the system is designed to provide national case tracking and a consistent process for investigating and following up on cases. Robin Buckland, executive director of primary healthcare at FNIHB, said the current system is "not a bad policy" but the agency is working to build an environment in which staff members can learn.

"It's taken a long time," she said. "But we want it to be right, and we want to implement it well." Reuters was not able to reach the nurses involved in treatment described in this story. "We truly believe that nurses are working hard to deliver the best health care possible, under difficult work conditions," said Debi Daviau, president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, which represents permanent staff nurses and other civil servants. —Reuters

International

Guns, smiles: Russia flaunts firepower at Africa summit

Putin hosts dozens of African leaders

SOCHI: Russia is showing off its next generation Kalashnikov assault rifles, helicopters and facial recognition systems as President Vladimir Putin hosts dozens of African leaders for a major summit in Sochi. The Wednesday and Thursday event at the Black Sea resort has brought together delegates to discuss everything from nuclear technology to mineral extraction — but on the sidelines, stands for arms companies dominate.

Russia has been a major supplier of weapons and military equipment to African nations and the country's arms exporter hopes the first Russia-Africa summit will help further boost business on the continent. "We would like to expand our presence there, of course," Rosoboronexport director Alexander Mikheev told AFP. He said that African countries now accounted for 40 percent of the exporter's current orders.

All 54 African states were represented at the event and Rosoboronexport said it planned to conduct meetings with the top leadership of 15 countries on the sidelines of the gathering. Russian and African attendees were offered an array of exhibits at which they could hold guns, pose for pictures or leaf through a catalogue of infantry weapons translated into French and Portuguese. "We adapt to the needs of our clients," said an official at one of the stands.

"South Africa uses older models, if you want to keep the same ammunition they will be compatible with these new arms," he told one dele-

gate, letting him hold a Kalashnikov. "It's so light," exclaimed the man who identified himself as a South African doctor with a "personal interest" in weapons. Behind him, a Rosoboronexport representative sang the praises of facial recognition systems which she said were "the most precise in the world" and could help secure borders, protect infrastructure and fight illegal trafficking.

'Huge potential'

"Twenty (African) countries are currently working with Russia," said Rosoboronexport's Mikheev, estimating the value of current arms contracts with the continent at \$12 billion. This year alone, nine countries including Rwanda, Mozambique and Angola are set to receive Russian arms.

Mikheev said that combat jets, gunships, Buk missile systems and S-300 surface-to-air missile systems accounted for 80 percent of Africa's purchases. Russian Helicopters holding company praised "huge potential for cooperation" as it showcased a modernized Mi-35 attack helicopter. "Over 900 helicopters made by Russian Helicopters' enterprises are registered in African countries," the company said in a statement. "This is almost one in four helicopters on the continent."

On the sidelines of the summit, Ethiopia agreed to buy a Pantsir missile system but Rosoboronexport said no major arms sales were expected to be announced at the end of



SOCHI: A visitor examines a Russian made rocket-propelled grenade launcher RPG-29 during the Russia-Africa Economic Forum Exhibition on the sidelines of the Russia-Africa Summit and Economic Forum in the Black sea resort of Sochi yesterday. —AFP

the two-day gathering. Moscow has in recent years struck a series of military agreements to provide military expertise and train soldiers in Africa. On Wednesday, Central African leader Faustin-Archange Touadera asked Putin to extend military aid, while Namibian President Hage Geingob told the Kremlin chief his country was interested in Moscow's military expertise.

Mikheev said defense deals also lead to more business opportunities in non-military

spheres such as infrastructure projects and geological exploration. "It's very important to showcase Russia's capabilities today," he said. "Not just in the military sphere." Observers say Moscow has been skillfully using a combination of arms exports and security expertise to expand its political and economic footprint in Africa. "Guns have opened many more doors for the Kremlin in Africa than butter," said Paul Stronski, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. —AFP

Macron unveils new pick for key EU post

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron yesterday put forward businessman and former economy minister Thierry Breton as France's candidate for a key European Commission portfolio, after his first choice was shot down by the European Parliament. Macron proposed Breton to incoming commission head Ursula von der Leyen for the ambitious portfolio covering industrial policy, defense spending, technology and space, an Elysee Palace official said.

The portfolio, which Macron fought hard for, has remained unchanged. Macron and Von der Leyen had agreed on Breton's "profile," the official said, adding: "If we are proposing this candidate, he is suitable." Two weeks ago, European Parliament lawmakers voted to reject Macron's first candidate for the Brussels post, Sylvie Goulard, in a rare political defeat for the French leader on the European stage.

A former MEP, Goulard resigned in June 2017 from a short stint as France's defence minister after claims she and other members of the centrist MoDem party were using European parliamentary funds to pay assistants who were actually based in France. She was questioned by French investigators in September and is also under scrutiny by the EU Anti-Fraud Office, though she has not been charged. Breton, 64, is credited with a turnaround for the debt-laden former state monopoly France Telecom, now Orange, and leading it to privatization.

He has served as a director on many boards and led French computer-maker Bull as well as Thomson Multimedia before serving as economy minister under Jacques Chirac from 2005 to 2007. He now heads digital firm Atos, a group with head offices both out-

side Paris and in Munich, where he has doubled turnover to more than 12 billion euros (\$13.4 billion) and staff numbers to 122,000. But Atos is an IT service provider to the EU and Breton's nomination has raised questions about potential conflicts of interest.

'Complicated'

The vetting process "will be complicated, once again," said Yannick Jadot, a European parliamentarian from France's EELV green party. "Thierry Breton is the CEO of Atos, it is a digital company that receives European grants, that is a European leader in supercomputers, also with European grants. And in his portfolio, what do we have? Digital."

Another MEP, Manon Aubry of the hard-left France Unbowed party, criticized the candidature of a boss of a listed company "that receives millions of European grants". But the Elysee insisted Breton was always "rigorous to avoid any conflict of interest" when he moved to government from the business sector. Macron's nominee will be vetted by European lawmakers in the coming weeks.

'Committed European'

The Elysee official said Breton "has solid skills in all the areas covered by the portfolio, particularly industry and high tech", adding that he is a "committed European" and "a man of action". Breton said yesterday that he was "working on preparing for the hearings", adding he was "very honored" by the trust placed in him.

"For Europe and for all our fellow European citizens, I appreciate the importance of the challenges associated with this portfolio for the future of our country." The vetting of the EU's 28 commissioners, one for each member country, has taken longer than expected, and the EU executive is now expected to start its work on December 1, a month later than initially planned. MEPs also rejected the candidates from Hungary and Romania last month. —AFP

Three dead after fierce flooding in southern France

PARIS: Three people have died after several days of heavy storms that sent rivers flooding over their banks across southern France, causing "significant damage," the interior minister said yesterday. Rescue workers have carried out nearly 1,800 operations since Sunday, Christophe Castaner said in a statement, after eight departments were placed on high alert for flash floods.

He did not provide details on when or how the deaths occurred, but an interior ministry official said they were in the Hérault, Gard and Pyrénées-Orientales departments. Around 700 homes remain without power in Hérault and Gard, and the flooding could halt train services across much of the area until at least November 4, the SNCF train operator said.

"This toll could have been higher," Transport Minister Elisabeth Borne said while inspecting the damage in Beziers, a city hit particularly hard. Flooding also killed a man in north-eastern Spain this week, and five people were missing, officials said Wednesday. Flooding and landslides forced the closure of nearly 50 roads and halted train services in the region, as well as forcing the diversion of 37 flights, Spanish authorities said. —AFP

International

From cell to where? Focus on home post-prison in US

Stable housing helps prisoners adapt to life in the outside world

WASHINGTON: Spare rooms are no longer just for guests and Airbnb. The lucrative room-letting business has inspired a new way of housing ex-inmates as the United States tests a raft of innovations to ease prisoner release, when a place to call home is a top priority yet often the hardest thing to find. Ex-prisoners say the freedom and security they get from a room of their own is a huge turnaround after a decade-plus of bunking up in crowded jails, and an opportunity to start afresh.

"I had my own room, for the first time in over 10 years," said KC Matthews, among the first to benefit from the Airbnb-style, post-prison program. "It provided me a safe space, my own space, and provided me stability ... to do the other things I needed to do," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone. Since August 2018, the Homecoming Project has been matching people due to leave prison with local hosts with spare space in Alameda County, outside San Francisco.

Researchers, advocates and policymakers increasingly say that safe and stable housing is critical to helping prisoners adapt to life in the outside world - and to staying there. Traditionally, prisoners fended for themselves on release - a challenge that pushes many back into jail - or enrolled in transitional housing programs with heavy restrictions. Now different cities are trying new ways to help inmates slot back into life, and housing is one of their key tools.

Home sweet home

For Matthews, a transgender man who had lived on the streets and in foster care for much of his life, his anxiety grew ever more acute as his release date neared. "Is there a place that will accept me and where I will be comfortable?"

said Matthews, 51. "This was weighing me down at a time I should have been happy - I was getting out of prison!" Which is where Homecoming came in. It paired Matthews with a potential host, then gave them opportunities to talk by phone before his release.

It worked. When he got out, Matthews said he was able to apply immediately for a driving licence, social security card and other necessities: critical errands that he said would have taken him a month under traditional transitional housing rules.

He was also able to ease back into the rhythms of life out of prison - re-learning how to shop for food and more - while his temporary home offered a safe haven as he adjusted. "That was one less thing on my plate - housing and safety," he said. The Homecoming Project works only with people jailed for at least a decade, said Terah Lawyer, project coordinator at Impact Justice, a nonprofit that runs the initiative. "If you're gone for 10 years, you come back completely a ghost," she said, referring to inmates whose driving licence, credit history and identity papers get erased.

"It was inspired by the Airbnb model and realising that ... anyone who has the money can stay at an Airbnb without anyone checking their record, but getting their own housing is complicated," she said. By placing ex-prisoners with community hosts and mentors for six months, the pilot project bypasses the tight restrictions of state transitional housing and helps inmates reintegrate. "The community hosts are going to be role-modeling what life is like in the community for participants," Lawyer said.

Cell to shelter

For prisoners to get any home on release is

complicated. In large urban areas, half of those released each year face homelessness, according to a 2016 report. Almost 50,000 people go directly to shelters on release, according to federal data. "The period after release from prison is about the most extreme poverty you can imagine," said Wanda Bertram with the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonprofit.

Money aside, she said, inmates need new ID, as well as find a landlord who will accept tenants with a criminal record and a place that meets their own often onerous parole requirements. Those who have spent a single stint in prison are seven times more likely to experience homelessness than the rest of the US population, and those who have been jailed multiple times are 13 times more likely to be homeless, according to a first-ever national estimate that PPI put out last year. There is no national data, Bertram said, but recognition of the issue has broken into the 2020 presidential campaign.

Former vice president Joe Biden, now a top-polling candidate for president, has said that if elected he will "set a national goal of ensuring 100% of formerly incarcerated individuals have housing upon re-entry" from prison. There is also a fledgling legal push underway to scrap rule-bound screening processes that can deny would-be tenants any shot at renting a home if they carry a criminal record, even prohibiting stays with family members.

Since the federal government highlighted the issue in 2016, 10 municipalities have enacted what are known as "Fair Chance" policies, said Deborah Thrope, supervising attorney with the National Housing Law Project, a legal advocacy group. "This is the first time people are really taking a hard look at screening policies, especially around affordable housing," said Thrope.

Another 2020 presidential candidate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, has floated a proposal that would make local Fair Chance strategies apply to federal housing policies.

\$25 and a bus ticket

It would mark a major change from the old ways, experts say. "What generally happened when we released in Georgia historically is you'd get \$25 and a bus ticket to wherever you came from," said Tom McElhenney, director of transitional services for the Georgia Department of Corrections. Those released in such a way "go into survival mode and go back to what they can do to survive, which is usually dealing drugs and other illegal" activity, McElhenney told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone. "We want to break that cycle."

Last year, the state prison system started a project in Atlanta to do just that - the Metro Reentry Facility. The standalone facility puts prisoners nearing release through an intensive programme of life skills and vocational classes, certification courses and more, seeking to ensure that when they leave, they have a job and a home, McElhenney said.

That means working closely with housing providers and updating inmates' ID - a common barrier to getting on. It also offers a space where family members can get to know each other again. "A lot of those released go and live with family members," said McElhenney. "Your best chance for success is with someone who knows you and can support you." So far about 80 people have gone through the Metro Reentry Facility, and the state wants to set up similar operations outside of Atlanta, he said. "We hope this will reduce recidivism and are confident it probably will." — Reuters

From hotbed of crime to joggers' paradise: Nairobi forest thrives

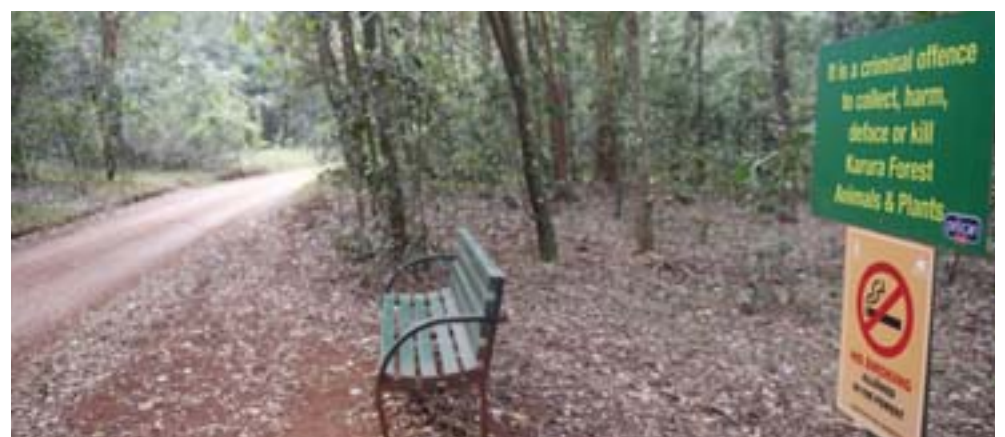
NAIROBI: "We would collect dead, dumped bodies. Some were decomposing... others were fresh," said John Chege of his early days policing Nairobi's Karura Forest, back when thieves and murderers outnumbered joggers and dog walkers in the woods. Karura then was the stuff of urban legend, a fearsome place invoked to scare misbehaving children. Chege and his scouts, stumbling on corpses by day, kept white-knuckled vigils by night as they scanned the darkness for intruders.

"It was hell," Chege told AFP of his hair-raising first months as Karura's inaugural chief scout, back in 2009 when efforts began to reclaim the forest. "But today we celebrate, because there is nothing of the sort." In the space of 10 years, Karura has gone from a dangerous no man's land to one of Nairobi's safest and most popular destinations, a verdant refuge in a city that has long carried the unfortunate moniker "Nairobi".

Karura is also a symbol against land-grabbing, having been saved from developers to become the world's second-largest forest that is fully within city limits, conservationists say. Kenya's forests are cleared at a rate of 5,000 hectares (12,300 acres) a year, the environment ministry said in 2018. But Karura has survived, even as green spaces are being swallowed by concrete in one of Africa's fastest-growing cities.

From zero visitors in 2009, today Karura attracts up to 30,000 nature lovers a month, with 10-year commemorative events planned in October to mark its striking transformation and storied history. For many years, hardly anyone came, said Karanja Njoroge, who chaired Friends of Karura Forest, a community group that co-manages the reserve, from 2011 to 2018.

Shaking its reputation was a challenge, even after an electric fence was raised around the



NAIROBI: A notice board is photographed in Karura forest, Nairobi. In the space of ten years, Karura forest has gone from a dangerous no-man's land to one of the safest and most popular destinations in Nairobi, a refuge in a city that has long carried the unfortunate moniker 'Nairobi'. — AFP

perimeter. "Karura Forest in 2009 was a place where no one would even want to be threatened to be taken. It meant either you were going to be killed, or that you were going to be punished,"

Njoroge said. Chege and his scouts, who were trained by the British army, could not convince nervous joggers they would be safe, and so ran alongside them in khaki fatigues. —AFP

Pakistan, India sign deal on visa-free corridor for Sikhs

The Kartarpur Corridor deal - a rare example of cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad and New Delhi signed an agreement yesterday on a visa-free corridor between the two countries that will allow Sikh pilgrims in India to visit the shrine to their religion's founder, which is in Pakistan. The Kartarpur Corridor deal - a rare example of cooperation between the nuclear-armed arch-rivals - follows months of heightened tensions, mainly over the disputed region of Kashmir.

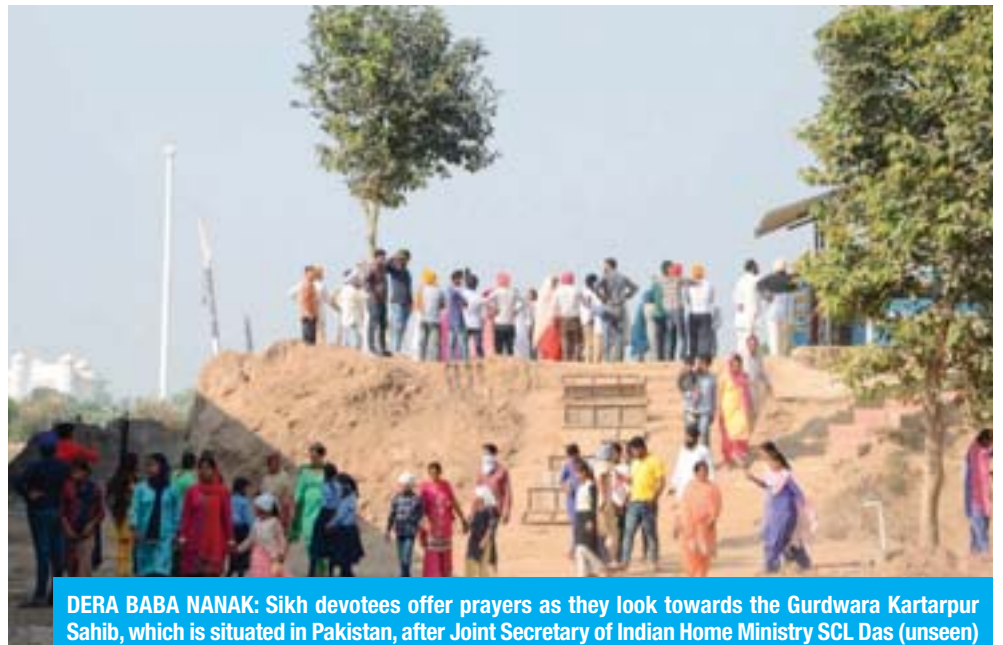
"Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin... can use the corridor. The travel will be visa-free," said SCL Das, a joint secretary in the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, at a press conference after the agreement was signed. "Pilgrims from around the world are also welcome," added Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman Mohammad Faisal. The deal allows for a secure corridor and bridge between the two countries, leading directly to the grave of Sikhism's founder Guru Nanak, just four kilometers (two miles) from the Indian border.

Pakistan had employed hundreds of laborers to spruce up the shrine, including building a border immigration checkpoint and a bridge, as well as expanding the grounds comprising the shrine itself. India had long been asking Pakistan for such a corridor, but the project's realization was

prevented by years of diplomatic tensions between the two countries that have fought three wars since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

The corridor is expected to be inaugurated in early November, ahead of the guru's 550th birthday on November 12, which is marked with celebrations by millions of Sikhs around the world. However Delhi said that it is still contesting Pakistan's bid to charge each pilgrim \$20 per visit. The pair have maintained an uneasy calm since tit-for-tat cross-border air raids across their disputed Kashmir frontier in February sparked fears of wider war, with each side claiming to have shot down a fighter jet from the other side.

Pakistani and Indian soldiers have also continued to fire over the Line of Control - the de facto border dividing the Himalayan territory, killing civilians on both sides in recent days. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. Both claim the Himalayan territory in full and have fought two wars over it. The Sikh faith began in the 15th century in the city of Lahore, which is now part of Pakistan, when Guru Nanak began teaching a faith that preached equality between all men.— AFP



DERA BABA NANAK: Sikh devotees offer prayers as they look towards the Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib, which is situated in Pakistan, after Joint Secretary of Indian Home Ministry SCL Das (unseen) signed an agreement with Pakistan on a visa-free India-Pakistan Kartarpur Corridor, at Dera Baba Nanak, some 50 km from Amritsar yesterday. — AFP

16 sentenced to death for burning Bangladeshi alive

FENI: Sixteen people were sentenced to death yesterday for burning alive a Bangladeshi teenager who refused to withdraw sexual assault charges against her head teacher. The case highlights what activists say is a culture of impunity over sexual violence in the South Asian country of 168 million people, as well as abuse rife in around 20,000 seminaries that educate mostly poor and rural students.

Nusrat Jahan Rafi was doused in kerosene and set on fire on April 6 after she made a sexual harassment complaint against the principal of her rural Islamic seminary. The head teacher, who a court in the southern coastal town of Feni found had ordered the brutal killing from jail after being arrested over the harassment claim, was among those sentenced to death.

Others included activists from the ruling Awami League party and some students - including two females - who either participated in the killing or guarded the gates of the seminary while it took place. "The verdict proves that nobody will get away with murder in Bangladesh. We have the rule of law," prosecutor Hafez Ahmed told reporters after the verdict in a crowded courtroom.

Rafi was lured to the rooftop of the seminary in Sonagazi where her attackers pressed her to withdraw the complaint she had filed with police.

When she refused, she was tied up, doused in kerosene and set on fire. She suffered burns to 80 percent of her body and died in hospital four days later. Her death triggered widespread horror across the nation, with protesters in the capital Dhaka staging days of demonstrations seeking "exemplary punishment" for the killers. The murder put pressure on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to do more to protect women, with her government ordering some 27,000 schools to set up committees to prevent sexual violence.

Rafi had gone to police in late March to report the sexual harassment, and a leaked video shows the local station chief registering her complaint but dismissing it as "not a big deal". Police said the attackers' plan had been to pass off her death as suicide, but this failed after Rafi managed to stagger down the stairs while still engulfed in flames.

Activists say many of the women and children who report sexual violence in Bangladesh often suffer a backlash, and

that successful prosecutions are rare. Rafi's case was fast-tracked, with the hearing taking only 62 days at a special tribunal hearing cases of violence against women and children. Maleka Banu, head of a woman's rights group, told AFP: "It is an exemplary punishment. We hope it will send a serious message to the perpetrators and collaborators of sexual violence."

She said she hoped the verdict would work as a deterrent and would bring down "alarming rise" in sexual violence in the country. Since the arrest of the principal, at least five more madrasa teachers have been held on charges of rape and sexual assault of their students. The head of the Mahila Parishad, another women's rights group, gave a "guarded welcome" at the quick conclusion of the case, but said more needed to be done to ensure increased convictions for sexual harassment and rape cases.

According to that group, there were 731 incidents of sexual violence reported in the first six months of the year, including 592 rapes, 113 gang rapes and 26 women who were killed after being sexually assaulted. Researcher Rezaur Rahman Lenin said on average more than 200 people are sentenced to death each year in Bangladesh, and as of May around 1,500 people were on death row. The number of executions carried out is less than 10 a year. Defense lawyers said they would appeal against yesterday's verdict in the high court.—AFP

Delhi offers Diwali laser shows to stop burning of crackers

NEW DELHI: Delhi authorities are offering residents laser light shows to mark the Hindu festival of Diwali this weekend and wean them away from bursting tens of thousands of firecrackers that cause a deadly spike in air pollution. The air quality in the Indian capital has already worsened with levels of PM 2.5, tiny particulate matter that goes deep into the lungs, already twice that of safe limits because of crop stubble fires in the surrounding farm states.

Each Diwali, acrid smoke from ear-splitting firecrackers turns into a thick, toxic haze that envelopes New Delhi and its bustling satellite cities, home to millions of people. The smog lingers for days as wind speeds drop in the winter months, adding to air pollution exacerbated by the burning of crop residues, vehicle exhausts and industrial gases. "Let's celebrate a smoke-free Diwali with this laser show and do our bit in making this festival pollution free," Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said in front page ads yesterday.

He asked residents to gather in the shopping district of Connaught Place and watch the laser shows that will run for four days beginning Saturday. While Diwali is celebrated throughout the country, New Delhi accounts for nearly half of India's demand for firecrackers. Although firecrackers push up pollution levels, authorities have been reluctant to ban them. Some politicians, including a few members of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, have said that Diwali is part of an ancient Hindu tradition and officials must respect the sentiments of Hindus. "We support every initiative to help improve Delhi's air but banning firecrackers on Diwali and letting fireworks go on Christmas and New Year is hypocrisy," said Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga, a spokesman for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.—Reuters

International

Japan renews call on S Korea to keep promises, mend ties

Disputed islets, forced asset sales threaten relations

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon agreed on yesterday on the importance of cooperating on North Korea and other issues, seeking to rebuild relations amid a bitter feud over history and trade. But there was scant sign of real progress and Abe reiterated that South Korea would need to keep its promises for ties between the two Asian allies of Washington to improve.

Relations between Tokyo and Seoul have deteriorated to their lowest in decades since South Korea's top court last October ordered some Japanese firms to compensate Koreans forced to work in their wartime mines and factories. Japan, which says the matter was settled by a 1965 treaty, calls the decision a violation of international law, and the feud has spilled over into trade and security matters.

About 100 journalists were present at the start of talks in Tokyo, the highest-level meeting between the two sides since the row flared. The meeting began with a handshake but no smiles. Abe urged Seoul to keep its promises - a reference to the 1965 treaty - in order to restore relations, according to statement issued by Japan's foreign ministry.

"Our two nations are important neighbors for each other, and keeping in contact over North Korea, bilateral relations and our ties with the United States are quite important," Abe was quoted as telling Lee. "Relations are currently in quite a severe state but should not be left that way. If South Korea can keep bilateral promises, that could be a chance to return to a healthy relationship," Abe added.

The statement also quoted Lee as saying he

shared the view that dialogue was important, while a parallel statement from South Korea's foreign ministry said Lee agreed relations should not be left in their current difficult state. Abe also repeated Tokyo's stance that the South Korean court ruling overturned the basis of two-way ties.

"Abe said the South Korean top court ruling is in clear violation of international law and ... fundamentally breaks down the legal framework for Japan-South Korea relations," Japanese Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Naoki Okada told reporters. In a sign that gaps remain wide, Lee told Abe: "South Korea has also respected and complied with the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations and Claims, and will continue to do so," according to Seoul's statement.

Lee, who was in Tokyo to attend Japanese Emperor Naruhito's enthronement ceremony this week, delivered to Abe a personal letter from South Korean President Moon Jae-in in which Moon called for attempts to resolve the pending bilateral issues, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported. Moon and Abe have not held a summit in more than a year and the statements made no mention of any meeting planned between the two. A Japanese government official questioned whether yesterday's meeting would lead to a breakthrough. "It depends on their (South Korea's) deeds, not words," the official told Reuters.

Difficult history

The animosity between Japan and South Korea is linked to the history of Japan's 1910-45 colonization of the Korean peninsula, the mobilization of forced labor at companies and women



TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (right) attends a meeting with his South Korean counterpart Lee Nak-yeon (left) in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

in wartime military brothels, and a row over the ownership of islets in the sea between the two nations. Earlier this year, the dispute escalated when Japan tightened export controls on materials vital for South Korean chipmakers. It then dropped Seoul from a list of countries eligible for fast-track exports, steps angrily denounced by South Korea.

The spat has prompted protests in South Korea, where Japanese companies and products have been boycotted, and trade between the two countries has slowed sharply. In August, South Korea announced it would scrap a military intelligence-sharing pact with Japan when it expires next month, just as the allies face rising tensions

over North Korea's nuclear weapons program and increased competition from China and Russia. Further potential flashpoints loom.

Thousands of South Korean students and activists are expected to gather on Friday to celebrate "Dokdo Day". Dokdo is the Korean name for islets claimed by South Korea and by Japan, which calls them Takeshima. South Korea is also planning to order asset sales of the Japanese companies found liable for damages under last year's forced labor rulings as early as December, which could further sour bilateral relations, analysts said. "Precautions must be taken to prevent that," said Yang Kee-ho, professor of Japanese Studies at Sungkonghoe University. —Reuters

Bolivia's opposition stages strike, Morales decries 'coup'

LA PAZ: Bolivia's opposition launched a general strike Wednesday amid protests and disturbances over disputed election results that pointed to another term for President Evo Morales, who likened the unrest to a right-wing coup. Speaking to reporters, Morales also said he will take measures to "defend" democracy and is confident he will be declared the outright winner of Sunday's election — with no need for a runoff.

His opposition rival, Carlos Mesa, urged his supporters to step up protests against what he said was an effort by the three-term Morales - Bolivia's first indigenous president - to steal the election. Mesa said his sup-

porters should proceed with "permanent mobilization" on the streets until the country's electoral authority "recognizes that the second round must take place." He also announced the formation of a political alliance with right-wing parties and centrist leaders that will press for the election's outcome to be determined in a runoff vote. Clashes broke out between rival demonstrators Wednesday in the eastern city of Santa Cruz, the country's largest and an opposition bastion. Offices in the city housing Bolivia's electoral authority were set on fire overnight, and security forces clashed with demonstrators in La Paz and elsewhere. Morales, a for-

mer coca farmer and Latin America's longest serving leader, is seeking a fourth straight term.

Partial results released Sunday indicated Morales would face off in a second round with Mesa, but the electoral court on Monday released stunning new results that suddenly raised prospects of an outright Morales victory. That drew opposition complaints of fraud and triggered rioting in some cities. "A coup is under way. I want the people of Bolivia to know," Morales said in his first public remarks since the vote, referring to the strike and the violent anti-government protests. "Until now, humbly, we have put up with it in order to avoid violence and we have not entered into confrontation."

Morales drew support from his leftist ally, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, who decried "a predictable coup that, I can say, was defeated. The Bolivian people will defeat violence." After the release of the controversial election results, mobs torched electoral offices in Sucre and Potosi, while



SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA: Supporters of Bolivian opposition candidate Carlos Mesa and of President Evo Morales clash during a demonstration over disputed poll results, in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. — AFP

rival supporters clashed in La Paz.

Monitors from the Organization of American States said they, too, had seen a "drastic and hard to explain change" in the trend of the initial results. The OAS held an extraordinary meeting on Bolivia at its Washington headquarters and said "the better op-

tion" to ease the crisis would be to hold a second round runoff. "Due to the context and the problems evidenced in this electoral process, convening a second round continues to be a better option," said the head of the OAS election monitoring department, Gerardo Icaza.—AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

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A woman looks at an oil painting by Leonardo da Vinci's "The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne", during the opening of the exhibition "Leonardo da Vinci", on October 22, 2019 at the Louvre museum in Paris. — AFP

Louvre blockbuster spotlights Leonardo da Vinci 500 years on

See Page 21



Visitors walk through the archaeological site of Herculaneum in Ercolano, near Naples. —AFP photos

New technique reveals **lost splendors of Herculaneum art**

One of the best preserved Roman houses at Herculaneum reopened on Wednesday after more than 30 years, its exquisite paintings brought back to life thanks to a revolutionary new technique. The three-storey House of the Bicentenary is perhaps the most beautiful noble house so far excavated from under the pyroclastic flow that entombed Herculaneum in the devastating 79 AD eruption of Mount Vesuvius that also destroyed nearby Pompeii.

Although much smaller than its better known neighbor outside the southern Italian city Naples, Herculaneum was a wealthier town with more exquisite architecture, much of which is still to be uncovered. Herculaneum was buried under at least 15 meters of rock, much more than the around four meters of ash at Pompeii, which for years made Herculaneum less attractive to looters and archaeologists alike.

The Bicentenary house, which also features

stunning mosaics, gets its name from the fact that it was re-discovered in 1938, exactly 200 years after official excavations began at the site under the Bourbon monarchy. The 600-square-metre building was closed to the public in 1983 as it began to fall apart, including its priceless wall paintings in the Tablinum, the room traditionally used by the father of the house for business and to receive clients. Conservationists focused on two large mythological scenes, one of Venus and Mars and one of Daedalus and Pasiphae, and paintings of a variety of other Dionysian themes common to the homes of Herculaneum's wealthy inhabitants.

'Most beautiful'

"The reason we chose this room to study and conserve is because the wall paintings here are some of the most beautiful at the site, but also some of the most severely deteriorated," said Leslie Rainer, wall painting conservator

from the Getty Conservation Institute. Black and white photos of the paintings from 1938 show remarkably well-preserved images, but they had almost disappeared before the latest restoration work began.

"The wall paintings are so significant that it was a terrible shame to see them so deteriorated and not to have solutions for how to conserve them properly," Rainer told AFP. The house became a laboratory for finding "new innovative treatment methods and materials that can be used here but also applied around the site and in the region for wall paintings that have similar conservation issues," said Rainer.

'Flaking and powdering'

Not only was the room left exposed to the elements after it was excavated, but wax was applied to the paintings in a well-meaning but ultimately misguided attempt to preserve them.

"The combination of the dramatic environmental fluctuations with the wax covering the wall paintings led them to be pulled up and so they were flaking and powdering, so we had to find solutions."

After experimenting with different methods to try to preserve the paint and also remove the wax, a non-organic rigid gel solution was found and "we were able to actually remove that wax layer and have a stable paint layer underneath," Rainer said. The wax method was used widely throughout the region and threatens the survival of many of the artworks it was meant to protect, but the experts working on the Bicentenary House hope this technique can be used to save them once its details are published. "We hope that professionals can use this method for wall paintings that show similar issues around the whole region," said Rainer, as conservationists apply vivid colours to the newly revealed surfaces around her. —AFP

'The Virgin will protect': Pilgrims are easy prey for Lourdes thieves

Pilgrims to the holy town of Lourdes in southern France, lulled into carelessness by the promise of heavenly protection, are increasingly falling victim to pickpockets, local authorities say. Thefts have more than doubled as organized gangs turned their attention to the town, attracted by the easy pickings there.

"Many people think that when they arrive in Lourdes nothing can happen, leaving their handbags open wider than they would have in Paris," said Philippe Subercaze, a city councillor in charge of security. "In Lourdes, they think the Virgin will protect them and that nothing will happen to them." Lourdes is one of the most revered sites for the world's 1.2 billion Catholics because it is said to be where the Virgin Mary appeared to a peasant girl in a grotto in 1858.

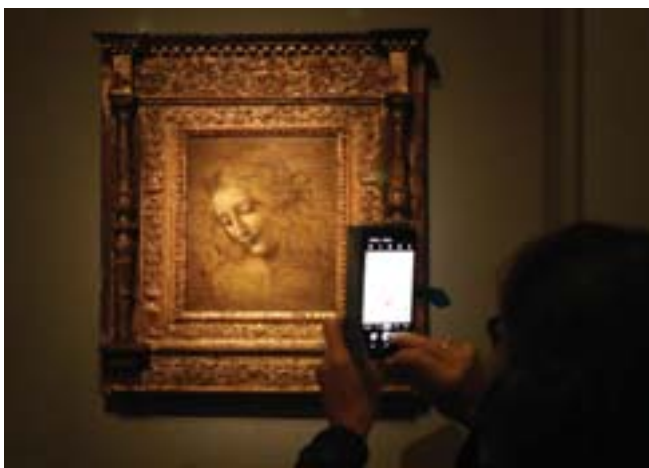
The town, with a population of about 14,000, attracted more than 770,000 visitors last year. Most came from Italy, Spain, Britain and Ireland.

Local prosecutor Pierre Aurignac told AFP there has been a "statistical explosion" of pickpocketing incidents—from 117 in the first nine months of last year to 274 so far in 2019. "It is cash they are after."

Most of the thefts happened in the town centre in the shop-lined roads near the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, an area surrounding a shrine. The municipality has put up about 50 video cameras since last year, adding to those the Sanctuary itself has installed. "These are very organized professionals," Subercaze said of the pickpockets. "They arrive in waves and change all the time. As soon as one is identified or arrested, they are replaced. It is a game of cat and mouse." Slowly but surely, the pilgrims are wising up. "A couple had their things stolen a few days ago, so now I take more care," said Anna Maria, who came to Lourdes from Naples, Italy. "I keep my bag pressed close to my body." —AFP



Catholic pilgrims pose in front of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary during the celebration of the Feast of the Assumption, in the French Southwestern pilgrimage city of Lourdes. —AFP photos



A person takes a picture with mobile phone at an oil on wood painting by Leonardo da Vinci's "The Head of a Woman—also known as La Scapigliata", during the opening of the exhibition "Leonardo da Vinci", on October 22, 2019 at the Louvre museum in Paris. — AFP photos



"La belle ferronniere" also known as Portrait of an Unknown Woman.



"Madone benois -1519"

LOUVRE BLOCKBUSTER SPOTLIGHTS **LEONARDO DA VINCI** 500 YEARS ON

Leonardo da Vinci is the star in a blockbuster retrospective opening yesterday at the Louvre museum in Paris to mark 500 years since the death of the Renaissance master. Some 240,000 people have already reserved their place in line for the exhibition, the biggest ever organized to showcase the Tuscan polymath's indelible contributions to humanity — with an emphasis on his painting.

A decade in the planning, the show simply titled "Leonardo da Vinci" groups 162 works, including 24 drawings loaned by Queen Elizabeth II of Britain from the Royal Collection. The British Museum, the Hermitage of Saint Petersburg and the Vatican have also contributed, as well as, of course, Italy — after a sometimes acrimonious tug-of-war between Rome and Paris over the loans. The exhibition in the Hall Napoleon, which runs until February 24, features 10 of the fewer than 20 paintings definitively attributed to the Renaissance master, as well as drawings, manuscripts, sculptures and other objects d'art.

Visitors follow a timeline of the master's peripatetic career under the tutelage of dukes, princes and kings, from Florence to Milan, Venice and Rome, and finally France, where he spent the last three years of his life. He died in the historic town of Amboise in the Loire Valley on May 2, 1519.

Two no-shows

Two standout works are missing from the show, starting with the Mona Lisa. Organizers decided the world's most famous painting should remain in the Louvre's Salle des Etats — its normal home — to help avoid overcrowding. By itself, the masterpiece attracts nearly 30,000 people a day. The Mona Lisa's ineffable smile however beguiles visitors in a virtual reality experience at the end of the show.

"It's a pretty extraordinary experience," said Lorenz Baumer, removing his headset after viewing the film. "You have the impression of being inside the head of this man... and encountering Mona Lisa through what she has to tell us," said Baumer, a jeweler. The experience ends with a dreamlike final 360-degree sequence that take the spectator up in a wooden flying machine imagined by Leonardo, soaring over the mountains and valleys of the painting.

The other notable no-show is the Salvator Mundi, the work that became the most expensive painting ever sold when it fetched \$450 million (400 million euros) at a Christie's auction in 2017. Mystery now surrounds the painting — whose authenticity is disputed by some experts — as it has not been seen in public ever since the record-shattering sale. The Louvre has said the museum's request to borrow the work is still pending, but a last-minute appearance would be a stunning surprise.

The Vitruvian Man

The final act in the row between Paris and Rome over Italy's contributions to the show came with a legal effort to halt the loan of the iconic Vitruvian Man drawing. The Vitruvian Man — which Italian media say is insured for at least one billion euros — joined the Louvre show with just days to spare before the opening. It will stay only eight weeks rather than the full four months.

"The Vitruvian Man, such a discreet drawing on paper, but so revolutionary," said Susan Prion, 63, a professor of medicine. The exhibition curated by the Louvre's Vincent Delieuvin and Louis Frank, the heads of the museum's painting and graphic arts departments, includes infrared reflectographs that offer an insight into the master painter's techniques. — AFP



Leonardo da Vinci's "The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne".



Leonardo da Vinci's "The Virgin, the Child Jesus with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist".



'St. Jerome penitent'

Lifestyle | Features

Rose McGowan sues Weinstein for 'diabolical' effort to silence her

US actress Rose McGowan filed a lawsuit on Wednesday against Harvey Weinstein, his ex-attorneys and a private intelligence agency, alleging they conspired to discredit her when she accused the disgraced movie mogul of rape. "This case is about a diabolical and illegal effort by one of America's most powerful men and his representatives to silence sexual assault victims," the suit filed in Los Angeles federal court states. "And it is about the courageous women and journalists who persisted to reveal the truth."

McGowan was one of the first women to make public allegations about Weinstein's abuse, triggering his downfall in 2017 and the emergence of the

#MeToo movement that brought down many other public figures. Her lawsuit targets Weinstein, lawyers David Boies and Lisa Bloom and the private intelligence firm Black Cube. The claims include racketeering, invasion of privacy and fraud.

McGowan alleges that when Weinstein learned in 2016 that she planned to write about the alleged rape said to have taken place in 1997, he unleashed a team of fixers to ensure her story "never saw the light of day, and-if it did-that no one would believe her." "Weinstein's campaign against McGowan and others involved some of the most powerful forces that money could buy," according to the suit. "He enlisted prominent, media-savvy representatives David Boies

and Lisa Bloom. He hired the international spy agency, Black Cube."

The suit says Weinstein and his team worked in concert for more than a year to try to silence his victims and journalists reporting on the abuses. Bloom's attorney Eric George said in a statement to AFP on Wednesday that "it is inexcusable that Ms. McGowan chose to include my client in her lawsuit." "Facts matter," he added. "There is simply no credible factual or legal basis for her claims against my client. We look forward to our day in court to set the record straight."—AFP



Rose McGowan



Afghan students attend a class at the Code to Inspire school in Herat. — AFP photos



Afghan girl coders build their own champions

Like the princess who hops over goblins and throws daggers at evil wizards in the video game they built, a team of women coders in patriarchal Afghanistan wants to inspire a generation of girls to smash obstacles. The young women are part of an after-school training program called Code to Inspire in the western city of Herat, where they learn tech skills and create games and apps to educate girls across Afghanistan and beyond.

Their highest-profile success has been this year's release of "Afghan Hero Girl", built over six months by 12 young women, a phone app in which a princess wearing a green veil leaps around a crumbling castle in a quest to defeat a wizard and rescue her family. Fereshteh Forough, a computer science teacher and a former refugee who founded Code to Inspire in 2015, said students were sick of the lack of female representation in the gaming industry and told her they were bored of "playing games where men are superheroes".

The game represents "the challenges and obstacles that women are facing every day in Afghanistan and despite all the backlashes they keep fighting and going through it," Forough, who is now based in New York, said in an email exchange with AFP. In a country where girls often have only limited educational opportunities, internet access is patchy and women face deeply ingrained discrimination at every turn, Forough sees tech skills as having a transformative potential.

Like many Afghans, she worries about an eventual return to power of the Taleban, who during their brutally repressive rule in the 1990s banned women from working or going outside the house. "By learning how to code you can do online remote work from the safety of your house if you (can) access the internet," she said. "The work that we do ... is about equality, empowerment and change so that these young ladies are able to add value to their communities and fight for their social, political and economic equality," she added.

'Get educated faster'

Women's rights and education for girls have made significant gains since the fall of the Taliban nearly two decades ago, but challenges remain as the insurgents frequently attack girls' schools and threaten female students. Afghanistan's ongoing war, now in its 19th year, resulted in more than 1,000 schools being closed by the end of 2018, UNICEF said, depriving some 500,000 children of their right to learning. A disproportionate number of these—about 60 percent—are girls.

"In the worst case scenario if the Taliban limit women's presence to the work space, (tech is) a skill that can get them beyond their doorsteps," Forough said. The games and apps are both educational and entertaining. Some include memories of the coders or are based on true stories. For instance, in the "Fight Against Opium" game, soldiers are deployed on a mission to poppy-growing Helmand province. It was based on a true story of one of the coders' brothers who was deployed to the southern province.

"My main goal as a game and app developer is to make as many educational games for girls as possible," Code to Inspire student Nasrin Wahidy said in a recent visit by AFP to the Herat school where the program is based. "We want the girls to learn and get educated faster through games." Another game teaches young Afghans how to recognize the geography of their country by showing them where each province is located. So far, Code to Inspire has taught more than 150 students to code, make games and apps, and develop websites. "They will become a digital citizen of the world without considering geographical boundaries," Forough said. — AFP

Film-maker stirs Pakistan #MeToo debate with rape allegation

Acclaimed Pakistani film-maker Jamshed Mahmood Raza has added new momentum to the country's fledgling #MeToo movement after airing allegations that he was raped by an unnamed media tycoon.

The director, who is popularly known as Jami, rocked Pakistani social media over the weekend after he published several tweets describing the alleged assault that happened 13 years ago.

"Why im so strongly supporting #metoo? cuz i know exactly how it happens now, inside a room then outside courts inside courts and how a survivor hides confides cuz i was brutally raped by a very powerful person in our media world," he wrote Sunday evening. The tweets were in response to a backlash online after a professor in the eastern city of Lahore committed suicide after allegedly being falsely accused of sexual harassment.

Amid the backlash, Jami pleaded with social media users to trust victims of sexual assault and avoid ignoring their accusations. "I told my few close friends but no one took it seriously," added Jami, whose 2015 film "Moor" ("Mother") was a massive hit. The film-maker has so far refused to name the tycoon allegedly behind the assault, while the allegations have unleashed a torrent of differing reactions online.

"@jamiyaad I see you. I hear you. I stand with you. Always," tweeted popular actress Meesha Shafi — who helped kickstart Pakistan's #MeToo movement in 2018 after accusing a popular singer in the country of harassment — on Thursday. "Jami is a true ally. This is unprecedented in Pakistan. This kind of revelation from a man," wrote Twitter user Khizra. Others were more sceptical.

"Still, u cant b serious using it to square Lhr professor's suicide & misuse of #MeToo," said another Twitter user Razi. "Pakistan is suffering by both #metoo & misuse of #MeToo." "No #MeToo here. Should have said No, but succumbed," wrote Ali Raj in response to a blog about the story. The #MeToo and #Timesup campaigns have gone global since allegations of sexual misconduct by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein in 2017, sparking an avalanche of accusations against other powerful men.—AFP



Jamshed Mahmood Raza



Images courtesy of the University of Richmond show a lab rat eating a treat and driving the “RatCar” on September 10, 2019, in Richmond, Virginia. — AFP photos

Rats trained to drive tiny cars find it relaxing

Sometimes life really can be a rat race. US scientists have reported successfully training a group of the rodents to drive tiny cars in exchange for bits of Froot Loops cereal, and found that learning the task lowered their stress levels. Their study not only demonstrates how sophisticated rat brains are, but could one day help in developing new non-pharmaceutical forms of treatment for mental illness, senior author Kelly Lambert of the University of Richmond told AFP on Wednesday.

Lambert said she had long been interested in neuroplasticity — how the brain changes in response to experience and challenges — and particularly wanted to explore how well rats that were housed in more natural settings (“enriched environments”) performed against those kept in labs. She and colleagues modified a robot car kit by adding a clear plastic food container to form a driver compartment with an aluminum plate placed on the bottom. A copper wire was threaded horizontally across the cab to form three bars: left, center and right.

When a rat placed itself on the aluminum floor and touched the wire, the circuit was complete and the car moved in the direction selected. Seventeen rats were trained over several months to drive around an arena 150 centimeters by 60 centimeters made of plexiglass. Writing in the journal *Behavioural Brain Research*, the researchers said the animals could indeed be taught to drive forward as well as steer in more complex navigational patterns.

As she had suspected, Lambert found that the animals kept in stimuli-rich environments performed far better than their lab rat counterparts, but “it was actually quite shocking to me that they were so much better,” she said. The rats’ feces was collected after their trials to test for the stress hormone corticosterone as well as dehydroepiandrosterone, which counters stress. All rats that underwent training had higher levels dehydroepiandrosterone, indicating a more relaxed state, which could be linked to the satisfaction of gaining mastery over a new skill, referred to as “self-efficacy” or “agency” in humans.

What’s more, rats that drove themselves showed higher levels of dehydroepiandrosterone as compared to those who were merely passengers when a human controlled the vehicle, meaning they were less stressed — something that will be familiar to nervous backseat drivers. The biggest takeaway for Lambert was the potential for new avenues of treatment the work opened up for people suffering from mental health conditions. “There’s no cure for schizophrenia or depression,” she said. “And we need to catch up, and I think we need to look at different animal models and different types of tasks and really respect that behavior can change our neurochemistry.” — AFP

Singapore restaurant ‘grab-a-crab’ machine causes an uproar

A Singapore restaurant yesterday suspended a bizarre promotional stunt where customers use an arcade-style machine with a mechanical claw to catch live crabs after it sparked uproar online. A video of the pink machine, containing the creatures and emblazoned with a picture of a smiling red crab under the phrase “Come and catch me”, went viral after being posted this week.

Similar to machines where people pick up soft toys, the game sees customers pay Sg\$5 (\$3.7) to use a joystick to move the claw over the creatures before lowering it to try to grab one. If successful, the customer can have the Sri Lankan crab cooked on the spot free of charge, choose to take it home, or leave it at the House of Seafood restaurant to eat another time. But internet users condemned the game as cruel after the specially produced video promoting it went online.

“This is too much,” Joseph Soh wrote on Facebook. “Why are you making their remaining life even more difficult... Absolutely disgusting.” The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said the machine “causes unnecessary harm to the animals and it also encourages people to see animals as nothing more than objects to play with”. “Crabs are living creatures, not toys,” it added. The government’s Animal and Veterinary Service said it was alerted to the case and was investigating. House of Seafood chief executive Francis Ng told AFP the promotion, which began this month, had been suspended after the outcry — but added he was surprised at the reaction. “People think I torture them but we don’t have any intention of doing that,” he said. “The crabs are not being hurt.”

The claw is covered with plastic and the area inside is cushioned to prevent injury if the creatures are dropped, added Ng, who also posted an apology on the restaurant chain’s Facebook page. Ng said a similar promotion at two restaurants he operates in China was a success. He plans to meet with Singapore authorities and will cease using the machine permanently if ordered. Restaurants across Asia often keep live seafood in tanks for diners to pick out for their meals. — AFP



Iran TV airs interview with jailed ‘zombie’ Instagrammer

Iranian state television has aired an interview with an Instagrammer famous for drastically altering her appearance through plastic surgery to look like a zombie and arrested for alleged “blasphemy”. The social media celebrity known as Sahar Tabar was arrested on the orders of Tehran’s Islamic guidance court on October 5 after “numerous requests from the public” for her to be detained, the broadcaster said.

She faces charges including blasphemy, inciting violence, gaining income through inappropriate means and encouraging corruption among the young. “I do not look like these photoshopped pictures right now,” the 22-year-old told state

television in the interview aired on Tuesday, her face blurred out. “This is close to what I look like these days,” Tabar said, holding a phone with a portrait of herself.

She resembles Hollywood star Angelina Jolie in the picture, but her face is gaunt, her nose sharply turned-up and cheeks sunken. Tabar denied reports she sought to look like Jolie, saying instead that she was inspired by a zombie-like character from the animated fantasy film “Corpse Bride”. Her Instagram account, which she said had 486,000 followers, no longer appears to be active.

The television channel noted that she was the only child of

a divorced couple who had been living with her mother, and that she “could have been in university by now” if not because of her “strange” online persona and fame. “I saw people were following what I did and, when the likes grew, I felt I was doing the right thing,” said Tabar, admitting she had not finished high school. Voicing regret, Tabar said her mother had tried to stop her from changing her appearance, but the fame and Instagram likes made her go on. “My childhood dream was to be famous.” — AFP

Lifestyle | Gossip

Jenna Dewan fears she may have upset Beyonce's fanbase

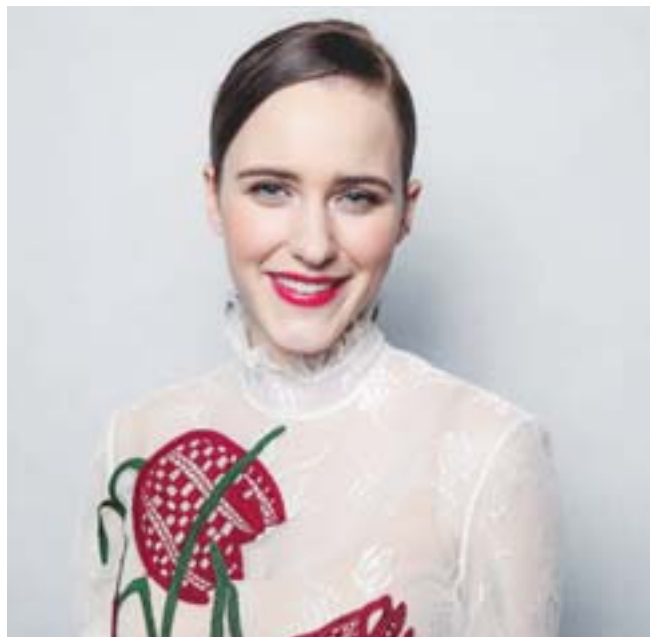
The 38-year-old star confessed to being irked by Beyonce's dance moves during the early years of her career - but Jenna quickly issued an apology to the pop star and her loyal fans. Asked about her frustrations with dancing musicians, Jenna explained on 'Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen': "When they walk in heels, but they walk. They walk like this..." The brunette beauty - who announced in September that she was expecting a child with boyfriend Steve Kazee - then imitated the 'Crazy In Love' hitmaker's early moves. Jenna didn't initially mention Beyonce by name, but the show's host asked who she thought was particularly guilty of the irksome strut. She replied: "Uh, okay, y'all are going to kill me ... but back in the day Beyonce did that." However, she quickly added: "Now she walks perfectly through her heels. The whole world is about to come for

me right now. "Beehive, I love BAE." Meanwhile, Jenna - who has a six-year-old daughter called Everly from her relationship with Channing Tatum - previously revealed she's been craving "7-Eleven Slurpees" and Cheetos during her pregnancy. She said: "All I want is, like, 7-Eleven Slurpees or Cheetos. "I'm a super healthy eater. I love eating healthy, vegetarian, all that stuff. And now I'm like, 'Give me anything!' Like, chips. It's so bad." Jenna's daughter is also "thrilled" at the idea of having a younger sibling. She explained: "[Everly] is so thrilled. I knew she would be happy 'cause she's been asking for this. "But as soon as she found out she started crying. She was like, 'This is the best day of my life...' "Everywhere we go, she pulls up my shirt, so everywhere we go she'll be like, 'There's a baby in this belly!' And then she's like, 'Don't you wanna touch it?' ... She's so proud."



Rachel Brosnahan loves make-up with multiple uses

The 'Marvelous Mrs. Maisel' star prefers easy to use make up as she's always doing it on the go and doesn't want to carry too much around. She said: "Makeup-wise, I love anything that I can stick my fingers into and can be used in multiple ways. I'm always doing my makeup on the go - in the back of cars on the subway, on planes - so I try to keep a tiny little makeup bag of essentials." And the 29-year-old actress has a very opposite skincare routine to her character's and admits she was initially "a bit judgmental about it". She added: "I think I've learned in response to Midge that less is more. Midge has a very involved skincare routine. Initially, I was a bit judgmental about it. But it works for her. It makes her feel great. It makes her feel her best. It makes her feel powerful and purposeful. And my skincare routine does the same for me. Although Midge's routine is essentially the polar opposite of mine." Rachel drinks a lot of water as she likes how it helps her skin. She told Forbes.com: "It's not necessarily a beauty item, but I try to bring a reusable water bottle with me when I travel. I do have a stainless-steel water bottle that literally says 'The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel' all over it. But I don't travel with that one because it gives me away at the airport. Instead, I use one that has a bicycle on it. It's great for filling up before getting on the plane." — Bangshowbiz



Jeremy Piven's stand up career is taking off

The 'Mr Selfridge' star was spotted performing a stand-up routine at Playboy Club on West 42nd Street before heading over to the Stand NYC for another set, the New York Post's Page Six column reports. Meanwhile, Jeremy previously admitted he longs for an "incredible" wife and family like his 'Entourage' character Ari Gold. When Jeremy was asked if there was a part of any characters he's played that he would aspire to emulate, he said: "Harry Selfridge found his art in business and I never have been good at business I never have been I haven't found any art in business but he did and that was miraculous the two worlds come together. And Ari Gold had this incredible relationship and a wife and a family and I don't have a family yet so I aspire to that as well. I don't aspire to be a reactive douchebag that's not something that someone would aspire to be!" And Jeremy also admitted he was looking forward to his future roles and he's working with his sister on a new top secret project. Speaking in 2016, he shared: "One of the things that London and this entire 'Mr Selfridge' experience did for me was it ... made me realize I need to do my own projects - do things that I'm more involved in and be more a part of it - because ... I love the experience of being in a collaborative atmosphere. So I'm working with my sister Shera Piven on something right now - one film and a TV series that I've come up with ... I feel like you're never too old to learn and be in school and I feel like that 'Mr Selfridge' was a heavy graduate program that I just lived through over there in the UK."

Louis Tomlinson dreams of going to university

The 27-year-old pop star used to secretly spend time in student halls in Manchester, where his girlfriend Eleanor Calder was studying, and he remembers those times fondly. Speaking about his new single 'We Made It', Louis told the Metro newspaper's Guilty Pleasures column: "The lyrics are about a time when I was visiting my girlfriend Eleanor at university in Manchester, drawing on that experience of being on the road in a world tour then going to my girlfriend's halls and living that life with her." Despite his ambition, Louis - who briefly broke-up with Eleanor, before they rekindled their romance - revealed his girlfriend is "proud" of his achievements within the music business. He said: "She is dead proud of me." Meanwhile, Louis admitted last month that he struggled with his identity during his time in One Direction. The pop star - who featured in the group alongside Niall Horan, Liam Payne, Harry Styles and Zayn Malik, before he decided to go solo - didn't know quite where he fitted in besides his bandmates. Louis reflected: "I wasn't singing a lot, I wasn't the frontman. Without being a sorry little twat, I thought: 'How do I do better, how do I make something of myself, an identity?'" However, Louis became more sure of himself over time and, in the 18 months prior to their hiatus, he found his own sense of identity. He said: "I felt like I knew who I was in the band, and I felt a real worth for who I was. "[The hiatus] rocked me. I wasn't ready for it. I felt like I was getting to be a better songwriter, singer, a more confident performer, and all of a sudden, when I felt I was finally getting some momentum ..."



Kerry Washington felt like an outsider during her school years



The 42-year-old actress attended Spence School, an all-girls private school in New York City, during her youth, and Kerry found the experience to be an “absolute culture shock”. Speaking to the Goop Podcast, Kerry recalled: “We were rich in the Bronx because we had like two cars and a dishwasher and a microwave. “Then I got to Spence and it was like helipads on peoples roofs in the Hampton’s. I really didn’t know how to comprehend it.” Kerry found joining the school to be a very isolating experience. She shared: “I remember in that moment thinking, ‘I cannot present any of these feelings I’m having right now, because it will identify me as other.’ These are my new friends at Spence and this is their norm. “If I ask a bunch of questions or act like this is weird, I will identify myself as being outside their circle. So I have to act like this is normal and figure out what the f**k is going on.” Kerry resisted the temptation to discuss her fears with her parents. And ultimately, she thinks the experience has proven to be beneficial to her as an actress. She said: “I didn’t become an actor because of that, but I did start to understand, oh, there is a level of identity that is about performance. “I started to look at my life almost anthropologically. Like, when I get on the subway in the morning, there is a particular way that people walk and talk and dress and eat and breathe even. “Forty-five minutes later, there is a totally different way that people walk and talk and dress and breathe ... I just started understanding all of these cultural indicators and what code switching looked like and felt like.”

Heidi Klum feels under pressure to “outdo” herself

The 46-year-old model is currently preparing for her Halloween bash in New York City, and as the event draws closer, Heidi is becoming increasingly anxious about her outfit. Heidi - who has staged a party every year for the last 20 years - shared: “I’m gonna do something very, very special. “I’m trying to do something very special on that day, because it’s 20 years already. I can’t believe it! 20 years ago, I thought, ‘There is no real cool party in New York City and someone has to do this.’ And so I did.” Heidi hopes she’ll continue to stage the bash for the next 20 years. She told ‘Entertainment Tonight’: “Why not [do it another 20 years]? Why stop the fun when you get older? I think we should have more fun when we get older!” Heidi has worn a number of eye-catching outfits over the years, including dressing as Jessica Rabbit and as Princess Fiona from the ‘Shrek’ movies. And the blonde beauty feels under pressure to outdo herself again this year. She said: “I’m pressuring myself. It’s not the outside world, it’s really me. I want to outdo myself every year again.” However, Heidi insisted she cannot rehearse for her party. The model - who married musician Tom Kaulitz earlier this year - explained: “Sometimes I sit there for 10 to 12 hours. When I turned myself into a really old woman, it took like, 12 hours, so you don’t really rehearse any of this stuff. “You do it on the day and you hope that it works out. So far it always did, but you never know. Fingers and toes crossed!”



Selena Gomez

“can’t be unauthentic”

The 27-year-old singer - who has touched on her own relationship heartbreak in her new single, ‘Lose You to Love Me’ - has insisted she couldn’t write a song that didn’t chime with her real-life self. Reflecting on her new single, Selena - whose track is rumored to be about her ex-boyfriend Justin Bieber - told E! News: “I wrote this song over a year ago. It’s obviously a very emotional song for me. “It’s interesting to see how far I’ve come from that point to now. Me sharing my story is exactly what I’ve always done. I can’t be unauthentic. I can’t pretend that I’m not going through something when it’s obvious that I had been.” Selena - who was involved in an on/off relationship with Justin over a number of years - hopes her fans can relate to her new single. She shared: “It’s one of those songs where I just feel like it’s out, it’s released and I hope that girls and guys all over the world can feel supported. That’s a feeling everyone’s felt. “That was something that I needed to do for myself regardless of what was [going to] come after.” Meanwhile, a source recently said that Selena’s single is “obviously” about Justin. The brunette beauty doesn’t mention Justin by name in the song, but according to an insider, the track relates to the ‘Love Yourself’ hitmaker rather than The Weeknd, who Selena has also dated. The source explained: “Although the song ‘Lose You to Love Me’ was co-written and a collaboration, Selena was very involved in writing and creating it, and the song is obviously about Justin. “Her fling with The Weeknd did not inspire the song - their relationship was much more short-lived and not deep enough to inspire it.”

Pete Davidson and Kaia Gerber are “just friends”

The 25-year-old comedian and Kaia, 18 - who is the daughter of Cindy Crawford - have recently been seen spending lots of time together, sparking speculation they’re dating, but a source close to the situation has insisted they are simply good friends. Pete - who stars on ‘Saturday Night Live’ - has previously been involved in a number of high-profile relationships with the likes of Margaret Qualley, Kate Beckinsale and he was even engaged to Ariana Grande. But despite recently being spotted leaving Kaia’s apartment building in New York City, the insider confirmed that he and the American model are just friends. In September, meanwhile, a source claimed Pete - who was still dating Margaret at the time - is consciously being “more low-key” with his relationships. The insider shared: “All of these women he has been with approached him. It’s not even that he has a type. “With Ariana [Grande], she reached out to him. She asked her manager, Scooter Braun, to set them up. With Kate Beckinsale, she went over to him at the Netflix after-party at the Golden Globes and started flirting with him. And even now they’re on good terms. “You wouldn’t think it, but he has impeccable manners and is so polite. I think, honestly, that’s part of the reason women like him. He’s been trying to learn from his past relationships and be more lowkey.” Pete was subjected to death threats when news of his romance with Ariana went public. Explaining why he doesn’t use social media, Pete said previously: “I got a death threat. “Someone wanted to shoot me in the face because she’s so hot. Do you know how insane that is? I was like, ‘Am I that ugly that people want to shoot me in the face?’” — Bangshowbiz





How to spend the perfect weekend in Kochi

Many who touch base with Kerala in Kochi (Cochin) simply make a mad dash for the palm-fringed backwaters, which unravel just south. But linger for a weekend and you'll be hooked by the charisma, laid-back vibe and delicious masala mix of culture in this tropical port city, which sits astride a cluster of peninsulas and little islands in the Arabian Sea. Moving to its own incredibly relaxed

beat, Kochi is India on a chill pill: walkable, easygoing and home to a wildly varied cultural heritage reflected in sights such as medieval Chinese fishing nets, Jewish synagogues, Portuguese colonial villas and the crumbling remains of the British Raj. Once at the centre of a lucrative spice and tea trade, Kochi has drawn traders, salt-bedraggled explorers and travelers to these shores for centuries. Today, its doors are still wide

open to welcome visitors in family-run homestays that offer a direct route to Kerala's soul. Two days here gives you a great taster.

SATURDAY Morning

Breeze over by ferry from Ernakulam on the mainland to Fort Kochi, where you'll feel the city's historic heartbeat. Refresh with some good strong coffee (rare in these parts) and a breakfast of French toast, pancakes and fresh fruit at Kashi Art Cafe, which has a Zen-like garden and rotating exhibitions of contemporary art. From here, turn onto Princess Street to reach St Francis Church, built by Portuguese Franciscan friars back in 1503, making this India's oldest European church. Behind the faded yellow facade, the barrel-vaulted interior attracts pilgrims who come to gawp at the tombstone of great Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama - the first European to reach India by sea - who died in Kochi in 1524.

On nearby Napier Street, nip into Fabindia to browse its rainbow assortment of fair-trade silks, cottons and handicrafts, then stroll south to the Indo-Portuguese Museum for the inside scoop on one of India's oldest Catholic communities. Lodged in the 16th-century Bishop's House, its collection includes precious teakwood altarpieces, vestments and silver processional crosses.

Afternoon

Retrace your steps back to the waterfront, where you'll find stalls offering beverages perfect for cooling off a bit: try sugarcane juice, sweet chai or lime-ginger





soda. Stop at the fishmongers to choose your fish or seafood (whatever's fresh that day - be prepared to bargain), and then head over to one of the shacks on Tower Road to have it cooked.

You can't, of course, fail to miss the half-dozen giant cantilevered Chinese fishing nets, or cheena vala as locals call them. A throwback to the 14th-century court of Kublai Khan, these humungous spider-like, 10m-tall nets demand five or six wiry fishermen to manage their counterweights at high tide. Watch them lowering the rope pulleys and hauling in the catch. It makes for some terrific photo-ops (have some small change handy for tips), especially as day softens into golden evening and the nets are silhouetted against the ripe peach of a setting sun.

Evening

The Kerala Kathakali Centre is hands-down one of the most atmospheric places to catch a traditional Kathakali dance-drama performance, where stories of love, lust and power based on the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Purana are played out with elaborate mudras (hand gestures) and facial expressions to the frenzied beat of a drum. Arrive at this intimate, wood-lined theatre around 5pm to see the flamboyant make-up and costume fitting before the actual show (6pm to 7.30pm) - it's pretty spellbinding. Afterwards, go for dinner at Fusion Bay, a sweet-and-simple family-run affair that's steps from the theatre. Here you can dig into sumptuous Kerala-Syrian fish dishes prepared pollichathu style (with masala spices and grilled in banana leaves). Many also rave about their pappas (Portuguese-style fish cooked in spices, lime juice and coconut).

SUNDAY Morning

Ease into the morning at Loafers Corner, a nicely chilled, minimalist-cool cafe in a 200-year-old Dutch-Portuguese heritage building. Snag a window booth or sit in the courtyard for a decent espresso, cardamom lassi and breakfast picks like olive-herb omelettes. From here, hop in an auto-rickshaw for the short drive south to Mattancherry and Jew Town, Kochi's old bazaar district and former spice trade central. When you're hailing a tuk-tuk, just pay for the ride and avoid cheap tours of the district where drivers get commission. Go for a nose around the shops lined with heaving sacks of chillis, rice and fragrant spices from Kerala's hills.

When the Portuguese wanted to impress the Raja of Kochi, Veera Kerala Varma (1537-65), they gifted him Mattancherry Palace in 1555, an architectural stunner that blends Kerala and colonial styles, with a sloping roof and ornate wood-carved ceilings. Top billing here goes to the extraordinarily well-preserved Hindu murals dancing colourfully across walls, which show scenes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranic epics.

Afternoon

After a quick lunch at first-floor Cafe Crafters (try the fer-

mented rice pancakes, or appam), cross the street to Pardesi Synagogue, the oldest of its kind in India. Built in 1568, it was partially destroyed when the Portuguese attacked the Jewish population in 1662, but it was restored to its former glory by the Dutch two years later. Its interior is a lavish ensemble of antique crystal chandeliers, colored glass lanterns and hand-painted Chinese tiles. Bear in mind that modest dress is required and photographs are not permitted. Across the way from here is the Ginger House, where you can sit by the water's edge and watch the ferries breeze by over a ginger-laced soda, lassi or ice cream. This heritage boutique hotel also harbours a rambling attic of antiques that's more impressive than many museums, exhibiting everything from richly bejeweled chests to life-sized elephant carvings and a giant Kerala snake-boat.

Evening

Back in central Fort Kochi, ramp up the romance on your final evening with dinner in the enchanting candlelit garden at chic Malabar Junction. The menu leaps creatively between Indian and Western flavors, striking well-spiced balance in dishes like tiger prawns with crispy poppadum and masala. The seafood platter is outstanding, too. For a more casual am-

bience, head upstairs to contemporary DiVine lounge for Indian wines by the glass and tapas. Lemony chenin blanc whites and full-bodied cabernet sauvignon reds pair well with the likes of roti tacos, cheesy crab with black garlic and creamy leeks, and chocolate samosas with mango sauce.

Where to stay

Homestays are the icing on the cake in Kochi. There are 200 or so to choose from, ranging from bare-bones to rather fancy, with the pick of places huddling in the historic streets of Fort Kochi. Some have air-con (advisable) and the vast majorities offer a heartfelt welcome and an insight into family life. Among our faves are Michaela Homestay, where host Michael is full of entertaining stories and goes above and beyond to please. Set in pretty gardens, peaceful Heavenly Homestay has slick, modern rooms and excellent breakfasts. Cozy Leelu has immaculate rooms, a roof terrace and small-group cookery classes, where you can learn to make homemade garam masala and Kerala dishes like fish curry using family recipes.

—www.lonelyplanet.com





Roasted whole side of salmon

This recipe requires salting the fish for at least 1 hour. Look for a fillet that is uniformly thick from end to end. The surface will continue to brown after the oven temperature is reduced in step 4; if the surface starts to darken too much before the fillet's center registers 125 degrees, shield the dark portion with aluminum foil. If using wild salmon, which contains less fat than farmed salmon, remove it from the oven when the center of the fillet registers 120 degrees.

Ingredients

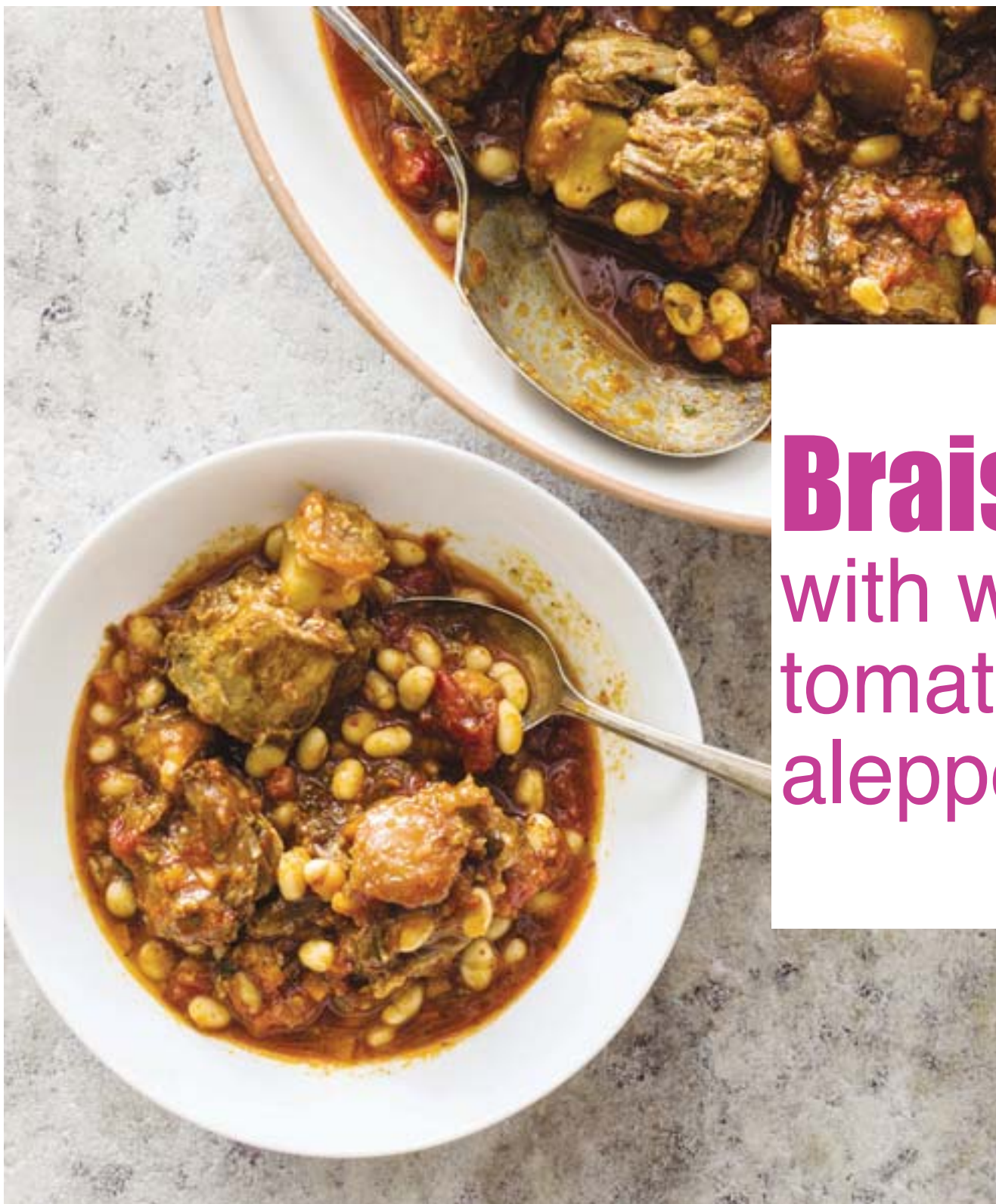
1 (4-pound) skin-on side of salmon, pinbones removed and belly fat trimmed

Salt
2 tablespoons honey
Lemon wedges

Preparation

Sprinkle flesh side of salmon evenly with 1 tablespoon salt and refrigerate, uncovered, for at least 1 hour or up to 4 hours. Adjust oven rack 7 inches from broiler element and heat oven to 250 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and place wire rack in sheet. Fold 18 by 12-inch piece of foil lengthwise to create 18 by 6-inch sling. Place sling on wire rack and spray with vegetable oil spray. Heat broiler. Pat salmon dry with paper towels and

place, skin side down, on foil sling. Brush salmon evenly with honey and broil until surface is lightly but evenly browned, 8 to 12 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through broiling. Return oven temperature to 250 degrees and continue to cook until center of fillet registers 125 degrees, 10 to 15 minutes longer, rotating sheet halfway through cooking. Using foil sling, transfer salmon to serving platter, then carefully remove foil. Serve, passing lemon wedges separately.



Braised Oxtails with white beans, tomatoes, and aleppo pepper

Try to buy oxtails that are approximately 2 inches thick and 2 to 4 inches in diameter. Oxtails can often be found in the freezer section of the grocery store; if using frozen oxtails, thaw them completely before using. If you can't find Aleppo pepper, you can substitute 1 1/2 teaspoons paprika and 1 1/2 teaspoons finely chopped red pepper flakes.

Ingredients

4 pounds oxtails, trimmed
Salt and pepper
4 cups chicken broth
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil 1 onion, chopped fine
1 carrot, peeled and chopped fine
6 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons ground dried Aleppo pepper
1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano
1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes 1 (15-

ounce) can navy beans, rinsed
1 tablespoon vinegar

Preparation

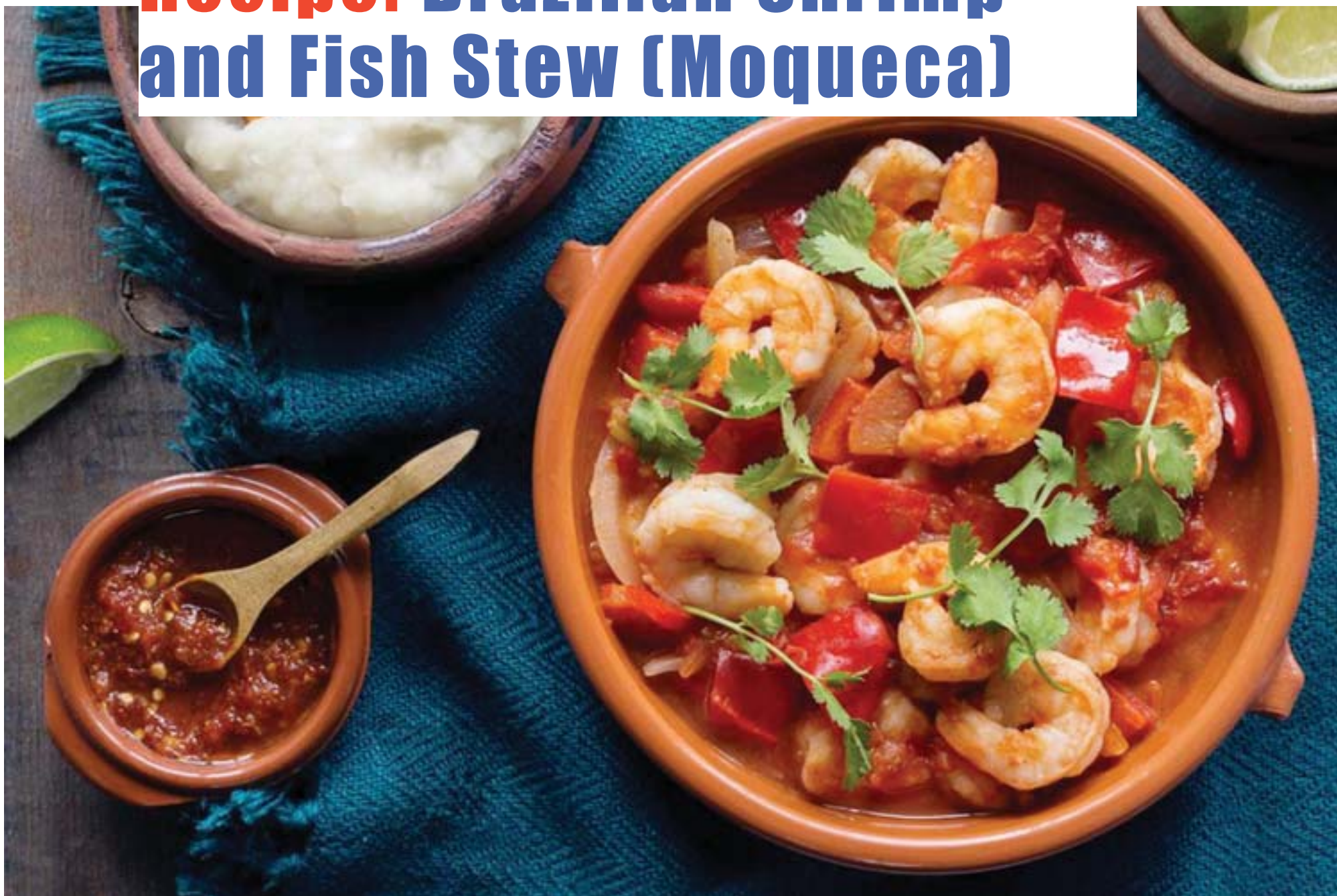
Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Pat oxtails dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Arrange oxtails cut side down in single layer in large roasting pan and roast until meat begins to brown, about 45 minutes. Discard any accumulated fat and juices in pan and continue to roast until meat is well browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer oxtails to bowl and tent with aluminum foil; set aside. Stir chicken broth into pan, scraping up any browned bits; set aside.

Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion and carrot and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic, tomato paste, Aleppo pepper, and 1 teaspoon oregano and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in broth mixture from

roasting pan and tomatoes and their juice and bring to simmer. Nestle oxtails into pot and bring to simmer and cover; transfer pot to oven. Cook until oxtails are tender and fork slips easily in and out of meat, about 3 hours.

Transfer oxtails to bowl and tent with foil. Strain braising liquid through fine-mesh strainer into fat separator; return solids to now-empty pot. Let braising liquid settle for 5 minutes, then pour defatted liquid into pot with solids. Stir in beans, vinegar, and remaining 2 teaspoons oregano. Return oxtails and any accumulated juices to pot, bring to gentle simmer over medium heat, and cook until oxtails and beans are heated through, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer oxtails to serving platter and spoon 1 cup sauce over top. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.

Recipe: Brazilian Shrimp and Fish Stew (Moqueca)



Pickled hot cherry peppers are usually sold jarred, next to the pickles or jarred roasted red peppers at the supermarket. Haddock or other firm-fleshed, flaky whitefish may be substituted for cod. We prefer untreated shrimp, but if your shrimp are treated with sodium, do not add salt to the shrimp in step 2. Our favorite coconut milk is made by Aroy-D. Serve with steamed white rice.

Ingredients

PEPPER SAUCE

4 pickled hot cherry pepper (3 ounces)
1/2 onion, chopped coarse
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
? teaspoon sugar
Salt

STEW

1 pound large shrimp (26 to 30 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed
1 pound skinless cod fillets (3/4 to 1 inch thick), cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces
3 garlic cloves, minced
Salt and pepper

1 onion, chopped coarse
1 (14.5-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
3/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 (14-ounce) can coconut milk
2 tablespoons lime juice

Preparations

For the pepper sauce: Process all ingredients in food processor until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Season with salt to taste and transfer to separate bowl. Rinse out processor bowl.
For the stew: Toss shrimp and cod with garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in bowl. Set aside. Process onion, tomatoes and their juice, and 1/4 cup cilantro in food processor until finely chopped and mixture has texture of pureed salsa, about 30 seconds. Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add red and green bell

peppers and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add onion-tomato mixture and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently, until puree has reduced and thickened slightly, 3 to 5 minutes (pot should not be dry).

Increase heat to high, stir in coconut milk, and bring to boil (mixture should be bubbling across entire surface). Add seafood mixture and lime juice and stir to evenly distribute seafood, making sure all pieces are submerged in liquid. Cover pot and remove from heat. Let stand until shrimp and cod are opaque and just cooked through, 15 minutes. Gently stir in 2 tablespoons pepper sauce and remaining 1/2 cup cilantro, being careful not to break up cod too much. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve, passing remaining pepper sauce separately.

Comic

Word Search

Look Up!

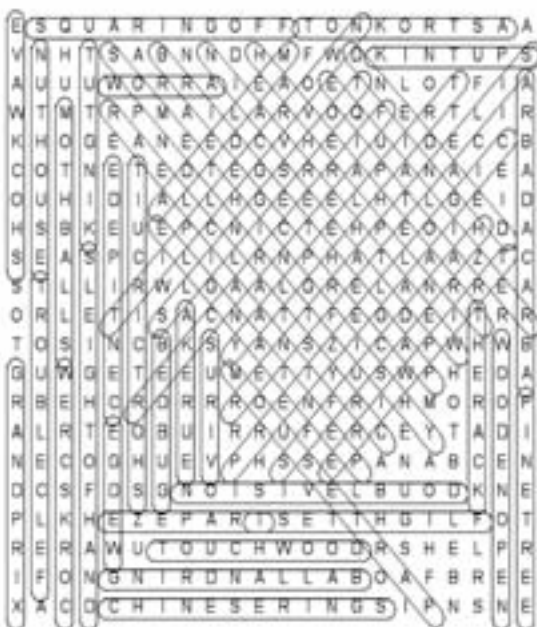
Find and circle all of the items that you might see when you look upward. The remaining 24 letters spell an additional item you might see.

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

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| AIRPLANE | GALAXY | METEOR SHOWER | SMOG |
| BIG DIPPER | HAZE | MOON | SOLAR ECLIPSE |
| BIRDS | HELICOPTER | PLANETS | STARS |
| BLIMP | HOT AIR BALLOON | POWER LINES | STREET LIGHT |
| BLUE SKY | JET EXHAUST | RAINBOW | THE SUN |
| CHIMNEY SMOKE | JUPITER | SATELLITE | TREETOP |
| CLOUDS | KITE | SATURN | UNIVERSE |
| COMET | LIGHTNING | SKYDIVER | VENUS |
| DRONE | MARS | SKYSCRAPER | |
| FIREWORKS | MERCURY | SKYWRITING | |

Yesterday's Solution

Livewire Puzzles



- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ABRACADABRA | EQUALIZER | PENTANGLE | THE RACK |
| ARROW | EUREKA | PINETREE | TOUCH WOOD |
| ASTROKNOT | FIRECRACKER | PRETZEL LOGIC | TRAPEZE |
| BALL AND RING | FLIGHT TEST | SHOCKWAVE | TRIPLE CROWN |
| BEBUG | GRAND PRIZ | SHORT CIRCUIT | TRIPLE PLAY |
| BRIDGE THE GAP | HANDCLIFFS | SILENT PARTNER | TRIPWIRE |
| CENTPEDE | HAVE A HEART | SLEIGHT OF HAND | TROUBLE CLEF |
| CHINESE RINGS | KING TUT | SUNGSHOT | VRUS |
| CORKSCREW | MELEDA | SOMETHING FISHY | WEATHERVAN |
| CRYSTAL CLEAR | NOTHBALLS | SPUTNIK | WEDGE |
| DEAD END | HOUSETRAP | SQUARING OFF | WOODEN OPEN |
| DOUBLE VISION | NUT HOUSE | | |

The hidden phrase is: A HANDFUL OF PATIENCE IS WORTH MORE THAN A BUSHEL OF BRAINS

Crossword 2342



ACROSS

1. An expression of open-mouthed astonishment.
5. (Norse mythology) The heavenly dwelling of the Norse gods (the Aesir) and slain war heroes.
11. A lyric poet.
15. Antibacterial agent (trade names Mandelamine and Ures) that is contained in many products that are used to treat urinary infections.
16. Inability to coordinate voluntary muscle movements.
17. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
18. A light springing movement upwards or forwards.
19. Silkworm moths.
20. A telegram sent abroad.
21. Cricket frogs.
23. Clean or orderly.
24. A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
25. (Arthurian legend) The most virtuous knight of the Round Table.
27. A girl or young woman who is unmarried.
31. A resort city in western Florida.
33. Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
36. Having help.
39. (Zoroastrianism) Title for benevolent deities.
42. Fabric dyed with splashes of green and brown and black and tan.
44. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
45. (Mexican) Corn and commeal dough stuffed with a meat mixture then wrapped in corn husks and steamed.
47. The sound made by a cow or bull.
48. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
51. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
52. (of spatial position) In or brought into line with or into proper relative position.
54. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
57. A drug (trade names Atarax and Vistaril) used as a tranquilizer to treat anxiety and motion sickness.
59. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
60. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
61. Scottish sea captain who was hired to protect British shipping in the Indian Ocean and then was accused of piracy and hanged (1645-1701).
63. English economist noted for his studies of international trade and finance (born in 1907).
66. Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
67. English essayist (1775-1834).
71. Fly a plane.
73. Capital of the state of Michigan.
74. Common black European thrush.
75. A minor match preceding the main event.
78. A small shelter for domestic animals (as sheep or pigeons).
79. (prefix) In front of or before in space.
80. The second largest continent.
81. A town in north central Oklahoma.

DOWN

1. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
2. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
3. Relating to or resembling or made of or adorned with pearls or mother-of-pearl.
4. Make amends for.
5. An associate degree in applied science.
6. Old-fashioned and out of date.
7. Willing to face danger.
8. Of or relating to or resembling an axis of rotation.
9. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
10. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
11. The cry made by sheep.
12. American dramatist (1928-).
13. A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
14. A small amount of residue.
22. Relative darkness caused by light rays being intercepted by an opaque body.
26. Before noon.
28. Of or relating to a directionless magnitude.
29. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
30. A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
32. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
34. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
35. Something whose name is either forgotten or not known.
37. An arm off of a larger body of water (often between rocky headlands).
38. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
40. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
41. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
43. Of or related to the amnion or characterized by developing an amnion.
46. Either of two large African antelopes of the genus Taurotragus having short spirally twisted horns in both sexes.
49. Breed of large wiry-coated terrier bred in Yorkshire.
50. A French marshal who distinguished himself in the War of the Austrian Succession (1696-1750).
53. Be iridescent.
55. A military trainee (as at a military academy).
56. (chemistry) Relating to or containing an alkali.
58. A highwayman who robs on foot.
62. Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
64. Divisible by two.
65. Channel into a new direction.
68. Large gregarious predatory feline of Africa and India having a tawny coat with a shaggy mane in the male.
69. The basic unit of money in Peru.
70. Advanced in years.
72. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
76. A substance produced by the hypothalamus that is capable of accelerating the secretion of a given hormone by the anterior pituitary gland.
77. Being one more than fifty.

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



TV Listings



00:05 Crank
01:40 Leatherface
03:15 Painted Skin: The Resurrection
05:35 Kung Fu Yoga
07:35 The Monkey King
09:40 The Taking Of Pelham 123
11:40 Stargate
13:45 Tai Chi 2: The Hero Rises
15:40 American Ninja III
17:25 Transformers: The Last Knight
20:00 The Recruit
22:00 Commando
23:40 Waist Deep



00:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
01:40 Intruders
02:35 Saba And The Rhino's Secret
03:25 Wolves And Warriors
04:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
05:02 Wildest Indochina
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Vet On The Loose
07:00 Vet On The Loose
07:25 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
08:15 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
09:10 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
10:05 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
11:00 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
11:55 Wild Dubai
12:50 Crikey! It's The Irwins
13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
14:40 Animal Cribbs
15:35 Intruders
16:30 Everest: Beyond The Limit
17:25 Animal Cops Philadelphia
18:20 Saving A Species: Gorillas On The Brink With...
19:15 The Vet Life
20:10 Vet Gone Wild
21:05 Wildest Indochina
22:00 Intruders
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 The Vet Life



00:10 EastEnders
00:40 The Woman In White
01:35 Holby City
02:30 Hold The Sunset
02:55 Bad Move
03:20 Death In Paradise
04:15 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
21:50 The Good Karma Hospital
22:40 Blood
23:30 Doctors



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
01:55 Psychic Kids
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 It Takes A Killer
19:30 It Takes A Killer
20:00 The First 48
21:00 Homicide Hunter
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
02:02 Friends
02:27 South Park (Repeats)
02:52 Takeshis Castle Thailand
03:17 Broad City
03:42 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
04:10 South Park (Repeats)
04:35 Impractical Jokers
05:00 Friends
07:10 Punk'd (Bet)
07:35 Punk'd (Bet)
08:00 Takeshis Castle Thailand
10:10 Friends
10:35 Friends
11:00 Friends
11:25 Friends
11:50 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
22:27 Comedy Central Roast Of Charlie Sheen
23:30 Most Ridiculous



00:30 Bizarre Foods With Andrew Zimmern
01:20 Must Love Cats
02:10 My Cat From Hell
03:00 Dirty Jobs
03:50 Cliptastic
04:15 Cliptastic
04:40 Tanked
05:30 Must Love Cats
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 You Have Been Warned
11:10 Tanked
12:00 Salvage Hunters
12:50 Storm Chasers
13:40 Invent It Rich
14:30 UFOs: The Lost Evidence
15:20 Dirty Jobs
16:10 Tanked
17:00 Must Love Cats
17:50 My Cat From Hell
18:40 Dirty Jobs
19:30 The Carbonaro Effect
19:55 The Carbonaro Effect
20:20 Dirty Tricks
21:10 Breaking Magic

21:35 Breaking Magic
22:00 Tricks On The Streets
22:25 Tricks On The Streets
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 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
03:00 Dead Of Night
03:45 True Nightmares
04:30 Murder Chose Me
05:20 Southern Fried Homicide
06:10 Swamp Murders
07:00 Evil Online
07:55 Evil Online
08:50 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
09:45 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
10:40 Southern Fried Homicide
11:35 Murder Chose Me
12:30 Murder Chose Me
13:25 Swamp Murders
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 Til Death Do Us Part
23:00 Heart Of Darkness



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.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Violetta
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Rolling With The Ronks
05:50 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
09:00 Jessie
09:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
09:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:15 Bizaardvark
10:40 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:30 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:20 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Bunk'd
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
13:35 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 Amphibia S1
16:35 Zapped
18:15 Stuck In The Middle
18:40 Stuck In The Middle
19:05 K.C. Undercover
19:30 Shake It Up
19:55 Shake It Up
20:20 Liv And Maddie
20:45 Liv And Maddie
21:10 Jessie
21:35 Jessie
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
22:25 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 The Hive
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
08:20 Bluey
08:30 Vampirina
08:45 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 Bluey
16:10 Vampirina
16:30 Sofia The First
16:55 PJ Masks Music Videos
17:00 PJ Masks
17:30 T.O.T.S.
18:00 Vampirina
18:15 Muppet Babies
18:30 Vampirina
18:45 Vampirina
19:00 PJ Masks
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Sofia The First
20:25 PJ Masks Music Videos
20:30 Elena Of Avalor
21:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy
21:30 T.O.T.S.
22:00 Vampirina
22:15 Muppet Babies
22:30 Vampirina
22:45 Vampirina
23:00 PJ Masks
23:30 The Lion Guard



01:05 Masters Of Disaster
01:50 Mythbusters
02:35 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers
03:20 Wheeler Dealers
04:05 Wheeler Dealers
04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:15 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Garage Gold
06:00 Storage Wars Canada
06:20 Garage Gold
06:45 Dual Survival
07:35 Deadliest Catch
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 Wheeler Dealers
12:20 Wheeler Dealers
13:05 Storage Wars Canada
13:30 Garage Gold
13:55 Salvage Hunters
14:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier
15:30 Dual Survival
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 Wheeler Dealers

20:15 Wheeler Dealers
21:00 Salvage Hunters: Classic Cars
21:50 Aaron Needs A Job
22:40 Dirty Mudder Truckers
23:30 Deadliest Catch



00:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
01:00 Booster
01:45 Counterfeit Cat
02:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
02:55 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:20 Booster
03:40 Booster
04:05 Counterfeit Cat
04:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
05:15 Supa Strikas
05:35 Supa Strikas
06:00 Lab Rats Elite Force
06:50 Phineas And Ferb
07:40 Gravity Falls
08:05 Gravity Falls
08:30 Phineas And Ferb
09:20 Big City Greens
10:05 Phineas And Ferb
10:50 Lab Rats Elite Force
11:35 Phineas And Ferb
12:20 Gravity Falls
13:10 DuckTales Shorts
13:15 Phineas And Ferb
14:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:30 Phineas And Ferb
15:20 Big City Greens
16:10 Supa Strikas
17:00 Marvel Spider-Man: Vexed By Venom
17:25 Marvel's Spider-Man
17:50 Phineas And Ferb
18:40 Supa Strikas
19:05 Lab Rats
19:30 Lab Rats
19:55 Disney 11 Recap
20:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
20:25 Marvel's Spider-Man
20:50 Phineas And Ferb
21:15 Phineas And Ferb
21:40 DuckTales
22:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
22:55 DuckTales Shorts
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 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
04:00 Botched
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
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Very Cavallari
23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:15 Clash Of Warriors
01:00 America's Book Of Secrets
01:45 Modern Marvels
02:30 Serial Killer Earth
03:15 Clash Of The Gods
04:00 Ancient Aliens
04:45 Deep Sea Salvage
05:30 UFO Hunters
06:15 Battles BC
07:00 America's Book Of Secrets
07:45 Modern Marvels
08:30 Serial Killer Earth
09:15 Clash Of The Gods
10:00 Ancient Aliens
10:45 Deep Sea Salvage

11:30 UFO Hunters
12:15 Battles BC
13:00 Modern Marvels
13:45 Serial Killer Earth
14:30 Clash Of The Gods
15:15 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Deep Sea Salvage
16:45 UFO Hunters
17:30 Battles BC
18:15 America's Book Of Secrets
19:00 Search For The Lost Giants
19:45 Serial Killer Earth
20:30 Clash Of The Gods
21:15 Ancient Aliens
22:00 MysteryQuest
22:45 UFO Hunters
23:30 Battles BC



00:20 The Curse Of Oak Island
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 Fifth Gear
06:45 The Curse Of Oak Island
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 Fifth Gear
18:45 Mountain Men
21:00 Lost Gold Of World War II
21:50 Lost Gold Of World War II
22:40 American Pickers
23:30 American Pickers



00:00 Fish Tank Kings
01:00 48 Hrs Destination
02:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
02:55 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
03:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
04:45 Confucius Was A Foodie
05:40 Access 360 World Heritage
06:35 Chef On The Road
07:30 Confucius Was A Foodie
08:25 Sara's Australia Unveiled
09:20 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
09:45 Fish Of The Day
10:15 Late Nite Eats
10:40 United Plates Of America
11:10 Access 360 World Heritage
12:05 Chef On The Road
13:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
13:55 Sara's Australia Unveiled
14:50 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
15:15 Fish Of The Day
15:45 Late Nite Eats
16:10 United Plates Of America
16:40 Access 360 World Heritage
17:35 David Rocco's Dolce India
18:30 Confucius Was A Foodie
19:25 Sara's Australia Unveiled
20:20 Around The World In 80 Dishes
21:15 Late Nite Eats
21:40 United Plates Of America
22:10 Walking Home From Mongolia
23:05 Access 360 World Heritage



00:00 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
00:50 Primal Survivor
01:40 Border Wars
02:30 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
03:20 Route Awakening
04:10 Nazi Megastructures: Battle Ready
05:00 Primal Survivor
06:00 Border Wars
07:00 The Big Picture With Kal Penn

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have plenty of good practical job-related thoughts and ideas. You have the ability to communicate with superiors and describe what you see. You work with real imagination and understanding in areas of the mind that are most private-depth psychology. Understanding your co-workers has an advantage this week, as someone may have been relieved from certain duties and another may have moved up in status. Politics and jealousy from others may gain your sympathy. Working with others at this time has brought you to realize that your ability to focus is an important factor in your business expertise. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular project. Laughter is contagious this evening-enjoy a good laugh with friends.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may be under a lot of pressure, at least in the way you appear to others. All is not in harmony between your emotions and the way you express yourself just now. Take a step back and reassess what motivates you. You are insightful when it comes to practical matters-job, career and such. You are independent and you may have an unconventional approach to work, especially regarding how you organize or manage your work. Perhaps the only problem today is that you may have a reputation for being different. You enjoy the emotional nourishment and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement. There is a need for change, a desire to break away from the outmoded patterns. Find an enjoyment for the new and unique.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You do not like making speeches, but when elected to take the place of a scheduled speaker, you can plan each word perfectly. You are able to be a very forceful speaker when needed. Today, your words just gush out and you create an emotional impact that brings new information to your listeners. You have no trouble putting your feelings into words; in fact, you may have to exercise some control over your tongue, for you are quick. You may enjoy throwing in a word here and there that is new to the audience and keeps them alert and listening. Ideas, words, books, etc., are pursued with great gusto. This is a time when support and recognition should be in the forecast from public, family and friends. Slow the tempo tonight and enjoy a quiet evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Everything points to your taking a project over. You feel that you have support from those around you and your ideas will add to the smoothness of the execution of the project. There is a surge of independence, freedom and an interest in trying new ideas. If you are in sales, or teaching, others will not be able to resist paying attention to you. You are a smooth talker with a quick wit. This is a productive time. You are not afraid to try new things. This will broaden your thinking and help you see new styles, ideas and paths to successful outcomes. A little time management may be needed for most people, but you seem to naturally pull things together. A sense of humor this evening helps you to enjoy your surroundings.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Pay attention to your timing today so that you are able to make complete sentences and complete whatever tasks are placed before you. Communication, particularly with those you feel may be a bit pushy, could prove troublesome. When using written communications, it will be good to spell-check and proofread. You will be successful in whatever method of communication you choose. Create an interest in viewing the possible outcomes of a situation, instead of the quick fix-no surprises. You encourage others through your own actions. There could be change on the home front this evening. You appreciate tradition and regularity and you may be set against anything new. Of course, one could consider a good reupholstering job on a sturdy chair.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your most essential quality has to do with the very real love and compassion you radiate. Your sense of value and sheer appreciation for life are communicated to all. You take control of a difficult situation today in some efforts to make others feel at ease. You could feel great support from those around you. You are also a born entertainer. There are special talents you are aware of and the energies today are with you in all of these areas. They are to enhance your problem-solving and strengthen your ability to help others. Perhaps you are in the medical field. You will succeed in your efforts; feel the confidence that belongs to you. Fill the air with music tonight.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You must learn to listen to some of your own more sensitive areas and feelings; they are clues into who you are and where your compassion can be found. Clear communication is ever important in order to get your information across. It is time to start thinking about opportunities that will show off your own special abilities. You may enjoy your job and be able to express your business expertise. This evening it will be time to show how well you can create what everyone wants. This may be with music, crafts or techniques, styles or expressions. You have held yourself back for much too long. You cannot abolish your creativity. Consider taking some time to volunteer in some mentoring and tutoring capacity, perhaps a community awareness project.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have strong, stable emotions and tend to draw around you the perfect environment for yourself. The thing you need is always at hand. In addition, you get much support and good fortune from friends and relatives. You are sometimes pulled between a desire to progress and be all that you can be, versus a tendency to dwell in the past. Today may be full of dwelling in the past but you will eventually pay attention to the happenings around you. You can change a difficult matter in the office to an understandable occurrence. You will probably be the teacher today and you should be very pleased at the way the workday ends. Meeting with friends after work will afford you an opportunity to relax and enjoy the company of your peers.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel left out or passed over just now. Your own requirements may appear to limit and separate you from where the rest of the gang is headed. This is a short-term situation but needs your attention. Close relationships will take on more emotional depth, power and importance at this time. An important event is near. This is a time during which you can have the experience of taking a greater role in the creation of life itself. You become one with the creative force to a marked extent-powerfully positive thinking. This could just be the time to break the mold and try what is unconventional, but with real passion. A much more independent and adventurous you will emerge. Relax this evening, perhaps a good video movie.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You enjoy working in a group that knows how to be part of a team and work together. You are very motivated, with a strong drive and urge to do and accomplish. In your own personal workspace you have an eye toward progress and the future; you feel compelled to try for what is just out of your reach. As a born coach or teacher, you are at home in the physical-action areas of life. You are quite able to manage a very active and strong emotional life. At home this afternoon a loved one gives you reason to be critical-you are wise to hold back your comments. Find the positive possibilities in this particular person. This person may just need to talk.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your relentless pursuit of anything hidden makes you a good investigator. You are positive and energized, handling subject matters that others would never come near. You are able to size up a problem and come up with a solution. Using your mind to negotiate obstacles and handle dilemmas, you will be called upon to solve several business problems today. You could be a computer wizard or a technical adviser-whatever the case, others are glad you make yourself available. You have a natural ability to guide and lead others through the hassles of life. You could be very much in demand as a counselor-you enjoy solving problems. Be prepared-this could amount to a passion that others may not be ready to deal with-pace yourself.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your mind could be quite clear and natural. Ideas are streaming easily to you. You can talk, talk, talk. You could be on a planning committee or in advertising that calls for your kind of thinking. Your outward seriousness and no-nonsense approach to things are obvious to all. This deliberate sense of responsibility comes across and is central to your personality and the way you relate to other people. Everything is run through your checkpoint to see if it holds up and can pass the test. Although you are very creative, you can be a stickler with details. You may be able to enjoy and value the relationships you have with your friends and loved ones tonight. General good feeling and a sense of support and harmony make this a happy time. Horoscopes July 2017

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

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Kuwait Times
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Friday, October 25, 2019

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- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

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Classifieds

Friday, October 25, 2019

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Abinesh Melapuram, Indian national (holder of Indian passport no. Z3083297 and Kuwait civil ID 285112104631) hereby change my daughter's name from Akshara Melapuram (Indian National, holder of Indian passport no. S0589124 and Kuwait civil id 317102100059) to Thejomayi Melapuram. She will be known as Thejomayi Melapuram from now on. C 5686)

Vanpulliparambil Sankaran Radhakrishnan. vanpulliparambil house, po engandiyur. Thrissur Kerala (Holder of passport NO: J5389373) presently residing in Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: Radhakrishnan Sankaran. Surname: vanpulliparambil. C 5682)

I, IBRAHIM PATHAN NAZIR AHMED holder of Indian Passport No. N9725885 having permanent address at PO Mahad, Dist. Raigad, Pin. 402301, Maharashtra, India. Residing in Kuwait present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: NAZIR AHMED IBRAHIM and surname: PATHAN.

My name is PRABHAKARAN NILESH THANDASSERIL S/o THANDASSERIL ETTIYATHI PRABHAKARAN. My passport number is M5451533 issued at Kuwait and address is THANDASSERIL, KOOROPPADA, P.O, KOTTAYAM, KERALA, PIN - 686502. I am resident of Kuwait and I have to change my name to, given name: NILESH and surname: THANDASSERIL PRABHAKARAN. **25-10-2019**

Old name: HAKIMUDDIN, new name: HAKIMUDDIN KAGZI, Passport No. T1940117, Civil ID No. 269121402091. **(C 5466) 23-10-2019**

MATRIMONIAL

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

BY NIGHT: Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for mist forming at night and some scattered clouds will

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	36 °C	27 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	37 °C	24 °C
ABDALY	36 °C	23 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	38 °C	24 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C
SALMIYAH	34 °C	29 °C
AHMADI	33 °C	28 °C
NUWAISIB	40 °C	24 °C
WAFRA	39 °C	24 °C
SALMY	39 °C	22 °C

SFC. CHART 24/10/2019 0000 UTC

MSE, Analysis (RPN)
Valid 0000 UTC 24 OCT 2019

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	10/25	Partly cloudy to cloudy and causing rising dust with a chance for scattered rain	35 °C	23 °C	SW-SE	12 - 40 km/h
Saturday	10/26	Cloudy and A decrease in temperature and rising dust with a chance for rain that might be	31 °C	22 °C	NE-SE	12 - 50 km/h
Sunday	10/27	Unstable weather and causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	30 °C	21 °C	SE-NE	22 - 55 km/h
Monday	10/28	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	29 °C	19 °C	NE-VRB	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:36
Sunrise	05:56
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:44
Sunset	17:09
Isha	18:27

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	39 °C
MIN. Temp.	23 °C
MAX. RH	78 %
MIN. RH	16 %
MAX. Wind	W 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Business

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2019

39 Departing Draghi looks to bind wounds at ECB



40 After record harvest, farmers fear leftist return in Argentina



41 Ghosn wants case dismissed over 'prosecutor misconduct'



HYDERABAD: An artist gives final touches to a statue of Hindu goddess Lakshmi displayed for sale at a roadside stall ahead of the Diwali festival, or Festival of Lights, in Hyderabad. —AFP

Diwali blues hit corporate India

Asia's third-largest economy battles waning consumer demand

MUMBAI: For Indian executive Bibhas Chakraborty, Diwali used to mean shiny expensive gifts from business associates keen to use the auspicious—and spectacular—Hindu festival to deepen ties. Now it's mostly sweets and nuts. As Asia's third-largest economy battles waning consumer demand, extravagant corporate gifts risk becoming a thing of the past, leaving many worried that this weekend's festival of lights—and presents—is losing its luster.

"Earlier, the quality of gifts we received was higher and often included gold and silver-plated picture frames or bowls. But now, with the economic slowdown, that's all changed," Chakraborty, a Mumbai-based 48-year-old, told AFP. "The joy of opening wrappers to find surprising items has been replaced with the usual sweets... which has

taken the sheen off the festival somewhat."

India's corporate gift industry usually works overtime in the run-up to Diwali to meet a surge in demand—with the annual ritual seen as a convenient way to nurture business relationships while avoiding accusations of outright bribery. But in Mumbai's busy Mangaldas market, a street lined with shops offering festive discounts, third-generation entrepreneur Jatin Shah is a worried man.

Shutters down

The owner of Rainbow Dry Fruits, an 80-year-old gift packaging firm, Shah added 20 temporary workers to his staff of 15 to account for the anticipated Diwali rush. But orders have yet to materialize. "In previous years... we would work till two in the morning. Now since the orders are lower in

size and scale, we finish work and pull down the shutters by 10 pm," Shah told AFP.

Even orders for the cheapest items—small boxes of Indian almonds, walnuts, and cashews—have fallen by more than half, he said, bringing down the firm's annual turnover by 35 percent and leaving him with no funds for employee bonuses, another Diwali tradition. "Diwali is not only the festival of lights but also represents economic prosperity," Shah said. Hindus mark Diwali with prayers to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, and the weeks leading up to the holiday usually see an uptick in consumer spending, similar to Thanksgiving or Christmas in the West.

Mood of gloom

But this year Indians don't appear to be in a mood to spend, with the slowdown hitting sales of

everything from cars to cookies. "I am not sure if there will be many gifts coming my way this year," said finance executive Chakraborty. Some of the biggest companies have slashed their corporate gift budgets for Diwali, said Ritu Grover, CEO of TGH Lifestyle, which works with more than 350 firms including telecom giant Airtel and IT outsourcing firm Wipro.

Analysts said the curtailed spending was a reflection of the gloom surrounding the business community, with economic growth its most sluggish in years. "Reduction in corporate gifting is an indicator of economic slowdown and there is no ambiguity on that front," N. Chandramouli, chief of Mumbai-based TRA Research, told AFP. "All indicators show it is going to be a slow Diwali this year." —AFP

Business

Stocks rise, euro holds gains before Draghi's farewell

Investors ignore earnings miss from Caterpillar, Boeing

LONDON: Europe's traders were sending European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi off in style yesterday, raising the region's stocks to their highest in more than a year and nudging the euro towards its best month since January 2018. Update earnings from Microsoft and Mercedes maker Daimler, along with a ceasefire in northern Syria, lifted the mood. Trade and Brexit uncertainties and some below-par German data prevented even bigger gains.

The list of landmarks was still impressive. The pan-European Stoxx 600 rose 0.3 percent to its highest since May 2018. Germany's DAX wasn't far behind and the euro was at \$1.1140, consolidating its 2.1 percent October advance. Gains in Asia had included a one-year high for Tokyo's Nikkei and saw MSCI All World index, which tracks nearly 50 countries, reach its highest since late July. "Draghi is in a situation where bond yields are higher and the collapse we saw over the summer is reversing, the euro has steadied itself and everything is fine, except for the PMIs of course," said Societe Generale's Kit Juckes.

"And he's handing over an empty monetary policy toolkit." Euro zone bond yields were steady before Draghi's send-off. The Swedish crown rose 0.7 percent after the country's central bank said it was still planning to raise interest rates in December. Its gains pulled the Norwegian crown higher as well, despite a relatively dovish message from the Norges Bank as it left rates unchanged. Turkey's central bank was expected to slash its 16.5 percent rates by another 100 basis points, after U.S. President Donald Trump lifted sanctions on Turkey following a ceasefire in northern Syria.

Electric dreams

On Wall Street earlier, the Dow and the Nasdaq added 0.2 percent each and the S&P 500 gained 0.3 percent. Tesla shares jumped 21 percent in after-hours trading after the company reported an unexpected third-quarter profit. Microsoft posted forecast-beating profit and revenue numbers after the closing bell, although the outlook was darkened by slower-than-expected take-up of its Azure cloud services. Shares of Boeing Co and Caterpillar Inc ended about 1 percent higher each despite big earnings misses.

Alarming headlines since the first quarter of 2018 suggested poor Caterpillar earnings seemed to mean a recession was around the corner, RBC Capital Markets' chief economist Tom Porcelli said, but has never managed to arrive. "We have been down this road before with CAT," Porcelli said in a note titled "Still Waiting For Recession." "If you keep saying a recession is here, it is a mathematical certainty that at some point you will be right. Maybe try again after CAT's next quarterly earnings report." So far, results from about 125 of the S&P 500 companies are out with analysts expecting earnings to have declined 2.9 percent year-over-year, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

Brexit battle

sterling paused at \$1.2914 after rising 0.3 percent on Wednesday. After more than three years, Britain appears closer than ever to resolve clear. Brexit conundrum but still has hurdles to a de-EU member states on Wednesday delayed decision on whether to grant Britain a three-



LONDON: A financial trader works at their desk at CMC Markets in the City of London, Britain. —Reuters

JohnsorBrexit extension. Prime Minister Boris said if the deadline is deferred to the end of the battle, he would call an election. "The Brexit ANZ looks like it will drag on," economists at not wrote in a note. "The UK government will meet its current timetable of leaving the EU in 31 October, and an extension appears likely. the meantime, Brexit uncertainty will keep weighing on UK business investment and activ-

ity." The euro was flat at \$1.1132. The Japanese yen was 0.1 percent higher at 108.6 per dollar and the Australian dollar was weaker at \$0.6842. The dollar index was lower at 97.452 against a basket of six major currencies, heading for its worst month since January 2018. In commodity markets, U.S. crude fell 38 cents to \$55.59 a barrel. Brent slipped 22 cents to \$60.95. Gold was trading water at \$1,491.51 an ounce. — Reuters

World Bank rates China, India as 'most improved' for doing business

WASHINGTON: China and India made the top 10 list of governments that have done the most in the past year to improve the ease of doing business in their countries, the World Bank said Wednesday. Despite a bitter trade war, in which the United States is demanding reforms from Beijing to protect intellectual property and open its economy further to American businesses, China made the top 10 list for the second year in a row.

With those improvements, China leapfrogged France to take the 31st spot in the "ease of doing business" ranking, moving up 15 places, according to the World Bank report. And despite US complaints, the report credited China with improving protections for minority investors, strengthening procedures for enforcing contracts and making trade easier with changes to customs administration and port infrastructure.

"Removing barriers facing entrepreneurs generates better jobs, more tax revenues and higher incomes, all of which

are necessary to reduce poverty and raise living standards," World Bank Group President David Malpass said in a statement. India landed on the most-improved list for the third year in a row, making it easier to start a business by abolishing filing fees, lowering the time and cost of seeking construction permits and making trade easier with port improvements and an improved electronic platform for submitting documents.

The country jumped 14 places to number 63 in the global rankings. The other eight economies where business climates improved the most were Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Togo, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, China, India, and Nigeria, the study found. New Zealand continues to top the global rankings, with Singapore, Hong Kong right behind, with Korea in fifth place, and the United States sixth. The World Bank studies reforms in 10 areas of business activity in 190 economies, including issues like construction permits, getting electricity and paying taxes. — AFP

BASF sticks to 2019 forecast despite sales slide

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German chemical giant BASF yesterday left forecasts unchanged for 2019 despite reporting falling sales and profits in the third quarter, blaming trade conflicts and uncertainty for the lingering gloom. Net profits at the group slumped 24 percent year-on-year between July and September, to 911 million euros. Meanwhile sales edged back 2.0 percent, to 15.2 billion euros, for an operating, or underlying profit down 1.0 percent at 1.4 billion.

"We can't sound the all-clear about the economic environment," chief executive Martin Brudermueller told reporters in a telephone conference, pointing to US-China trade conflicts and Brexit uncertainty. "Things certainly aren't going to get easier in the coming months... it's clear that it's not going to be a walk in the park," he added. Especially falling production in the global car industry—a vital customer for chemical makers—has weighed on the Ludwigshafen-based firm.

But there were some bright spots, like better sales of catalytic converters in China and India as new emissions limits are set to bite next year. And sales of battery materials continued to climb steeply as pure electric and hybrid vehicles claim a small but growing share of the market. "In recent years, we've seen double-digit (percentage) growth in revenue and volumes" in batteries "and it's continuing that way in 2019," chief financial officer Hans-Ulrich Engel said.

"Tesla published relatively positive numbers yesterday evening, of course that's also a sign of what's going on in the automobile field," he added. CEO Brudermueller added that the company was "radically and systematically reshaping our organization" through the downturn and had already "made a lot of progress" in a restructuring program announced earlier this year. Bosses plan to cut 6,000 of BASF's roughly 120,000 jobs worldwide by the end of 2021, contributing to annual savings of 2 billion euros.

By October, 1,800 posts were already shed, with more to come in the fourth quarter, Engel said. Looking ahead to the full year, BASF confirmed its forecast of a fall of up to 30 percent in operating profit before special items, on a "slight decline" in sales. BASF shares gained 1.8 percent to trade at 68.98 euros around 10:20 am in Frankfurt (0820 GMT), against a DAX index of blue-chip stocks up 0.4 percent. —AFP

Departing Draghi looks to bind wounds at ECB

Critics launch barrage of criticism against Italian economist

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: At his final press conference yesterday, departing European Central Bank president Mario Draghi will downplay differences among policymakers over September's big-bang stimulus package, hoping to limit their impact on the institution's effectiveness, analysts predict. While he is widely credited with saving the euro, critics inside and outside the ECB have since last month launched a rarely seen barrage of criticism against the Italian economist.

"The only disturbing factor of Draghi's farewell party is the ongoing 'war of the roses'," ING economist Carsten Brzeski said, predicting "therapeutical moments" around the governing council table. Florian Hense of Berenberg bank said Draghi would highlight that "despite some differences, the governing council members agree on many points." The pressure to bind lingering wounds will be high, as AFP learned incoming chief Christine Lagarde will attend the last meeting before she takes office on November 1 as an observer. Some analysts have warned that last month's eruption of infighting has weakened the weight of the ECB's words on financial markets.

In September, ECB further lowered its interest rate on banks' deposits into negative territory, at -0.5 percent, and loosened conditions on a new round of cheap credit to lenders. Most controversially, it again fired up "quantitative easing" (QE) bond-buying purchases to the tune of 20 billion euros (\$22.4 billion) per month from next month, less than a year after setting them to idle last December. Central bank governors from core eurozone economies like France, Germany and the Netherlands all criticized the move, while a German ECB board member resigned.

Super Mario

September looked like the last encore for a solo artist who repeatedly succeeded in bending the ECB to his will. Since taking

the reins in 2011, Draghi has been credited above all with saving the euro during its existential debt crisis. That rescue came only with help from hefty cash injections—including 2.6 trillion euros of QE—and record low interest rates. Both earned him the ire of conservatives, especially in Germany, who say he has harmed savers.

As he departs after five years of recovery and 11 million jobs created, Draghi leaves former French finance minister and International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Lagarde to confront a eurozone apparently running out of steam. Last week, the IMF forecast eurozone economic growth of just 1.2 percent this year and 1.4 percent in 2020. And present inflation is far from the ECB's target of just below two percent, fuelling debate on whether the institution should revise the goal altogether.

Lingering threats

An official account of September's governing council meeting showed broad agreement on the need for further supportive steps, as the ECB's own forecasts showed inflation falling short of its goal out to 2021. Meanwhile US trade confrontations with the European Union and China show no sign of letting up and other foreign sources of uncertainty like Brexit persist.

"Draghi's final gift as ECB president will have been to pass on to his successor, Ms Lagarde, a hefty yet extremely flexible package of policy measures" to tackle such headwinds, said Chiara Zangarelli of Nomura bank. However, Lagarde "will have to adjust this complex package to economic conditions as it sees fit in a way that deals with low inflation, declining inflation expectations and a divided Council" all at once, she added.

Meanwhile, as the growth outlook has ebbed, the ECB has intensified its calls for governments to loosen their purse strings. Lagarde is likely to persist in urging capitals to do more to boost growth and inflation, echoing her IMF role. "The ECB is rightly



FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank (ECB), addresses the media during a press conference following the meeting of the Governing Council in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. — AFP

worried about the balance between monetary and fiscal policy" after years fighting its inflation battle almost alone, economist Christian Odendahl of the Centre for European Reform told AFP.

Last month, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said governments shouldn't "overstretch" monetary policy in an apparent recognition of the ECB's woes. And Germany's nomination Wednesday of Isabel Schnabel, an economist who has often defended the ECB against critics, to replace Sabine Lautenschlaeger is widely seen as an olive branch from Berlin. — AFP

Markaz speaks at Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" has announced its participation as a speaker at the plenary session of the first day of "Future Investment Initiative", on October 29 at 2.15 pm at Ritz Carlton, Riyadh, KSA. The initiative is held under the Patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and the leadership of HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs and Chairman of the Public Investment Fund (PIF).

The initiative is organized on October 29-31 2019 by PIF, the investment arm of KSA and one of the largest sovereign funds globally. Organized around the overall theme of 'What is next for global business?' the event will focus on three key pillars:

- 1) Sustainable future: Exploring new innovations and investment models that can support profit, people and planet
- 2). Technology for good: Business and policy frameworks that can guide the future growth of the tech industry
- 3). Advanced society: Cultural and organizational systems that can inspire humanity in the age of machines.

Mr Manaf A Alhajeri, CEO of Markaz, will shed light, through his participation as a speaker in the plenary session titled Trading Places: What new financial centers are rising up around the world?, on a number of key topics such as Why

now? London, New York, and Hong Kong might be the world's great financial capitals, but as economic and geopolitical shifts create a new global order, a new establishment is emerging.

Urgent questions? In post-Brexit Europe, how will Dublin, Frankfurt, and Luxembourg differentiate themselves to capture business leaving London? In Asia, cities such as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Busan are rising as are Tianjin, New Delhi, and Baku - what factors are fueling this rise? In the Gulf region, Riyadh is attracting significant financial firms, as are Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Will this success establish MENA as a major global financial player?

Key takeaways? What these ambitious upstart cities are doing to attract global financial capital and become the bustling financial hubs of the future. In addition to Alhajeri, FII will bring together decision makers, leading investors and global experts to explore future economic trends and opportunities, shed light on the future of industries, and discuss how investment can continue to drive overall global prosperity and development.

In this context, Alhajeri said, "This initiative is part of the notable movements undertaken by CGG countries to attract



Manaf Al-Hajeri

international investments to the region. Changes achieved and reforms enacted in the past five years in the GCC region are important. GCC governments are veering towards 'minimum government and maximum governance' and establishing institutions of excellence (free zones and innovation hubs) with good infrastructure, in addition to leveraging on high mobile and internet penetration, ICT adoption for government services to improve ease of doing business.

Development of private sector is at the heart of ongoing reform efforts. GCC governments have provided enabling business environment for private sector growth to encourage job creation. Up gradation of Kuwait and Saudi Arabian capital markets to various 'Emerging Market' indices allowed more attraction to the GCC economic and raised their competitiveness. Furthermore, financial inclusion, financial development and financing options are integral for achieving robust, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Financial hubs also provide the eco-system for investment and savings that drives entrepreneurial endeavors and economic growth."

Alhajeri added, "Yet, certain challenges remain, such as attracting firm and capital into GCC, improving ease of doing business and competitiveness of economy, a greater need for National Investment Policy (NIP), enhanced focus on innovation and knowledge and changing the geopolitical perceptions." The Future Investment Initiative (FII) is an international platform for expert-led debate between global leaders, investors and innovators with the power to shape the future of global investment. It is focused on utilizing investment to drive growth opportunities, enable innovation and disruptive technologies, and address global challenges.

The third edition of FII will continue building active, global networks of influential decision makers to explore the emerging industries that will shape the global economy and investment landscape over the coming decades.

Business

After record harvest, farmers fear leftist return in Argentina

Farmers brace for backlash from Peronist duo

RAMALLO, Argentina: Record grain harvests were a much needed boon to Argentine agribusiness this year, but farmers here see trouble ahead if leftist Peronist candidate Alberto Fernandez wins Sunday's presidential election. "They're coming for us," Daniel Perez says darkly as he gazes across a vast expanse of grain fields in Ramallo, the lush agricultural heartland of Buenos Aires province.

Peronists "will come for us in the countryside for sure," said Perez, "because it's the only real money they can call on" to help lift Argentina out of crisis—particularly its growing number of urban poor. Farmers like Perez found an ally in President Mauricio Macri when he scrapped taxes on exports of corn and wheat following his election in 2015.

Now they are bracing for a backlash from Fernandez and his running mate, former president Cristina Kirchner, should the Peronist duo seal an anticipated return to power. Perez, 42, has grown disillusioned with Macri after the economic turmoil of the last two years that has seen millions of Argentines hit by soaring inflation and a plummeting peso.

Devil you know

But better the devil you know than the devil

you don't, he says, and his fears over what Peronism can do to farming are worse than four more years of Macri. With bumper exports of soybean oil and soybean flour, agriculture is one of Argentina's few success stories in an economy beset by crisis since early 2018. The sector showed year-on-year growth of 46 percent to July, according to the National Institute of Statistics, after rebounding from one of the worst droughts in years.

But Perez and other grain producers need no reminding of the restrictions levied by Kirchner in 2008 that led to months of farmer protests. Farmers accused Kirchner of saddling the agricultural industry with an unfair share of the national tax burden, hurting their international competitiveness. She said then that taxes proposed on soybean exports were aimed at redistributing farming wealth to projects for the poor. Now they fear a return of such interventionism against an industry which accounts for 6.1 percent of GDP.

Export earner

Argentina's agricultural exports bring in more than half of the country's export dollars. And the agribusiness sector, a major foreign currency earner, doesn't want to be the well that the left



RAMALLO, Argentina: A flock of sheep near Bariloche, in the Patagonian province of Rio Negro. —AFP

will dip into again. Daniel Pelegrina, president of the Rural Society of Argentina, says the left should have other priorities. "Argentina produces more than it consumes, we need to keep our horizons open" for trade, he said. "We need stability in the economy, to revive the currency and end inflation."

Fernandez, the election favorite, has assured

farmers what happened in 2008 is "all in the past." He had an insider's view of the show-down, having been Kirchner's cabinet chief. Fernandez has promised he will continue with tax relief on production, but Pelegrina is dubious. "We have doubts because, in his camp, is Cristina, who had a very strong animosity towards the countryside." —AFP

Amid trade war, GM strike, Boeing crisis, US durable goods suffer

WASHINGTON: Sales of major American-made manufactured goods had a dismal September, hit hard by Boeing's woes and a protracted work stoppage at General Motors, according to a government data report yesterday. And even outside the volatile transportation sector, a key measure that economists watch for signs of business confidence, fell for the second month in a row, the Commerce Department reported. It was more bad news for the US manufacturing sector, the weakest link in the slowing American economy, battered by a slump in foreign demand and the US trade war with China.

Total new orders for US durable goods, those big-ticket items intended to last three years or more, fell 1.1 percent in September to \$248.2 billion, which was about as bad as economists expected. The result meant 2019 so far has been a year to forget, with sales in the first nine months of the year 0.8 percent lower than the same period in 2018. The largest part of the damage last month was done by the transportation sector, with autos and parts falling 1.6 percent and civilian aircraft falling another 11.8 percent, extending August's decline. But economists note the bad news was exaggerated by the GM strike and Boeing's troubles. GM has reached a contract agreement with the UAW union last week, and voting among unionized autoworkers on whether to approve a deal is expected to conclude on Friday, more than a month after the work stoppage began. —AFP

Oil, gas giants spend 250 mn on EU lobbying

PARIS: The five biggest publicly listed oil and gas companies and trade groups representing them spent more than 250 million euros lobbying the European Union to influence climate action since 2010, environmental groups said Thursday. Research showed that BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell and Total, as well as trade groups acting on their behalf, have held at least 327 high level meetings with European Commission officials since Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker took office in 2014 — an average of more than one a week.

The findings came from publicly listed documents, and companies who responded to requests for comments said there was no conflict of interest in their executives meeting high-level EU policymakers. But green groups said the money spent on access to officials showed to what extent oil and gas firms were seeking to influence decisions in Brussels. "This is part of a long trail of the fossil fuel industry delaying, weakening and torpedoing much-needed climate action," Pascoe Sabido, a researcher and campaigner with Corporate Europe Observatory, told AFP.

The EU is seen as one of the global leaders when it comes to climate action. But there are fears its member states are not



CALIFORNIA: Gas prices over \$4.00 per gallon are displayed at a Chevron and Shell gas stations in Greenbrae, California. —AFP

phasing out fossil fuels quickly enough to comply with the 2015 Paris climate accord, which commits nations to limit warming to "well below" two degrees Celsius. A Commission spokeswoman told AFP it was "good practice that politicians and officials meet with external actors".

She added that "some meetings" with oil and gas representatives focused on "renewables and the ways to decarbonize our economy". Last year the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) called for a radical drawdown in fossil fuel use to hit the safer 1.5C cap laid out in the Paris deal. Yet global emissions are rising year on year, and environmental groups fear major EU gas infrastructure projects in the pipeline could lock the continent into fossil fuels well beyond the IPCC's deadlines.

Support Paris

The investigation by Corporate Europe Observatory, Food & Water Europe, Friends of the Earth Europe, and Greenpeace EU looked at companies' own declarations and the EU's lobby transparency register and published meetings. It found that the five firms declared spending of 123.3 million euros on EU lobbying between 2010-2018. Trade associations representing them spent an additional 128 million euros in that period. In April the watchdog Global Witness calculated that oil and gas majors were planning to spend \$5 trillion on new exploration by 2030, a figure it said was "poles apart" from the Paris goals. A spokeswoman from Total told AFP that the figures contained in Thursday's report "in no way reflect" what the group spends on lobbying. —AFP

Business

Ghosn wants case dismissed over 'prosecutor misconduct'

Ex-Nissan chief accuses prosecutors of subcontracting investigation

TOKYO: Ex-Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn yesterday called for the case against him to be dismissed, saying the charges were politically motivated and accusing Japanese prosecutors of a "pervasive pattern of illegal misconduct". The claims, made in two filings to the Tokyo District Court, allege prosecutors colluded with Nissan and effectively subcontracted out their investigation to employees of the automaker who were trying to oust Ghosn.

"The prosecutors' case, which was politically motivated and poisoned from the start, is fundamentally flawed and contradicted by the evidentiary record," Ghosn's lawyers said in a statement. Ghosn is out on bail in Tokyo, awaiting trial on four charges of financial misconduct. He denies any wrongdoing and laid out his defense again yesterday.

The filings formalize claims Ghosn has made previously—that the allegations against him stem from resentment within Nissan over his plans to more closely integrate the firm with its alliance partner, French automaker Renault. Along with Mitsubishi Motors, Nissan and Renault form a leading auto alliance, but relations inside the partnership have been tense at times. Ghosn's legal team claim the opposition to further integration of the car firms drew in even government officials from Japan's trade ministry METI.

Unlawful collusion

"The prosecution against him resulted from unlawful collusion between the prosecutors, government officials at METI, and executives at Nis-

san," Ghosn's legal team said in a statement. "Our argument is that this case itself is made up," Ghosn's lawyer Junichiro Hironaka told reporters. "Concerns arose within Nissan that, should Mr Ghosn stay, the company might become absorbed by Renault. So they wanted to oust him and decided to cook up a case." The filings made Thursday do not compel a response from the court before the trial begins, which Ghosn's legal team have said may not be before next April.

But they lay out their strategy for attacking the case against him, as well as his defense on the specific charges. Contacted by AFP, the prosecutor's office had no immediate comment. The allegations are the latest twist in a case that has gripped the business community since Ghosn's shock arrest last November. The formerly high-powered executive was detained as he landed in Tokyo on a private jet and spent 108 days in detention before winning bail and emerging in a bizarre workman's disguise.

He was rearrested not long afterwards, as prosecutors added to his charge sheet, but won bail for a second time after spending another 21 days in detention. His release came with strict conditions, including restrictions on seeing his wife and bail of \$4.5 million.

Hostage justice

Ghosn faces a constellation of accusations, including charges of under-reporting his compensation, using Nissan money to pay back acquaintances and skimming company funds for personal use. He denies all the allegations, saying



TOKYO: In this file photo former Nissan Motor Chairman Carlos Ghosn arrives for a pre-trial hearing at the Tokyo District Court in Tokyo. — AFP

the compensation in question had not been finalized, that his payments with Nissan funds were to company partners and had been approved, and that he never used the automaker's money for himself. Ghosn's lawyers argue however that the case as a whole should "never have been brought," calling it an "abuse of the official authority of criminal

prosecution." But it remains unclear how sympathetic a court will be to the argument, in a system where prosecutors rarely lose cases. "The Japanese court is not brave, so we fully assume the possibility that we will go to trial, and we are making the argument that in all circumstances, he is not guilty," Hironaka said. —AFP

Volkswagen to unveil new Golf as end of era nears

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Volkswagen is set to unveil the newest incarnation of its iconic Golf hatchback yesterday, counting on the bestseller to help fund a costly switch to the electric era and bridge the gap to the cars of the future. The eighth generation of the unglamorous but trusted compact car, of which more than 35 million units have been sold since 1974, will make its debut during an evening ceremony at the group's Wolfsburg headquarters.

But it will be a decidedly less glitzy affair than last month's unveiling of the ID.3 — VW's first all-electric, mass-market car which took centre stage at the Frankfurt auto show and symbolises the group's 30-billion-euro (\$33 billion) bet on zero-emissions vehicles. Seven years after the model's last revamp, the new Golf 8 is hitting the road in a vastly changed landscape.

Volkswagen has been rocked to the core by a costly diesel emissions cheating scandal that is still reverberating across the industry, and has forced carmakers to adapt to tough new EU pollution regulations. While the "dieselgate" fallout has sped up the industry's pivot towards electric and increasingly automated cars, the huge investments required for the switch are being hamstrung by trade conflicts and a global economic slowdown.

In the face of these challenges, it's clear that the new

Golf—easily the group's most recognisable car after the legendary Beetle—is being rolled out "to make money", said industry expert Stefan Bratzel of the Center of Automotive Management. The crowd-pleaser will be available in diesel, petrol and hybrid—and could well be the group's last hurrah in the fossil fuel era. "It will bridge the gap between the new era and hanging on to old customers," said industry expert Ferdinand Dudenhoeffer.

Glitches

VW's CEO Herbert Diess is betting big on next-generation vehicles, promising to bring some 70 electric models to market by 2028. But before the greener, smarter cars go mainstream, "it would be stupid" to pass up the hundreds of thousands of new unit sales that a revamped Golf would ring up, said Dudenhoeffer. In 2018 VW sold 832,000 Golfs around the world, accounting for 13 percent of VW's own-brand sales. The ID.3 won't be able to quickly rival that kind of market share, said Bratzel. "The Golf will be needed to bring in volume sales for several more years," he said.

By reusing the platform the previous Golf was built on, the group was able to slash production costs, saving hundreds of millions of euros, VW production chief Andreas Tostmann said. Overall, VW has poured nearly two billion euros in the Golf 8 and says it has brought the model into the digital age with online technologies and smart driving assistance systems. But software glitches forced the company to forego for now the installation of some planned on-board functionalities in order to stick to the scheduled production start earlier this year. "The Golf is also a symbol of the Volkswagen group's struggles to transition to a new world," said Bratzel. —AFP

Tesla shares rev higher after update on profits, China

BEIJING: Tesla shares raced higher in after-hours trading Wednesday following the company's announcement that its factory in China had started production and quarterly financial results that beat expectations. Shares in Tesla climbed more than 20 percent after the electric carmaker, which had been expected to post a loss, reported a profit of \$143 million on revenue of \$5.4 billion in the third quarter ending September 30.

Tesla said it is producing vehicles "on a trial basis" at its so-called Gigafactory in Shanghai, which will help boost global production and sales. Tesla chief executive Elon Musk was optimistic that the Shanghai factory could begin cranking out Model Y vehicles by the middle of next year, and believed the new model has the potential to be a huge seller. The company has been dogged by concerns it may not be able to ramp up production to meet demand and that Musk may have overstated Tesla's goals for sales and technology improvements.

Musk has predicted the company may be able to deliver self-driving cars by 2020, though analysts are skeptical. Improvements to "Smart Summon," a feature that allows owners to summon their car with a smartphone app, are also expected, he said. Musk touted the tool as a step toward fully autonomous vehicles and said that an over-the-air software update will be pushed out in the coming weeks. Tesla, a contender in the race to produce fully self-driving cars, last month issued a software update that included "Smart Summon." Under the feature, an app acts as a remote control which allows an owner to beckon their car, although Tesla advised they keep the vehicle in sight the whole time. —AFP

Sports

Roger Federer into 17th Basel quarter-final

BASEL: Roger Federer crushed Radu Albot 6-0, 6-3 on Wednesday to win his 22nd match in a row at the Swiss Indoors and earn a quarter-final place at his home event for the 17th time.

The nine-time champion was ruthless in a 22-minute opening set, finishing the entire job in 63 minutes in front of 9,000 fans.

He will on Friday face the winner from Stan Wawrinka and Frances Tiafoe, who both earned straight-set wins earlier in the day.

"It's a super feeling to know exactly where the ball is going, what the other guy is doing," said top seed Federer. "I was hitting a lot of winners, those kind of moments are really rare."

Federer's Swiss compatriot Wawrinka fired 10 aces and 30 winners to overwhelm fellow veteran Pablo Cuevas 6-3, 6-4 to make it into the second round, keeping alive his outside chances of making the ATP Finals.

Federer, who is playing in Basel for the 19th time, won his first set to love at the tournament since 2006. His loss of just three games on Wednesday was his most powerful showing on the ATP since beating Andreas Seppi at the Paris Masters 6-1, 6-1 four years ago.

"I'm very happy, it was important to start the second set with a break," said 38-year-old Federer. "Even though I was playing well, I was not over-confident, I was always worried that he might make a comeback."

If Wawrinka beats America's Tiafoe in their second-round match, the Swiss pair will clash on Friday in the quarters.

"I hope Stan goes through, I always enjoy

playing him," added Federer, who holds a 23-3 edge in the series against his close friend.

"I'm glad that he is back (from double 2017 knee surgeries)." Federer dominated 49th-ranked Albot, sweeping the first eight games before the Moldovan got on the scoreboard.

The top seed finished on a first match point after five aces and five service breaks.

Wawrinka, who was a runner-up to Andy Murray in Antwerp last weekend, currently stands at 15th in the race for the season-ending showpiece in London with 1,500 rankings points available between Basel and next week's Paris Masters, the final event of the regular campaign.

Six of the eight spots for the ATP Finals have already been secured. Wawrinka, 34, ended each set against Uruguay's 45th-ranked Cuevas with aces, breaking once per set to go through to the second round in 67 minutes.

"It was great for a first match," said Wawrinka, who lost just nine points in 10 service games. "I moved and served well, I was really focussed. I'm really happy to get through in two sets." The seventh seed is playing Basel for the 14th time and improved his record at the event to 12-13. Three-time major winner Wawrinka said his three-set final loss to Murray in Antwerp on Sunday proved useful in Basel. "Antwerp really helped me today, I've got confidence in my game, the game is there."

But he refused to speculate on any London chances: "I'm super-far away, so it's not at all in my mind." Sixth seed David Goffin also stayed in the race to London with a 6-4, 6-4 defeat of



BASEL: Swiss Roger Federer returns a ball to German Peter Gojowczyk during the 1,500th match of his career at the opening day of the Swiss Indoors tennis tournament in Basel. — AFP

2014 US Open champion Marin Cilic. Goffin entered this week at provisional 10th in the race and is duelling with Italy's Matteo Berrettini, who currently stands eighth, and ninth-placed Roberto Bautista Agut. Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania lined up a second-round match with third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas after defeating

Pablo Andujar 6-1, 6-1. Filip Krajinovic will next take on fifth seed Fabio Fognini after going past Serb compatriot Laslo Djere, 6-1, 6-4. Australian Alex De Minaur defeated Taylor Fritz of the US 6-3, 6-3 and Switzerland's Henri Laaksonen was put out by Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-4. — AFP

India rest Kohli for Bangladesh T20s

MUMBAI: India have left out captain Virat Kohli from the squad named for three Twenty20 internationals against Bangladesh starting next month, but he will return for two Tests between the South Asian neighbours.

Senior batsman Rohit Sharma will captain the Twenty20 team in the limited-overs series due to begin on November 3 in Delhi. Uncapped allrounder Shivam Dube has been drafted into the squad in place of injured Hardik Pandya, while Sanju Samson and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal have been recalled.

Bangladesh had threatened to call off the tour over a domestic pay dispute, but the national board and players resolved their differences late Wednesday. The second T20 is on November 7 in Rajkot and the third on November 9 in Nagpur. Kohli, described as the "most important man" in Indian cricket by new board president Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday, will captain the side in the Test series starting November 14 in Indore. The Test squad is essentially the same that swept South Africa 3-0 in a series that ended this week. That gave India a world record 11th straight home Test series triumph.

T20 squad: Rohit Sharma (capt), Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Sanju Samson, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant, Washington Sundar, Krunal Pandya, Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, Deepak Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed, Shivam Dube, Shardul Thakur Test squad: Virat Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant. — AFP

S Korean women tops at bowling championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Director General of Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Dr Humoud Fulaiteh asked all local sports federations who plan to host regional or international championships, to start from where the Bowling Club ended, and make sure that they benefit the name of Kuwait bearing in mind the support the state gives through PAS to the sport and athletes.

Fulaiteh hoped that the federations be like the Bowling Club in making greatly organized events.

He lauded the efforts as the higher committee succeeded in proving Kuwait's ability to host major events and dazzle the world with the beauty and magnificence of the organization such on the case with the opening ceremony.

Today and tomorrow will have the three events for men and women, as the South Korean women dominated the doubles and snatched the first two gold medals for their country, which was also in control during the 2016 championship



in Hong Kong.

While the Malaysian doubles team of Sin Li Jane and Esther Cheah failed to keep the title and ended in third place behind Korea's Kim Moon jeong and Lee Yeonji who won silver while their compatriots Lee Mayoung and Baek Sungja bagged the gold. Today, will see the qualifiers of the threes for both genders in two groups, while the finals will be played on Sunday.

Malaysia tops the medals tally with two gold and two bronze, followed by South Korea by one Gold, one Silver, while Indonesia and India have one silver each and Japan has a bronze medal.

Malaysian players expressed their pleasure for their country being on top of the table, which gives them optimism to have Malaysia return to the top from which they were absent since the nineties of last century.

Nationals rout Astros to take command of World Series

HOUSTON: Powered by a devastating six-run seventh inning, the Washington Nationals seized command of the World Series by routing Houston 12-3 Wednesday, moving halfway to the US capital's first title since 1924.

Kurt Suzuki, Adam Eaton and Michael Taylor smacked home runs, Asdrubal Cabrera drove in three runs and Stephen Strasburg pitched six strong innings as the Nationals grabbed a 2-0 edge in Major League Baseball's best-of-seven final. "We know the series isn't over," said Washington's Anthony Rendon. "To steal two games from them at their home field is great but we still have a job to finish and we still have two more to go."

Suzuki, in the first World Series of his 13-year career, hit a solo homer off Houston's Justin Verlander to launch Washington's seventh-inning fireworks, ensuring the 36-year-old Astros ace would remain winless after a sixth World Series start. "The homer was great," said the first Hawaiian with a World Series homer. "Any way you can help the team, good things will happen."

"I've waited 13 years for this. It pumps you up, especially how long I waited to get to play a World Series game."

The scene shifts to Washington for Friday's game three, the first World Series matchup in the US capital for 86 years.

Of the past 18 teams to seize a 2-0 World Series edge, 17 have won the title. Only three teams

have dropped the first two at home and won the title — Kansas City in 1985, the New York Mets in 1986 and the New York Yankees in 1996.

"Clearly the Nats have outplayed us, bottom line," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. "They are halfway to a race to four wins. Clearly game three is very important for us."

"I don't think they are going to be planning the parade. They know we're going to make them fight for it." The Nationals, who have won eight games in a row and 18 of their past 20 games, began play 50 years ago as the Montreal Expos before moving to Washington for the 2005 season.

Washington's only World Series crown came 95 years ago when the original Senators defeated the New York Giants in seven games. They would relocate to become the Minnesota Twins in 1961 and a replacement version would leave after the 1971 season to become the Texas Rangers. The Nationals could match the 1914 Boston Braves as the only teams to win the World Series after falling 12 games below .500 during the season. "We're here because the boys never gave up," Nationals manager Dave Johnson said.

Strasburg, a 31-year-old righthander, struck out seven while allowing only two runs on seven hits and a walk in improving to 4-0 in the playoffs. Verlander took the loss for Houston, his



HOUSTON: Adam Eaton #2 of the Washington Nationals hits his two-run home run against the Houston Astros during the eighth inning in Game Two of the 2019 World Series at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. — AFP

fourth in six World Series starts, and fell to 1-4 in this year's playoffs. Deadlocked 2-2 after six, the game turned thanks to unlikely heroes. Suzuki's homer and a walk to Victor Robles

ended Verlander's night but Astros reliever Ryan Pressly walked Trea Turner, Eaton advanced the runners on a bunt sacrifice and Juan Soto walked to load the bases. — AFP

Distribution of medals for Gulf Women Games and shooting competition



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex was the venue for distributing medals and prizes for the Olympic skeet, trap 10m air pistol and rifle, and 25m pistol winners, as part of the sixth women's sports in the GCC countries in the presence of the chairperson of Higher Organizing Committee Sheikhha Nacema Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi and Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi spoke on behalf of Kuwait Shooting Federation saying that on behalf of the shooting community "we congratulate HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister for the safe return of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah after treatment abroad. He said it is our pleasure to have Kuwait host the events of the Sixth Gulf Women Games and the shooting competition, adding that these games are opportunity for athletes to get in touch to strengthen ties and give woman shooters to compete and excel.

Eng Al-Otaibi thanked all Gulf countries for participating as the number of shooters is over 100 and we are competing in a fair and brotherly manner.

Meanwhile, Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi said Kuwait shooting was able to take first place by winning 5 gold, one silver and 2 bronze, while Bahrain was second followed by Oman. He said the achievements are only the result of joint efforts, both technical and administrative along with the shooters.

Results of the tournament are as follows:

Trap - Women - Team:
Kuwait, Oman

Trap - Women - Individual:
Shahad Al-Hawal - Kuwait, Sarah Al-Hawal - Kuwait, Fakhriya Khamees - Oman.

Skeet - Women - Team:
Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar

Skeet - Women - Individual:
Iman Al-Shamma from Kuwait, Mariam Hasani from Bahrain, Sheikha Al-Rashidi from Kuwait.

25m Pistol - Women - Team:
Bahrain, Oman, UAE

25m Pistol - Women - Individual:
Nasrah Mahmoud - Qatar, Ayesha Al-Buraiki - Bahrain, Mooza Ali - Bahrain.

10m Air rifle - Women - Team:
Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman

10m Air Pistol - Women - Team:
Bahrain, Oman, UAE

10m Air Pistol - Women - Individual:
Mouza Ali - Bahrain, Ayesha Al-Buraiki - Bahrain, Nasra Mahmoud - Qatar.



Sports

Kyrie Irving scores 50 in Nets' overtime loss to Timberwolves

BROOKLYN: Karl-Anthony Towns collected 36 points and 14 rebounds as the visiting Minnesota Timberwolves overcame a 50-point performance from Kyrie Irving in a 127-126 overtime victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Wednesday in the season opener for both teams. Irving had the ball in his hands on the final possession, but the six-time All-Star lost his footing off the dribble and forced a shot that caromed off the rim as time expired. Towns sank a career-high seven 3-pointers, and Andrew Wiggins added 21 points for the Timberwolves, who overcame squandering an 18-point, second-quarter lead to hand Brooklyn its seventh straight season-opening loss. Irving shot 17 of 33 from the field in his first game since he and the injured Kevin Durant elected to sign with Brooklyn in the summer. The point total was the seventh best in franchise history and the most by a Nets player making his debut, eclipsing the 30 posted by Hall of Famer Nate "Tiny" Archibald with then-New Jersey in 1976 as well as D'Angelo Russell in 2017.

NUGGETS 108, TRAIL BLAZERS 100

Denver, behind 20 points and 13 rebounds from foul-plagued Nikola Jokic, snapped Portland's NBA-record streak of 18 consecutive home-opening victories. Will Barton totaled 19 points for the Nuggets, six in the closing quarter. Jamal Murray scored seven of his 14 points in the final quarter. Trail Blazers star Damian Lillard led all scorers with 32 points, 13 in the fourth. Hassan Whiteside had 16 points and a game-best 19 rebounds. Rodney Hood scored 13 points, and CJ McCollum had 12.

HORNETS 126, BULLS 125

Dwayne Bacon drained several late-game shots as part of Charlotte's record-setting performance, and P.J. Washington scored 27 in his NBA debut as the Hornets slipped past visiting Chicago in the season opener for both teams. Charlotte set an NBA record by making 23 baskets from 3-point range in a season-opening game. The previous mark was 19. Washington made seven 3-pointers, an NBA record for a player in his debut. Overall, the Hornets were 23-for-44 from long distance, with the 23 treys also representing a franchise record. Washington's point total was the most by a Hornets rookie in an NBA debut. Lauri Markkanen led Chicago with 35 points and 17 rebounds.

76ERS 107, CELTICS 93

Ben Simmons had 24 points, nine assists and eight rebounds to lead host Philadelphia past Boston. Josh Richardson scored 17 points while Joel Embiid added 15 points, 13 rebounds and three blocked shots despite playing in foul trouble for much of the second half. Tobias Harris also recorded a double-double with 15 points and 15 rebounds, and former Celtic Al Horford had 16 points. Gordon Hayward paced the Celtics with 25 points while Jayson Tatum added 21 points and 10 rebounds. Enes Kanter and Kemba Walker each contributed 12. Walker, who made his debut with the Celtics after eight seasons with the Charlotte Hornets, shot just 4 of 18.

PISTONS 119, PACERS 110

Andre Drummond scored 32 points and

grabbed 23 rebounds to power Detroit over Indiana in Indianapolis. Drummond delivered in all phases. He shot 12-for-18 from the floor, 8-for-10 from the free-throw line, blocked four shots and added three steals. He produced the NBA's first 30-point, 20-rebound performance in a season opener since Charles Barkley in 1992. Luke Kennard knocked down six 3-pointers and finished with 30 points for the Pistons. The frontcourt duo of Domantas Sabonis and Myles Turner led Indiana with 27 and 25 points, respectively.

MAGIC 94, CAVALIERS 85

Nikola Vucevic led four players in double figures with 21 points as Orlando opened its campaign with a front-running victory over visiting Cleveland, spoiling John Beilein's NBA coaching debut. Markelle Fultz totaled 12 points to go with a game-high six assists off the bench. Terrence Ross had 10 points as the Magic, a playoff team last season, used a 36-21 advantage in points from reserves to pull away from the Cavaliers. Four starters scored in double figures for Cleveland, led by 16 points apiece by Collin Sexton and Tristan Thompson.

HEAT 120, GRIZZLIES 101

Justise Winslow scored a game-high 27 points, and Miami used a 23-1 fourth-quarter run to defeat visiting Memphis. Winslow added seven rebounds and seven assists. Goran Dragic scored 19 points off the Miami bench, Kendrick Nunn had 24 points, and Bam Adebayo posted 14 points and 11 rebounds. Jaren Jackson Jr. topped the Grizzlies with 17 points. Rookie Ja Morant, the second overall pick in the draft, had 14 points, four assists and six turnovers.

MAVERICKS 108, WIZARDS 100

Luka Doncic scored 34 points, Kristaps Porzingis added 23 in his Dallas debut, and the Mavericks defeated visiting Washington. Doncic, the reigning NBA Rookie of the Year, made 12 of 19 field-goal attempts, including 4 of 9 from 3-point range. Dallas reserves Dorian Finney-Smith and Justin Jackson added 10 points each. Bradley Beal scored 19 points on 7-of-25 shooting for Washington, which has lost on nine of its past 10 visits to Dallas.

SPURS 120, KNICKS 111

LaMarcus Aldridge poured in 22 points, and Bryn Forbes added 20 to lead San Antonio to a come-from-behind win over visiting New York in the season-opening game for both teams. The Spurs used a 17-0 run over a 4 1/2-minute span of the fourth quarter to turn a five-point deficit into a 109-97 lead, with five different players scoring points in the decisive surge. Dejounte Murray had 18 points and eight rebounds for San Antonio, and DeMar DeRozan and Rudy Gay hit for 13 points each. Marcus Morris scored 26 points while Julius Randle added 25 points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks. New York rookie RJ Barrett had 21 points in his first regular-season game.

JAZZ 100, THUNDER 95

Donovan Mitchell opened his third NBA season with a bang, scoring six of his game-high 32 points in the final minute as Utah held off Okla-



NEW YORK: Jeff Teague #0 of the Minnesota Timberwolves guards Kyrie Irving #11 of the Brooklyn Nets as he falls in the final seconds of overtime for a Minnesota Timberwolves win and final score of 127-126 during their game at Barclays Center in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. — AFP

homa City in Salt Lake City. Mitchell tipped in his own miss with 54.4 seconds left for a 94-90 lead, then canned a 20-foot pullup from the right wing with 21.8 seconds remaining to make it 96-91. He added two foul shots with 8.1 ticks on the clock for a 98-94 advantage. Mitchell also grabbed 12 rebounds for Utah, which got 16 points from Bojan Bogdanovic. Royce O'Neale hit all six of his field-goal tries and scored 14, and Emmanuel Mudiay came off the bench to chip in 12 points.

SUNS 124, KINGS 95

Devin Booker scored 22 points and Kelly

Oubre Jr. added 21 to lead a balanced attack as host Phoenix pulled away from Sacramento. Deandre Ayton had 18 points and 11 rebounds, and new point guard Ricky Rubio contributed 11 points and 11 assists in his Suns debut after signing a three-year, \$15 million free agent deal this summer. Six Suns scored in double figures in coach Monty Williams' debut, and Booker handed out 10 assists. Buddy Hield had 28 points and sank six 3-pointers, Marvin Bagley III scored 14 points, Harrison Barnes had 12 and Cory Joseph 10 for the Kings in coach Luke Walton's debut. — Reuters

Tiger roars back after horror start to share Japan lead

INZAI: Tiger Woods got off to a horrific start before roaring back with nine birdies in 15 holes to share the inaugural Zozo Championship lead in Japan yesterday as Rory McIlroy struggled. Woods, three over after three holes, bounced back in stunning fashion with a back-nine of 29 and a six-under round of 64 to top the leaderboard alongside US Open champion Gary Woodland.

"I certainly was not expecting to shoot six-under par after that start," admitted Woods. "It was ugly early and it was nice to be able to flip it. Now I'm in a position where we're going to have a long, long weekend of a lot of golf. Hopefully I can keep it going." The American duo head into Friday with a one-shot lead over home favourite Hideki Matsuyama at Accordia Golf Narashino Country Club in Inzai City.

"I was excited that fans were calling out my name," said Matsuyama, who at 27th in the world is the highest-ranked Japanese player

in the event. "We don't normally have such big crowds." Woodland, who won his first major at Pebble Beach in June, never looked troubled in a blemish-free round with six birdies.

"I drove the ball well. Any time I can control the ball on the greens from the fairway and make some putts, that adds up to a pretty good day," said the world number 18. McIlroy is ranked the second best player on the planet, but you wouldn't have known it as he scratched around with a cold putter in a two-over 72, the low point being a double-bogey six at the 12th.

Remarkably, Woods's 64 was the lowest season-opening round of his long career and came as the 43-year-old chases an 82nd US PGA Tour victory to tie the all-time record held by Sam Snead. It was the most birdies Woods has scored in 18 holes since the first round of the 2013-WGC Mexico Championship. But all that had not seemed remotely possible when Woods, who won his 15th major at the US Masters in April, creaked into action after a two-month layoff for arthroscopic left knee surgery.

Starting his round on a 10th hole lined by massive crowds more than 10 people deep, Woods dropped three shots in as many holes with three consecutive bogeys. — AFP

Sports

Recalled Ford urges England to 'embrace pressure' against All Blacks

TOKYO: England recalled George Ford at fly-half yesterday for their World Cup semi-final against New Zealand with the Leicester stand-off adamant they were willing to "embrace the pressure" against the world champions.

Ford came off the bench during England's 40-16 quarter-final win over Australia. But he is back in the starting XV for tomorrow's match against the reigning world champions in Yokohama. "I've got a different role this week to last week but my job for the team doesn't change," Ford said.

"We come up against a team with strengths all over the field. We are going to have to be on our toes, alive in every moment of the game." England captain Owen Farrell, who started at fly-half against the Wallabies, moves to inside centre with Manu Tuilagi alongside him in midfield.

Henry Slade drops down to the bench for the most important match of veteran Australian coach Jones's four-year reign with England, pitting the world's number two side against top-ranked New Zealand.

In-form wing Jonny May, who scored two tries against Australia, has been passed fit after leaving the field shortly before the end of the Wallabies' match with a hamstring problem.

Ford has been one of England's leading players at Japan 2019 and was named man of the match in a pool win against the United States.

But concerns about the threat posed by Australia powerhouse midfielder Samu Kerevi saw him benched for the quarter-final. Ford's inclusion is set to bolster England's kicking and distribution options, with All Blacks centres Anton Lienert-Brown and Jack Goodhue not posing the same physical threat as Kerevi.

"We just feel it's the right combination this week," Jones told reporters of his decision to revert to a dual playmaker system featuring childhood friends Ford and Farrell. "Whenever you play against New Zealand your work off the ball is going to be massively important.

"They like to move the ball around, they are very good on transition and George's work-rate off the ball has been absolutely exceptional." New Zealand, who have not lost a World Cup match since a 2007 quarter-final defeat by France, will head into this weekend's clash as favourites.

But Ford insisted England "wouldn't want to be anywhere else", adding: "We enjoy the pressure, we want to embrace it and I think we will do." England have won just seven of their 41 Tests against New Zealand — who hammered



OITA: This combination photo created shows England's head coach Eddie Jones (L) and New Zealand's head coach Steve Hansen leading a training session in Tokyo. — AFP

Ireland 46-14 in the last eight — and they have lost all three of their previous World Cup encounters against the All Blacks.

'TWO HEAVYWEIGHTS'

But several members of the current side featured the last time England beat the All Blacks in a 38-21 victory at Twickenham seven years

ago, and were also involved in the 2017 British and Irish Lions squad that drew a Test series in New Zealand.

"I think traditionally when you play against New Zealand the pace and intensity of the game gets you," said Jones, Australia's coach when they beat the All Blacks in the semi-finals of the 2003 World Cup.

"I think if you have experienced that before you understand what you have got to prepare yourself for and most of our squad have been involved in those games so we've got great experience."

England have also known they were in line for a semi-final against New Zealand ever since the World Cup pool draw took place in May 2017, with Jones confident that meant they were "ready to go". "It's going to be a great contest, isn't it? Two heavyweights, one dressed in black, one dressed in white. You couldn't think of a better scenario."

The only other change to England's match-day 23 sees back-row Mark Wilson replace Lewis Ludlam on the bench. New Zealand named their side earlier Thursday, with the inclusion of Scott Barrett at blindside flanker the only change for a game coach Steve Hansen said could be one "for the ages". — AFP

Japan to ask Joseph to stay on as rugby coach

TOKYO: Japan's Rugby Football Union will seek to keep Jamie Joseph as coach after he took the Brave Blossoms to a historic World Cup quarter-final at home, its president said yesterday. "The selection committee has decided to ask him to serve as the head coach in light of results of the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan," JRFU President Shigetaka Mori said in a short statement.

"We will enter into more concrete negotiations going forward," he added. Kiwi Joseph oversaw a campaign by Japan that exceeded all expectations and lit up the World Cup — the first one held in Asia and outside the traditional rugby heartlands. Japan beat Ireland 19-12 and Scotland 28-21 to top their pool and lift their world ranking to an all-time high of sixth. They eventually met their match in the quarter-finals against South Africa, who produced a bruising defensive effort combined with dominance at the set-piece to run out 26-3 winners. But their brave performances have captured the hearts of fans across the nation and raised the profile of rugby in a baseball-mad country. Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus paid tribute to the Japanese team, saying that his much-fancied team had been "very nervous" at half-time when they were only 5-3 up.

World Rugby chief Bill Beaumont said that their style of rugby had made the rest of the world "sit up and take notice" and that they deserved to be counted at the top table of the global game. Joseph himself had been tight-lipped about his future after the South Africa match.

Asked what was next for him, he replied: "I can't tell you. Japanese rugby is in a good place now. I am going to really celebrate the achievements of this team. There's been a lot of work and it's been relentless." His achievements with Japan have even led to him being linked to a job with the All Blacks after current coach Steve Hansen leaves. — AFP

Downbeat Hamilton doubts title triumph in Mexico

MEXICO CITY: If things go his way, Lewis Hamilton can clinch his sixth drivers' world title triumph in the rarefied atmosphere of the Mexican Grand Prix this weekend. It would be a monumental achievement, nudging him ahead of five-time champion Juan Fangio and making him the second most successful driver in Formula One history behind only Michael Schumacher whose seven titles between 1994 and 2004 remain the pinnacle.

The 34-year-old Englishman, though, holds out little hope of either winning the race at a venue ill-suited to the strengths of his Mercedes car or sealing the title. "Mexico is generally our worst race of the year because of the way our car is set up and it's going to be a tough one for us," said Hamilton.

History shows that this is one of his least favoured tracks — he has won just once, in 2016, in four races although he did enough in 2017 and 2018 to secure the world titles in Mexico. Hamilton, who leads the championship by 64 points with four races, including Mexico still to come, knows he can take a cautious approach without scrapping for victory on Sunday.

He will secure the title by out-scoring his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who lies second, by at least 14 points. But he accepts that the Finn will be a very competitive rival and unlikely to wave him through to the chequered flag.

Both the in-form Ferrari team and Red Bull, for whom Max Verstappen will hope to complete a hat-trick of Mexican victories after his wins in 2017 and 2018, have high hopes of success at a track where Mercedes have admitted they expect to struggle.

"The last few have been pretty shocking even though we've won the title there," said Hamilton.

"I'm hoping for a better weekend but I think it's going to be very hard to beat the Ferraris on those long straights.

"We have no hope of passing them, that's for sure, and if you look at the others, McLaren are picking up serious speed and so are the Red Bulls. It will be a tricky one for us." The Briton added



Lewis Hamilton

that he was not expecting a Mariachi party to celebrate his title. "I don't anticipate it will be Mexico," he said. "I think we will be battling for a good few races."

Although Mercedes completed a record sixth consecutive constructors' and drivers' championship double at the Japanese Grand Prix earlier this month, the team have been overhauled by Ferrari, in terms of pure speed and performance, since the Belgian Grand Prix.

Charles Leclerc won in Belgium, where Ferrari began a run of five successive pole positions. That domination yielded three victories, two for Leclerc and one for four-time champion Sebastian Vettel, and two opportunities lost due to mistakes and misfortunes. "After two races in which we could have done better, we arrive in Mexico determined to win," said Ferrari team chief Mattia Binotto. "We will be aiming for our sixth consecutive pole, before looking to convert that into victory."

Vettel, who took pole in Japan but missed out on his second win this season after making a poor start, believes the altitude of Mexico makes a big difference. "We race with maximum down-force, but, since we are racing so high above sea level, the air is very thin and the cars actually produce very little down-force." — AFP

Sports

Pulisic delights Lampard with match-winning display at Ajax

AMSTERDAM: Christian Pulisic has staked a claim for a starting spot at Chelsea after the winger came off the bench to lay on the winning goal of a hugely impressive Champions League triumph at Ajax.

Chelsea's academy graduates have stolen the headlines as a youthful side has rattled off six wins in a row to move into the Premier League top four and draw level with Ajax at the top of Group H. However it was Lampard's replacements who made the difference at the Johan Cruyff Arena, with American Pulisic coming off the bench to provide the perfect assist for fellow substitute Batshuayi to squeeze home a dramatic winner with four minutes remaining.

"You rely on them coming on and being positive and they both did. It's great for squads when subs come on and make differences like that, it's great for everyone," Lampard said. "You have to give Christian huge credit because he looked so lively when he came on and his assist was as important as the finish."

Pulisic signed for Chelsea in a £58 million (\$73 million) deal in January but the highly-rated 21-year-old has struggled to get into the Chelsea side since arriving in the summer, with the likes of Mason Mount, Tammy Abraham and Callum Hudson-Odoi stealing the limelight.

However his superb performance from the bench on Wednesday night came after a

similarly positive substitute display in last weekend's 1-0 win over Newcastle United.

His lightning footwork and smart cross was a reminder of the player who delighted Borussia Dortmund fans before he was forced onto the sidelines by another young Englishman in Jadon Sancho.

"I've tried to shut my ears to a lot of the outside talk... it's a big move for him and I have other options in those areas," said Lampard. "Let's give him full credit, he wants to know what I want from him, what the Premier League's like, what his new teammates are like. It's not going to be an easy road," said Lampard.

"I see the big picture with him, I want him to be successful with this club because he's a good lad and he wants to do really well. "Acting like he's acting, training like he's training these last few weeks, playing like he's playing ... obviously makes me very very happy."

Lampard got off to a rocky start as Chelsea manager, with just two wins from his first eight games and the 1-0 home defeat to Valencia that made the matches with Ajax crucial to qualification for the knockout stages of the Champions League.

However on Wednesday his side, which featured four youth products in the starting XI and one more on the bench in Billy Gilmour, showed new levels of maturity in holding off a prolific attack that had fired Ajax to an unbeaten start of the season.



AMSTERDAM: Chelsea's US midfielder Christian Pulisic (C) fights for the ball with Ajax's Moroccan midfielder Hakim Ziyech (L) and Ajax's Dutch defender Joel Veltman during the UEFA Champions League Group H football match between Ajax Amsterdam and Chelsea in Amsterdam. —AFP

Chelsea also had more shots on target than the Dutch champions despite no longer having Eden Hazard to weave his magic in a hostile environment.

Despite working under a FIFA ban from buying new players, Lampard denied he was being forced to play youngsters. "People think that the choice of the young players is a

necessity: I have to play Mason Mount, I have to play Tammy Abraham," said Lampard.

"I've got options in the squad but the young players have shown that they deserve to play... I feel like there's more to come, because I've seen the quality, and I'm not just talking about ability on the ball, I'm talking about how much they want to win." —AFP

Inter Milan beat Dortmund to boost Champions League last 16 hopes

MILAN: Lautaro Martinez and Antonio Candreva scored in either half to boost Inter Milan's Champions League last 16 hopes on Wednesday with a 2-0 win over Group F rivals Borussia Dortmund. Argentina forward Martinez continued his fine form scoring after 22 minutes in the San Siro, but missed a chance for a second from the penalty spot eight minutes from time.

Candreva sealed the three points a minute from time to move Antonio Conte's side off the bottom of Group F having fallen 2-1 to Barcelona and being held 1-1 by Slavia Prague. Inter join Dortmund on four points with Barcelona top with seven points from three games.

"We knew we had our backs to the wall after picking up just one point before tonight," said Conte. "This victory extends our expectation of qualification in a very, very difficult group."

"I'm happy especially for my players. They went to great lengths to earn a place in the Champions League last season and to experience these kinds of matches, with the full stadium and the

tifosi. "It's now about making sure we get the result we need in Dortmund. Barcelona and Dortmund are favourites in this group, but it's up to us now." Stefan de Vrij sent the ball through for Martinez in the opening half an hour with the Argentine beating the offside trap as well as goalkeeper Roman Burki from close range.

The 22-year-old's goal, his second consecutive in the Champions League after scoring against Barcelona and fifth in four games for Inter, was confirmed by VAR. Inter could thank captain Samir Handanovic for keeping their advantage into the break with the goalkeeper diving low to clear a Jadon Sancho angled drive.

Conte gave 17-year-old Sebastiano Esposito his Champions League debut coming on after an hour in place of Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku who struggled to make an impact.

With Alexis Sanchez injured Esposito has stayed in Milan instead of playing for Italy in the U17 World Cup in Brazil. He became the youngest Inter player to make his Champions League debut after also becoming the youngest to start in the Europa League last season.

And the teenager impressed forcing a foul from Dortmund's Mats Hummels to the delight of the 60,000 crowd at the San Siro.

Burki denied Martinez a brace from the spot but Candreva powered forward with a minute of normal time to play to seal victory with his fifth European goal leaving Burki with no chance. —AFP

China to host expanded Club World Cup in 2021

SHANGHAI: China will host the inaugural edition of the expanded 24-team Club World Cup, FIFA president Gianni Infantino said yesterday, hailing it as a "historic decision". FIFA's choice underlines China's growing clout in football and could be a precursor to the country eventually hosting the World Cup proper.

Infantino made the announcement after a meeting in Shanghai of the FIFA Council, the decision-making unit of football's world governing body. It will mean many of the biggest club teams — including eight from Europe — descending on China in June-July 2021.

Infantino confirmed that China, which has made football a national priority under President Xi Jinping, had been the only candidate. "It is a historic decision for football," he said. "It will be a competition which every person, every child and everyone who loves football is looking forward to."

The FIFA chief said in June that his new Club World Cup could generate as much as \$50 billion in commercial income, although he did not state how many editions that would cover and a

source told AFP the figure was "scarcely credible". The current Club World Cup features seven teams including the holders of the UEFA Champions League. Qatar will host the competition this year and in 2020. The Gulf state will use the two tournaments as logistical tests for stadiums and infrastructure ahead of the 2022 edition of the World Cup, FIFA's flagship international competition.

The plan for a revamped Club World Cup — "a childhood dream", said Infantino — was approved at a FIFA Council meeting in Miami in March despite opposition from UEFA and the powerful European Club Association.

It will take place every four years and replaces the Confederations Cup, an international competition that acted as a test event for countries hosting a World Cup. FIFA also will double the funding allocated for women's football to \$1 billion over the next four years after the Council rubber-stamped plans already announced by Infantino.

"The Council decided to put 500 million in addition to the 500 million already budgeted," he said. Since the Women's World Cup in France in the summer, "women's football has moved to the next level, we need to work on that, build on that", said Infantino.

China, the world's second-biggest economy, is becoming increasingly influential in football under Xi, a known fan of the game. He and Infantino met last week. Xi and his communist government's stated aim is for the country of 1.4 billion to host and eventually win a World Cup. —AFP

Messi's historic goal helps Barcelona edge Slavia Prague

PRAGUE: Lionel Messi claimed another goal-scoring record as Barcelona edged a spirited Slavia Prague 2-1 on Wednesday to stay top of Champions League Group F. Messi opened the scoring after three minutes, beating Slavia goalkeeper Ondrej Kolar with a low left-footed shot to become the first player ever to score at least once in 15 consecutive Champions League seasons.

The 32-year-old Argentinian first robbed midfielder Petr Sevcik outside the Slavia box before an exchange with Arthur put him neatly through the static Slavia defence. Barca earned a second on 57 minutes when Slavia winger Peter Olayinka deflected a Luis Suarez close-range shot from an impossible angle into his own net as the hosts failed to clear Messi's free kick.

Olayinka sealed Barca's sixth straight competitive win but deprived Suarez of a goal that would end his four-year drought in away games in European cup competitions. Before that, left-back Jan Boril equalised for Slavia five minutes after half-time, capitalising on a superb pass threaded by Lukas Masopust that found him one-on-one with goalkeeper Marc Andre ter Stegen.

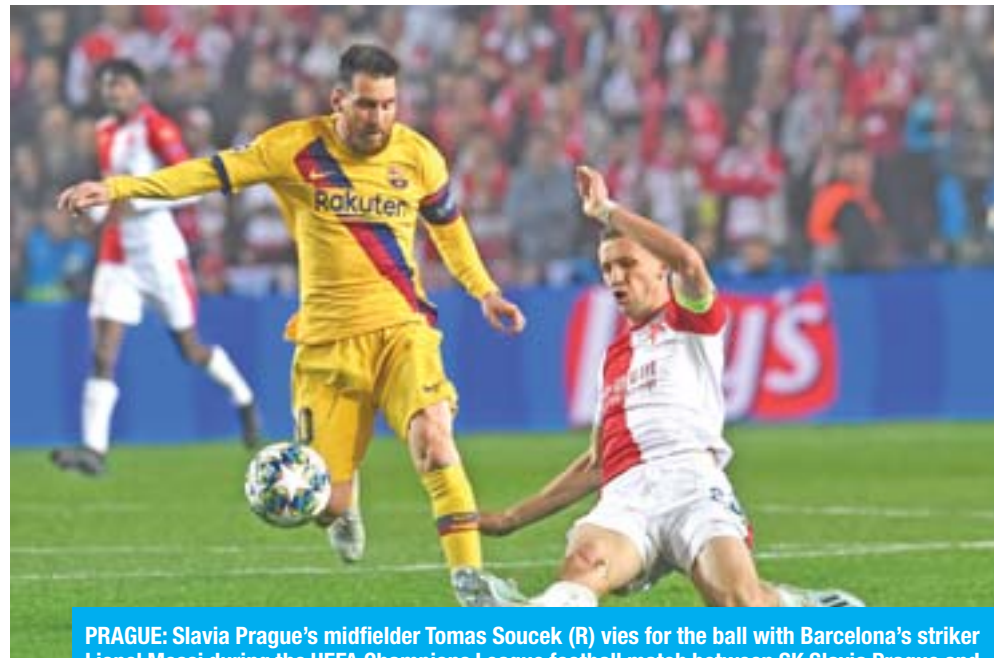
Barcelona top Group F with seven points from three games and are three ahead of Inter Milan who beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0. Slavia sit at the bottom with a single point. "The result could have been better, but Slavia took risks, they played very well and made us defend a lot,"

said Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde. "We started very well, we dominated the game, but we also lost the ball a few times and they threatened — they really made us suffer because when they struggle, they boost their offence and that's exactly what they did today."

He added: "We are at the top of the table and we play the next two games at home. They will show us where we are." Commenting on Messi making history, Valverde said: "It is really an incredible record. I hope Leo will continue to do well." Slavia coach Jindrich Tipisovsky bemoaned Slavia's bad luck with the ugly second goal. "It's a shame to lose with a goal like this," he said.

Valverde made two changes from last weekend's 3-0 win at Eibar, calling up Nelson Semedo and Gerard Pique to replace Samuel Umtiti and Sergi Roberto, both sidelined with knee injuries.

Jaroslav Zeleny almost grabbed a goal for Slavia on 20 minutes after a superb pass from Boril, but his shot bounced off the feet of a diving ter Stegen. At the other end of the pitch, Messi curled a free kick into the Slavia box but Clement Lenglet's poke was too weak to surprise Kolar, while minutes later Suarez blasted the ball over the crossbar. Slavia came close again when Zeleny put through Masopust whose low shot was stopped by ter Stegen, and only seconds later the German keeper had a hard



PRAGUE: Slavia Prague's midfielder Tomas Soucek (R) vies for the ball with Barcelona's striker Lionel Messi during the UEFA Champions League football match between SK Slavia Prague and FC Barcelona in Prague, Czech Republic. — AFP

time clearing Olayinka's shot over the crossbar. Messi before kicking out Frenkie de Jong's powerful low attempt from inside the box. — AFP

Rodgers revival has Leicester dreaming

LONDON: Revitalised by the appointment of manager Brendan Rodgers and free-scoring form of Jamie Vardy, Leicester City are once again upsetting the applecart of the Premier League's top six. Three years on from a remarkable title triumph that allowed football fans across the world to dream, third-placed Leicester could leapfrog defending champions Manchester City into second in the table with victory at Southampton on Friday.

The Foxes have more points after their opening nine game of the season than Claudio Ranieri's side managed in 2015/16 when they went on to beat odds of 5,000/1 to be crowned champions of England.

The standards set in recent seasons by City and European champions Liverpool, who already hold an eight-point lead over Leicester at the top of the table, mean the chances of matching that remarkable feat look just as slim now.

However, Leicester do harbour realistic ambitions of a return to the Champions League by becoming the first side outside City, Liverpool, Tottenham, Chelsea, Arsenal and Manchester United to break into the top four in four seasons.

When Rodgers took over in February, a squad filled with talented young players plus the title-winning experience of Vardy and goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel was languishing in the bottom half of the table. Since then only City, Liverpool and Chelsea have taken more points than Leicester.

Rodgers endured a whirlwind ride in just over three years in charge at Liverpool, coming agonisingly close to ending the club's long wait for a league title in 2013/14 before being sacked in October 2015. He rehabilitated his reputation with seven trophies in two-and-a-half seasons at Celtic before returning to the Premier League with an immediate impact. — AFP

Mertens beats Maradona's goal mark to edge Salzburg

SALZBURG: Belgium attacker Dries Mertens beat Diego Maradona's tally of 115 goals for Napoli to help his side beat Salzburg 3-2 in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Mertens, 32, who joined the Italian club in 2013, is now just five goals behind Marek Hamsik who has the all-time Napoli goals record of 121.

Napoli's first European victory on the road since December 2016 keeps top of Group E, a point above holders Liverpool who beat bottom side Genk 4-1, with Salzburg in third place on three.

"It's a fantastic evening for us, but we still have to beat Salzburg again in order to qualify," coach Carlo Ancelotti told broadcasters Sky Italia. "It's a great night for him (Mertens). Napoli are back to winning a Champions League away fixture after three years and we hope to keep that going now," he added.

Salzburg coach Jesse Marsch named Mali teenager Sekou Keita on the bench despite the forward scoring the equaliser at Sturm Graz on Saturday to maintain their unbeaten start to the Austrian league season.

The home side had an early goal ruled out by VAR as teenage striker Erling Haaland was judged to be offside after 10 minutes.

Mertens equalled Maradona's tally, who reached the number in 188 appearances in the space of seven seasons between 1984-1991 at the San Paolo Stadium, on 17 minutes.

He blasted his effort to the top corner after a deft assist from Jose Callejon.

Norway forward Haaland, scored his 19th goal in 13 appearances this season with five minutes of the first half to play.

South Korea striker Hwang Hee-chan was brought down in the Napoli box by right-back Kevin Malcuit and 19-year-old Haaland

converted from the spot. Mertens went one better than Maradona with 25 minutes to play after right-back Malcuit made up for his earlier defensive error with a tidy cross for the Belgian.

The visitors then levelled as Haaland headed in from a Zlatko Junuzovic inswinging cross after 73 minutes to become the first player to score six goals in his first three Champions League appearances.

But without Salzburg touching the ball from the restart substitute Lorenzo Insigne smashed home the winner from Mertens' cross on the half-volley to keep them ahead of Liverpool.

The two sides meet again on November 5 in southern Italy and a victory will move Napoli a step closer to a first knockout appearance in the competition since 2017 leaving Salzburg to fight with Genk for a spot in the Europa League. — AFP

Live MATCHES ON TV	
LOCAL TIMING	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Southampton FC v Leicester City	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
SPANISH LEAGUE	
Villarreal CF v Deportivo Alaves	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Hellas Verona FC v US Sassuolo Calcio	21:45
beIN SPORTS	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
FSV Mainz 05 v FC Koln	21:30
beIN SPORTS	
FRENCH LEAGUE	
FC Nantes v AS Monaco FC	21:45
beIN SPORTS	



South Korean women tops at bowling championship

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